

# STEM

Developing Leaders, Transforming Nations



**Peter Kimeu,**  
STEM Coordinator

Short Term Experience in Ministry Programme (STEM) is the Fellowship of Christian Unions (FOCUS) leadership development program. It was launched in 1992 with a running theme of “Developing Leaders, Transforming Lives” as a follow-up of the FOCUS missions’ conference dubbed Commission Conference. It is designed to give fresh graduates a one-year opportunity to serve God in institutions of higher learning, the church and society.

In order to achieve the vision, the program meets three needs that are critical to the Christian faith in Kenya. First, the need for trained, mature Christian leaders to influence the church and society. Second, to increase the number of staff involved in discipling students on campus and finally, to encourage Christian involvement in society particularly in social issues.

We released the 25<sup>th</sup> Cohort of 37, on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 to join 493 STEM Staff alumni already influencing the church and society. Some of the alumni are shaping the political scene of our nation. For instance, a number of them are involved in legislation as Members of Parliament and County Assemblies, Speakers of County Assemblies.

Others are involved in Church ministry as pastors, administrators and leaders in faith based Organizations. 62% of the students’ staff workers in FOCUS are STEM Alumni. In essence STEM is living up to her vision. The majority are involved in the market

place—the public and private sector.

Our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude goes to the parents and relatives of the STEM staffs who humbly allow their sons and daughters to serve in this ministry before they reap the fruits of their labour after graduating. Joining STEM would be a disappointment by some parents but I am yet to meet one dissatisfied of the results that the program has imparted on their children.

We also give our gratitude to the STEM partners who, without them, we couldn’t have run this program. We can only say thank you and may God bless you. You have stakes on the great impact achieved through STEM. A contribution of Ksh. 50 towards STEM is far much more than a multibillion real estate investment. It is a treasure stored in heaven, that are rust and moth proof.

Finally, we express gratitude to the students who have poured out their hearts to the STEM staffs and provided an enabling environment for ministry. Some students are so concerned about the welfare of their STEM staffs to the extent of sharing the little resources they have to support their ministry. May God continually bless you.

To everyone who has taken a part, small or great, seen or unseen, may the Lord Almighty richly bless each and every one of you for taking the step and believing in this ministry over the years.



# MEET YOUR STEM STAFF

## 2016/17



Agnes Njeru  
STEM Staff  
Kimathi University



Everton Kataka  
STEM Staff  
VOI CUs



Martine Odero  
STEM Staff  
Kitui CUs



Carol Thindiu  
STEM Staff  
Med school & Kenya Science



Kennedy Ochieng  
STEM Staff  
Bondo CUs



Lucy Muthoni  
STEM Staff  
Maseno University



Naomi Mutheu  
STEM Staff  
Machakos & Daystar University



Eusavia Kititi  
STEM Staff  
Pwani University



Rodgers Opetu  
STEM Staff  
Muranga University





Andrew Muganda  
STEM Staff  
TUM



Rachael Wambui  
STEM Staff  
TUK& KUSOL CUs



Kevin Ogombe  
STEM Staff  
KeMU



John Mwaniki  
STEM Staff  
Moi Annex & CHS



Kevin Yoga  
STEM Staff  
Karen CUs



Salome Njoroge  
STEM Staff  
Kibabii CUs



Harison Munyalo  
STEM Staff  
UoN Kikuyu campus



Lydia Nyambane  
STEM Staff  
Moi Main



Caleb Mwaniki  
STEM Staff  
JKUAT



Esther Khakasi  
STEM Staff  
Kisii Universities



Edwin Mwangi  
STEM Staff  
KU Ruiru



Gladys Wanjiru Mwangi  
STEM Staff  
Laikipia University





Pauline Kachinja  
STEM Staff  
Resource Mobilisation



Wycliffe Omondi  
STEM Staff  
Nakuru Town



Nelly Kabura  
STEM Staff  
Maasai Mara University



Julius Mugambi  
STEM Staff  
MMUST, KMTC Kakamega



Collince Ketere  
STEM Staff  
Karatina University



Jennifa Munge  
STEM Staff  
Kitale CUs



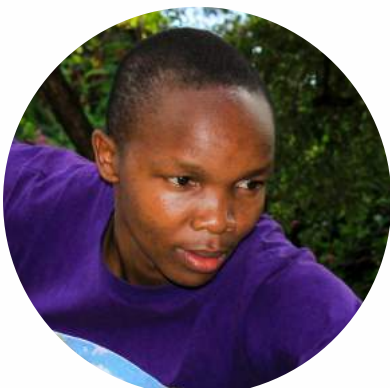
Carol Kimani  
STEM Staff  
Lower Kabete



