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USAID Supports Intern at Kenyan Energy Regulator to Learn 'Soft Skills' and Reach Career Goals

March 2018 – Finding success in any career field requires more than formal education – you need to learn how to be effective in the workplace. These “soft skills” – managing relationships with coworkers and superiors, time management and creative problem solving – are a necessary part of career growth. Such skills go together with what is learned in a classroom.

Margaret Jeruiyot Ayabei knows this lesson well. Reflecting on her experience as an intern at the Kenya Energy Regulatory Commission, she said that the soft skills she learned as an intern would help her reach her goals and advance the goals of her future employers.

“Having these skills will help create a good working environment where I work, making it easier to venture in the sector easily. They will ensure continuous and steady growth in my career and that of organizations I will work for,” she said.

Margaret is in the first cohort of young women participating in the Women in Energy Regulation Internship Program, which fosters interest and advances career opportunities for young women in energy regulation. Supported by USAID’s Energy Division and Power Africa and implemented by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the program aims to help young women like Margaret build necessary skills to pursue careers at regulatory agencies, electric utilities, and other organizations.

“The internship has boosted my interest in the energy sector; it has been a motivating factor to work extra hard to achieve my career goals and make a positive change to the society through solving problems related to energy,” Margaret said.

Margaret’s goals include addressing water scarcity and improving the life of women through clean energy, and her time studying electrical engineering at the Technical University of Kenya put her on that path. She has also trained in solar photovoltaic installation and interned at energy companies in Kenya before coming to the ERC.

The training at the ERC, though, has been much more practical and hands-on, Margaret said. At the commission, she interacts directly with industry players and can learn different disciplines in both technical and non-technical areas. She also said that interns are substantively involved in the work of their respective departments and that she receives guidance and mentorship from supervisors.

“There is continuous assessment of interns’ performance and room for employment if a vacancy arises,” she said. From here, Margaret will work to obtain the necessary licenses to be successful in the energy sector, carrying the skills learned through the Women in Energy Regulation Internship Program with her.

“My career goal is to help individuals, institutions and organizations to achieve their highest potential, vision and mission through quality service,” she said.

This story is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of NARUC and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.