

FAWE News

The news magazine about the education of girls and women in Africa

Girls' Voices –



The life and times of African schoolgirls



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FAWE News is published quarterly by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) to report on the education of girls and women across sub-Saharan Africa.

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The Forum for African Women Educationalists is a pan-African non-government organization, founded in 1992, whose goal is to increase access, improve retention and enhance the quality of education for girls and women in Africa. FAWE's members are African women ministers of education, permanent secretaries and university vice chancellors who come together to wield their positions and influence in pursuit of FAWE's goal.

FAWE's mission is to work at continental, national and local levels, together with partners, to create positive

societal attitudes, policies and practices that promote equity for girls in terms of access, retention, performance and quality by influencing the transformation of education systems in Africa. To put the goal into operation, FAWE has facilitated the establishment of National Chapters in 33 countries across the continent.

FAWE's strategic direction for 2002-2006 calls for action in four key areas:

- Education policy
- Advocacy
- Demonstration interventions
- Replication and mainstreaming

Underpinning these is a renewed focus on capacity building at both regional and national levels. Particular attention is given to developing the skills of National Chapters to influence policy formulation, implementation and monitoring through advocacy, and to demonstrate what works. The ultimate aim is to influence governments to replicate and mainstream such best practices, with an overall emphasis, in line with Education For All goals, on action on the ground. FAWE is supported by a variety of agencies, foundations and other donor partners.

Editorial

Small Steps, Big Results

“**PENS AND PENCILS...**”, says one of our girls. Knowing she has the pens and pencils relaxes her mind and helps her concentrate on her studies. Such a small thing, but it is making a big difference in her life. These are small bits of FAWE’s broader goal of ensuring that girls have the opportunity to participate in quality education.

This issue of *FAWE News*, as is the custom this time of the year, presents the voices of FAWE’s girls. The girls have shared their feelings about school and family life and some of the cultural practices that may hinder – even terminate – their educational aspirations.

The girls write in poetry, short stories, letters and simple comments. They speak of joy and pain, challenges and triumphs, economic poverty but a richness of spirit. Some marvel at the opportunity they have been provided just to be going to school at all. The totality of their contributions paints a picture of a level of courage that many think African girls do not possess, and a gritty determination to succeed.

We salute these girls, and all the girls in FAWE programmes – and their sisters across the continent! The spirit portrayed here is the fundamental reason why it is so important to ensure the education of girls.

Prof. Penina Mlama
FAWE Executive Director



Prof. Penina Mlama
FAWE Executive Director

Point to Ponder

I most admire our school headmistress because of her braveness and how she saves girls who are in trouble, and has actually done the work that I thought no one would do.

Student at FAWE Centre of Excellence, Kajiado, Kenya

Family and Friends

My First Day at School

“Wake up! Wake up! You must be ready for school,” said Mother. It was a Tuesday morning in January 1995. My mother woke me up when I still wanted to sleep because the blankets were warm. I woke up and went to bathe. I was very proud to put on my new school uniform. My mother prepared my food. My mother took me to school and I was very excited to be in Grade 1D. That same day I met my friend Maceline who grew up with me. My teacher in Grade 1D was Mrs. Mutambaneshiri. She was very kind but she used to keep a long stick, which was about 30 cm. This is what happened to me on my first day at school.

Kudsai Muvengi, Zimbabwe

I like reading library books, which keeps me busy when I'm lonely. I like playing netball after class. This refreshes my mind after hard work in class. I like playing computer games also to refresh my mind. My hobbies are reading story books, playing computer games and working in the flowerbeds, and sometimes listening to gospel music. I also like giving advice to those girls who might have problems.

Agnes Ashire, Kenya

POEM: EDUCATING GIRLS

Woman, mother of humanity!
Woman, main pillar of the family!
Woman, counsel for humanity!
No development is possible without you
Humanity needs an educated woman
A woman capable of enlightening others
But girls and women, unfortunately
Have been victims of this plague: Illiteracy!
They have not had the opportunity to sit in the classroom.

