

# **Final Report**

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As a college graduate one wonders how the transition to the working life is going to be. Some find it hard and for others it's a smooth path depending on where each ends up working. I would say that CARE international in Rwanda has prepared me not only as an employable youth but also as a leader in the workforce. Over the period of 3 months, I have gained more working experience more than I did in the other 5 internships I had.

The biggest credit goes to all the CARE Rwanda staff members who welcomed me into the busy working environment. As an intern, I did not expect the staff members to be open to me as they did. I want to say that at the least I had a long conversation with each of the Country Office staff members from the drivers to the Country Director. It was in those conversations that I learned how to prepare for my career, how to handle working stress, what connections I need to get where I want to be and even lessons on life in general.

**Teamwork and Work Ethic:** If you are more of a questioning person, you would be wondering if maybe the staff were always free and had no work, which is why I had access to all of them. Well, I have never seen a working environment where everyone was working like a machine and overtime like at CARE Rwanda. Everyone heads their own department but collectively assist each other for the success of the Country Office (CO). When a project in the CO has an event, all staff members become event planners, protocols, Master of Ceremonies and sometimes drivers. During my internship, I was able to learn that regardless of how one individually succeeds it is important to also contribute to the success of others.



*At CARE Rwanda, working doesn't mean sitting in the office chairs. Pictured I was mobile working while consulting a co-worker.*

**Duties:** Reflecting on my first day, I still wonder what my internship terms of reference were. I was able to work with nearly all departments in the Country Office, ranging from project managers, senior management team, resource mobilization, field officers, communications officers, to human resources and to aid all CO projects.

For the 2nd half of my internship, my role was mostly with the communication department developing and improving the communication channels for the Country Office. The goal was to increase the awareness of the intervention of CARE international in Rwanda to the outside world and attract donors for project funding. I started a YouTube channel where all the success story videos of the organization would be shared. I increased the liveliness of the

Country Office social media--Facebook, Twitter, CARE Website, Google+ and created a LinkedIn profile of the Country Office.

I also assisted project managers and the monitoring and evaluation team with writing the midterm and final project reports, updating the narrative reports and analyzed collected data to present in the donor meetings. I had never written a report before joining CARE Rwanda, but I am now confident that I can become a project manager with the mentorship I attained from the project managers in the office. Additionally, I also updated the Country Fact sheets, Capacity Statements and developed the quarterly newsletter.

**Indirect beneficiary of CARE Projects:** In the communication role, I traveled at least 2 times a week to the field to collect success stories of about 5 CARE Rwanda projects for reports or the CARE Human Interest Contest. Every time I talked to a beneficiary I always left with a lesson. The most lessons were from the Enterprise Development and Economic Empowerment for Out-of-School Adolescent Girls project (EDOAG). The project supports out-of-school girls, aged 14-19, to claim and enjoy their economic rights via a blended approach of forming and strengthening youth VSLA groups, ensuring access to finance, and providing financial and enterprise management training. To date 8,959 adolescent girls have been supported—results show that enterprise development for out-of-school girls is effectively fighting poverty not only for the girls but for their families as well.

Most of the beneficiaries I talked to were younger than me and had dropped out of school due to either financial issues or abuse by their parents and had resorted to finding their independent source of income. They actually have achieved a lot; they own businesses, land, have built houses, have livestock, gardens and some have employed other out-of-school girls.



*Pictured above on the right is Francine Musabyemariya (23 years old), who dropped out of school because her parents couldn't afford her school fees.*

Francine started working on a plantation in the national park earning 300 RWF (0.34 USD).

After joining the EDWOAG project, she started saving 400 RWF (0.45 USD) in a co-operative of other 30 out-of-school girls. From her savings, she was able to buy a piglet for 10,000 Francs

(11.49 USD) and she later sold it for 60,000 (68.92 USD). Francine used the income to buy her first sewing machine.

Now, Francine owns 3 sewing machines, sells mobile network services (Airtime), employs 3 other girls, owns a forest, has 2 savings accounts and 1 pig. Additionally, she trains a class of 15 tailoring and has an approximated income per month of 150,000 RWF (172.41 USD).

Her visit was the best financial literacy lesson I will ever get. The hope, desire to do better and willingness to share what she got was the wonder that still stays in my mind. I kept asking how did you do that? What was your drive? Where did you find the hope? She answered, “my past was worse, and I did not want to go back”.

It is stories like Francine’s that I fetched from projects every time I visited the field to collect success stories. I am super challenged and at the same time learning from their life experiences and their wisdom. I feel blessed that I am learning from firsthand beneficiaries and their stories get stuck in my head. I am so thankful to everyone that made it possible for me to intern at CARE. If I had not, I am so sure I would not have had these life lessons that are so impacting.

**At the office:** I have been able to grow the ability to manage all my tasks and the confidence to say no to superiors. My supervisor once took me to his office and told me at CARE Rwanda one learns to say no tasks when it is necessary. "There is a lot of work at the office and everyone will need some assistance, but it really gets overwhelming", he emphasized. This was the heaviest lesson for me to catch up on. I am usually the person who wants to get my hands dirty, work on every task and learn about every single component/project. It felt like a heavy storm when I told

a project manager one time that I wouldn't help with his report. At the same, I realized that I needed that confidence so that I could prioritize on what was most important.



*Pictured: I– in a sports jacket and white pants--was in Learning for Change training on Knowledge Management facilitated by CARE Austria.*

It was one educational experience attending Morehouse College for 4 years and it was another interning at CARE International in Rwanda. I was able to fully exhaust my college theoretic skills- content development, research, data, event management, time management, fundraising, leadership, and team working- in the 3 months I spent at CARE International in

Rwanda. Additionally, I was able to learn more about the operation of resource mobilization in the NGO world, graphic design and relationship building between organizations.

**Thank you:** I am so grateful for the CARE USA team that believed that I would be of a great assistance to the team and CARE Rwanda that gave me the opportunity to learn at the same time serving my people. I am also thankful to Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation (JJCF) that trusted and invested in my dream and indeed it was a really great opportunity. I would not conclude without saying that I would love to continue working with CARE if it is possible because of what I have learned, the impact the organization has on the Rwandan community, and the healthy working environment it provided to me.