



Personal Development Case Study

Ivy Lydia Achieng Wasonga, Kenyan Volunteer

Cycle 1 Machakos

Placement: Kenya Red Cross Society



What I Have Learnt:

It has been an educative experience to work with an NGO like the Red Cross, as it has given me a positive attitude to being in a working environment. I have been able to learn a lot of different things such as working with the greenhouse projects at Machakos Boys School, as part of the Red Cross livelihood programme. I've always had an interest in agriculture, and have learnt new things such as the importance of intercropping, making pesticides from the Neem tree, and making liquid manure as an organic fertiliser.

We were encouraged to join in with the other youth activities that take place at the Red Cross, such as the membership drive and dissemination sessions, which helped me learn more about the origins of the Red Cross and its importance in the Machakos community. This helped me gain the confidence and courage in talking to a crowd of people. Apart from that, I was also able to work with other placements such as Light of Hope Youth Initiative in their education sessions. I taught children about HIV/Aids and helped distribute sanitary towels to young girls. This was one of the best parts of my placement experience because I enjoy working with children and being in a teaching environment.

While I've been here, I've learnt that poverty eradication starts from us in many ways, for example I understand now the importance of kitchen gardening as it is a form of income generation.

How I have changed since joining the programme?

Before I joined this ICS programmes, I was shy and never had the confidence to face people and talk in front of a crowd. However, I now enjoy talking to crowds of people for example

when teaching, or helping to facilitate a drug abuse workshop. I have learnt other skills such as report writing and how to work well in a team, particularly with people from a different culture. I have really enjoyed working with my UK counterparts and have learnt different things from them, as they have from me. Before coming to this programme, I was on attachment at Kilifi County Hospital, and ICS has continued to help me build on my personal and work experience, such as my self-esteem and self-awareness. I have learnt the importance of volunteering.

Challenges I have faced and how I have overcome them

During the first weeks of my placement, I found it difficult to understand my UK counterparts' accent and some of their difficult vocabulary. After talking to them to slow down whilst speaking and use simple English, working with them became much easier and they were cooperative and understanding.

Another challenge I faced was living in a host home with a new family. I had to adapt and get used to their culture and way of living, which was different from mine, and though it was hard at first, it has been fun and I have enjoyed having a motherly kind host mother.

Memorable moment

For me, one of the memories that stands out the most was when we had our first Community Action Day (CAD) at Kasaini Primary School on the 15th November. I spoke about HIV/Aids to the youth which I thought would be a hard task because it is not easy to get youths or anyone to get tested and know their HIV status. However, I was surprised to see them turning up in large numbers to listen to the talk and get tested, as well as being eager to know more about HIV/Aids. That was an achievement for me and I felt proud for the hard-work I had done. One thing I learnt was that I should always believe in myself in order to save the day.



Giving my talk to the youths about HIV/Aids

Quote to sum up my experience:

"In every challenge we face, there is always a solution as long you believe in yourself and have confidence that you are going to make it!"



At the Red Cross Membership Drive Launch



Working on our Women's Empowerment GCD with my UK counterparts