

# 2 MyNetWork



LOVE  
IN  
THE  
TIME  
OF

TEXTATIONSHIPS

Why Kenyan youths are falling deep into relationships that exist only on screens P.4&5

# Khaligraph Jones: I have worked too hard to go back to poverty

The rapper talks about his journey, sacrifices, and why success isn't just about dropping hits.

With nearly 15 years in the music industry, Brian Ouko Omollo, popularly known by his stage name Khaligraph Jones, has cemented his place as a pioneer in Kenyan hip-hop.

From setting trends in rap to expanding his brand beyond music, the rapper has mastered the art of staying relevant.

In this exclusive interview, the OG opens up about his journey, the sacrifices he has made, and why his name still carries weight even when he takes a break from releasing new music.

## How are you doing?

I have been keeping busy with a variety of creative endeavors, including artwork and even casting.

**You are one of those artists who remain relevant even without constantly releasing new music. What is the secret?**

The secret is building a brand. I have always understood that I am more than just a musician; I am a brand, and everything I do must contribute to strengthening that brand. My focus has been on making myself a businessman as well as an artist. When I first came to Nairobi, I knew I had to work hard and establish myself. Over the years, I have built a name that people recognise and respect, regardless of whether I have new music out or not. Many artistes struggle with this because they rely solely on their music for relevance. I am a pioneer in Kenyan hip-hop, and I have worked tirelessly to solidify my position in the industry.

**When you talk about creating your brand, what exactly do you mean? What steps did you take to ensure you don't have to release music constantly to stay relevant?**

I did what was necessary. I put in the work. I was one of the first Kenyan artists to start releasing multiple songs in quick succession.

Before me, it was unheard of for an artiste to drop a song today and then another one the next

week.

But I set the pace. I created a movement. Because of that, when you ask young rappers today who their role model is, most of them will tell you it's OG. They saw the work I put in, and they respected that.

**What does it take to be confident in this industry, sometimes being away from home and family?**

It takes everything. You have to give it your all. There is no sleeping.

Every penny you make; you reinvest it back into the music. Many people don't understand the sacrifices that have to be made.

If you are not willing to give 100 percent, then you should not even start.

There is no room for half-measures.

**It has been almost 15 years since you joined the industry. How was that journey of becoming a household name?**

The transition took time. It was a process. I had to be where I was five or 10 years ago to be where I am now. Without those struggles, I wouldn't be here. It is all about growth. You learn little by little, and eventually, it shapes you into the artist you are meant to be. Those years, 2015, 2016, and 2017 were crucial for me. I was growing, evolving, and refining my craft.

Now, I can look back and appreciate the journey because it made me who I am today.

**What is one phase in your life that you wouldn't want to go back to?**

Poverty. No one wants to go back to struggling. I know what it means to go without, to hustle hard just to survive. I have worked too hard to go back to that life. That's why I keep pushing forward.

**Did you ever feel traumatised by music?**

Not really. I have always done music because I love it. Whether it made money or not, I kept doing it. Of course, there were tough



times, such as getting booed off stage and being told to leave, but those are just growing pains. Every artist goes through them. They never made me want to quit; they only made me stronger.

**How do you view music now? Is it just entertainment, or has it evolved into something more?**

Music is a business. In the beginning, it was just a passion project for me. I was even a bouncer at one point because music wasn't paying my bills. But as I grew and built my brand, I saw the bigger picture. Now, it's a profession. It's entertainment, yes, but it's also a business. You have to approach it with that mindset if you want longevity.

**Do you believe that everything you and your family have today comes from music?**

I know so. Everything I have is because of music. In Kenya, there's always skepticism when an artist becomes successful. People assume there's something else going on, like money laundering or some hidden hustle. But anyone who knows me understands that my entire suc-

cess has come purely from music, nothing else.

When we talk about music, it's not just about the royalties you earn from platforms like Spotify. Music is what builds your brand, and that brand is what attracts investors and corporate partnerships. That's why I work with major brands. It's not just about streaming numbers or YouTube views; it's about the influence you have. The stronger your influence, the more opportunities you create.

**Which brand do you think elevated your career the most?**

All of them. I have worked with many brands like Monster Energy, Coca-Cola, and Safaricom and every experience has contributed to my growth.

**Have you ever declined to work with a brand?**

Yes, many times. There are so many reasons, sometimes due to finances or policies in contracts that might jeopardise my brand. That is why having a lawyer is important.

In 2024, one of the things that made headlines was your massive mansion. Tell us about it.

