

My Secondary School experiences in Zaria

When I first came to Zaria, everything was totally different from the village. I came in contact with different kinds of people from various states, and their behaviour is different from village customs, including their way of life. Zaria is a civilized place, and it is exposed to different kinds of things. There are amenities like electricity, good roads, hospitals, good houses and good markets, where you can go and entertain yourself without any disturbance. But the way people live their life here is terrible, because everybody has his or her life to live, and no one cares about anyone. They live their life the way they want it and never care about anything else. Though city life can be good, if you are not careful enough, you will lose your life. People communicate with one another freely, and they use English language, while in the village it's not like that. I came to realise that the way people dress in the city is quite different from the village. The manner of dressing in Zaria also depicts the foreign influence people are exposed to through television programmes and movies. To make the situation worse, parents cannot discipline their children because they are afraid their children could rise against them.

When it comes to schooling, St. Bartholomew's is quite different from Najude Pioneer School in the village. Teachers at St. Bartholomew's are too lazy, even to the extent that students are the ones to mark their fellow students' homework and exams. There's a saying that goes „opportunity comes but once“, so those students that are marking will use that opportunity to increase marks for themselves so that they will pass. While in the case of the principal, his concern is just to relax and wait for the end of the month. Even to monitor the performance of the students and to mark and register the exam results is a big problem for him and the teachers. During these past two years in school, I encountered so many things. When I came to boarding school, the first day everything was different. I met new faces and I was very shy. After that, when things were going on, I became used to the system there. Life in the hostel is terrible, and if you are not wise enough you are finished. There was a time we the junior students were deprived of our rights to speak: We were not allowed to speak if our senior students were talking to us. Stealing is a normal thing, students refer to it as „tapping“ or „shifting“. You will be on your bed, and someone will just come and carry your pillow or your blanket. They can also forcefully open your locker and carry whatever they want.

Concerning the issue of examination malpractice, some students read hard while some do not because they depend on exam malpractice. Examination malpractice consistently remains one of the biggest problems of Nigeria's educational system. No wonder the academic certificates being issued to graduates in Nigeria are worth nothing more than the sheet of paper they are printed on. Furthermore, in addition to examination malpractice, bribery and corruption make the situation even worse. Some students find their talents and skills replaced by a lack of confidence and low self esteem. Being confident makes us to be bold. Like me in school, books give me every possible information about ourselves and about our surrounding.

For me, when it comes to the aspect of academic quality, NPS is better than the schools in the city, because the students in Najude Pioneer School are exposed to a very conducive and supportive learning environment. Students are more hard working and because everybody takes learning serious, they perform better in exams, and without exam malpractice. In NPS, we were also exposed to quality teachers who are dedicated to their work and industrious in teaching. But at St. Bartholomew's school, teachers are not hard working and they are not submissive to their work as teachers. After exams, instead of marking them by themselves, they usually employ students to mark it for them. In NPS, it is not done that way. In fact there, students don't have the right to enter into the staff room at ordinary times, not to speak of the exam period, when teachers are busy piling results. At St. Barth's however, it's a normal thing, and the Headmaster and Principal are even too lazy to check students' results if there is any mistake. In NPS, the Principal is trying her best to see that there is no complaint from the students when it comes to their exam marks and their results. The principal finds time to mark and cross check all the results, in order to see that everything is done properly. But at St. Barth's, all the teachers care for is their salary, even if they don't work.

My plan after my secondary school is to study law because that has been my dream. I also like to do my military course at NDA Kaduna. Lastly, I would like to use this opportunity to recognise all of our Swiss sponsors and expressing my words of gratitude to those who made this great effort towards my studies. I pray that God will continue to bless you and grant your various dreams and wishes. I hope to see all of you one day. I also want to use these opportunity to appreciate uncle Linus, who also helped me in different ways since my primary school to my last year in secondary school here. I appreciate the passion with which he cared for me for he is truly a father at heart. I wish to also thank the Principal and the entire teachers at Najude Pioneer School for their love and encouragement throughout my studies and also my fellow students: Thank you all for your support.