



# AWEF

AFRICAN  
WOMEN'S  
EDUCATION  
FUND  
JUNE, 2026

## Spotlight on OUR INCREDIBLE STUDENTS

*Your donations change women's lives in poverty-stricken areas. Our students express their gratitude often. Below is a letter from Ashley.*

Dear AWEF,

MY NAME IS ASHLEY WASILWA. I was born and grew up in the Mukuru slum. My mother passed on and left us seven children with my father. Mukuru slum is a place where life teaches you to be strong before it teaches you to dream. Our house was a single small room made of iron sheets, and in that room lived my father, my six siblings, and me. Every day was a calculation: what can we do today so that we can eat tonight?

After we finished Class Eight, my sister and I were sure our school journey had ended. We had passed our exams, yes, but passing does not pay school fees. My father had no steady work. Secondary school felt like something meant for other children, not for girls from Mukuru. So we did what we had to do. Some mornings, before the sun was fully up, I would walk to the nearby estate to wash clothes for Somali women who lived there. It was hard work, and sometimes my hands would ache, but that money meant food for my family, at least for that day. On one of those mornings, as I was walking with a bucket balanced in my hands, my life changed.



**Me and My Sister with AWEF representative when he visited our school.**

That was the day Elizabeth crossed my path.

She was a social worker with the Mamma Africa School, and she stopped me and asked why I was not in school. I remember feeling shy and tired as I explained that my sister and I had finished Class Eight, but there was no money for secondary school. I told her about our family, about the washing jobs, about how we were just trying to survive.

Elizabeth listened, really listened. Then she said something I had not heard in a long time: "Let me try to help." She promised to present our case to Fr. David, who helps distribute funds to students for education through AWEF. I did not want to hope too much, because in Mukuru, hope can hurt when it breaks. But a few days later, the mes-

sage came: my sister and I were going to be enrolled under AWEF sponsorship at Mamma Africa Secondary School.

I remember the day clearly. We looked at each other and laughed, then cried, then laughed again. It felt unreal. Two girls from Mukuru, going to secondary school—not because our parents suddenly had money, but because someone had believed our story was worth listening to. Later, Fr. David and a group from the USA even visited our home in the slum. I was embarrassed by how small and poor it was, but they did not look at us with pity. They looked at us with respect and encouragement. For the first time, I felt that my background did not disqualify me from having a future. Mamma Africa became more than a school to me. It became a place where my dreams started to take shape. The journey was not easy, but step by step, year by year, I kept going.

Today, I am in university, pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies.

When I look back at that girl walking to wash clothes so her family could eat, I realize how close I was to a very different life. And when I look forward, I know that my story is not just about me it is about what can happen when one person stops, listens, and decides to help.

Because of kindness, courage, and opportunity, my story did not end at Class Eight. It truly began there.

*God Bless You All. I will ever remain indebted to you all. - Ashley Wasilwa*

## Save the Date for our next Fundraiser

Stay tuned to our website at [www.awef.org](http://www.awef.org) for new and exciting fundraisers that are sure to intrigue and delight both our existing friends and new supporters!