Without woman, there is no life
Woman! You are vital to life
No development is possible without you
You, Oh woman!

Didn't humanity err
During the War
Weren't women occupying the same positions
as men do during peaceful times?
Without you, O woman, humanity could not
have attained

The current level of development!
Because whoever gets stuck in
War issues

Does not think about development
Woman, you are the icon of peace
Of tranquility, of love!
You deserve as much as the man
You deserve to go to school!

Women from the four corners of the world
Have to join hands to triumph against illiteracy
Don't they need freedom
Like any other citizen?

Woman get up! And move forward!
Be brave! Brave! FAWE!
Success awaits you!

Boubou Keita

Fily Dabo Sissoko High School, Mali

A SKIT ON SENDING GIRLS TO SCHOOL

Moussa, the wise old man, is enjoying the cool shade of a mango tree after a hard day's work. He's sipping a cup of tea with his friends. He suddenly says:

"Folks, I'm going to tell you the story of two villagers who were discussing the issue of sending girls to school. They were under a baobab tree, the place specially earmarked for debating life issues such as marriage and other current affairs."

Today, after working in the farm, they are now sitting under the famous baobab. They look less happy, a sign that the issue at hand is sticky. Suddenly, not before spitting out his "siramougou" to the ground to freshen his mouth.

Amara: Chaka, how was your day?

Chaka: Well, tiring as usual, you know we are the only ones to carry the family burdens.

Amara: You are absolutely right. Is there no way of alleviating this burden?

Chaka: What are you suggesting?

Amara: You know very well.

Chaka: It's about our women whose degree of freedom can be compared with the size of this tiny room where they must prove themselves; prove to their husbands that they are the best wives, the best cooks. Their daughters have to do the same.

Amara: What tiny room are you talking about? What do you mean?

Chaka: Don't be silly, my friend. You know as much as I do that our wives and our daughters know nothing but housework.

Amara: Do you know the daughter of the woodcutter, Fatou, almost killed her baby with an overdose of drugs?

Chaka: Allahou Akbar! But but what happened?

Amara: Excellent question: you know Fatou can't read or write, just like most of our girls in this village.

Chaka: So?

Amara: It's a problem that concerns all of us. Listen carefully: She made a mistake in administering the prescription. Her baby was rescued by a detoxicating therapy given by the doctors.

Chaka: My friend, now, I understand you. Let's not be selfish! Let's send our girls to school so that they may bring more light and tenderness; because when a woman fails, the entire humanity suffers: they should no longer languish in the shadows like their mothers.

Amara: But it's not too late for the mother: the issue is, they can enrol for evening classes.

Chaka: Nice thing. Let's talk about it starting tonight with the chief. We need to prepare our women and daughters for school.

Amara: Men too have to learn to read and write.

Song and dance

FAWE Club,

Fily Dabo Sissoko High School.

Girls' Education

Look at me! I say look at me!
You may think I went to school, but I didn't
The reason is because I'm a girl

I remember when I was young,
My father took all my brothers to school,
I told him, I wanted to go too
But he told me, girls don't go to school

These days, go to an office
You'll see what you would find,
A woman, who was once a girl,
And had her education well.

These days, girls are the big people in society,
all because of education,
But me, education is a dream
I only know how to write my name,
But sometimes, I write it wrongly,
Parents, take your girl-child to school,
For one day, she will help you,
Remember, education is the key to succeed.

Beatrice Umaka, Kenya

At School

THE PROBLEMS I encountered before FAWEZA started helping me were numerous. Firstly, my father died when I was in grade eight, that is, form three. This affected my education a lot because he was the only financial supporter I had. Hence, I was left with a lot of financial problems.

When I went to grade nine, in the first term, I reported back in school late because I had difficulties in raising the required school fees. Moreover, I did not even go to school with the full fees and I ended up having balances remaining.

But when this organization started taking care of my finances I benefited a lot because my education still continued. If it was not for the FAWEZA group, my education would have been cut off earlier. But I thank God for enabling this organization to help me.

I now have the courage to work harder just like any other friend of mine who is not orphaned. I now know that I will finish my education at this school because I am assured of people who will take care of me and this encourages me to work very hard in my studies in order not to waste this blessing for nothing.

Had it not been for help from FAWEZA, the future would have been bleak as I come from a not so well to do family where I cannot get help. I thank them so very much for this sacrifice.

Nchimunya Nganda, Zambia

The bursary has left me open minded and ready for my studies.



I AM A BENEFICIARY of FAWEZA bursary and I am doing my eleventh grade this year. I am the fourth born in a family of five and my mother is a widow. I really want to thank you for the support you are giving me because it was really difficult for my mother to find school fees for me. I appreciate the support you are giving me because I know that my door has been opened. Without your help I know I would have been out of school and just moving about in the streets without anyone to help me. But through your help, I am still in school and I thank you very much for that.

I have benefited a lot through the bursary because I am being helped for the payment of school fees which was the major problem for me. I am able to come to school on time when we open. I am also in the SAFE club which aims to sensitize people, especially pupils, on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. As a girl child, I have known the dangers of early pregnancy which hinders one's future plans and disturbs our studies. Through the SAFE club, I have also known the dangers of early marriages.

Hope Sichachani, Zambia

MUCH GREETING GOES TO FAWE blessing and continuously. Thanks a lot for the commendable job you have done in our school - which is empowering girls and being concerned about girl-child education.

For our school to become a Centre of Excellence it isn't a simple thing. Because all the physical, academic and social facilities have to be gender responsive. And you FAWE you have come in to provide us with a dormitory that is going to accommodate 40 girls. Also a bursary scheme to help the needy girls to ensure that they are retained in school has been established.

Since the coming of FAWE to our school in 2003, we have changed drastically in the mode of academic performance. We have set a reading culture, we have known our rights, also to speak freely about the problems we are facing in school and how to solve them.

We have come out of traditions such as early marriage and female circumcision, we have understood the danger of these vices since coming of FAWE. We are now building another new nation of action development.

We have started Tuseme clubs. Through these clubs we are able to organize ourselves so well. We are able to understand our problems, speak about them and we have learnt how to solve them. Through this club we have planted flowers in the compound which have blossomed and also trees making the compound look beautiful. We have also planted tomatoes, *sukuma wiki* [kale] and a nursery bed. Also we have started a Tuseme journalism club. Through it the teachers and students are able to know what is happening in the school.

I can't forget to thank you most for promising to put up another dormitory for girls and a sanitary block for boys. Last term, you took five girls and three boys to celebrate child day, after spending a few days there, we really got empowered.

In a nutshell, we shall continue to cherish all the assistance we are getting from FAWE. Live long FAWE

Muthoni Nkuraru, Form 3, Athwana Centre of Excellence, Kenya

I like reading because I think of what I want to be (a journalist). I must know how to read. My hobbies are playing basketball and making friends. I like going to school and playing with my friends.

MY NAME IS Mujawamaliya Liléane. I study at the FAWE Girls' school in Rwanda. I am 16 years old.

In a few words, I came here without the means to pay the fees because my mother is poor. I arrived at the school and they welcomed me. After several days our director came into our class. He asked if there were any students who did not have the means to pay. In the second trimester they began to pay the fees. Up to the present they pay for us without a problem. I truly thank FAWE Regional who does not cease to help us.

Thank you very much.
Liléane

I AM GOING TO TELL YOU my story and my joy after having received the bursary that came from FAWE Regional. Before having this chance I was afraid, and thought that one day the school would drive me away because of the fees, but my God helped me. The school gave us the forms to complete after I learned that FAWE Regional had chosen me among those who wanted help to pay the school expenses. I was very happy and I thank my God again, who gave me this chance to have the means to study without fees constraint.

