

Careers Advice for Secondary School students in Kilifi, Coast



17th April, 2010

In April, 2010 KESHO organised its 2nd Annual Careers Day. It was supported by 129 students from all over Kilifi District and 54 professionals who very kindly volunteered their time to share their wealth of experience with the students. The day's activities ended with inspirational talks and a prize giving for the best performing graduates last year.

Nearly 100 students from KESHO and around 40 girls from Moving the Goal Posts attended the event and talked to experts from a wide range of professional fields including Medicine, Law, Engineering, Construction, Carpentry, Social and Lab Sciences, Human Resource Management, Teaching, IT, Banking, Media and more....

KESHO and Moving the Goal Posts (MTG) are organisations promoting opportunities for young people in Kilifi. KESHO is currently sponsoring 180 students from Nursery through to University level; Moving the Goal Posts promotes football among girls and encourages participation in reproductive health and rights.

Career Advice is not normally available in schools and yet for students to make realistic choices and plans for their future they need access to relevant information and the opportunity of discussing ideas and options with experts in their field.

The Careers Day focused on enlightening students on available career choices based on their likes/dislikes, skills, market needs and performance at school. Within a field there are many career options which can suit students of all abilities. Knowledge of these options is important and can help prevent students making over ambitious and inappropriate choices for courses of further education. It can also empower students and help overcome feelings of helplessness, particularly among average performing students who sometimes feel there is nothing left for them once the top performers have taken the highly competitive places in medicine, law and engineering.

EVALUATION of the CAREERS DAY

The day was evaluated by the KEMRI Schools Engagement Programme (SEP), at KEMRI, who also helped to organise the day by inviting professionals from a wide range of careers from within KEMRI and from the wider community.

Of the 129 students who attended, 124 completed the evaluation questionnaire form. There were 44 Boys and 80 girls in attendance (42 of whom were girls from MTG). 68% of students were between 16 and 18 years of age (range 12-22yrs). 8 students were from National Schools, 77 from Provincial and 34 from District schools. 25% were in Form 1, 39% in Form 2, 23% in Form 3 and 6% in Form 4.

There was evidence that the careers day really helped to broaden the career options that the student's were considering. For example, at the start of the day, most students were giving a single choice of career but by the end, students were mentioning more than one career that they were considering. Furthermore, students seemed more aware of the different types of careers that exist, with a broader range of careers being mentioned at the end of the day compared to at the start.

Among the boys, before the Careers Day 73% said they'd like to be Doctors or Engineers and by the end of the Careers Day, this percentage had dropped to 60% with the balance choosing other careers such as Management or Accounting.

Among the girls, before the Careers Day 30% said they wanted to be Doctors and 37% Nurses or Teachers. By the end of the day, their choices had broadened and another 26% said they wanted to be Lawyers or Bankers/Accountants. The reasons students gave for their career choice were because it matched the subjects choices and their current level of academic achievement, and because they were motivated / inspired by the nature of the career.



When students were asked "what did you learn today" 77% of students reported one of the following: Certain qualifications are needed for particular careers; it's important to have more than one idea of a career and not be fixed on one choice only; determination is needed for success; there are many careers within one field which can be chosen to match your interests and your qualifications.

The majority of students said they really enjoyed the day, and liked talking to the facilitators and learning about new career options; one or two mentioned that time was a bit limited.

The careers day is only possible because of the huge amount of voluntary support given on the day. We were really thankful to all the students and professionals who came and supported the event. A huge amount of advice, guidance encouragement and inspiration was shared and it was clear everyone really valued the experience. We are looking forward to holding a similar Careers Day again next April.

KESHO Careers Day 17th April, 2010

* Career representatives from:
KEMRI/Wellcome Trust Research Unit (37 staff in total)
Equity Bank
Barclays Bank
Kenya News Agency
Kilifi Rotary Club
Pwani University
Radio Rahma
Cornerstone Builders
Asembo Carpenters

* Event Organisers:
The Kesho Committee.
SEP, KEMRI/Wellcome Trust.

* Hosting Venue:
Upendo Methodist Women's Group



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