

VOLUNTEER REPORT FORMAT

To be submitted to CRS at the end of volunteer assignment and shared with the Host

1.1 Assignment information

- a) Volunteer Name: *Miranda Mlilo*
- b) Host Organization: *CRS*
- c) Assignment: *KE88*
- d) Dates of Assignment: *August 1- August 15*
- e) Number of days worked- *12*

First day was spent being introduced to the school, and the students. I was shown around campus by two students Oliviah, and Libro. They introduced me to all their friends on campus and I chatted with a lot of students. They showed me various rooms on campus, and the offices of various departments. Through this I was able to absorb the atmosphere that the students work in on campus, and learn about what they thought of the University. This was a unique way to learn the ins and outs of the University which would prove to be helpful later, during my interactions with environmental science students.

1.2.1 Objective 1 in your SOW: Develop a list of necessary equipment for the nutrition laboratory

- a) Progress with the objective: I was given a list to go off of from the nutrition laboratory at Kenyatta University. I read the textbook Nutrition Assessment and compared the two lists. The list from Kenyatta was extremely thorough. There was little missing, however I added a few items that would be beneficial to Kenya specifically.
- b) *Expected impacts/results*: One of those items included a reverse osmosis system in order to obtain distilled water from any water system in order to have the most accurate results during an experiment. Another item was a syringe in order to draw blood, which is the best way to test for various vitamin levels in the body. An example of a vitamin that is measured this way is vitamin A- a huge deficiency issue in Kenya. The large scale equipment was already accounted for.
- c) *Recommendations*¹: I put a star next to the items that were absolutely essential in case they needed to choose between certain items on the list due to funding issues.

1.2.2 Objective 2 in your SOW: Give motivational talks to the students

a) *Progress with the objective*: I met with third year, and second year environmental students (separately). It ended up being less of “giving” a motivational talk, but more of an exchange of ideas and experiences. I found the students here to be very intelligent and up to date with environmental issues, especially the ones affecting their own country. We began by comparing the classes we have taken at University so far. Some similarities include the fact that we take more general classes the first 2 years, and begin to start specializing in our last two years. A key difference is that I choose a concentration

¹ **Note:** Only make not more than 6 recommendations. The most useful recommendations for hosts are ones that they can implement themselves with minimal expense. For example, a cooperative might change its financial reporting procedures or hold more regular meetings of its board. Broad recommendations on tax or credit reform, changes in government policy, or investment in large-scale equipment, are usually not within the host organization’s reach.



during my undergrad, while they do not specialize until the masters level. We then discussed the success and challenges of environmental issues in our own countries. At the governmental level, the students complained of corruption. Laws are passed but not enforced, and projects often lose funding due to inability to get the money to the right people. I discussed issues of corruption in US congress, and explained how it occurs in terms of actually getting laws passed rather, rather than implementing them. Some changes they wished to see in Machakos include:

Cleaner water, improved waste disposal (more effective and environmentally friendly), and create a more modern sewer system.

They asked a lot of questions about how the issue of environment is approached in the US. Then they asked questions about the US school systems, graduate school process, and overall perception of Africans. I answered all of their questions thoroughly, and often asked questions of my own so that we could compare and contrast.

b) *Expected impacts/results*: The students showed interest in starting an environmental club. I gave my recommendation that they start building their club by gaining community and university support. They would do this by starting projects in the community such as pick-ups, tree planting etc... to show people that their purpose is a healthier, and sustainable life style. I gave examples from the club at my University, and applied certain projects we did to Machakos. We discussed how we could alter these projects to make sense in Machakos. At the end the students gave a list of goals they would like to see for the club which includes:

Create awareness within the community and spread the importance of conservation, manage waste, plants trees and in turn earn points from an international org that gives money for tree planting. These are very possible goals that can have a large impact because in the case of Machakos University College, the most change can start within the community. They were worried that not enough people will join the club to make a change- I pointed out that the club itself can be small, but can still involve many people.

c) *Recommendation: Timeline*:

First Semester: Form the club, get students and start spreading information about their objectives and goals at University and within the community

Second/ Third Semester: Create projects within the community that will get the students and people living in Machakos a change to get involved.