Now I study without the problem of thinking about fees and the other materials that I need at school.

I conclude by again thanking FAWE Regional for all that it does for me.

Thank you and God bless you.

Mucyo Chantal, Rwanda

The subjects I prefer are mathematics, chemistry and physics. I would like to become a scientist.

POEM : MARTYR

I am a girl from my country
A girl from my village
Traditional girl.
Respectful of a culture
That testifies today
To my own destruction.

I am a girl from my village
A wreck of a schoolgirl
Forced into exile
Condemned to exploited
Immaturity. I am
A victim of forced marriage.

I am a girl from my village
Girl for bearing children
Stuffed with insipid and face-
tious lessons
Suffering from ignorance
Exposed to insecurity
Remorse from dropping out of
school
To sickness, to hatred.

I feel at this moment
Of my life
The sadness of dropping out of
school
Of forgetting the alphabet
Crudely learnt
In this crazy world

Where education rules supreme
And conditions human happi-
ness.

I am the child with a wounded
heart
Betrayed and subjugated
I am the uneducated girl suffer-
ing
The ultimate insult of not
knowing how to read, write and
count
As others benefit.

Alas! Family burdens
Good-bye School
Good-bye Light
Good bye my teacher -instructor
Alas! Dark destiny.
Alas! Strange life!
In me strife and desolation ripen
What sadness!
Only miserable episodes!
Only regrets!
Let me sink into my suffering
Let me weep with the Angel of
the shadows
Let me weep with my eyes
extinguished by worry
I have read the torment,
The torment of illiteracy
It is horrifying!
The abyss is enormous.

Prayers for my sisters
Illiterate sisters in my village
Whose future has been compro-
mised
May the dawn of Renewal finally
bring to you
The liberating and uplifting
message
Hearken the distress of my
tears!
Listen to me, because my voice
will never waver
Eternal heaven
Save my femalefolk
From ignorance and misery
May it stand up to affirm itself
May the school instruct finally!
The new girl!
Actor and facilitator of develop-
ment
Fighting and struggling
Never again, will others like me
In my village
In my country
Suffer from being born girls,
poor girls!

**Memoirs of a young country
girl.**
BASSA GOUNDOUROU
Massam Makan Diabat High
School - LL1 (2003-2004)



Sometimes I find math hard. This is because when I calculate the sum I get all the answers in the choices and wonder whether to choose A or B.

WHEN I WAS 12 YEARS OLD, my dad tried to marry me off to a boy who was younger than me and in a class behind me. I said no and he chased me away. I run to my auntie where I stayed for one year. During this time, my uncle was circumcising his daughters and he decided I would be included in the circumcision. I had already decided I would not be circumcised and my mum knew about it. Closer to the day of the circumcision, my aunties came for me to join the other girls but I managed to escape. I ran away to another auntie who lived far.

Once a girl is circumcised, she becomes a woman ready for marriage and she is immediately given away for marriage. I did not want this to happen to me. When I was at my auntie's house, I covered my head to hide my identity so that people could not recognise me. I had not told anyone, not even my mother, where I was. While here, I met some girls who were already attending school and I explained to them my problem. They took me to the school where they were attending and tried to ask the teacher to admit me in school. However, the school was full and she said I had to come another day.

But the girls told her I had a special problem and she agreed to listen to me. I explained my problem and she allowed me to stay in the school. Later this year, she brought me to my current school, which has a programme for rescued girls. I'm happy here because girls are taken care of. Although I feel lonely when other girls are going home during holidays, I always remind myself that I have to persevere if I want to succeed in life. I have learnt to be patient and I work hard to make progress in my education. My mother knows I'm here and she has visited me. I would like to become a lawyer when I complete studies.

Yvonne Kakenya, 17, Kenya

What It Means to Be Empowered

Girls

Girls, girls
You are not always there for boys
So remember one thing
You must have "good manners"
Because nowadays
There is a killer
"AIDS"

Boys are liars
Girls, girls
You do good things
You help your mothers and
Grandmothers

Girls don't play with boys
Boys are very very dangerous
Because they can make you pregnant
Where would you go?

