

Good morning Cyprian. I wanted to reach out and give you the full picture of what's happening at JKF straight from inside because this is not something most people outside would know, and I feel it's important someone understands the reality here. You know, JKF used to be the pride of Kenya's publishing industry, especially under Francis Menjo. He was passionate, ambitious, and really cared about the organization and the staff. Back then, the foundation was thriving. Profits were high, staff had room to grow professionally, and many even managed to buy homes at a young age.

It was a golden era and people felt proud to be part of the team.

But after Menjo left, the decline started almost immediately. Resources began being mismanaged, and one of the first major errors I noticed was the closure of all the regional Business Distribution Centres around 2007–2008, leaving only the Kijabe Street office in Nairobi. Those centres were crucial as they promoted JKF products, connected directly with clients, and allowed management to respond quickly to problems.

When they closed, it felt like the organization had been cut off from the people who mattered most. Regional sales and marketing staff stayed, but we struggled because distribution was centralized, making operations slow, inefficient, and frustrating for clients.

Around the same time, JKF's printing press was shut down and all the machines were sold. Management decided to outsource printing, and I know from what I saw that this was mainly a way to secure kickbacks. Costs shot up, profits shrank, and oversight of the entire process disappeared.

By 2015, JKF was operating on very thin margins, and the introduction of the one-book policy made competition tougher because smaller publishers could now compete for government contracts. Even with JKF's strong brand, leadership failed to adapt, and the decline continued. During this period, staff were still paid and could access loans, but the organization's stability was already being undermined.

When the new management team under David Mwaniki took over in 2021, everything got worse. Unlike previous administrations that cared about staff welfare, this regime has ignored our rights and interests. Salaries started coming late, sometimes two or even three months late, marking the first time in JKF's history that we genuinely suffered financial hardship. Our loan deductions were not sent to banks, medical cover disappeared for over a year, and management would tell us there was no money, which is unacceptable for a government institution.

These financial difficulties caused resignations, retirements, and a wave of staff leaving because the situation was unbearable. Those of us who remained have had to endure mounting debts, missed rent and school fees, and the stress of uncertain income, all while continuing to do our jobs as if nothing had changed.

In 2023, the Ministry of Education reassigned JKF to manage the Elimu Scholarship program and completely scrapped publishing. That created another mess. Procurement for scholarships,

uniforms, and other resources was centralized in Nairobi, and large contracts were awarded to only a few suppliers instead of supporting local county-level providers.

Some beneficiaries still don't have uniforms because the suppliers couldn't cope with the workload, and some contracts were revoked when suppliers failed to deliver on kickback promises. Audits revealed widespread mismanagement and misappropriation of scholarship funds, and no one has been held accountable.

The provident fund trustees are also a huge problem. Their terms expired 2–3 years ago, but they continue in office without elections or proper consultation. The last AGM was in 2019, and repeated requests for a new one were ignored. They even moved members' schemes without informing anyone until 2022. It makes us feel completely powerless.

For the past three years, salaries have been paid in tiny fractions: 20%, 30%, or 50% of net pay, leaving staff to cope with mounting arrears. Some have lost homes, many struggle to afford basic needs, and medical coverage has lapsed for over a year. Despite all this, the staff continue to deliver on every task, performing our duties as if nothing has changed.

JKF is also earmarked for dissolution, but the process has stalled for reasons we don't fully understand. Staff are left without reliable income, and many of us feel abandoned. I truly believe urgent intervention is needed from the Public Service Commission, Treasury, and Ministry of Education, either to redeploy us or to make sure we are paid properly. And honestly, it's time for CEO David Mwaniki to step aside; his leadership has failed the institution and its people, and only new leadership can restore dignity and hope to JKF.

I wanted to share all of this with you so you can understand the real situation from someone inside. It's been a rough few years for us, and without attention from the right authorities, things will keep getting worse.