Yes, my house became a topic of discussion, but honestly, I built it because I wanted to. People always have opinions but they no longer count. Some say it's too big, others question why I need such a large space. But at the end of the day, I know why I did it. Social media will always talk, but I don't live for people's opinions.

Maybe I have a big family, maybe I have cousins who need space. The truth is, I built the house because I love it, and I wanted to create a comfortable home for myself and my family.

It's funny because, while some Kenyans were busy criticising, my house was trending in Nigeria, with many people congratulating me on my success. Even in Tanzania, people were saying I had set a new standard. That is what matters to me, showing that anything is possible. I came from Kayole, a place where many don't believe they can achieve such things. My journey proves that hard work pays off.

**Can you share how much you spent on the house?**

That is private information. But it has so more than 10 bedrooms.

**Do you have a studio in your house?**

Of course. My house has everything I need. But I don't post it often. I like to keep certain things private. When I do share, it is because I feel like it. People say I am flaunting, but the truth is, I am just living my life.

Remember when I used to post from other small studios, no one said anything. But now, because it's in my house, suddenly it's an issue? It doesn't change anything for me. I worked hard for this, and I will enjoy it how I want.

**Are we expecting a new hit soon?**

Yes, dropping on Thursday. It is the biggest thing ever, Khali Cartel 5, featuring artistes from across East Africa.

**Have you ever made any financial mistakes?**

Of course, we are all human, and mistakes happen. But what matters is learning from them and bouncing back stronger.

I always advise artistes to buy what they can afford and not to chase after luxury vehicles just because others have them.

You never truly know how someone else acquired their wealth, so it is important to stay in your lane and live within your means.

Once bought land that turned out to have legal issues, and it became a major setback. Experiences like these teach valuable lessons about handling money wisely.

**What is one achievement in your youth that you are most proud of?**

Without a doubt, discovering music. Music has given me everything I have today. That, for me, is the greatest achievement as I turn 35 later this year.

## Careers

# How one woman is shaping policies for disability and gender rights

From volunteer to leader, Tasline Otieno is accelerating action for inclusion. By Winnie Onyando

Tasline Otieno embodies this year's International Women's Day theme, "Accelerate Action." From a volunteer to a Programs Coordinator at the Consortium of Disabled Persons' Organisations in Kenya, she has championed climate justice, electoral reforms, and disability inclusion. With over 20 volunteer experiences, she is driving change and inspiring others to do the same. She shares her journey with MyNetwork.

**Tell us about your journey to becoming a Programs Coordinator. What inspired you to work with people with disabilities?**

I am a Programmes Coordinator at the Consortium of Disabled Persons' Organisations in Kenya (CDPOK), where I manage programmes that empower and support people with disabilities. My career is built on education, passion, and experience.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology from the Uni-

versity of Nairobi (2018) and will graduate with a Master's in Research and Public Policy from Daystar University in two months. I am also pursuing a second Master's in Gender and Development at the University of Nairobi, which I plan to complete in a year.

My journey began as an undergraduate, volunteering with various organisations to gain experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion. That led to roles as a field officer and project officer, where I developed leadership and project management skills. Now, I use that expertise to manage programmes that promote advocacy and inclusivity.

**What does this year's IWD theme, "Accelerate Action," mean to you, especially in advancing equity and inclusion for women in Kenya?**

"Accelerate Action" speaks to the urgent need for change. One key issue is implementing policies that already exist, such as the two-thirds gender rule, which aims to increase women's representation in leadership. This law has yet to be enforced. Acting on it would significantly advance inclusion in leadership.

Another urgent issue is femicide, which has become a crisis. Women are being murdered daily, often by people they trust. We must act now to prevent these crimes and ensure justice for victims. These are just two areas where action is long overdue.

**As a Programmes Coordinator, what actions have you taken to promote disability inclusion in Kenya?**

I design and manage programmes that promote disability inclusion through community education, capacity-building, and advocacy. I empower people with disabilities to participate in governance, access education, and influence climate justice policies. I also work with field teams to ensure effective program delivery, resource mobilisation, and stakeholder engagement to advance inclusion.

**What actions or resources are crucial for accelerating women's leadership and advocacy?**

To fast-track women's leadership, we must dismantle systemic barriers.

Access to justice must be faster and more transparent, with the government held accountable. Training, mentorship, and funding are needed to equip women with leadership skills and confidence. Policy enforcement—such as implementing the two-thirds gender rule—will ensure fair representation. Collaboration between larger organisations and grassroots women's groups can expand impact through joint projects and capacity-building. These steps will create an environment where women can thrive as leaders.