Margret Ndumo, Zimbabwe



Mother

Mother, mother
You are very special to me
You do what your child wants
You breast-fed me
I am proud of you.

Mother you teach
Me good manners
You send me to school
With your own money
I am proud of you.

I am lucky to have you
Some children have no mothers
You give me things that I need
I am proud of you.

*Chido Ndoro,
Zimbabwe*

I WAS BORN IN A VERY POOR FAMILY

and my father couldn't afford to take us to school. So he decided to marry us off, with my older sister, to the same man. Me and my sister decided to reject the marriage and we ran away from home. We had heard of a woman who rescued girls from forced marriage. So we went asking everyone we met on the way where we could find this woman. Eventually, we found her and we explained our problem to her. She allowed us to stay in her school and we started learning. We had carried nothing from home and I had to borrow things from other girls in the school. Many of them were very kind and they assisted us. I like the people in my school because they are very encouraging and helpful especially in studies. My favourite subjects are English and Mathematics.

My mother was fearful of what might happen to her and us at first because of what we had done. She was often blamed for our action. But today she is very proud of me because I do very well in school and many people admire her for having a daughter like me.

Black

I was borne by a black mother
In a black, dark room
Full of black people.
I went to a black school
Full of black pupils
Wearing my black uniform
On my black skin.
A black teacher taught me
Writing on a blackboard.
All I did was black
But I am very proud to be a black
person.

*Dorcas Goredema, Zimbabwe,
Founder member of
Young Writers' Club*

ONE DAY, MY MOTHER told me I was going to work as a house girl for someone. I did not know what it meant to be a house girl. She took me to a high school teacher far from home, where I was to start work. After working for him for a time, the teacher tried to rape me, and I ran away from his house. I met a woman and explained to her my problem and she reported the matter to the police. Many women came to talk to me when they heard the story. They took me to AIC Girls, Kajiado, where I was welcomed and given a chance to learn. I'm now in class 8 and I like my school very much. My mom is now a different person. She loves me and appreciates the education I'm getting.

Margaret Kabirithu, 18, Kenya

Without
FAWE I
wouldn't
be in
school
because of
lack of
school fees
and my
desire is to
help
others if
God wishes
and I
complete
my
studies.

MY SISTER AND I were to be given out by our dad to work for another family but mom rescued us and took us to school. I told my mom I did not want to be circumcised because girls should not be circumcised. I feel it is bad to give out girls to adults because they are forced to do a lot of work like grown ups when they are still young. Girls should be allowed to learn and make their own choices in life. I like science and mathematics and I lead in my class.

Sopiato Teya, 11, Kenya

AIDS

Fear and tears is what you have brought to Africa
Who would have known that you would come
In such a destructive manner?
All is not well in our country now
Smiles have faded and tears have taken their place.

Unity among families now is history
Death is now our staple food
Why are you doing so much harm to our world?
Haven't you got mercy on the children of Africa?

You chose to come through many ways
And up to now we have no cure for you
But I'm telling you, one day we will find
A cure and you'll be gone once and for all
We will not lose hope.

Audrey Dzvairo, Grade 7A, Zimbabwe

I should avoid drug
abuse and abstain
from sex to avoid
HIV/AIDS.

Gloria, 12

I should say no to sex and shout
for help if I am forced to have
sex and send someone to report
to my parents.

Christine, 11

I have been taught how
to behave as a girl to
avoid being raped and
how to prevent abortion
by avoiding teenage sex.
Gladys, 14

I have learned I
should abstain
from sex because
of STDs and HIV/
AIDS. I learned
that I should tell
other children to
abstain from sex so
that we may all be
healthy and stop
HIV/AIDS.

