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HIS POINTS QUALIFIED HIM FOR BACHELOR OF COMMERCE BUT HE GRADUATED WITH A DEGREE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AS WELL

DeKUT Spotlight
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Meet Shadrack Kiprotich – A Techie, Innovator & Microsoft's Most Valuable Professional



"If my dad did not buy his first laptop and PC back then and if I did not choose to study at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DeKUT), I would not be anywhere close to what I am currently doing. I grew up within the hospital environment since my parents, one of my siblings and also close family members are medics. With this, I knew my career would be aligned to medicine as I had grown an admiration for their careers; then my dad got his first laptop and PC which drifted me away from the medical world and I started developing an interest in computers; I was still in primary school. The Interest developed with time and in high school, I did computer studies which I later dropped in Form 3. After Form 4 I was to enroll in a coding course but I received an early letter of admission to DeKUT for May 2018 intake; during the selection of courses, I missed a Computer Science course by a few points which made me go for Bachelor of Commerce. I really wanted a university which would enable me to pursue my tech career dream while doing the business course and DeKUT, given her slogan "Better Life through Technology" felt like the best fit for me. Up to date, I have never regretted that choice. I became part of that slogan. I completed my studies in a timely manner and also I can say I achieved my objective as it seems I graduated with 2 courses." - Shadrack Kiprotich.

Kiprotich is a 2021 graduate of DeKUT. His formal course was Bachelor of Commerce but he graduated with a second 'degree'; Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and he has gone to become Microsoft's Most Valuable Professional. How did he achieve this?

Joining DeKUT in May 2018, Kiprotich still had an interest in tech but he did not know how to get started with coding until he met Josh (as he is commonly called) via a WhatsApp link sent to his class's WhatsApp group addressing people interested in tech. Josh ended up becoming his first programming teacher and mentor; and with this he got to learn his first programming language - C#. From then, Kiprotich went on to learn of the various technologies that exist and how they co-exist. He grew in this journey when he joined the Microsoft Tech Community where their community leaders Joshua Ndemenge and Edwin Muraya (now Cloud Advocate and Software Engineer at Microsoft respectively) used to guide them. This continued to spark his interest as he was getting to understand a lot of things in that world; cloud computing, mobile app development, web development, game building, frontend and backend development; etcetera. During the day, Kiprotich used to attend Bachelor of Commerce classes and evening hours were his time to learn programming. He would then attend weekly programming sessions and deliver on his tasks as given by his instructors/mentors. With time, he started instructing/training the attendees whenever Josh (Joshua) and Edwin weren't available and through this, he says that he learnt the important lesson that; the more you do it and pass the knowledge the more concepts you learn. Tech communities became the foundation of his journey into tech and he went on to build techies and innovators through tech communities. "Coming from a non-technical background, I am a product of the tech community notably Microsoft Learn Student Ambassadors community, Computer Society of Kimathi, Developer Student Clubs, Microsoft Tech Community and now the Power Platform User Group Kenya and I am happy to be paying it forward" he says.

Kiprotich further gives credit to the DeKUT Innovation and Incubation Hub (DeHUB), his mentor there then Kenneth Njihia and the University at large as he says it's through the support that he got from those quarters that he was able to enhance his innovation capacity and even showcase it. Case in point, he recalls the Engineers Hack event in 2019 organized by the Microsoft Student Ambassadors focusing on building innovative solutions on Artificial Intelligence, IoT, Machine Learning and Data Science. Kiprotich put a team together to solve a problem within the agricultural sector on pests and diseases. They developed an artificial intelligence solution to help farmers detect pests and diseases by scanning a suspicious leaf and getting recommendations therein. Working on this, he says, opened up a lot of opportunities for him; including getting an honorable mention by H.E. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya then, during the International Youths Day after winning 1st place during the Fursa vs Virus challenge organized by the National Youth Council. He also had a chance of participating at the Covid Hackathon by Konza and also underwent its acceleration program in 2021. This opened doors for the Game of Learners Imagine Cup competition and led him to a role at the Microsoft ADC while he was still a student.

MVP is an award given to individuals who have exhibited exceptional technical expertise and a talent for sharing knowledge within their technical community.





As a professional and human being, Kiprotich says that he is inspired and guided by the Japanese concept of IKIGAI; life's worth/ meaning for being. He says that this helps him define the purpose of his life, gives him the motivation to wake up every day and chase the purpose. "This makes me want to repeatedly, continuously and consistently work on my passion in the tech space and generally as an individual" he adds. This is what he says, as a parting shot: "Being a country music fan, I tend to think that it is not the rope, the boots or the hat that make you a cowboy but what is in your heart. Find your passion by discovering your IKIGAI and keep an open mind and heart; to be willing to learn from experiences and to be open to new opportunities and possibilities. It's the mindset, the spirit and the values that matter a lot. Challenge yourself every day and never stop learning!"

What is your IKIGAI?