

## **Ronald Kasendwa - Namilyango College**

My names are Ronald Kasendwa but my friends call me Ronkas. I am an S6 student of Namilyango College offering PEM/A (Physics, Economics, Maths and Fine Art). I joined Namilyango College in 2007 from St. Henry's College Kitovu. I am currently the chairperson school *Computer and ICT* club and the School coordinator for the Mtandao-Afrika website designing challenge.

Having some connection with SchoolNet Uganda, I was lucky to grow up not looking at a computer and other ICT gadgets as monsters as many other students do. At St. Henry's College Kitovu, I learned Word Processing and PowerPoint Presentations in S1 and S2. I was not able to develop my ICT skills to the level I wanted because we had limited hands-on activities. During holidays, I used to pass by the SchoolNet Uganda offices and taught my self the Internet and some other few applications and luckily people at SchoolNet Uganda were welcoming.

In my S4 at St. Henry's Kitovu, I joined a project call Open Knowledge Network (OKN) which was introduced in the school by SchoolNet Uganda. As part of the OKN project, the school used to take us for study field visits to places and events like eye cataract operation, commercial farming, commercial wood sculptor etc. After the study trips, members of OKN would write field trip reports/articles which would then be disseminated through school assemblies, parades and the OKN notice board.

I remember writing an article about wood sculpturing which was put on the OKN notice board for almost a full month. It really made me a school celebrity. My participation in the OKN project greatly improved my interviewing and report making skills.

During my S4 vacation, I tried to participate in Mtandao-Afrika website design contest (<http://www.mtandao-afrika.org> ). Mtandao- Afrika is an Internet challenge where African youth form teams having members from different African countries to build educational websites. Unfortunately, I did not complete because I failed to get team members from other African countries. I did not despair or loose interest but instead, I settled down to learn some programming so that I could participate in future Mtandao-Afrika competitions.

With the software I got from SchoolNet Uganda, I taught myself how to use applications like Macromedia Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Adobe Photoshop and Image Ready. I also learnt programming languages like VisualBasic, PHP-MySQL, XHTML and CSS without going to a computer school!

I also had a chance of working briefly as a student Intern at SchoolNet Technical Service/ Refurbishment centre located at plot 83, Tufnel Drive in Kamwokya, Kampala. The centre imports refurbished computers, checks them for faults, and does Operating System and application software installation before selling the

computers at affordable prices to schools and individual teachers. The work at this centre is done by student Interns under the supervision of SchoolNet Uganda Technical Director, Mrs. Allen Nansubuga Ssebandeke.

It is at this centre, that I learned computer assembling and disassembling, troubleshooting and made my first Operating System and application software installation. I had a real hands-on experience with the computers, something I had longed to do. SchoolNet Uganda had made my dream become true. This was the best experience in my life; I developed technical skills and confidence in software installation and troubleshooting. Right now I can't take my computer to anybody for repair but have been paid on a number of occasions for repairing other people's computers. I feel proud and thankful of the technical skills, I acquired at SchoolNet Uganda Technical Service Centre.

When I joined Namilyango College in 2007, I offered myself to stand for the post of chairperson for the Computer and ICT club. The students put trust in me and elected me as the chairperson of the club because of my ICT skills despite the fact that I was a new student from another school.

As chairperson of the Computer and ICT club, I have tried to pass on my knowledge and skills by:

- Mobilizing more students to join the club.
- Conducting lessons and competitions for club members in word processing and presentation software. The club gives prizes and certificates of competency (signed by the school) to the winners.
- Invited officials from SchoolNet Uganda, the local implementing partner of Mtandao-Afrika website competition to sensitise and inform club members about Mtandao-Afrika competition.
- Organized training for club members in programming and graphic design for students interested in participating in Mtandao-Afrika competitions.
- Provided students with the necessary software for website design.

I am currently participating in the 2007 Mtandao-Afrika competition as a programmer and I am hopeful that I will reach the finals.

Right now, I consider myself partly successful in the DOT COM world. I take off time to reflect on how and what got me this far. I attribute my achievement to my hard work and to SchoolNet Uganda and the teachers and students in its network.

In Dec 2007, I had the opportunity of being one of the co-facilitators at the Inspiring Science Education for Girls, *Science with ICT* Holiday organized and conducted by SchoolNet Uganda.

At the camp, I learned how to associate with people from different regions of the country, improved my teaching and facilitation skills, learnt how to listen and accept other people's suggestions and views and how ICT can be applied to the teaching and learning process.

SchoolNet Uganda, taught me to have self confidence and belief in whatever I do. Whenever I am trying to do something new, I always reflecting on this, nothing can ever stop me. I also leant that all big things started small, in fact as one person's idea. I will never sit on my ideas too because they might grow up into the big things in future.

To SchoolNet Uganda, I say THANK YOU, THANK YOU. I promise I won't sit on the knowledge and skills I have acquired. I will always use them for personal advancement and share them with others. Always count on me, for whatever assistance or help you may think I can offer.

How I wish other organizations and individuals could take a leaf from SchoolNet Uganda.

Thank you very much SchoolNet Uganda. Wish you the very best in all your activities