Angela, 12

Sugar Daddies

Sugar daddies are old men who have money and drive expensive cars. These men have their own families, but they attract teenage girls with their money and cars that do not actually belong to them. Most of these cars are company cars.

A sugar daddy buys you gifts like chocolates, deodorants, flowers and even takes you out to lunch everyday while his children starve to death. Girls, let us not be attracted by these old men who are old enough to be our fathers. These old men are after our bodies, using us for their sexual desires and then spitting us out like bubblegum, once it loses its flavour and sweetness. When they get you pregnant, they tell you they have their own families to look after, having told you before that they would take care of you.

Having an affair with a sugar daddy is a very bad thing to do because you will probably get pregnant, get AIDS or both. BE WISE AND STAY AWAY FROM SUGAR DADDIES.

Patience Parato, Zimbabwe

I HAVE LEARNED that girls should not take drugs, which sometimes leads them to engage in sex and they can get HIV/AIDS. If I am raped, I should report to the police or any other reliable adult. If a girl gets pregnant, she should not abort because it can kill her and she will suffer because she will not see her baby. I should avoid affairs with boys because it can lead to pregnancy that will affect my body and education, and I may lose my friends when I get pregnant because they will avoid me.

Winnie Wanjiku, 14, Kenya

I should help to prevent teenage sex, avoid rape spots, dress well, and avoid walking in the night.

Yvonne, 11, Kenya

I should protect myself from HIV/AIDS by avoiding sex.
Dorothy, 10

I AM A PEER COUNSELLOR in the HIV/AIDS Tuseme Club in my school. Many times I am called to make a presentation in a workshop or to speak to girls and boys about HIV/AIDS. For this, I have to prepare my notes well and make a booklet on what I want to speak about. I use magazines, books and Tuseme information sheets, and consult adults when preparing my work for presentation.

I find peer counselling fun. When I had to give a lecture to class 5 on HIV/AIDS, the pupils were very active and they asked many questions. In my lectures, I always tell the young people to abstain from sex to avoid HIV/AIDS. I remind them to stop drug abuse because it leads them to make wrong choices in life. I encourage them to report any cases of rape or forced sex to an official or adult so that they can get help. I have noted that since the Tuseme Club started its work in our area, there has been visible behaviour change among young people. I usually keep track of HIV/AIDS prevalence in our area and I know when the numbers of those infected or affected is going down. I keep statistics of the numbers of infected people. I would like to continue lecturing more on HIV/AIDS in many places. I will work hard to succeed in my education because I want to become a doctor or an accountant.

Gloria Ngumi, 12, Kenya

My Grandmother

My grandmother is very old, but still so lovely. No one really knows how old she is. She must be about ninety-one years old. She tells some interesting stories and we enjoy listening to them. We like talking to her. I think she was very beautiful during her young age because her eyes still twinkle when she talks. Now she is old and she has wrinkles on her face and hands. She always tells us that everything has changed.

She likes to eat while sitting with her legs crossed. She tells us that all her grandchildren should come and stay with her during the holidays. Her sister looks after her during the school days but will be away during the holidays so there will be no one to look after her. My grandmother walks slowly and talks slowly with a deep voice. She walks with a walking stick. She is so old that she cannot do any work for herself.

Thandiwe Hoyi, Zimbabwe

Hopes and Dreams

I want to be a doctor because I can help my people by treating them well.

I AM AN ORPHAN and I used to have many problems with studies. Life was very difficult! When I passed the primary leaving exam with good marks I wasn't happy because I was worried about school fees. I was admitted to FAWE Girls School where I started Senior One. I reported with hardly any of the requirements.

At FAWE, they didn't expel me from school. I had my problems. But one day I was told that FAWE Regional had decided to pay for me. I felt extremely happy.

Since then I have been doing well in class and I am ready to achieve my goal. FAWE regional, your love challenges me and I promise never to let you down. God bless you.



Uwreye Annet, Rwanda

I will do my best in studying and I will try to help those who are helpless, mainly those who aren't able to sponsor themselves. If I have finished my studies I will give advice to the girls who don't want to study. That is my mission.

