

KUCETEKELA FOUNDATION

Student Profile

Name: **Sonia Zulu**

Gender: Female
Date of birth: 4th July 1992
Place of birth: Lusaka, Zambia

Mother: Loda Tembo Zulu
(stepmother)
Profession: House wife

Father: Joseph Zulu
Profession: Gardener

Primary School: Chibelo Basic School

Secondary School: **Ibex Hill Secondary School**

2010 Level: **Grade 11**



Family Background:

Sonia's father was born in 1966 in Katete, and moved to Lusaka with his father during his childhood. He attended Lusaka Boys High School where he completed Grade 7. Sadly, his father died soon afterwards, and he was forced to discontinue his education, since there was no one to support him financially. He then started working as a gardener, which he continues to this day. He now works in the Woodlands area of Lusaka. He married and had Sonia, his first-born child. However, he has now re-married and has had five more children with Mrs. Tembo Zulu.

Including the six children and one of Sonia's aunts, Sonia's father financially provides for nine people in their household. Sonia's stepmother is not currently employed. The father cannot continue to support all the children, and, if not for a scholarship, Sonia would have to stop her education after Grade 7.

Sonia's Educational Background:

Primary – Chibelo Basic School

Sonia started school at Woodlands A Primary. She was there from Grade 1 up to Grade 7. She sat her Grade 7 exams but failed to qualify to Grade 8. Her father then decided to take Sonia to Chibelo School to repeat Grade 7 and to try again to

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qualify for Grade 8. Sonia had a very strong year at Chibelo School and earned the fourth position in her class.

Her favorite subjects are English and Social Studies. She earns her highest grades in English. In her application, Sonia wrote that she enjoys school because she likes the teachers.

At Ibex Hill Secondary School

Grade 8

Throughout her first year at Ibex Hill, Sonia enjoyed the opportunity to learn new things in a new atmosphere. She was excited to learn the word “bonjour” as she took her first foreign language class. Although she was nervous about learning a new language, she eventually grew confident in her desire to understand it. Her favorite subjects were Geography, History, Religious Education and English. Science was not her strongest subject; however she did grow more interested in it and studied hard enough to make a notable improvement.

Grade 9

Though Grade 9 was more challenging, Sonia, as expected, improved in all her academic work. In French class, she improved and understood a lot more of the language. She also improved in her punctuality and time management. With a more effective use of time, Sonia felt she was able to study better in Grade 9 than in Grade 8. One important thing to note is that she was so well behaved that she was elected as the class Monitor. Sonia is very mature and responsible, and earned the trust of her peers and teachers.

Grade 10

In Grade 10, Sonia focused on further improving her performance. She has greatly improved in Chemistry, Commerce and Biology through focused study. In commerce, she placed in the top 5 in her class in term 3 with 85%! She also does not shy away from reaching out for help when she needs it, especially from her fellow KF scholars. She gets help from Phales in Math and confides in Dennis when she is struggling with her friends. Sonia also felt that she made progress socially and has gained confidence in herself. “I have become more open.” Sonia remarked recently, “While I was shy before, I now have the courage to talk, to share who I am. I have improved in reading and in English, and it has helped me to socialize with people.”

Sonia's Interests:

Extracurricular Interests

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While in primary school, Sonia would usually help her stepmother with household chores such as cleaning the house, cooking and looking after her siblings. She loved playing with the children, watching television, reading stories and visiting friends.

Sonia participates the Scripture Union club because of her love for reading. In Scripture Union, she acts as a “prayer warrior” — organizing Scripture Union and leading prayers during the club meeting. As a prayer warrior, other students seek her advice on spiritual as well as personal matters. She related the case of one disabled student at her school, who, because of back problems, is not able to walk properly. She came to Sonia because her friends were making fun of her disability. Sonia told her not to listen to her friends’ criticisms but instead to focus on what she is able to do—to focus on her schoolwork and areas where she can succeed.

She also participates in soccer recreationally as a defender and hopes next year to take part in matches.

Community Service

During her vacations, Sonia participates in community service at her former basic school, Chibelo. During one break, she took the initiative to go to the headmaster and ask how she could be of service to the school. He gave her various projects—cleaning up the grounds and helping in the classroom. She now goes there during her breaks to help the 7 to 10 year old age range with their reading and spoken-English. She says it builds her confidence to know that she can help others—even the smallest improvement in a student’s reading is rewarding.

Sonia’s Role Model:

Sonia looks up to her teacher of religious education at Ibex Hill School, Ms. Mulenga. “She is so young, yet so ambitious. She is encouraging and I can always go to her for advice,” says Sonia. Sonia hopes that she will have the same poise and strength. Sonia, however, is herself already a mentor. As the oldest in her family, her younger siblings, especially her little brother, look up to her and follow her example of working hard

Career Interests and Work Experience:

Her career interest is to become a lawyer. “I like to argue with people, and I like to convince people that what I say is true. Like I argue with my friends about why dating is not allowed at school. I try to show them the reasons and persuade them this is right.”

Sonia participated in a week of work experience at the Pharmaceutical company, Pharmanova. She spent her time in the lab, assisting with the analysis of Panadol

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Syrup, a painkiller. The experiment was comparing the effect of the active ingredient, paracetamol, between the liquid and tablet form of the medication. She was also able to observe the various steps of the manufacturing process. Her favorite activity was the safety inspections that she conducted herself: “because I was now working, I felt a duty and importance doing safety inspections.” She said that although she does not want to work in the pharmaceutical industry, that it was nevertheless an important learning experience. It taught her the importance of working as a team with co-workers and treating your superiors with a level of respect.

What the teachers think of Sonia:

Sonia’s teachers at Chibelo praised her and described her as one of the best pupils in the class. She is both quiet and smart. The teachers were aware of the difficult financial situation in Sonia’s family and believed that she was a deserving student for the scholarship.

Sonia’s Thoughts on KF

“Kucetekela Foundation has given me many opportunities. It has exposed me to different types of people and though I used to feel shy to tell people I am sponsored, I have become more open. I tell them now so they can learn from me. Other people just take advantage of their parents’ hard work. They depend on their parents and do not work hard. I encourage them to work hard. I used to be closed up and never told them what I was going through. Now I have courage and confidence.

I especially enjoyed the day we spent with Pestalozzi. I learned it felt good seeing another group being sponsored. Sometimes it feels like we are the only ones. I was touched by who [the Pestalozzi children] are—their family background, how they work together as a family. It made me realize the KF students are like my family.

Being part of the Kucetekela Foundation encourages me and helps me carry on. It really helps me focus and concentrate on my academic work. I have experienced a lot of things and learned a lot from my friends in the KF family. I have learned that hard work and determination is the key to success. There is a lot of competition in my class and that also drives me to work hard because I do not want to fail.

I appreciate KF for sending me to this school where I have learned a lot more than just academics. I now associate with a lot of people and I have made a lot of friends from different provinces. I will never follow people with bad behavior. I have learned to put God first and to work to the fullest in order to achieve good things in life as well as to make sponsors happy and proud. I do not want my sponsors to lose hope in me including my family.”