

My Learning Experiences as iEARN-Adobe Youth Voices Learner



I am **Bukirwa Rhamulah** a student at PMM Girls School, Jinja, Uganda. I am an iEARN student participating in the Adobe Youth Voices (AYV) Project.

I joined AYV in the late 2009 although I actively started participating in 2010 after attending the second AYV-face-to-face workshop which was held at Gayaza High School, Kampala from 11th to 15th January 2010. During the workshop, I was inspired by the testimonies of AYV alumni youths who shared their experiences at the first Adobe Youth Voices Summit held in California, USA. I took it as an eye opener. I left the workshop knowing that there were many things I could do other than living in the small world that I thought I had understood.

At school, the AYV members used to meet once in a while and we would discuss the way forward. We made a draft action plan in which we included organizing a face-to-face workshop which was one of our major activities. Our AYV site was able to organize the workshop where two other AYV sites in Jinja - Kakira Senior Secondary School and Jinja Senior Secondary School - were invited to participate. During the workshop, the students who had participated in the previous workshop at Gayaza High School were given an opportunity to share their experiences with the rest.

Though I participated in the Gayaza AYV workshop, there were certain skills and knowledge that remained for me to learn like the differences between a storyline and a story board and some important skills in media editing using Adobe Elements. The workshop we organized at our site therefore was an opportunity to fill the gaps.

With time I was able to produce my own media called, *A Fact File of Child Abuse*. I got the inspiration for this media from a poem that I had written some time back about the poor Ugandan child:

The Poor Ugandan Child

Oh what a child
My God!!!!
I mean
The poor Ugandan
Child.

Whose life is full
Of nothing but
Poverty!!

Life on the street
Lying on the street
Gabbage is the food
His life full of nothing
But poverty
Oh the poor Ugandan child.



Jinja Senior Secondary School AYV learners creating a web during a face-to-face workshop at PMM Girls' AYV site – 7th March 2010.

Since I was in school I wanted to use the resources available around the school environment. I made up my mind to piece up bits of newspaper headlines, comments and information from *The New Vision* (A leading daily in my country) from our school's library.

I faced a challenge of slow Internet in that whenever I needed to get information I was at times hampered by its slow speed. I and my mates were also heavily challenged by the need to balance time between our AYV work and the regular school (class) work. Among the many challenges that I faced, I think lack of support from fellow students was the most challenging because I had to learn how to accept other views that were contrary to mine.

I also got a chance to talk briefly about the AYV Project during our school's science fair which is held every year. On the strength of my media, I was invited by SchoolNet Uganda to give a testimony of my experiences as an AYV peer Educator on 18th August 2010, at a workshop organized for secondary school administrators held at

Gayaza High School. I felt honored and happy at the opportunity of addressing and showcasing my media to school administrators.

Then on 15th September 2010, I and my friend, Nakabugo Samantha, were invited by the Rotary Club of Jinja to talk at the club's fellowship about Adobe Youth Voices and our experiences under the theme:

'Project Based Learning Using 21st Century Skills – The Experiences of iEARN-Adobe Youth Voices Learners of PMM Girls' Site'

All these have been big successes for me but none of them compares to that when I almost developed wings after learning that my media, **A Fact File of Child Abuse**, was among the best 20 media and selected to be included in the DVD for the iEARN-AYV sites for the 2009-2010 cycle. I now feel that my media is beginning to impact on the community and I hope there is going to be a positive change.

Behind every success there are always people. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank iEARN and SchoolNet Uganda for empowering the youth with skills to express them selves freely on issues concerning them using 21st Century skills, the PMM Girls' School administration for always being supportive whenever we needed their help, our educator, Chole Richard for he is always there to show us the way and to guide us, The New Vision for letting me use their information freely for my media, the AYV Project because before I joined it, I had never dreamt or even thought of receiving audience from school administrators or Rotarians and now the audience is worldwide. I am eager to learn more and share the little I know to my fellow peers.

“Winners never quit and quitters never win” That's my motto.

Bukirwa Rhamulah
**iEARN - Adobe Youth Voices Learner,
PMM Girls' Site, Jinja,
Uganda.**