

Shema's Story: A New Path to Purpose

A fictional short story



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In a bustling neighborhood of Kigali, Rwanda, Shema, an 18-year-old recent high school graduate, found himself at a crossroads. With his final exam scores not yet in, Shema was stuck in limbo, unable to move forward with his education or secure a decent job.

Without direction, he roamed the streets with his friends, filling the long hours with activities that veered towards trouble; the weight of an uncertain future squeezing around him.





One afternoon, as Shema walked through his neighborhood to buy bread, he ran into Emmanuel, a familiar face. Emmanuel was a respected mentor at G.A.P.P., the Gaining Adequate Preparation Program, known for helping young people find direction and build skills. Sensing Shema's aimlessness, Emmanuel struck up a conversation, sharing the benefits of G.A.P.P. "You don't have to spend your days like this," Emmanuel told him. "Why not stop by and see what we're doing? You'll pick up some valuable skills for your future—and maybe make a few new friends along the way." Shema shuffled some dirt with his shoes. "I'll think about it," he replied.

Days later, Shema found himself in a tense situation. A scuffle broke out between his friends and some other boys, causing the police to arrive. Shema was handled aggressively by one of the officers and nearly arrested. The experience shook him and that weight returned to his shoulders. Emmanuel's words echoed in his mind, and the next day, he made a choice: he would give G.A.P.P. a try.



Shema's first days at G.A.P.P. were challenging. The schedule, the expectations, the strict training—it was a far cry from his recent lifestyle. But slowly, he began to change. With each passing week, he learned not only practical skills but also self-discipline and goal-setting.



He found himself surrounded by mentors who believed in him, and he began to believe in himself, too. He took pride in the small wins, like completing a project or speaking up in a workshop. For the first time in a long time, he felt hopeful.

Six months later, Shema had completed his capstone project, "Plan for Success." This project allowed him to outline his vision to pursue a degree in engineering and to map out the steps he will take to get there. Inspired by his newfound confidence and purpose, Shema enrolled in college, determined to build a future he could be proud of.





Today, Shema credits G.A.P.P. with helping him turn his life around. The program gave him direction, skills, and a supportive community. He is now on a path to becoming an engineer, driven by the same purpose that once seemed out of reach.

G . A . P . P .



Gaining Adequate Preparation Program

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