Fourth Semester: With the awareness that has been raised through projects, appeal to the local government with petitions and community support to advocate for the environmental change they want (ex- sanity dump site).

1.2.3 Objective 3 in your SOW: **Organize a talk to encourage a greener planet community involvement and sustainability**

- a) *Progress with the objective:* I was given a platform at a student and local government meeting that Dr. Nzeve, the dean of the department of Agriculture and Natural resources invited me to attend. The students in attendance had taken a class on waste management. In order to apply to life all the information they learned in class, their teacher organized an opportunity for them to visit the local dump site. This proved very beneficial for them. They investigated the disposal site to see how it affected the community, and presented their finding to the department of local government that manages municipal solid waste. They found a lot of problems with the dump site. It is an open land fill which leads to pollution of soil, air, and water. This affects the community because farmers irrigate their farms with dirty water that has the potential to poison crops that are then distributed all over Machakos and Nairobi. The polluted air causes health problems among the residents. Several have reported death of their animals due to the quality of the land they graze on, which makes it hard for them to support their families. It is a breeding ground for pests that carry dangerous diseases, carries a risk of fire, gives a bad odor to the community, and destroys the aesthetic value of land. They criticized how hazardous waste and non-hazardous waste are mixed together in that dumpsite.
- b) *Expected impacts/results:* The students called for it to be replaced with a sanitary landfill. In the meantime, they want security around the dumpsite so the trash has less of a change of being blown away, and people are discouraged from going around and digging through it, which exposes them to many dangers. They believe the water and soil surrounding the site need to be tested for metal and lead contamination. The teacher gave a moving speech explaining the importance of students applying their knowledge. Only 4 students presented, but around 20 from the class came to observe. The response from the government official was not all the helpful. He gave “no promises” about future funding. He also agreed about having recycling from the source, but no indication that he would pursue that goal.
- c) *Recommendations:* I was asked to speak at the end which is when I had the opportunity to address what I had heard, and provide my opinion based on my experiences. The main theme of my speech was the importance of government support to address the wants of the people. I said people can only get so far without the proper aid. For example, the students showed interest in a recycling process, and the local government seemed to agree. That desire cannot be fulfilled without a proper recycling system set in place, and then a community outreach education on what it would entail. In addition, public trash bins to encourage proper waste cleanup, because it seems that the issue lies in the initial disposal of waste. A sanitary land fill is more expensive, and the money may not be there, but it is important for the government to address the issues with the open dump site to lessen its negative effect on the people, and inform them of the dangers they face. If both the government and people of Machakos work together towards a common goal, there’s nothing standing in their way.

I have come with my experiences and knowledge from the US, and in turn the students have given me their experiences and knowledge. The environmental problems we all face are very similar. However, the circumstances of which we are under are different. Now that the students have my contact information, I hope we will continue to keep in contact in regards to the progress the University has



made. I think we will be able to exchange community involvement ideas, job opportunities, and overall positive progress environmentally.

Other important experiences: One day during the trip I was able to visit a local high school. It was incredibly inspiring to see the hard work from the principal, and the goals she had in order to improve her school. Part of understanding the University process is seeing where these students are coming from. I learned that in Kenya, boarding schools are common and many students that can afford it opt to go there. As a result, the students left at day school are the ones who cannot completely afford the education of a boarding school. As a result, the students at this school are struggling to maintain good grades, and compete on the same level as those that go to boarding school. We spoke to the principal about some of the challenges she feels the students and teachers face at this school. She believes that both the students and teachers are overworked because of long school hours and a very intense required curriculum. Also, many students don't have time for their students outside of school because when they get home they have other chores to do, and they are already arriving late. I realized the importance of developing good work ethics during high school so that those same habits can be carried to University. I was given an opportunity to say a few words to the students. I explained what a degree in Environmental Science entails, and why that field is important for everyone daily life. I asked if anyone had heard of environmental science before and no one had, so I was careful to explain the basics of what I am studying, in the hopes that it might become of interest to some of the students.