Issa Gachanja  
STEM Staff  
Egerton Njoro



Steven Mwendia  
STEM Staff  
UoN Main & Chiromo



James Nganga  
STEM Staff  
Kenyatta University



Sarah Mutheu  
STEM Staff  
Chuka University



Beth Njane  
STEM Staff  
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Seth Jaoko Omondi  
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Faith Musyoki  
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Upper Kabete, AHITI & KTTI



Gideon Muendo  
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Josephine Githutha  
STEM Admin & KTTC



Peter Kimeu  
STEM Coordinator

**STEM DESK 2016/17**



# THE STEEL FACTORY

## The panel beating of values and disciplines

Was it a preaching expedition or a touring experience? What really changed the narrative along the STEM journey? At times it was a transformation so glaring that even students did not fail to notice. After he preached his first sermon, two days after reporting in Egerton University CU, Issa Thuo heard the CU chair ask, "Hawa watu wa FOCUS mnatolewa wapi?" (Where are these FOCUS people fished from?) For Thuo, he did not have to look for answers far away, he could only credit the success to SOT; a life changing training that had hurled him on the path of impact. The conviction that student ministry was a call deep in God's heart and the resounding bell challenging him to embrace the ambassador's call seriously ignited in him the unquenchable passion for service.

Everton Kataka, who took his second term in Taita Taveta recalls his experience in his first term. "On the very first day I landed in my station, I got it clearly that things would not be business as usual; I was in a potter's kiln. Although I had been certain to join the

program, I doubted whether I was the right candidate. What was I to do with my struggles with sin and the uncertainty of the call? I wrestled with the thoughts. However, as things turned out, I realized that I was the right candidate for that time.

My first achievement was the victory over sin! The shackles of guilt were broken and God empowered me for the task." One day, after preaching in one of his CUs, a student pulled aside Everton's colleague and asked, "You mean STEM can do this to a person? (Referring to a few positive changes he had noted in him) What does STEM give to you people?" Everton compares STEM to a steel manufacturing factory. There are high temperatures, so designed to make one Malleable into the desired end product. There are curving and hammering, where the unwanted rough edges are made smooth. There is polishing and branding before the final product can be packed for any meaningful use.

## Opportunity Unequaled

"There were issues I struggled with, grounds I feared to tread, hills and mountains that I could not climb, fears that had put me down and inadequacies that rendered me ineffective. As I exit this amazing life-changing program, I am confident that my light will shine even brighter. Gone are the days of lighting a lamp and putting it under the bed. I am a city on a hill," remarks Seth Jaoko a graduate of the University of Nairobi Main Campus and serving as a STEM staff in Western Region. His sentiments echo the feeling shared by many STEM staff as they look back on the one-year journey.

For each one of them though, the invitation to join the program had been welcomed differently. Kelvin Yoga, a graduate of Maseno University and serving with the Karen CUs observes, "STEM was not so good an idea

even at the beginning of Staff Orientation and Training (SOT) because I was not fully convinced that it was a wise decision for a Computer Science graduate. Like many other students, I was looking forward to a plum job soon after my graduation and the idea of joining STEM seemed out of point. However, I now agree that good things do not always come glittering, some come wrapped, not appealing to the eye."

Julius Mugambi, another STEM staff serving in Western Region adds, "I can now confirm the truth in the statement: "God does not always give us what we want but what we need. I could not have been in any better place after Campus than in STEM. I highly appreciate God for giving me an opportunity to serve Him for this one year."