**If you could make a call to action this International Women's Day, what would it be?**

We must respect and protect women's lives. No one should be attacked for who they are or what they do. We must also enforce gender equality laws to create a fairer, safer world for women. The time for action is now.

**Only five percent of people with disabilities in Kenya are employed, and representation is limited. I would like to close these gaps and push for inclusion.**

Tasline Otieno



**How can we accelerate the inclusion of women with disabilities in leadership?**

We need training, mentorship, and access to resources to help them build confidence in leadership. Policies must also set clear quotas for representation in national and county governments. Making inclusion mandatory rather than optional will ensure real change.

**You have achieved so much at a young age. What is your secret?**

Volunteering has shaped my journey. Since 2013, I have volunteered over 20 times with organisations like World Vision, Red Cross, and Dandora Social Justice Centre. This experience helped me develop skills in election reform, climate justice, and advocacy. Volunteering opened professional doors for me and remains a powerful force for social change. I still volunteer today—I even have a volunteer commitment tomorrow!

**How do you stay motivated to champion equity and inclusivity despite challenges?**

Resilience and adaptability keep me going. Challenges like gender inequality, unstable donor funding, and overlooked internal talent exist, but I focus on diversifying my skills and addressing inequalities head-on.

Only five percent of people with disabilities in Kenya are employed, and representation is limited. I would like to close these gaps and push for inclusion.

**What is your vision for the future of disability inclusion in Kenya?**

I envision a Kenya where people with disabilities face no stigma or discrimination. They should have equal opportunities and be seen as capable contributors to society. Policies must include disability considerations across all sectors—from climate justice to gender equality. Organisations should go beyond tokenism, offering real employment opportunities, accommodations, and capacity-building. Inclusion should be the norm.

**What advice would you give to others who want to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities?**

Be open-minded and take action. Start by volunteering to gain experience in disability rights and inclusion. Invest in learning through training and fellowships. Passion and resilience are essential—making a difference takes effort and dedication.

## Movie Review



BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

**DOC**  
Where: Amazon Prime  
Genre: Medical drama

Doc is an American medical drama series directed by the talented Barbie Kligman, this series masterfully blends medical intrigue with deeply personal stories, creating a captivating narrative that keeps viewers hooked from the very first episode.

The show centers around Dr. Amy Larsen, portrayed by the brilliant Molly Parker. Dr. Larsen, a highly skilled physician, faces a life-altering event when she loses her memory in a car accident. This twist sets the stage for a compelling journey of self-discovery and resilience as she navigates the challenges of rebuilding her life and career. The character's struggle to regain her identity and reconnect with her estranged daughter adds an emotional depth that resonates with audiences.

One of the standout features of "Doc" is its ability to balance intense medical cases with heartfelt personal stories. Each episode presents unique medical scenarios that are both intriguing and thought-provoking. The show's commitment to authenticity is evident, with medical cases that are not only believable but also serve as a backdrop for the characters' growth and development. The series does an exceptional job of portraying the complexities of patient-doctor relationships, highlighting the emotional toll that medical professionals often endure.

The ensemble cast of Doc is another highlight. Supporting characters, including Dr. Michael Hamda (Omar Metwally), Dr. Jake Heller (Jon-Michael Ecker), and Dr. Gina Walker (Amirah Vann), each bring their own distinct personalities and storylines, creating a rich tapestry of interconnected lives. The chemistry among the cast members is palpable, making their interactions feel genuine and emotionally resonant.

Visually, Doc excels with its stunning cinematography that captures the bustling hospital environment with a keen eye for detail. The show's soundtrack complements the narrative perfectly, enhancing the emotional impact of each scene.

# The growing popularity of 'Textationships' among Gen Z

Are these digital connections the real deal, or just an elaborate illusion we're swiping our way through? By Jackson Ngari

Let's get real – welcome to the wild world of "textationships," where love happens through screens faster than you can say "read receipt."

Gen Z, we see you scrolling, sliding into DMs, and building entire relationships without ever seeing bae's actual face. It's not just dating; it's a whole digital dance of emojis, voice notes, and late-night existential conversations that never leave your WhatsApp.

Picture this: Mercy Njeri, a 27-year-old interior designer, thought she'd found her digital soulmate. One year of non-stop texting, heart emojis, and what felt like a deep connection. The plot twist? When they finally met, her perfectly crafted digital romance crashed harder than a poorly designed website.

