

# ELLY KOMBO WAFULA

Q&A WITH THE FIRST  
QUEEN ELIZABETH  
COMMONWEALTH  
SCHOLARSHIP  
(QECS) SCHOLAR TO  
UNIVERSITY OF  
MALAYA



The Association  
of Commonwealth  
Universities

Queen Elizabeth Scholarship (QECs) University of Malaya scholarship application for 2020 is now open where the deadline of application is on 15 January 2020. With the aim to assist in providing financial aids for outstanding individuals from the Commonwealth countries. As one of the most competitive programme applicants must ensure the profiles more solid and presentable.

Hear from **Elly Kombo Wafula** how he has determined his strong intention before being selected the first QECs scholar at the Malaysia's No. 1 university.

### **Q: Can you tell us more about yourself?**

A: "I'm Elly Kombo Wafula from Kenya. I have graduated with a Bachelor's Degree of Science majoring in Physics from University of Nairobi. I'm now undergoing Master in Medical Physics at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya (UM) with the support from QEC and UM."

### **Q: Why UM?**

A: "The University of Malaya provides an opportunity for me to fulfill my childhood dream of becoming a Medical physicist. Studying in UM is also a privilege for me. This course is accredited by the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM), United Kingdom, and has stood the test of time since 2002. The experience I will be able to apply established knowledge to help in the treatment of cancer. Furthermore, it caters for my specialty which is Radiation Therapy treatment and has adequate facilities for this kind of training. The department also provides fairly modern therapy equipment which is comparable to those available in Kenya."



### **Q: Why did you choose to go for this course?**

A: "It is in line with National strategic plan. The government of Kenya has planned to address this by 2030 in its National Strategic plan by setting up 8 cancer treatment centers. And the government has recommended for Medical Physicist specialist which would ease the burden on few cancer treatments centers with radiation therapy."



## Elly's first meeting with QECS at UM



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healthy  
lives &  
promote  
well-  
being  
for all

### Q: Tell us how Medical Physics has become your greatest interest?

A: "Kenya has a sad story about cancer, the number of patients traveling to India seeking treatment is huge but this is not cost effective for an ordinary Kenyan. Currently there is a shortage of these health professionals in Kenya, and cancer is not showing signs of slowing down. I know this from the fact that in my undergraduate studies I worked on x-ray analysis of rock samples and from it I was able to determine the levels of lead in my samples. This kind of study is very important for carcinogenesis study and has further pushed me to want to study more on how to help the local community."

### Q: How do you enjoy UM and Malaysia so far?

A: "I have a lot to say about this. From the first day I stepped in Malaysia everything has been working out for me so perfectly. I was very lucky to meet very kind people all the way from my academics to accommodation who went out of their way to help me though I arrived a little late and was overloaded with amount of academic work. I enjoyed classes at the university Hospital and had the opportunity to handle a Linear Accelerator for Radiation Therapy and other diagnostic equipment which I had only heard of. I made quite a few new friends and paid visits to places and enjoyed a variety of food. Of course, I enjoyed the famous Nasi Lemak, (coconut rice) and traveled on the electric train, and I am still amazed by automated-almost cashless society culture in Malaysia!"

### **Q: What will be a piece of advice for QECs applicants?**

A: "Technically something can be done at the application stage. While applying for the QEC scholarship I opened up an account on the University of Malaya e-application portal while applying for the QECs. Later that I realised it saved much time by doing this. When I received the notification that I have been awarded the scholarship the entire procedure then went very quickly, and that allowed me to join the class in timely. Last but not least, be passionate about what you want to do. Opportunity will only find you on the path to success."



### **Q: How do you relate the benefits from being awarded QEC scholarship to the current scenario and the future development in your country?**

A: "Studying this course would build capacity for these medical experts who are tasked with safety of cancer patient during treatment and diagnosis. It's recommended that every cancer treatment center should have at least 3 Medical physicists. Kenyans have had to travel to other countries due to insufficiency of equipment and expertise. My work aligns with my country agenda of Universal Health coverage. With a focus on cancer expertise and building necessary workforce to handle cancer cases. I also intend to use my skills to train health physicist in my country even as this course is introduced The University of Nairobi. This is well in line the United Nations sustainable goal number 3; Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages because everyone has a right to good health because if a person is in good health, he or she would be able to generate wealth."

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