# Metamorphosis: A story of transformation



Transformation marked every facet of the life of a STEMer in unique ways. For someone like Andrew, ministering among the students in Pwani Region had to be approached differently for any success to be realized. Appreciating the age bracket and the intellectual endowment of university students, Andrew noted that his old antics could no longer make him relevant; his dancers needed a different tune and the sooner he learnt to play it the better. He says, "I had to do need analysis before drawing any training concept; I needed to base my objectives on facts, not imaginations. Extensive reading of God's Word and other materials became a dire need since I had no option but to enhance my application of truth and sharpen my mentoring and counseling skills. I had to keep pace with the excellent demand for FOCUS."

The wind of transformation also blew away some misguided conceptions and defined certain things afresh. For Jennifer Muge the STEM Staff in Kitale CUs in North Rift Region, her previous view of wealth was sharply confronted. She relates, "I looked at the STEM house and a cloud of sadness covered my heart. Most of the items belonged to the STEM house, just a handful could be attached to my name. I stared at the clothes and noticed that my wardrobe had not changed much since I left campus. I thought to myself, 'this isn't the kind of life I envisioned after Campus."

'Did I get short changed? When will I "catch up" with my friends?' Such thoughts and much more raced through my mind. I started wishing the STEM program ended so that I could get a job and earn money. I was trapped in that web until one morning when I was in my bed, God started speaking to me. He brought to my mind

the different things He had helped me to accomplish so far: specific lives that I had impacted, progress with the Associates and the programs that I had strengthened in the CUs, including BEST-P, discipleship classes and small group Bible studies that enrich students' lives. Then, I heard a question deep within my heart, 'Jennifer, can you compare all these with money?' I knew the answer was "NO". I broke in tears and sobbed as I prayed to God, asking for forgiveness for thinking that money was of more value than what I was doing.

I have not been having much money during STEM but I'm glad that I have been part of something eternal. This has really changed my attitude towards life and of course towards money.

I have learnt not only to be content with what I have but also to commit part of it to God's service remembering that he who is faithful with little will be entrusted with much." Jennifer's view is also shared by Sarah, she observes, "In a world where success is valued in monetary terms, I have learnt that living the purpose for which the Lord created me is the true definition of success. This is a major milestone in my life as the Lord has made it clear every day what He made me do, and I'm more determined to live a purposeful life. Understanding that I cannot serve both God and money, I have quit the chase of material things that I may live a life worthy of God's calling."

Beth Njane the pioneer STEM Non-residence in Nairobi CBD drives the last nail on this. She concludes, "I have appreciated living within my means and realized the place of the discipline of simplicity in a believer's life."



# STEM End-product: Fun and Success Stories



Salome Wanjiru (STEM Staff in Western Region) narrates her most enjoyable moments in her ministry experience as those she shared with her fellow staff team in Western Region, the times she sat with students in her house sharing their lives as well as time she spent alone reading and journaling in the STEM house. "I love to see things that God created because they make me marvel," she starts her narration. She continues, most of the times when we were together with my teammates, we enjoyed visiting places and just being adventurous. On this day, we went hiking with some of my fellow STEM staffs at a place in Bungoma County called Marakaru. We were also accompanied by one student from Kibabii University. What made the experience exciting is the sight of God's beautiful creation. The rocks that are as though they were hewn with a very sharp object.

I got to appreciate God's wisdom in creation and was reminded of psalmist in chapter 19 where he talks about the creation showing forth the greatness of God, and the song "How great thou art." Up to this time, I still can't fathom how great God is. He is infinite and

knowing Him humbles my mind and heart. It comforts me especially now that I have been feeling distanced from people, and the Holy Spirit keeps reminding me that God is just present with me. And at the thought that such a great God is with me and wants to be a friend to me, my mind finds peace and my heart is comforted.

A certain day we were in Kisii for our meeting and so we decided to go to Kisii University in a forest where the CU members and the STEM staff usually pray. We got to a place where we stopped to take photos. It was then that I saw how differently we're wired by God yet He would use us to accomplish different things in His vineyard. We're all so different from each other yet blend so very well.

I can't forget to share how I did lobbying for a bonding session so many times on realizing that the leadership team in Kibabii University CU was not united. I tried to plan my own meetings with the leaders but it had never worked previously. They eventually bought the idea and have had two bonding sessions in a period of one month and I can see changes in their interactions.