"This guy was NOTHING like his texts," she admits, and trust us, we've all been there.

What started as innocent Instagram comments morphed into an obsessive text exchange that consumed her entire day. Sound familiar? Welcome to the era of textationships – where your typing game is stronger than your actual relationship skills.

But after a year of messaging, Mercy realised something wasn't right.

"I told him that we needed to meet. We were talking every day, but we had never seen each other. It was getting frustrating."

When the two finally met, Mercy was disappointed. "He wasn't the person I thought he was. In person, he was more distracted, not as engaging as he had been over text. I didn't know him at all," she admits. "Our connection fizzled out almost immediately"

Why did she meet him then? "Out of curiosity," says Mercy. "There was comfort."

In a similar vein, \*Bonface Kimani, a 29-year-old events coordinator from Nyeri, similarly found himself in a textationship during the pandemic. After "sliding into her DMs" on X (formerly Twitter), Bonface struck up a conversation with a woman he had never met and before long, their relationship was conducted entirely through text.

"There was an instant connection," Bonface recalls. "We liked the same things, had the same interests. It was easy to keep the conversation going."

What started on X soon shifted to WhatsApp and Facebook, where the two would chat for hours on end. "We were in different towns, and the Covid restrictions made it nearly difficult to meet in person."

Despite the physical distance, Bonface still felt a strong emotional connection. "It felt like we were really getting to know each other intimately. I even once sent her birthday gifts."

But as the months passed, Bonface began to question the sustainability of the relationship. "There's always that fear of being catfished," he admits. "I was nervous about it at first, but we got on a video call and that helped ease my worries."

Eventually, the relationship slowed down, and they returned to being casual friends. "We don't talk as much anymore, maybe just the occasional sharing of TikTok and Facebook reels," Bonface says. "It was fun while it lasted, but it wasn't sustainable."

## Easing pressure

Elsewhere, for Joan Muthoni, a 24-year-old Public Health pro-

fessional, textationships provided a way to connect emotionally without the pressures of physical proximity. Joan met her partner through a mutual friend, and their relationship quickly evolved into daily texting and voice calls.

"We've been texting for months now, and it's been one of the most emotionally intense relationships I've had," Joan explains. "There's something about texting that makes it easier to open up. I don't feel as self-conscious."

Despite their deep emotional connection, Joan hasn't met her partner in person yet. "We live far apart, and with both of us busy with work, meeting hasn't been possible yet. But we talk every day, and that's enough for now."

Joan admits that there are moments when she wonders if their emotional connection will translate into real-life chemistry. "It's hard to know if we'll click in person the same way we do over text. But I trust that the connection we've built is real."

Over the months, their relationship evolved from casual conversations into something much deeper. "I think the turning point was in December, when we both realised this was more than just friends. We decided to give it a shot and started officially dating," she reflects.

Despite the distance, their communication habits kept the relationship strong. Joan noted, "We do voice and video calls as well. It helps us stay connected, and I feel like we communicate more openly than I ever did with someone in the same place." The ability to open up through text gave her a sense of comfort. "There's something about typing that makes me feel less judged."

Joan admitted there were times she wondered if the person she was getting to know through the screen would match the reality. "I sometimes fear that there might be parts of him I'm not seeing yet. You know, like how does he handle anger? Will we have the same energy in person as we do over text?" she said.

"We've talked about meeting soon, and I think it will be great," she said, adding that their relationship feels natural, even though it's based on communication across different continents.

"Sometimes it even feels like we're in sync with each other. I'll be about to text or call him, and at that same moment, he reaches out too. It's like we're on the same wavelength," Joan shared.

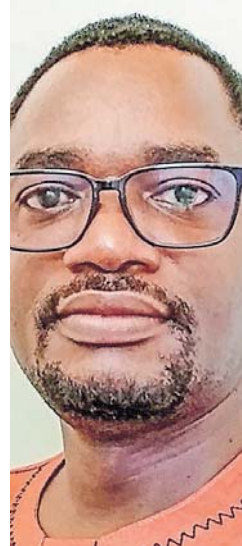
## Moments of doubt

Sarah Nyambura, a 23-year-old journalism student at KCA University, found herself deeply involved in what she describes as a "textationship". It all began innocuously with a friend request on Facebook.

"He sent me a friend request, and I accepted. At first, I didn't pay much attention," Sarah recalls, mentioning how his name had not stood out to her initially. But over time, he made his presence known. "After a few likes and comments on my posts, I noticed him. It was subtle, but I started becoming aware of his interest."



