

SHUJAAZ

INC.

**FAN
SNAPSHOT**

FAN SNAPSHOT: RUTH

MESSAGE

'Shujaaz stories have given me hope to live again.'

WHO IS SHE?

Ruth is a Shujaaz fan from Elgeyo Marakwet.

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I love that I can easily find Shujaaz where I live. One my children loves reading Shujaaz and whenever she doesn't understand some of the words, she asks me to read them out to her. It was through reading her the stories that I came across a disability story.

Teaching was my passion. And I used to work as a teacher even though I didn't have college training for that.

My life was going great, until one day in 2017 when I started having painful headaches. I went hospital and the doctors found that I had a tumor that was affecting the eye. My life changed. Life became hard and I even had to go for guidance and counselling where they told me to accept my new life and the fact that I would now be considered as a person living with disability.

I now can see partially with one eye, but my other eye is blind. I am unable to walk long distances and I always need white cane to help with walking. The National Council of people living with disability gave me a card which I use to identify myself as someone living with disability. They also told me that with that card, I could be exempted from paying taxes, but that will happen when I expand my business.

My business is not that big, but it is has helped me feed my two children and I am not staying idle. After my operation I stayed home for two years without doing anything. Things were difficult. My husband stood by me when I was jobless. I needed KSH 500,000 for my operation. My husband and I didn't have that kind of money, so we sought help from family and friends and even called for a harambee (fundraising). But the money was not enough, and we ended up selling everything we owned except our land. My husband and I had to start a whole new life – doing different hustles, including the milk business which I currently run.

RUTH:

MESSAGE

'I am grateful that at least I can do some light tasks on my own.'

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Most of the people in my group cannot speak up for themselves. It is for this reason that I decided to bring them together and form a group. We have a chama (merry-go-rounds) and sometimes we also get help from various well-wishers. My group members have become my new friends.

Before I became disabled, I had many friends. As a teacher, I had many friends from school. My family loved me because I used to support them financially when I had a job, but right now they see me as a burden because I am unable to help them like I used to. My mother doesn't have much, but she still loves me and is very supportive. My husband's parents are not that well off either, but I thank God that they've always been supportive too.

Because I love teaching, someone advised me to go to college and study Special Education, but my doctor had recommended that I avoid doing strenuous activities because that would affect my nervous system. I have come to terms with my situation and I am grateful for life. The hardest thing for me was accepting this new life that I now live. I even had to make new friends who could related to my situation, but now I do and I'm grateful that at least I can do some light tasks on my own.

Ruth first knew about Shujaaz through her sister who would bring the comics from school. She and her sister would read the comics together and Ruth would translate the sheng (slang) bits of the comic for her sister. 'Because of my condition, I sometimes experience memory loss. So, I can't remember when exactly I began reading Shujaaz'. She enjoys reading Shujaaz because she's always motivated by the real-life stories featured in the comic, like stories on hustling... She first reached out to DJ B on SMS because she also wanted to share her story, after reading Chapter 125 of the comic that featured a girl living with disability just like her. "I thank you so much for being a friend and I'm glad my SMS did not go to waste".

FAN FEEDBACK:

MESSAGE

I read Wanja Maina's story and it's so touching...

WHO IS HE?

He is a 20-year-old Shujaaz fan from Bomet



I know a certain family where the father is disabled. He uses his wheelchair to work every day in the company of his wife and children. He never lets his disability get in the way of him being his family's sole provider.

I always shed tears watching his children push him uphill especially when it's raining. All I can do right now is just hope that someday I'll be able to help them. Which got me thinking, "how many abled people are disabled?"

EXAMPLE FAN MESSAGES

FANS RESPONSES TO STORIES ON OUR PLATFORMS FEATURING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Honestly speaking, even though the artist (Donjo Kid) is blind, she has stood up for herself and followed her talent and for that I give her many congrats and if there are people like her they should know that disability is not inability

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There was this time I wanted to kill myself, but I read Shujaaz Chapter 125 about Wanja Maina and I saw that if she is disabled and is also sharing tips on how to make money online, I saw that even I one day could get help.

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