# THE LANE OF STEM

By: Kelvin Odhiambo

STEM Staff in Mt. Kenya Region

Launching ministry on circumstance  
Made servants quite service's advance  
Focus on celestial prominence is the best  
FOCUS planting her young in STEM  
Is the greatest demo in trusting God's care  
Shielded and safe stage by stage  
Our progress portrayed page by page  
Serving in ministry yet in paint and pain  
Our mind, our brain, our heart, our skills  
Our faith, all have grown under GOD's own care  
The kinder into kindness creeps  
Regenerating friend raising morale  
First moments it was a weep. Though,  
With anxious lusty lungs and soundless sigh  
This far, we only count on HIS creative care  
Ouch! At one point, STEM shipwreck  
Stipend whirlwind, team-mate storms,  
What of family mistrust and CU big moles  
When one will tear and no one else would care!  
The Omnipotent was there and HIS gear was care.

Trusted even though tossed by trials  
Helpless students had their joy defined  
Their chains of struggles God helped us rework  
Leaking leadership and love stories are now rebuild.  
Across most students' life now lies the STEM lane of care.  
It was just a year; great commission isn't yet over.  
Treasure our heritage, everywhere stand to be counted  
Convocation is just assembly, in tent-making be stewards  
Newcomers we wish you well, your journey has begun,  
Thanks to all for your support and glorify GOD for HIS care.

I have through this learnt that I am doing God's work, simply co-working with Him and things happen according to His timetable.

For Carol Thindiu, the STEM Staff in Medical School and Kenya Science Christian Unions, it was all joy seeing students pick up some skills and acquiring some disciplines through her effort.

She shares a story of "a young man from one of the Christian Unions who had real struggles with reading other books besides the bible. Most of his free time was channeled towards watching series and movies. After walking with him for some time, I asked him to identify an area of life he struggled with. We then went ahead to pick up a book.

Gladly he not only read the book and finished. The young lad picked up so many insights from the book and enjoyed the read, such that he decided to pick up another book and continue reading." Her joy was derived in the personal time she had with students; lending them a listening ear, through their victories, struggles and realities of life.



# Benefits, Values and Disciplines Acquired



For the STEMers, an opportunity into student ministry was not just a time to give but also to gain. Seth observes, "It was more of a tool that God has used to mold me into the person He wanted me to be, equipping me for acts of service. In as much as I have served students, I have gained more in return."

It was a year of self-awareness and personality improvement for Everton Kataka and Julius. Realizing that the vibrant life of the student community could no longer contain their introvert nature, they had to come out of their cocoons and surface to life. Through the many sessions of training and preaching engagements, some like Esther Khakasi steadied their nerves to overcome stage fright. She says, "I felt completely insufficient especially having come from the Christian Union that needed a lot of mentorship. I thought STEM was not my 'thing'. I'm surprised at how God has worked in my life. He has given me the courage to stand and speak in front of people."

The opportunity to stay alone also imputed a sense of responsibility. For someone like Andrew who struggled with personal management and organization, it was a time to deliberately look into the issues objectively and also seek the support of his team leader. He attests, "I struggled with managing time, doing planners, meeting deadlines, managing my finances and general grooming and outlook. As I exit STEM, however, these have become areas of lesser struggle for me.

Julius adds, "I was poor in planning leading to poor time management. I have often fallen behind the

schedule in the submission of accounting sheets and weekly planners. Although I'm not yet so prudent with this, I have really improved. I'm still working to see to it that I no longer struggle with it. 'Ordering your private world', the STEM read, has really challenged me on these two values."

Worth noting is the spiritual growth that many attribute to the STEM programme. A lot of care, both at individual and corporate level was ensured in the Regions to safeguard against spiritual lethargy which could lead to ineffectiveness. This constituted making plans to approach devotions deliberately so that it was not pushed to the periphery by the ever-screaming duties and responsibilities. Sarah Mutheu confesses, "My personal devotion is one of the key areas I have gained ground.