Joan Muthoni, a 24-year-old Public Health professional, reflects on her emotionally intense "textationship," which evolved into daily texting and voice calls without physical proximity. She believes texting allows for easier emotional openness...POOL



Dr Charles Wagunda, a linguistics lecturer at Rongo University, notes that texting appeals to Gen Z due to its convenience and emotional expression, while also cautioning about the potential for miscommunication caused by the absence of non-verbal cues. PHOTO: POOL



Sarah Nyambura, a 23-year-old journalism student at KCA University started a text relationship on Facebook. LUCY WANJIRU / NATION



Then, one day, a message appeared in Sarah's inbox and that was the spark. "I saw a message in my inbox and it was just a simple 'Hey.' I replied, and that's how it all started," Sarah explains.

The texts became a constant in Sarah's daily routine and though the conversations were solely digital, she began to feel emotionally attached. "We texted every day and it felt like we were building something real. I started to anticipate his texts and when a day went by without hearing from him, I'd feel disappointed," she admits.

Her partner, however, lived miles away in Meru, while Sarah was based in Nairobi. The physical distance between them made it impossible for them to meet, but at the time, Sarah believed that their communication through texts was enough to sustain their relationship. "In the beginning, I didn't see the distance as a big issue. We were connecting on an emotional level, or at least I thought we were."

Yet as the months passed, Sarah also began to experience moments of doubt. "I started wondering if I really knew him. The more we talked, the more I realised there were gaps in my understanding of who he really was as a person. You can only know so much through a phone screen," she reflects. The ambiguity of their interactions began to gnaw at her, especially when the topic of meeting up in person came up.

"I would ask when we could meet, but something always came up. It was either I was too busy with school, or he had commitments in Meru. It was frustrating," she says.

For Sarah, the lack of physical interaction became more than just an inconvenience—it started to affect how she perceived the entire relationship. "There were days when I would just sit and wonder: 'What am I doing? Is this even real?' I couldn't shake off the feeling that I was falling for someone who was more of a concept than a real person."

Over time, their once-vibrant conversations began to lose their spark. "At first, we'd talk about everything—our dreams, what we wanted in life, even the mundane things like what we were having for lunch. But after a while, the conversations became repetitive. I found myself wondering if we were just texting for the sake of it."

Despite the emotional bond they had formed, Sarah admits that their relationship began to feel hollow. "The emotional connection was there, but it wasn't enough. I needed more than just words on a screen," she confesses.

The uncertainty surrounding their relationship wasn't just about the physical distance, it was about trust, too. "There were times I would wonder, 'Is he talking to other people like this? Am I just one of his many?'" Sarah explains.

Over time, the frequency of their texts diminished.

### Crossing continents

Henry Mogeni, a university student, never thought texting could lead to a deep emotional connection, especially with someone from a different country. "I joined a random WhatsApp group online, just trying to make new friends," he begins. "I wasn't looking for anything serious, but then I met her. She was from Nigeria and we immediately just clicked."

For Henry, texting wasn't just about staying in touch; it became the core of their relationship. "We started texting almost every day," he says, recalling how their chats went from casual to personal. "It wasn't just surface-level stuff. We talked about everything: our cultures, what it was like growing up in Kenya versus Nigeria, our daily routines. I learned so much about her life, and she learned about mine."

As their conversations deepened, Henry felt himself becoming emotionally attached. "I wasn't used to opening up like that, especially to someone I had never met. But texting made it easier. I felt like I could share things with her that I might not have shared with someone face-to-face."

Henry and his partner continued their text-based relationship for over a year. They even began teaching each other their native languages, creating a bond that felt tangible despite the distance.

"She taught me Yoruba and I taught her Swahili," Henry recalls. But as time went on, the limitations of their textationship became more apparent. "We talked about meeting, but it wasn't realistic. We were in different countries, and neither of us had the resources to travel," Henry explains. "It started to feel like we were just texting for the sake of it, and the emotional connection we had built started to fade."

Henry also reflected on the challenges of maintaining a text-based relationship. "Unlike in-person relationships, you can't just walk over to the other person and talk things out. You're left wondering if the other person is losing interest or just busy."

The strain of the distance and lack of physical presence began to weigh on him. "There were moments when I needed more—a hug, a smile, something tangible."

The relationship began to shift as both Henry and his partner faced the realities of their respective lives. "She started a new job, and I got busy with school," he explains. "Our messages became shorter, less frequent. It felt like we were living in two different worlds, and the emotional intensity started to fade."

