

364s Moses Asimwe Rwanda Journal

I never thought that the GEE would be such an impressive experience to me as it was! Being youth from one the poorest nations and poorest continent, I could not imagine how I could be integrated in a team comprised of members from across the globe with different language, financial, educational, and cultural backgrounds.

With GEE, I was writing history. Firstly, it was an opportunity for me to get to know my motherland, my continent, and the rest of the world more than I did before. I got delighted when my team selected my country Rwanda as a focal point for our sanitary pad business for girls in Rwanda. This gave me chance to explore more about what women and girls in my country are going through. As a citizen of Rwanda, I had a role to give more information to the rest of the team members and this triggered me to interact with girls especially in rural areas. They gave me real life stories of how they sometimes miss classes because of being buried by boys at school when they are in menstruation periods due to blood on desks as they don't have sanitary pads because they are expensive. The GEE deserves a monument at home to always remember its positive impact on me and people around me. I have now initiated negotiations with the Business Development Fund (BDF); a fund installed by the government of Rwanda to fund potential start-ups in the country, to persuade its funding to the business in order to save Rwandan girls at the same time making my team's dream a reality.

Furthermore, I have a thousand reasons to believe that the experience of GEE has sharpened my ambitions and focus to being more of a solution than a problem to global challenges especially those affecting the youth so as to make the world a better world to live. More so, I have realized my potential in helping my motherland save youth in general and girls in particular from educational, health, and financial problems. GEE has been a bridge for me to give my teammates an insight of Africa and getting to know more about other places too like New Zealand, Nigeria and several areas I didn't before.

However, the good experience couldn't pass unchallenged. One of the weeks when I was mostly needed by my team than ever (7th – 13th April), in Rwanda we were commemorating for the 20th year since the genocide; which left the country in ashes with over 1,000,000 Tutsis bloodily murdered in only 100 days, happened. During this week every year, we are supposed to gather in public places especially on memorial sites and commemorate and listen to healing talks and therefore nothing else should be done. But I could go for commemoration during day time and make my contribution late in the night. Again this required me to go to the University and request security officers to allow me use University internet at night because all students had gone home for a short commemoration week. This wasn't easy for me to convince them to permit me while risking their jobs because they were not allowed to allow me. Given all these challenges, I was able to contribute to the team and work well with the rest of team members and team leader.

In a nutshell, the GEE has left me with a lesson of hard work, meeting strict deadlines, working in a crisis, team work, recognizing different people with different culture, and

tolerance. It has ignited my creative thinking and devising solutions to global challenges especially youth oriented. My respect and thanking to New Zealand for the good work!