STEM has enabled me to have a strong devotional life so that I don't shortchange myself or the students." It was from such rich devotional life that Kelvin Yoga found true solid ground on which to stand on in times of trials and hardships. His view of ministry in light of career has totally changed. He adds, "I have come to learn that the greatest call I have is to be with the Lord and continually hear from Him. It is now clear to me that I was created to serve God through serving His people; this is what I want to live for and even die for." The place of reading was also an area of growth for many STEMers, especially in the development of their minds for the engagement and dissection of issues. Not only so, it gave many of them the impetus to buy books and develop personal libraries. More to



that, it was also an invaluable source of material for ministry as Nelly Ng'ang'a observes, that 'The Disciple Makers' Handbook', one of the STEM reads, enriched her discipleship program and counselling ministry in Narok CUs. Thanks for the mandatory titles, many STEMers did not only acquire reading skills but also developed the culture of reading.

Lucy, formally of Western Region CUs attests, "My reading skills have been improved greatly during the period I have been on STEM. I can't believe I have loved to read this much! It has been great."

The STEM journey was also a voyage into long-term friendships. Sarah Mutheu notes, "My relational capacity grounded; I have interacted with people of all odds, students, associates, staff and other people in my ministry endeavours. Through this, I have established great relations and also grew in my relational capacity." "Through visitations to my STEM house for one-on-one interaction with students, I had the opportunity to mentor and share my life with a number of them. Besides that, I made friends and networked with Associates, both young and old.

Visiting the old Associates was the best experience I had. It gave me an opportunity to learn and share my worries with them. Some became like parents to me. Now, I can say I have friends in Nakuru and Naivasha," adds Wycliff Omondi, (Nakuru CBD CUs). It was on such platforms that he acquired important values such as transparency, vulnerability and accountability. The requirement to raise one's own support was not a one-way activity but also an opportunity that inculcated a desirable virtue. As reported by Julius, his struggles with fundraising challenged him to reflect deeply on the discipline of giving. With the understanding that giving isn't because we have much but because we appreciate the needs others have, he has become a better giver irrespective of his limited resources. On fundraising, Wycliff, on the other hand, observes that he learnt to rely on God, fully acknowledging that it is God who meets his needs and provides for those He sends for his work.

"I thought preaching was easy and automatic so long as you had a verse." Begins Beth Njane, "STEM has taught me that sermon preparation is key, it is as important as the people you are preaching to and as the invitation itself. Taking time to research and read widely is as spiritual as waiting upon the Lord for inspiration on the topic." Like many other STEMers, the programme taught Beth the skills of sermon preparation and presentation.

For Carolyn Kimani, being on STEM as a BSc. Education graduate was also of great service to her as she got the opportunity to sharpen her communication skills. Her best of days were Mondays and Tuesdays; the

days she would facilitate BEST P classes in Lower Kabete and Parklands CUs in the evening. She looked forward to demonstrating her stage prowess in presenting the Gospel. For Lucy, however, conducting sessions of training was not easy at the beginning but with time, through mentorship by her colleagues in the Western region and the many opportunities for training, her training and communication skills have really improved.

Student ministry is usually a beehive of activities and one must always be vigilant lest they are overtaken by events and end up not making any impact. It is for this reason that budgeting for time, adopting proper mechanisms of record keeping and being organized became a necessity for STEMers. Nelly observes, "I not only documented bits of information I collected in an orderly manner but also did my newsletters and reports with much ease, Thanks to record keeping. I also learnt to keep track of my communication with partners for proper follow-up."

In order to safeguard against time wastage and to ensure maximum impact, STEMers draw personal development goals, ministry plans and weekly planners capture how to achieve them. However, even with the organization skills, Carolyn Kimani notes that an obstinate animal called emergency would occasionally interfere with her plans.

To stay on course, she says, "I ensured that I remained strategic and flexible; quickly adjusting in the event important and urgent events cropped up." To both Carolyn Kimani and Lucy, they never thought that they could be that flexible. The latter appreciates that STEM has not only stretched her but has also taught her to be flexible to the end to do what she couldn't be able to do."

The greatest test for each of the STEMers now remain to live out the values, disciplines and convictions acquired beyond the one-year programme. Seth has this to say, "I carry a lot with me as 'take homes', valuable principles and disciplines that by the grace of God will carry me forward.

Odero Martin seconds, "I endeavor to translate this vast knowledge and experience gained through STEM programme to touch other lives in the corporate, academic, missionary and church set-ups." Indeed, there could never have been anything so life-changing and transforming than going through STEM.

Sarah Mutheu concludes, "Coming on STEM was like signing off a blank contract of surrender with no guarantee of how the journey would look like but one year down the line, I must confess that STEM was the best decision that I have ever made in my life!"











# Baby Steps in ministry: Learning to be a Steward

I never expected the chat to go in that direction. Since all I wanted was just to say Hi, and know how Monica (my former schoolmate) was fairing. But as soon as I was done knowing how she was, she streamed a series of questions at me. And with ease, I answered each until she asked, "With the three months in STEM what is it that you have learnt?" Gazing at the screen of my phone I seemed to have run out of words. Therefore, I promised her I would share what I had learnt soon. Gordon MacDonald, in his book "Ordering Your Private World," writes a chapter on Living as a Called man. In this chapter lies one of the greatest lessons I have learnt in the three months I have been in STEM.

I am a steward. This might sound cliché, but as we reflect deep into the life of John the Baptist in John 3:25-30, we see him approached by some people who seem to be carrying what I may refer to as the important news.

According to them, they were carrying the scoop of the day. So they came to John and informed him of a man who he had borne witness to some days ago (Jesus Christ), who is now baptizing people. And as per the analysis of the "reporters", this was not a good trend for John.

Maybe they anticipated that John the Baptist would get angry and plan to sabotage the work of Jesus Christ.

But John the Baptist answered them in Vs 27 saying, "A man can receive nothing unless it is given to him from heaven (NKJV)." What he was simply telling the people was that the people who followed him were not his own, those he baptized he did not baptize them for his own sake for he was just one who was entrusted with them.

John seems to understand that he is nothing more than a steward and he cannot compete to get back the people since they were not his, to begin with. Reflecting on this passage in our context today the crowds may mean different things, it may be our careers, our families, our ministries, our health and wealth. Do we like John treat them as things we are given to us by God to manage or do we treat them as rightfully owned property?

The difference between the two is that if one treats them as she/he was just a manager then losing them has changed nothing because from the initial stage they never owned them. But for those that saw them as owned then their loss is a total crisis.

Thus each day I teach my heart that all I have is not mine but it was given to me by God and I am just a manager who ought to be faithful in my engagement with all of it.



**"But he knows the way that I take;  
when he has tested me, I will come  
forth as gold."**

**—Job 23:10**



# The thorn in STEM

The area of raising funds while on ministry remains one of the areas clouded with uncertainties and negative attitudes. For Kennedy Otieno, fundraising was not begging as he earlier thought but giving people opportunity to stand with God's work. Although this attitude was dealt with during STEM induction program, that did not mark the end of the challenges in fundraising.

He says, "The down moments in this journey were the times I had spoken to friends concerning ministry support and they had promised to send in their contributions later in the day only to call back and no one answers my call. Some have never picked my call to date!"

Harrison Munyalo had his part of the story to tell, "I remember several times when I could get my fundraising statement and my mind could just switch off because the amount of money reflected in the statement was not what I should have raised by then."

While these and much more remained the tough experiences of fundraising, it was never a walk in the dark without the dawn of light moments. Many were the instances to celebrate. Kennedy says, "This, of course, did discourage me but on the brighter side, I not only received encouragement from partners but also there were people I did not know and others I least expected support from, who surprised me with their contributions."

Odero Martin also had a similar experience, "I was frustrated when my expectations were not met, but surprisingly, I was strengthened when most people who supported me morally, spiritually and financially were not in my initial supporters list." Harrison adds, "In those times, I would pray for a breakthrough in this area, and the Lord reminded me of His faithfulness and that this is His ministry and so I needed not to worry about anything. What I needed to do was only to keep my trust in Him who is able to do everything."

Harrison's encouragement is actually a message any one of us needs, he says, "From this I affirm that one can be successful in STEM fundraising once you recognize that this is God's work who called you to minister and He is able to connect you with

the right people who will support his work." Lucy agrees with this and in fact prides as having acquired commendable skills in raising funds for ministry.