Sanyu Florance, Rwanda

When I finish my schooling and get a job I'd love to be by myself. When I get my own job I think I will enjoy staying alone, but I will still want to be helping others.

I would like to go to a country called the UK because I would like to attend the University of Oxford.

I ATTENDED A SMALL VILLAGE SCHOOL where my father paid school fees until he couldn't afford any more. Many times I missed class and was behind in learning. Eventually, I was withdrawn from school and circumcised. Soon after, my father organized for me to be married. I put up a fight against it and told him I did not want to get married but to continue with school. I explained to him I would look for the school fees myself, although he thought I was talking nonsense.

Five days to the marriage, I ran away from home. I moved from one town to another until late in the evening, when a woman offered me accommodation in her house. The following day, she took me to the chief's office. The chief bought me a school uniform and took me to a school. Our culture is very bad because girls are married at a young age. My twin sister and the younger sister who follows me are already given away for marriage. I call upon my people to stop marrying young girls and let them go to school instead.

Sophia Toti, 14, Kenya

My role model is Professor Mlama because just as she helped us to go through school I also want to help other girls, and to fight for them to go to school as I did.

I would like to go to South Africa to see how gold is mined.

I want to be a lawyer to help my community and also to be an example to be followed for the whole community.

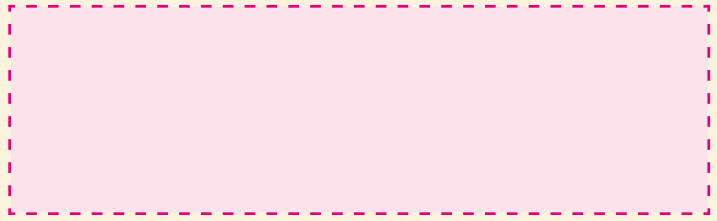
Because these days no one can do anything without education and the girls are still backwards, I would like to continue, and others too, as they have helped us. We will also help others when we have completed school. Thanks.

Uwamwezi Doreen, Rwanda

When I finish school I want to be an engineer because since childhood I've always been interested in electronic machines and how they work.

I WORK HARD AT SCHOOL and then I am encouraging other girls to study hard to help those who are helpless. Fawe aids me a lot in provision of books, pens, school fees and other necessities. Without Fawe I wouldn't be in school because of lack of school fees and my desire is to help others if God wishes and I complete my studies. Thanks.

Uwangabe Sylvia, Rwanda



**I HAVE BEEN SO LUCKY TO
BE AMONG THE GIRLS WHO
HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY
FAWE.**

It has played a big role in promoting my academic performance, and that is essential in promoting girls education and I think it is very courageous and interesting. The subjects I treasure most are biology, chemistry, history, geography and also English/literature.

I will try my level best to study hard in order to achieve my goal through this chance. I will also try to improve my fellow girls' education by helping them to understand what they don't and being a model for the others. Thanks.

***Mutesi Allen,
Rwanda***

POEM: FAWE-MALI

Tribute to FAWE-MALI

Nairobi 1992

Bellagio 1992

Bamako 2004

FAWE-MALI

What were the gains?

A return to equality sought after

In girls' education.

Maybe, among the pupils of Niamakoro Children's Hostel

A will that I know not of

Would have heard my appeal and would have understood me.

Girls' education

In Science and technology courses

It's great

It's fantastic.

Advocacy and sensitization

Training and Mobilization

FAWE-MALI

Forum for African Women Educationalists

I salute your fight

I understand your claim

Dream is a second life.

I want to realize it for the young girls of this world

The freedom of speech

The right to professional mobility

The right to progress.

The whispers of my heart find expression in my pen

I will walk this path

A path

A nation.

I always contemplate this benefit that I never enjoyed

FAWE-MALI

This is my testimony

This is my message.

Bamako Technical School

www.fawe.org

