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By
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The time I spent in WACSI as an intern from January to July 2013 was a memorable one for me as it was rich in experience sharing and helped me discover my potential. I have had so many rich experiences and opportunities that I personally believe will forever shape and influence my professional life while fostering personal growth and development.

In this report, I hope to highlight the enormous opportunities offered by WACSI to young people from various countries in West Africa wishing to pursue a career in the domain of Civil Society. In my desire to write this report, I have in no way any claim to come out with a perfect piece of work.

These few details lead me to realize that, like all human endeavours, this report is not perfect and may contain errors and shortcomings. Thus, I remain open to all criticisms and suggestions which could present me with new sources of inspiration as I develop in my ability to research and learn.

This report would not have been possible without the contribution and collaboration of others. My sincere gratitude:

- To Almighty God who granted me health and long life, without which I could not have finished this internship report;
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- To The Head of Department for Capacity Building, Charles Vandyck for his technical support and constant supervision which contributed immensely to my personal development. I also thank him for his guidance which was a remarkable force that enabled me to successfully complete the internship program;
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- To the rest of the WACSI staff for their support and guidance which helped me to overcome the challenges I faced during the past six months in WACSI.

To all of you, I extend my deepest gratitude.
LISTE OF ACRONYMS

CSO: Civil Society Organisation
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
OSIWA: Open Society Initiative for West Africa
RtoP: Responsibility to Protect
WACSI: West Africa Civil Society Institute
AMPCAN: African Movement for the Prevention of Child of Abuse and Neglect
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Next Generation Internship Programme instituted by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) aims at developing the skills of young Africans to contribute to the development of the civil society sector. The executive summary gives an overview of my six months internship which includes the activities, meetings and experiences. Below is a summary of my experience.

During my six months internship in WACSI, I worked with the Capacity Building and Research and Documentation Units. I also assisted in organising and coordinating activities for the Institute, (Personal Productivity Skills, Resource Mobilisation and Proposal Writing, Introduction to Policy Advocacy & Engagement and Policy Research Methodology & Analysis, Development Partners Meeting, Civil Society Forum on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism ct in Ghana, Planning Meeting of Civil Society Actors in West Africa + Cameroon towards an annual West Africa Civil Society Conference).

Reflecting on my experience at WACSI, the internship programme has made immeasurable impacts in my aptitude in varied fields such as: Team work, Report writing/Analytical writing, Organisational and intercultural competence, Programme Organisation and Coordination. The internship programme has broadened my knowledge base, which was made possible through my participation in the various workshops organised by the institute and my interaction with participants at the workshop.

It has been a wonderful experience in WACSI and I recommend the institute organises more of such programmes and workshops to widen its sphere of operation. It will be of much benefit to the institute if it continues to create similar platforms for young people across West Africa as a way of building their capacity and bringing them to appreciate the civil society sector and share in the vision.
NEXT GENERATION INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

During my six (6) months internship, I had the opportunity to work in three (3) very active departments, namely: Departments of Capacity Building, Advocacy Policy and Research and Documentation. Working in these departments, was for me a period of knowledge acquisition and experience through the activities below:

Below are some key activities I participated in:

➤ **Trainings**
I supported both Capacity Building and Policy Advocacy Units in the conduct of three trainings (Personal Productive Skills, Resource Mobilisation and Proposal Writing, Introduction to Policy Advocacy & Engagement and Policy Research Methodology & Analysis). My contribution consisted of logistic support during the training by providing all necessary training materials to trainers and participants. I also wrote Post Evaluation Reports at the end of training:

- **Personal Productivity Skills**  
  That training permitted me to know how to become an effective manager and enable me to explain the positive attitude and behaviour that should be followed in the workplace. It also allowed me to assess my own effectiveness, and identify the skills needed to improve my own effectiveness, and to set a plan for personal development.

- **Resource Mobilisation and Proposal Writing**  
  The training took place at WACSI Training Center in Accra-Ghana from May 6-8, 2013. This training enabled me to know the art of writing the call for proposal and also the project preparation cycle.

- **Introduction to Policy Advocacy & Engagement and Policy Research Methodology & Analysis**  
  The training organized by Policy Advocacy Unit in WACSI training centre May 6-11, 2013 in Accra, Ghana enabled me to acquire knowledge on Research methods in formative and summative evaluation.

- **NGO Management training at the United States Embassy**  
  That training has enhanced my skill and ability to use Google for my research.

➤ **Meetings and Conferences**
- Development Partners meeting
- Civil Society Forum on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Act in Ghana
- Planning Meeting of Civil Society Actors in West Africa + Cameroon towards an annual West Africa Civil Society Conference

➤ **Expert Database**
In order to increase the number and quality of its resource persons, the institute has been renewing its expert database. Under the technical supervision of the Capacity
Building Unit Officer, I worked as part of a team which was tasked to gather profiles of new experts, compile them and put them onto the Institute’s website.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ACQUIRED**

The internship has changed my life on a professional level in that it allowed me to learn new skills and enhance my personal skills. For me, these achievements are the direct result of the effort invested in me by WACSI so that I may also impact on other communities in need of leadership and the society as a whole.

**Among the countless achievements are:**

- **English language training:**
  WACSI is a centre for exchange of ideas and for me to be well grounded in English, I was given the unique opportunity by the institute to improve on my English by enrolling me in a Language Institute. This kind gesture from WACSI has groomed my professional life because it has heightened my ability to make public speeches.

- **Leadership Development:**
  My leadership ability has drastically improved because I now have the necessary tools required of a leader. This opportunity to enhance my skills is partly due to the different sessions organised by colleagues for trainees.

