

# Ayiesa's Story

“Rafiki Thabo has really transformed my life. I am the first person in my mother’s whole extended family with a degree... This has made me gain my respect. I am no longer the fatherless boy the community used to see.”

Born out of wedlock, as a child Ayiesa was stigmatised within his community. Living with his grandmother so that his mother could work, he struggled with malnutrition. Aged six, Ayiesa’s eagerness to learn led him to a primary school, where initially he was only allowed to listen as he could not pay the school fees.

Despite taking on various jobs to fund his secondary education, Ayiesa was forced to stop going to school when money ran out, continuing to study by himself at home, and passing all his exams without attending classes. Later he worked as a garbage collector to fund a 3-year diploma course in Accountancy.



Despite his hard work, Ayiesa was denied a loan to pay for his university course. The Rafiki Thabo Foundation heard of Ayiesa’s situation, and decided to give him the support he needed to succeed.

As a Rafiki Scholar, Ayiesa graduated from KCA University in Kenya with a degree in Business in November 2013.

In the six years since his graduation, Ayiesa has...

- Become **Internal Auditor** at the Kenya Institute of Special Education
- Set up **three businesses**: a honey and peanut butter processing business which he runs with his wife, a beauty salon set up to provide a job for his brother, and a women’s hostel
- Supported his mother-in-law's **therapy centre** for children with cerebral palsy
- Become a proud **husband and father**
- Founded the **Kenya Rafiki Alumni group**, giving motivational talks to young people about the importance of education