For Henry, the experience left him with mixed emotions. "There's a part of me that wishes we could've met in person, to see if what we felt through those texts could have been real face-to-face," he reflects. "But I've also come to terms with the fact that some relationships are meant to exist only in certain spaces."



Henry Mogeni formed a deep emotional connection with a woman from a different country online. LUCY WANJIRU/INATATION

### Expert View: Instant gratification

Dr Charles Wagunda, a lecturer in linguistics at Rongo University provides a take on textationships, focusing on the linguistic elements that influence these digital interactions. According to Dr Wagunda, texting has become a dominant mode of communication among Gen Z because of its convenience and its ability to convey emotion quickly and efficiently.

"Texting allows for a level of immediacy and emotional expression that's difficult to achieve in other forms of communication," Dr Wagunda explains. "Emojis, abbreviations, and GIFs all serve as ways to enhance the emotional content of a message without requiring a lengthy explanation. This appeals to younger generations who want efficiency and brevity in their communication."

But Dr Wagunda also warns that texting can be a double-edged sword. "Texting lacks the non-verbal cues that are essential in face-to-face communication," he says. "Without tone of voice, facial expressions, or body language, it's easy for messages to be misinterpreted. A message that was meant to be lighthearted can come across as dismissive, or a joke can be taken the wrong way."

According to Dr Wagunda, one of the biggest challenges in text-based relationships is the phenomenon of "curated communication." "When people are texting, they have more time to think about their responses," he says. "This can lead to more thoughtful conversations, but it can also create an idealised version of oneself. People can pres-

ent the best parts of themselves while hiding their flaws, which can lead to disappointment when the relationship moves offline."

Dr Wagunda also points out that textationships often create a sense of emotional immediacy that can be addictive. "The constant ping of notifications, the thrill of waiting for a response—it all contributes to a heightened sense of emotional connection," he says.

"But this emotional high is often temporary, and when the novelty wears off, the relationship can fizzle out."

Despite the challenges, Dr Wagunda believes that textationships can offer a valuable form of emotional intimacy, especially for individuals who struggle with face-to-face communication. "Texting provides a safe space for people to express their emotions without fear of judgment," he says.

### Benefits and risks

Joan Kirera, a counseling psychologist, offers insights into the psychological dynamics of textationships, stressing both their potential benefits and risks. Texting, while providing a space for emotional closeness, can also bring insecurity and uncertainty in relationships.

"One of the key issues with textationships is the lack of immediate emotional feedback," Kirera explains. "In face-to-face interactions, we can rely on non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions to gauge emotions. But in texting, you're often left waiting for a response, which can heighten anxiety and lead to overthinking."

She also underscores the problem of emotional projection in text-based relationships. "When texting, it's easy to fill in the blanks with your own idealised version of the other person. You create an image of them in your mind that may not align with reality. This becomes problematic when you finally meet in person and realize that the connection you felt was largely a product of your own imagination."

The illusion of emotional closeness that texting creates is further compounded by the convenience and consistency it offers. Kirera notes,

"Texting allows people to communicate from anywhere, at any time, which can create a false sense of intimacy. You feel close to someone because they're just a message away, but in reality, the emotional connection may not be as strong as you think. It's important to balance this with face-to-face interactions to ensure the connection is real."

Kirera points out that texting can sometimes be used as a way to avoid vulnerability. "Texting feels safer—there's less risk of rejection, and some can control the narrative. But this doesn't allow for genuine emotional growth. Real relationships are built on vulnerability, on being open and honest with each other in person."

jpgari@ke.nationmedia.com

I wasn't used to opening up like that, especially to someone I had never met. But texting made it easier. I felt like I could share things with her that I might not have shared with someone face-to-face.

Henry Mogeni



Top ranked First African player to reach a Modus final.

# Peter Wachiuri: Kenya's Darts pioneer making history on the global stage

How a Kenyan darts player went from local pub games to the global stage. By Geoffrey Anene

Q&A

## Where did your darts journey begin?

When I finished Class 8 in 2002, I moved to Ngong, Kajiado, in search of work and found a job as a carpenter. However, the income wasn't stable. After work, I often went to the football pitch to keep busy and avoid falling into bad habits like excessive drinking, which some of my peers had succumbed to. I played football for six years before a serious leg injury forced me to quit. During my recovery, I struggled financially. I remember one morning when my child asked me for bread, and I had nothing to offer. That moment made me re-evaluate my priorities. I decided to explore other interests and discovered darts at a local club in Ngong, where older men gathered to play. I quickly fell in love with the game and honed my skills at Vineyard Club, later joining Ngong Darts Club and then Florida Darts Club.

