



## **Peter Kanakuze**

I am Jean Pierre KANAKUZE. I was born August 25,1991, in the southern province of Rwanda, the former Gikongoro. My parents were refugees in Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo)from the time of the first genocide that followed Rwanda becoming a republic in 1959. In 1984,they decided to come back to Rwanda. After coming back, they settled again in Gikongoro, which is currently Nyamagabe District. Family and relatives were settled there too. It was a large family at that time. But now the family has been destroyed by the Genocide.

The neighbors would stigmatize the whole family and in January of 1994 after much stigmatization, my dad decided to send us back to DRC. I was 2.5 years old. My mom carried my youngest brother Jean de Dieu, (he was 5 months old) on her back and Francoise, my 10-year-old sister carried Jean Claude on her back. Jean Claude was 13 months old. I walked but when I was tired my mother carried me on her shoulders or asked other people to carry me. I was told that it was almost the end of January 1994, after walking about 4 weeks, before we reached the DRC, where we settled in a city called BUKAVU.

After this long journey, we heard the sad news that in Rwanda, people had started killing the Tutsi people. We were scared about our dad and our relatives. Some of them were already murdered. We hoped our dad would come back to DRC. We wondered why he did not come and bring the first born in our family, a boy, who had stayed in Rwanda with an aunt. But he didn't come to DRC and we began to think he had been killed. Then an aunt gave us the bad news, that our father and our first born had been murdered. After two years, at the end of 1995, we, my mother with her four children, came back to Rwanda.

The UNHCR took us to the eastern province and we settled there for about 3 years, then my uncle, my father's brother, moved us from there. I remember it very well. It was about 1999. he took us to the southern province formerly Butare which is currently Huye District. When I started school I was living with him. He paid for my school fees during all my studies in primary, as well as in secondary school.

It was not easy because sometimes school fees were not provided on time and the finance department used to send me home to bring back the school fees. He would try to find the school fees and I would go back to school. By that time, I was in a boarding school. Also, he tried to pay my tuition fees at university but because he wasn't working, ( I mean he didn't have a permanent job and had to look after his family), now he was not able to pay tuition fees for me. I thank him for all he did for me and for helping my family too. From that time, I stopped my university studies. I was in semester two in first year.

I used to seek a part time job even though it's not easy. I tried not to become a burden to my uncle's family. I would wake up in the morning and tried to seek some temporary job. It was so hard to get jobs,

but I tried and also, I tried to get some knowledge about many things like computer, English and other skills. That's the time I heard about RMLC (Rwanda Multi-Learning Center) and registered. It was like miracle for me. I used to remain at RMLC from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm and then go back home. I would walk to RMLC. It would take about an hour and a half.

I can speak four languages: Kinyarwanda, French, Kiswahili and English. RMLC helped me to have a bright future and have new friends especially those who are in the student group, Rwanda Family Welfare, like Eric, Justin and others. It has highly motivated me to succeed and use perfectly the opportunity I have. My desire is to take care of the people who are passing in the same situation in which I had experienced before and to find a job in order to help the rest of my family. Finally, I wish to get married, and make a family.

I thank God who has turned sorrow into joy now that I am a sponsored student with INSPIRE!africa. When I think how the life was, I feel the tears of joy from the deepest corner of my heart. Now I am proud of living and encouraged. It is not easy to get proper words to express thanks to my lovely family from Canada and INSPIRE!africa. I know there is no way of paying you back unless to show you that what you did for me is respectful and valuable to me. I am a happy man. Your generosity and your kindness and love will not be forgotten.

Message from Peter to his Canadian sponsors. I was amazed the time I received photos and a birthday card and gift, then I was extremely happy when I received a call on Christmas. This shows to me the love and value that you give me in your life. Your love touched me somewhere, because when I look back and see the life that I was in before and compare it to the current one, it is totally different, that's why I say that nothing more precious to me more than your generosity and your kindness and love.

Now I have registered in a bachelor degree program at Adventist University of central Africa (AUCA) in information technology. I am a happy man and I will have a bright future. I am not worried anymore. I expect to graduate in 2019. I thank you and I love you too. Once again thank you all from my deepest of my heart, thank you for new lovely name JP Goodall.

Jean Pierre KANAKUZE (Peter or JP Goodall Kanakuze)