1.4 Number of people Assisted

- a) Through formal training
- b) Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count)
- c) Out of these above, number of host staffs
- d) Training/assistance by field

Category	Total	Males	Females
Environmental Science Students	50	25	25
High School Students	100	50	50
Clients/ Suppliers			
Family Members			
Total	150	75	75

1.5 Gender



- a) *What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How?*

I noticed that when I was meeting with students in a professional way, men felt much more comfortable speaking with me and sharing ideas than the women. I felt that women were often more reserved, while the men had little hesitation to speak their mind. After noticing this, I tried to direct my questions towards women specifically to see if they had a different view point, and to make them feel comfortable speaking. While some women did speak up, a lot of them reaffirmed what the men had already said.

- b) *How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community?*

It might be beneficial to set up meetings with women only. This way they won't feel intimidated by the presence of their peers that are men, and will be more open to sharing their thoughts

1.6 Value of volunteer contribution in \$

- a. *Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment*- Two full days to prepare, research, and compile information. Also spent time emailing people in the Environmental Science department at UMD about helpful information to bring to Machakos University College.
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment

1.7 Value of hosts' contribution in \$ (Please consult the host as well)

- a) Meals \$60
- b) Transportation \$110
- c) Lodging \$150
- d) Translation
- e) Other (Specify)

1.8 Host Profile Data:

Did you obtain any data that supplements or corrects the data in the existing host information as detailed in the SOW? Please list it.

1.9 Recommendations for CRS:

For someone in my shoes, the best thing they can do is meet the different students. Each student has unique and original incite that can be very beneficial in the development of environmental progress. We are at the age where our opinions and ideas are the most malleable. Hearing a range of opinions helps to create an open mind, and a future understanding of everyone's own distinctive challenges. I met people from a range of different departments and disciplines, and found that our studies were all interconnected. I hope CRS will continue to set up collaboration between students, and not just professionals alone.

1.10 Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VOLUNTEER CONTACT: [Name]

[Title]

[Phone]

[E-mail]

[US City] Area Volunteer Travels to [Country] to Share Skills with
Local Farmers

Farmer to Farmer program promotes economic growth and
agricultural development in East Africa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Title]

[Phone]

[E-mail]

[City] Area Volunteer Travels to [Country] to Share Skills with Local
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Farmer to Farmer program promotes economic growth and
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[Name], a [title] from [city, state] travelled to [country] for [x] weeks to share his/her technical skills and expertise with local farmers. [Name]'s assignment is part of Catholic Relief Services' Farmer-to-Farmer (FTF) program that promotes economic growth, food security, and agricultural development in East Africa.

“[Volunteer quote],” said [name].

Funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the five-year program matches the technical assistance of U.S. farmers, agribusinesses, cooperatives, and universities to help farmers in developing countries improve agricultural productivity, access new markets, and increase their incomes.

In [country], [name] worked with [Host] in [value chain] training and giving technical assistance to [type of beneficiaries] to enable them to [Goal of the assignment]. Up to [Number of beneficiaries] beneficiaries were reached. [Other details are optional]



[Name]'s volunteer assignment is one of nearly 500 assignments that focus on agriculture, food security and nutrition in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. This is the first time CRS has been involved in the 28-year-old Farmer-to-Farmer Program funded by the U.S. government.

CRS is partnering with five U.S. institutions to tap into the rich diversity of the U.S. agriculture community: the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Foods Resource Bank, National Association of Agricultural Educators, American Agri-Women, and the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

The U.S. volunteers will travel to East Africa for anywhere from one to six weeks, their expenses covered by USAID.

“One thing we are certain of is that this program will be beneficial not just to the farmers in East Africa, but also to the volunteers from America,” said Bruce White, CRS’ director for the program. “It’s going to make the world a little bit smaller for everyone involved.”

For more information, visit farmertofarmer.crs.org

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Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in nearly 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. For more information, please visit crs.org or crsespanol.org.