## Did you always believe you had a future in darts?

My confidence grew when I started defeating experienced players in Ngong. There were about ten of them, but as I kept winning, some became jealous. However, I knew I had what it took to compete at a higher level. I started following national tournaments organised by the Kenya Darts Association (KDA), with my first tournament in Rongai, Kajiado, where I finished second. That experience fuelled my passion even more.

The Stima Darts Club in Ngong played a crucial role in my progress. They supported me, took me under their wing, and gave me exposure in Tanzania and Uganda. That experience helped me stand on my own as a player.

## What challenges have you faced in your darts career?

Once I became the top player in Kajiado, some competitors disliked that I was winning all the prize money and even barred me from their tournaments. However, I didn't let that stop me. I sought out new clubs, eventually joining Gikambura Super Darts in Kiambu and registering with the KDA Kiambu branch. Without a membership card, you can't play in official tournaments, so I got one purely for my love of the sport.

Darts is like any other sport—it requires discipline and resilience. Some players will encourage you, while others try to bring you down. It's up to you to stay focused and pursue your goals.

## How was your experience competing in the UK?

Being the first Kenyan to compete in the Modus Super Series was a huge honour. I

know there have been great Kenyan players before me, like Robert Ndirigacha, who played at the World Cup four times, so I don't take this opportunity for granted.

The biggest challenge for me in the UK was the cold. While others were sweating, I was constantly freezing. I would run to the heater every chance I got, which felt embarrassing. As for the food, I wasn't used to eating burgers and kebabs daily. But after my final match, some Kenyan fans called me and took me to a place that served nyama choma, fish, and ugali. I hadn't seen Kenyan food in almost a week!

## How was the reception back home?

I never expected the overwhelming welcome I received at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Seeing my fellow darts players, fans, and my family there made me emotional. I hadn't viewed my performance as historic, but their support made me realise that even finishing second was a major achievement.

## What lessons have you learned from darts?

The slogan of this sport is 'Darts, New Friends.' You meet different types of people—some who will encourage you and others who will try to derail you. I've learned to be cautious and focused. Darts is meant to bring people together, and it's important to know how to handle different personalities, especially quick-tempered opponents.

## Darts is often associated with drink

## The Kenyan who put Africa on the global darts map

Peter Wachiuri is a Kenyan professional darts player who has risen through the ranks to become the country's most successful darts export. Raised by a single mother and his grandmother in Olkalou, Nyandarua County, his journey to the international stage is nothing short of inspiring.

He made a name for himself at the World Darts Championship African Darts Group Qualifier, finishing second behind South African Cameron Carolissen to earn an invitation to the Modus Super Series. Now in his fourth year of competitive darts, Wachiuri is the first Kenyan to play at the prestigious Modus Super Series.

Going into the weekly tournament in Portsmouth, UK, he was a rank outsider but made history by becoming the first African player to reach a Modus final. Competing under the Buffalo Franchise in the African Darts Series (ADS) League, he finished as the runner-up after a 4-1 defeat to Scotland's Scott Campbell, securing a place in the Modus Doubles World Cup scheduled for April 2025.

## ing. Do you take alcohol?

Darts requires a high level of discipline. Yes, it's often played in pubs, but it doesn't mean you have to drink. The game involves pointed missiles that can be dangerous if misused. I always say discipline is crucial—you must know what you want from the sport. If you lose, accept defeat gracefully and congratulate your opponent.

## Is darts your main source of income?

I am also a driver, but I consider darts a profession now. It provides a source of income, and I never miss a competition. I once worked for a taxi company, but they became frustrated with my frequent leave requests for darts tournaments and eventually let me go.

## How do you balance driving and playing darts?

It's all about discipline. Even if I arrive home at midnight and have planned to train, I will follow through. My training sessions last about an hour before I go to bed.

## Do any of your children play darts?

I have three boys: Samuel, Jayden, and Ethan. Jayden is particularly interested in darts. He helps me fetch darts during practice, and I've even seen him throw a few. My youngest, Ethan, is only a year old, but he insists on holding a dart whenever I practice. My wife, Teresia Njeri, is also my biggest supporter.

## What's the secret to your success in darts?

Hard work in training and applying those skills in competition. Practice makes perfect.

