



On the spotlight with WIK SRP Alumna,
Dr. Nhial Kuch.



Dr. Nhial Kuch

Academic Profile:

2021 PHD Economics graduate from Queen's University in Ontario, Canada and WIK SRP Alumna.

1. What does it mean to you to achieve this level of academic success?

- Achieving the highest degree in economics is definitely my proudest personal milestone after my family. I hope to use my personal success story to inspire people in refugee camps, and to make them believe that it is possible to rise to the highest level of education out of tough a place like Kakuma Refugee Camp. With a PhD in hand, I aim to employ the skills and knowledge that I have acquired to solve some of the socio-economic problems that are facing our communities today.

2. What was your inspiration to excel in academics and to advance your education?

- My motivation to advance in education stems from multiple sources. First, I find economics intellectually stimulating because it provides answers to many contemporary issues using tractable models to represent complex behaviours of economic agents. Second, my elder siblings sacrificed so much to give me a chance at life when many things were not working in my favour back in the days in Kakuma. I promised myself to repay their sacrifices by becoming the best version of me that I could possibly be.

3. How have your life experiences shaped you in this journey?

- I have come to realize that at the highest level of education, being smart is just a tiny 'cog in the wheel' because your patience, humility, self-discipline, intrinsic motivation, and persistence will be tested more than ever before in graduate school. Fortunately, my life experiences in Kakuma Refugee Camp taught me all of these virtues that I have repeatedly relied on throughout my academic life. Also, as someone who lived in Kakuma for nearly 18 years, I can say that the fear of poverty forced me to make the best possible use of every opportunity presented to me.

4. What would you say has been the impact of the support you received from WIK?

- WIK equipped me with pedagogical research skills that have been useful throughout my academic life. Furthermore, I improved my English language skills through the intensive English language course that was provided by WIK in Kakuma.

5. What ways are you giving back to the community?

- They say charity begins at home, so presently I am helping a few relatives who are studying in Kenya. Here in Canada, I give informal advice to new SRP students in my social circle on how to stay on track at school. Hopefully in the near future, I will be able to engage in more impactful activities in my community.

6. What does your future look like?

- I am very optimistic about the future. I am already working as a full-time economist for the federal government of Canada, which is in line with my short to medium-term career goals. My ultimate objective is to relocate back to Africa where my services and expertise might be more relevant and impactful.



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