

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CASE STUDY

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**PLACEMENT: BLIND AND LOW VISION NETWORK**

**CYCLE 1 MACHAKOS**



## **What I have learnt**

Throughout my volunteerism, I have learnt a lot especially with the UK Counterparts. To me the whole program has been a learning process and a cultural exchange program. Living and working with an international group of like-minded individuals was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. The best part was making friends from other cultures and learning things I probably would never have learnt. The whole experience opened my eyes to the world and really made me feel proud of myself. It gave me the chance to give back and this resulted in an incredible sense of fulfillment. Working in a different environment has provided me with the opportunity to gain knowledge, experience and skills which I may not have been able to acquire at home. The obvious example is learning a new language, Kamba, much faster than I could at home by immersing myself into the language and culture. In addition, by volunteering in my field of interest, I have had the opportunity to learn new ways to approach different problems and also have gained valuable work experience in a new environment.



## **Changes**

Before I joined this program, my self-esteem was low; my confidence and lifesatisfaction was poor. By volunteering in this program, I had the opportunity to experience personal development which takes the form of improved self-esteem, self-confidence and lifesatisfaction by pushing myself out of the comfort zone and immersing myself into a different culture. I feel a sense of empowerment and have

begun to reflect on what I want from life.

ICS contributed to this change by giving me a chance to challenge myself to change the world and make it a better place. Working with people of different disabilities has really helped me a lot. I have learnt guiding skills on how to guide a blind or a visually impaired person, i have learnt to be patient and understanding. Apart from getting to learn from them throughout the volunteer program, I have been interacting with them in so many occasions and helped them come up with ideas of improving their livelihoods, e.g. most groups engage in baking as their source of income, having going through a pastry school before I joined ICS, the program provided a platform for me to share with the disabled groups my baking skills and improved their cake recipe. Before I couldn't use a charcoal jiko to bake cupcakes but I learnt from them, I used to bake cupcakes but I was using an electric oven which could hold a maximum of 12 cupcakes and consumed a lot of electricity compared to the charcoal jiko which can bake over 80 cupcakes at a go.



My interaction with them was quite good and it really changed my mentally about them. I came to learn that disability is not inability. Right now I have gained a new perspective on my personal and professional development. Every day I think about the way I was connected to them and willing to help, how grateful I was, it has made me a better person and certainly shaping my personal and professional goals.

### **One memory that stands out...**

One memory from my ICS experience that stands out to me is the day my team and I took to Muvuti Self-Help Group an electric cake mixer to ease their work of mixing a lot of dough and cake ingredients all together using hands. I could tell from their smiling faces how happy they were and how we had really impacted their cake project. I wished we could have achieved more than what we had already



achieved within the short period we had been with them but time was limited. Maybe the next cycle will pick up from where we left.



### **Personal Quote**

*“When you think you are “giving”.....you are actually getting much much more in return.....and it’s something that money cannot buy.”*