## Is mathematics essential for darts?

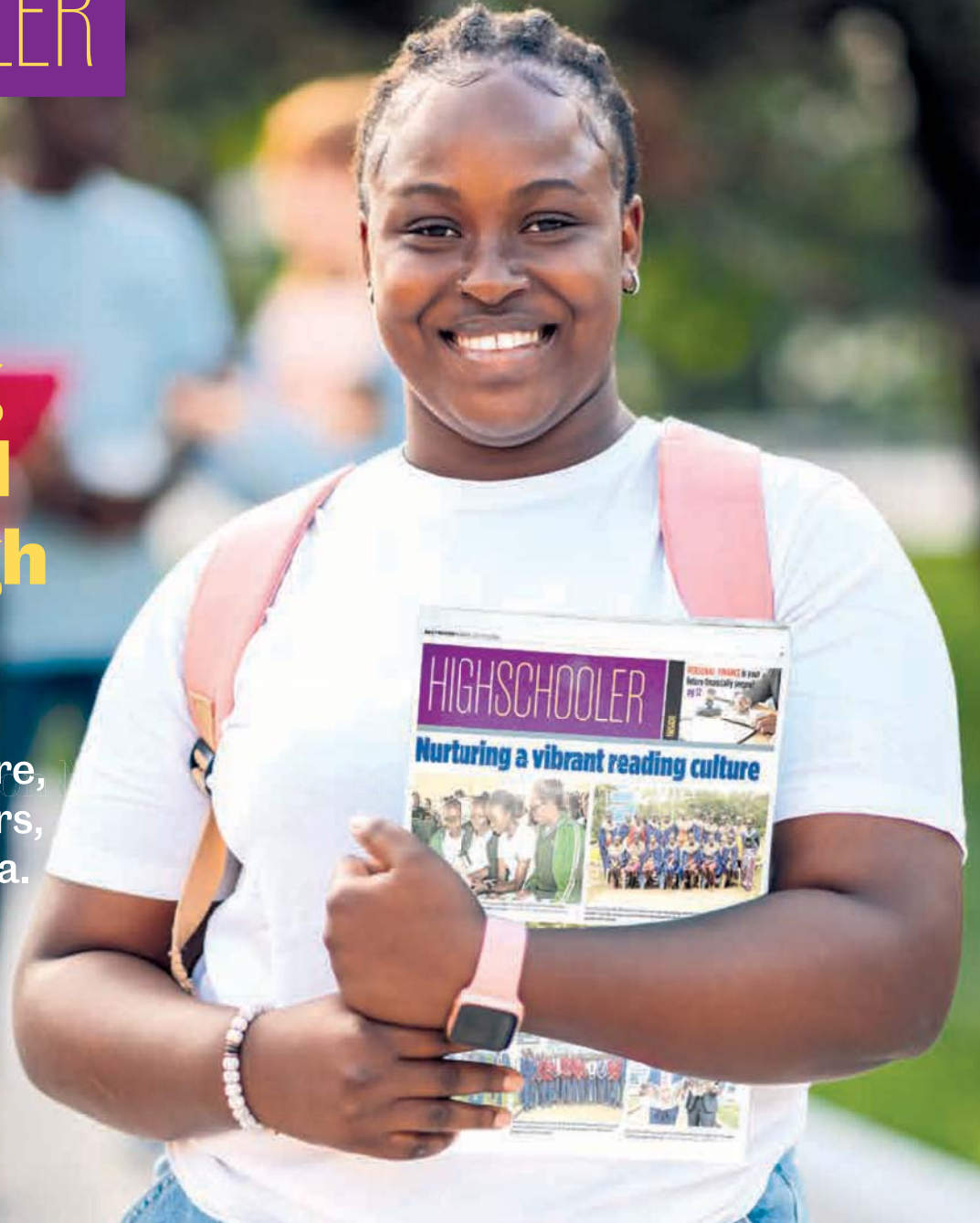
Yes, mental arithmetic is important for calculating scores. However, if you lose track, you can always ask for your score.



# HIGHSCHOOLER

## Advancing Junior and Senior High Schoolers

Premium content on careers, literature, finance, exam papers, crossword and trivia.



Sponsor your school for an annual subscription of Newspapers in Education program at **Ksh 60,000** per year.

For more details please contact

Philemon Bett [+254 722 129 446](tel:+254722129446) [nie@ke.nationmedia.com](mailto:nie@ke.nationmedia.com)

### DAILY NATION



Visit: [epaper.nation.africa](http://epaper.nation.africa)  
subscribe today