Below is a list of training sessions I benefitted from:

- **Achieving results, writing excellent proposals and reports**
  Through this session I now know how to write a report or a proposal taking into account: the title, the summary of the position of the problem, the plan, appendix and bibliography.

- **Project Management**
  The theme developed in this session particularly helped me to improve my knowledge in project management, specifically the different types of project definitions.

- **Front Desk**
  This session helped me to acquire some knowledge of the characteristics of a good receptionist, such as:
  1 - Always pick up the phone with your left hand;
  2 - Always start with a greeting and mention the name of the company you are speaking from;
  3 - Never hang up first on a caller;
  4 - Do not shower praises on a visitor.
• *The use of websites in communication*
  This session helped me to do a self-assessment of my communication skills especially when it comes to conveying important messages to an unknown audience. I also learnt how to use the Internet or a website to effectively communicate a message to an audience.

• *Spotlight on key administrative and financial policies*
  The sub-themes developed in this session were relevant and very practical. One of the sub-themes that helped me the most is financing and types of budget.

• *Budget preparation, forecasting and cash analysis*
  This session was useful and helped me to acquire some crucial knowledge of budget proposals, especially during the implementation of a project.

• *Building effective research skills*
  This session showed me research techniques that I knew. It led to the development of a proposal for a research paper on Guinea entitled *The Role of Guinean civil society organisations in the 2010 presidential elections*.

• *Training and Facilitation Skills*
  This session was very relevant and seemed to have been prepared just for me. I especially got to know what the difference between Training and Facilitation is:

  **Training:**  
  T- Tell  
  E- Expert  
  A- Accept  
  C- Confirm  
  H- Hear

  **Facilitation:**  
  L- Listening  
  E- Experience  
  A- Actually use  
  R- Reflecting/resourceful  
  N- Never neutral
To enhance my knowledge and skills, WACSI gave me the opportunity to intern with an organisation called African Movement for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (AMPCAN) to acquire work experience in the field of child rights for a period of a month.

**About AMPCAN**

African Movement for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (AMPCAN) is a national non-governmental organisation that focuses on promoting the rights of children and their protection from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The organisation was registered in February 2008 in Ghana as the local affiliate of the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), a Pan African organisation network of national chapters and organisations that work towards promoting greater understanding and respect for the rights of Africa's children. The regional body was founded in 1986 and has its headquarters in Nairobi Kenya.

**Mission:**
The mission is to improve the welfare of the Ghanaian child and to enhance opportunities for the development of their full potential.

**Vision:**
The vision is a Ghanaian society in which the rights of children are upheld.

**Objectives:**
- To act as a national centre for the protection and prevention of child abuse and neglect;
- To facilitate promotion, defence and advocacy of children’s rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the Children’s Act;
- To collaborate and network with organisations having ideals similar to those of AMPCAN;
- To create awareness on child abuse and child protection issues in Ghana, where appropriate, initiate actions to restore normalcy and to create a safer environment for the optimal growth of the child;
- To provide legal aid and, where necessary, institute litigation for child victims of abuse and neglect or those in conflict with the law;
- To empower communities to protect their children from abuse and neglect;
- To work to address the basic causes of abuse and neglect including poverty.
Current Activities

- Child Rights Advocacy and Child Rights Clubs
- Improving Children’s Access to Education with Materials and Equipment
- Care reform Initiative
- Exchange of Personnel Programme
- Child Helpline International

Professional Experience and New Learning Areas:

During my stay in AMPCAN, I learned a lot about children:
- Educational outreach through the creation of children's clubs
- The integration of children in conflicts with the law
- The protection of children

I also worked on Child Helpline project for Ghana.
CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

During my internship in WACSI, I encountered some difficulties which include:

- Lack of availability of some colleagues to share their knowledge with interns:
  WACSI is a centre for exchange of ideas and experiences among practitioners of civil society.

In link with this purpose, the next generation internship program offers opportunity to young people to acquire knowledge and improve their skills in the civil society area. However, some staff members are not usually available; what prevents interns to approach them for requests for clarification.

- Lack of attention towards interns during holidays:
  Interns are from various countries, so they are far from their parents and friends. WACSI has therefore become their family in Ghana. However, interns do not receive attention from staff on special occasions or during holidays.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning the way forward to strengthening civil society setup in West Africa and ensure continuity of its mandates is for the Institute to:

- Enable more young people from French countries in West Africa to benefit from the internship programme at WACSI.
- Develop toolkits and organise foundational training courses in advocacy and research documentation for interns.
- Interns should not be overlooked in terms of privileges accrued to staff especially after trainings.
- Organise various scheduled trainings in Francophone countries.
- Establish corporate relationship with tertiary institutions within the sub-region. In this regard, the institute could use this platform to engage the students in its programmes and other activities such as writing publications for the WACSERIES.
- Partner with credible Civil Society Organisations to develop a regional integration program for Tertiary Students within the sub-region.
CONCLUSION

WACSI’s internship programme has offered me a great opportunity to grow and develop. It has propelled me to be able to overcome challenges and develop my career. I learnt extensively about civil society, the relevance of civil society to state building, promotion of democratic values, human rights, rule of law and sustainable developmental processes in West Africa. The programme has enhanced my critical thinking and analytical skills as well as improved my professional and ability to work in a multicultural environment.

Working in WACSI as an intern was not only an honour and privilege but a lifelong experience that will forever shape my professional life. This great experience is incomparable to other internship experiences I had in the past. The Executive Director has inspired me to serve rather than expect to be served by subordinates.

I am very appreciative of this opportunity and forever grateful to WACSI for giving the opportunity to not work as an intern but also enabled me enhance my English – this I believe epitomised my intern experience in WACSI.