

RITA ABEGAO
Tanzania Alumni 2004



My experience with YCI has been one of personal growth. It has allowed me not only to learn about other cultures, meet some amazing people and be an active global citizen. But it has also enlightened me to my own strengths, given me self-confidence, and helped prepare me for a career in international development.

In September of 2004, I was one of YCI's first volunteers to go to Africa. We spent three months in Tanzania working with a local organization called *Africa Alive!*

We lived and worked in a village in the interior of the country, carrying out various HIV/AIDS education initiatives.

By project end, we had successfully implemented three workshops for the leaders of five surrounding villages, organized two community health days and one primary school health day, initiated youth clubs for primary schools in the surrounding area, and participated in World AIDS Day events.

Since returning, I have continued to volunteer with HIV/AIDS initiatives and help promote volunteerism. I have given various presentations to schools talking about my experience with YCI in Africa and the importance of global citizenship. As new volunteers go off to continue the work in Tanzania, I have been part of the pre-departure sessions, offering advice and tips for their oncoming adventures.

Recently, I have been accepted by YCI to continue working with them. I will be returning to my beloved Tanzania (!) to work with Kivulini Women's Rights Organization. My placement will be for eight months in Mwanza, where I will be joining efforts in promoting, educating and advocating for the equality of women and the end of domestic violence.

Thanks YCI for all the great work you do, and for the opportunity you've given me and other volunteers.

And with that, my new adventure begins...!