

At the age of 13, when I had just moved to Plettenberg bay and to a new school, I was just a little girl with big dreams who didn't worry on how she will achieve them but knew that she will get there.

My journey with Born in Africa began when one of the volunteers asked me what I wanted to be one day when I grow up; with some much bravery I looked at him and said "When I grow I want to be the minister of education". That I believe had the other born in Africa members (which included Isabella and her dad) to gather around me and hear my story, there were probably intrigued by my dreams. Little did I know that this was going to be the beginning of a long fruitful journey?

Having been raised by a single mom of two kids then, there was little my mom could do for us. She saw the potential I had but could not afford to take me to one of the best high schools in town. It was through the help of my primary school principal and my best friend's dad Mr Quick fall that I came to know about Born in Africa. He introduced me to them and after hearing of my dreams decided to sponsor my education.

I was taken to one of the best High schools called Wittedrift High school and Born in Africa funded everything from my books, uniform, school fees, bus fare and many more things I needed. I was at the time assigned to my God parents Luc and Agnes whom always made sure I had what I needed. They would send me money to buy clothes and birthday gifts. I regularly kept them informed about my progress at school by writing to them and by sending pictures of myself.

I was also assigned with a mentor through my High school years (Joyce at the time) who was always there to talk whenever I needed help and would advise me on issues I struggled with. She would monitor my progress, check up on me, do house visits, motivate me when I seemed to be losing focus and was always there to support me.

I also enjoyed the activities we got to do with the other born in Africa kids such as camps, beach outings, swimming lessons etc. this gave me a chance to meet the other kids in the program and have fun. It was a balance between them supporting me financially but also ensuring I have fun and get to bond with other kids.

I was never in need of anything as born in Africa provided me with anything I would ask. There was a time I struggled with a subject in school and they were able to assist me in getting a tutor to help me.

When I finished High school, Born in Africa was still willing to fund my further studies. They helped me apply to a few institutions and eventually I got accepted at the TSiBA Eden campus to study towards a bachelor's degree in Business administration.

I had the privilege of meeting my Godparents on a few occasions over the years. They would take time off and spend their vacation with me. The laptop I use to this day was one of the many gifts they got me. It helped me a lot through my College years in doing assignments.

I also had the privilege of documenting (in a short video) my journey with Born in Africa for their 10th birthday celebration. It was such wonderful and fun experiences to be able reflect and share of how far Born in Africa brought me. It also gave me the courage to share my story with other young people through motivation speeches in schools of how BIA had contributed to my dreams and they too could make their dreams come true through hard work and determination.

For the past 4 years I have been in Cape Town finishing my studies. BIA ensured that they find me well suited accommodation and funded my rent, food and school fees. I never once again was in need of anything as they always provided when they can. My circle of Godparents at this time had

grown because my cost of studies and accommodation was much higher, and I am truly grateful that they supported me throughout.

I also was able to do my learners license and license through the help of my God parents and even if I did not get the license itself I was grateful I got to learn how to drive

Belinda who became my mentor and a big sister to me over my tertiary school years was always a phone call away for anything I needed, she regularly checked in with me and requested that I give her feedback from time to time about my progress.

I am now done with my studies and will be graduating in August, my final results earned me a post in the merit list because I worked hard not only for myself but for the people that made it possible for me to be where I am today. I remember that during all my exam periods I will always remind myself that I am doing this for my family, myself and for BIA.

I am currently working at Allan Gray and grateful to have gotten a job straight out of varsity, not many of our young people have this opportunity and the few that get it have to make sure they work every hard to be successful.

I do not however believe that my journey with BIA has come to an end; I look at it as the beginning of another chapter. I now have the opportunity to give back and become a mentor another BIA student like myself. I also still want to be a motivational speaker and speak to the young women and men out there and tell them of my story.

Throughout my journey with Born in Africa I have come to learn to be grateful, even for the little you have. To also be grateful for the people that walk this journey of life with you, Born in Africa saw potential in me when I was a child and believed in my dreams. They invested so much in me and would always push me to try harder. There is nothing more motivating in life than having people who believe in yourself at times better than you believe in yourself.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people:

Isabelle: for the phenomenon woman that you are. You started this whole initiative and have made so many people's dream come true. I can't ever thank you enough, but can only hope that our successes will be fulfilling to you. You inspire to wanting to do the same one day and keep you legacy alive. I hope I have made you proud. Thank you for the funds you continue to rise in making our dreams come true.

Belinda: For the shoulder to cry on, the time you spent listening to me for putting up with me when I became troublesome. You are a big sister in so many ways and a mom sometimes. Thank you for always making me believe in myself and advice.

Godparents: Although I rarely got to see you all. I am blessed enough to have had people who thought of me and wanted nothing but the best for me. Today I hope and pray I have made you all proud with what I have achieved. I intend on keeping you guys update still about my future successes in life because you guys are the foundation of what is and what is to come. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart and wish you and your families many more blessings.

Born In Africa: Thank you! I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE.