

Friends, I am privileged to be here today; standing on a place I have never been to in my life. For this, I appreciate the power of the mighty God, the doors of education and the connection of my friends from **Radio Milambo FM 108.3**.

My name is **Okunya Milton K**, today I wish to hail the many women in my life for their special contribution in making me what I am today. My subject today is **WOMEN, SEEK YE FIRST**...I am aware of the special challenges facing my young sisters here today and my daughters in all classes from One to Eight in this school and indeed everywhere else in this region.

My dear mothers, I know the battles you fight daily: the dilemma to take my sisters and my daughters here to school when the family resources are so thin that you are tempted to keep them for the boy - boy whom your people consider to be a pillar, *wuoyi siro* as some say!

My dear mothers, I know the never ending arguments some of you hold with my fathers and your husbands on why my sisters and daughters here should continue going to school at puberty when the beckoning call of suitors, *joroye* is irresistible to my fathers and brothers!

My dear mothers, I know the ridicule you endure when my sisters and daughters get pregnant soon after puberty when you are equally heavy and the painful words of your neighbours!

My sisters and daughters here today, I know the pressures you face walking to school early in the morning when others are a sleep and meeting boys your age either escorting or having escorted girls your age after their night orgies,

My dear sisters and daughters here today, I know the pressures you face when you wish to study with that tiny oil lamp on a rickety table but you have cook for the family, the exhaustion to bear, of course, after a trip to the river to collect water and then collect vegetables for the family supper,

My dear sisters and daughters here today, I know what you feel when you have gone to sleep very tired yet you cannot sleep because your admirers, *jo ongora* are knocking ready to drag you to that night dance- *disco matanga!*

My mothers and sisters present here today and elsewhere in this region, I wish to encourage you and to inspire you to persevere in the pursuit of education, you will reap one day. **Seek education first**... you will reap handsomely some day!

If you would choose to engage in **agriculture and farming**, as an educated woman your production will likely to be **ten times better** than one who is not,

Seek education first... as an educated woman, you will **enjoy better health** than one who is not because you would more likely **make better decisions on hygiene** than one who is not,

Seek education first...as an educated woman, you will have **a smaller and planned family** that would more likely be **better provided for** than one, who is not,

Seek education first... as an educated woman, you are likely to **enjoy better income and for a longer time** than one who is not,

Seek education first...as an educated woman you are likely to **enjoy a higher life expectancy** than one who is not,

Seek education first... as an educated woman you are more **likely able to have a say in choosing your marriage partner**-a husband and therefore you can rely on your values than one who is not!

Persevere my mothers; we will one day hail you,

Persevere my daughters and sisters, society will one day hail you,

I now hail these wonderful women in my life:

That woman, who chose to keep me in her womb for nine months when it could have a lot easier to abort me, bore me in pain and even gave me a name!

That trio of women who taught me in nursery school and opened my mind for lifelong education, bearing with my ignorance believing that I too had a future through education!

That woman who defied my father and insisted I go to high school and believed I had a better future with an academic education than thrashing into the vocation and apprenticeships without sufficient education!

That woman who stood behind me as I knelt before **Rev Otiang'** being christened at **St Peters ACK Ramba** and sowing in me the seed of Christianity which has borne some fruit somehow!

That woman who welcomed me empty handed but still believed I could marry her daughter even though the chasm in our socio-economic backgrounds was so wide!

That woman who today and for as long as I cannot remember has bought clothes until today I cannot even tell what size of trousers I put on and even decided what I have on today!

My fathers and brothers here today and elsewhere in this region, it makes sense to support the education of your daughters and our sisters,

My fathers and brothers here today and elsewhere in this region, it makes sense for you to facilitate the education of your daughters and our sisters,

My fathers and brothers here today and elsewhere in this region, it makes sense to be stimulants for the education of your daughters and our sisters,

My fathers and brothers here today and elsewhere in this region, you stand to gain and gain more from the education of your daughters and our sisters!

Finally women, **SEEK YE FIRST... Hon Martha Karua** did it...have we not seen the results...?

Women, seek ye first...**Hon Danitta Ghati** did it...have we not seen the results...?

Women, seek ye first...**Hon Merezza** did it...have we not seen the results...?

Women, seek ye first...**Dr Olympia Okal** did it...have we not seen the results...?

Women, seek ye first...**Madam Anne Oloo** did it...have we not seen the results...?

***Ka nyako osomo gima ber ahinya Anyango aluori nyar Kendu...!***

Thank you and may God bless you all!