For her, the STEM story would not be complete without an episode on fundraising. "It was difficult at the beginning since the attitude was wrong: that I was begging for their support. Coming to an understanding that raising funds especially for God's work is an opportunity we give to others to be partners in the ministry for God's blessing helped me appreciate it. This has also helped me to do with a lot of joy; not as a burden. Glory to God!"

Apart from the frustrations that characterized the fundraising experience, there were other challenges.

These stretched from the tight schedule in the CUs; sessions of training, sermons and meetings to the overwhelming needs of the students. In light of these pressures, Gladys Wanjiru (STEM staff Laikipia University) notes that one could easily move from one CU to another without really quantifying work done, or sometimes be tempted to remain in the CUs where things were working out well. In some of the CUs, she adds, leaders were a thorn in the flesh; they would never discuss anything concrete in her presence.

The only news she received was reports of work done. Her experiences are also shared by James (STEM Staff KU Main), "Some of us have had struggles

in settling down in some CUs, partly because the CUs do not appreciate the place and work of the STEM staff or FOCUS in general. Some good ideas and thoughts that would have enriched the CUs hit the rock when the leaders failed to cooperate."

As a STEM staff, students also looked at Gladys with a lot of expectation as though she knew everything. In all these, her game changer was patience, preparedness, constant capacity building and trust in God. Considering her challenges, she concludes, "Students ministry is not an easy thing to do, actually not one of the best, many are the times you desire to quit but I found joy in gaining perseverance that is incomparable. I can't regret this since I am now better placed in my exposure in the ministry. I thank God for this experience."







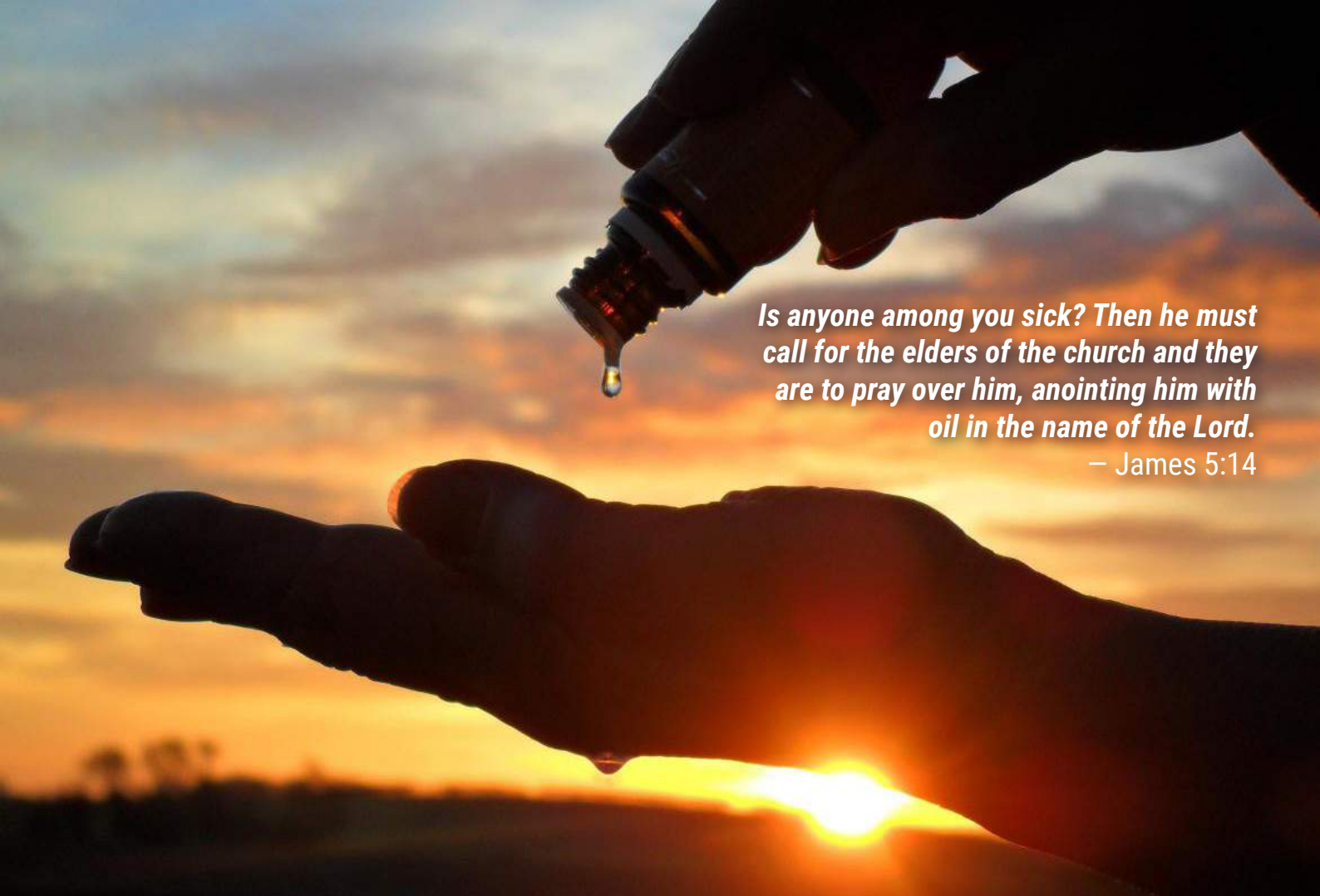
Julius, on the other hand, counts perseverance and resilience as the key anchors in the times the tides unfolded wings of strife, "Staying put in the face of adversity is the best lesson I have learnt. The hope that things will get better because He who called us is faithful, keeps me moving." As Sarah Mutheu puts it, "There was still a small voice that assured me and strengthened my heart daily amidst the tough times saying 'I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.' (Joshua 1:5).

Last but not least, there was also pressure from parents and relatives. With the completion of university education, most of the family members placed very high expectations on STEMers, some ended up not

understanding and therefore, not supporting them. Some of their friends have also failed to appreciate what they have been doing.

For James, a number of them have withdrawn and have disconnected him from their professional links. "Despite all these awful experiences, we are strong and vibrant to serve our Lord." He says, "We consider them as momentary struggles; tools to shape and develop us to be effective ministers of God. When issues press us hard, we run to those things that fill our inner being. I have personally developed values and learnt several lessons from my experiences."





*Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

— James 5:14

## Jehovah Rapha – The God Who Heals

I have known God from 2005 when I got into a personal relationship with Him. Joining STEM program was the best decision I ever made since I gave my life to Jesus. It has been short term but full of great experience. If you ask me today how STEM has been, I will simply say 'it has been an experience'.

It is in this period when I came to know what cancer really is. It is true that some things do not look so serious until they affect one in your close circles. Life turned to be empty and void when I took my mum to the hospital in March and she was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Things continued to worsen when a biopsy test was done showing that the cancer was in stage 3B. Cancer has four stages; and stage 3B meant that it only takes two weeks for the cancer to move to stage 4, the final stage.

Being the only person who has been to school, the whole family and even the village wanted to see how I would raise the money to take my mum for cancer treatment. Even though we were sure that mum would not survive this, it was my time to be strong for her and the whole family proving to be the hardest thing I have ever done in my life.

It was a known fact that I wasn't able to raise over Ksh. 300,000 needed for the whole treatment. This was a hard class of faith of learning to trust God fully who in His own way had strategically placed people around me to help me go through this situation. Through FOCUS Kenya, this money was raised and my mum was treated.

Raising of that money was a miracle but not compared to the great miracle of seeing my mum go through the treatment successfully and recover fully. To me, this was the real hand of God working in my mum's life since cancer patients rarely survive. God wanted me to know that He is still at work amongst His people and that miracles are still real even today, making it a great confirmation that He wanted me to be in STEM at this time.

It is also in this year that I met a lady who has become part of my life. I owe a lot to God and to FOCUS Kenya and I'm proud to be a child of God and a member of FOCUS family. I will forever be grateful to God and FOCUS Kenya.

By: **Kevin Yoga**



# MEET YOUR STEM STAFF

## 2017/18



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**STEM DESK 2017/18**