

### **A heartfelt thank you to Born in Africa and my sponsors:**

As I come to the end of my journey as a sponsored student through the Born in Africa program, my heart is full of gratitude, reflection and hope. Looking back over the past 16 years, I am overwhelmed by the unwavering support, encouragement and belief that Born in Africa and my sponsors have shown me. You have not only helped shape the person I am today but also opened doors that once felt firmly closed.

### **Words of thanks:**

To the Born in Africa team and to my generous sponsors: THANK YOU for investing in my life. Thank you for believing in a young child from a small community, for choosing to walk alongside me and for never giving up even when I was uncertain or doubting myself. Your kindness has been more than financial support; it has been emotional, spiritual and motivational. You saw potential in me when I was still discovering it for myself, and that is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Born in Africa has been so much more than a sponsorship – it has been a family. The staff, volunteers and mentors I have met along the way have all played a significant role in helping me become confident, grounded and purpose driven. You have not just helped me succeed – you have helped me grow.

### **Highlights from my journey:**

My journey with Born in Africa began when I was just a little child with dreams far bigger than my circumstances. I still remember my first school uniform, the stationery that made me feel like I truly belonged in class, and the home visits that reminded me someone cared. Over the years, this support became the foundation that allowed me to dream even bigger.

From primary school through high school and beyond, you were there – cheering me on at every stage. I took part in enrichment programs, received career guidance, and was supported with tutoring and mentorship. The outings, camps, and workshops not only helped me academically but also helped me grow as a person. They taught me about teamwork, leadership, and resilience.

Some of the highlights I will never forget include the educational trips that broadened my horizons and the annual end-of-year celebrations that reminded us all how far we

had come. The sense of community created by Born in Africa has been one of the greatest gifts in my life.

**Reflections on my growth and achievements:**

When I look back, I do not just see a student making it through school – I see a person who has been nurtured, shaped, and uplifted by the love and support of others. I have grown into someone who believes in themselves, who is not afraid to pursue goals, and who has learned the value of giving back.

Through the highs and the lows, I have learned perseverance. I have achieved academic success, overcome personal struggles, and developed a deep sense of purpose and gratitude. Born in Africa helped me see that I was capable of achieving more than I ever thought possible. I have not just grown intellectually, but emotionally and morally. I have learned kindness, responsibility, and the importance of being a role model to others.

**My hopes and goals for the future:**

As I prepare to enter the next chapter of my life, I carry with me everything Born in Africa has taught me. My dream is to excel in my career that not only fulfills me but allows me to make a difference in the lives of others – just as you made a difference in mine.

Whether it is through teaching, I want to give back to my community. I want to become someone who sees potential in young people and helps them believe in themselves the way you believed in me. My goal is to continue learning, growing, and walking a path of service and gratitude.

One day, I hope to sponsor a child myself. I want to be for someone else what you were for me—a light, a guide, and a reason to keep going.

**In closing:**

Sixteen years is a long time—but you stayed. You walked every step of the journey with me, and now, as I prepare to take flight on my own, I do so with confidence, humility, and deep appreciation.

From the bottom of my heart: **thank you, Born in Africa**. Thank you to my sponsors. Thank you for changing my life, and for reminding me that kindness, belief, and opportunity can truly transform the future.

With many thanks and love,

**Ragne Cloete**