

# PRINCETON IN AFRICA

## Final Report

This report focuses on your observations, reactions, realizations, and insights after completion of your fellowship. It will be shared with board members and future Fellows and used to improve the quality of fellowships. We hope it will help you to continue processing your time in Africa. We encourage you to make additions in the form of personal letters, a collection of anecdotes, photos, etc., and you are encouraged to draw conclusions or highlight observations with additional commentary as well as simply relating events.

Please indicate when information is not to be shared outside of PiAf and rest assured that we will honor your request.

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### Your Personal Information

Organization: Indego Africa  
City, Country: Kigali, Rwanda

What do you plan to do next? Please be specific! (e.g., attend Harvard Med, be a barista at Starbucks, teach English in Cameroon, etc.) – I am working at the Clinton Health Access Initiative in Rwanda

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### Your Travel and Other Logistical Information

- How will you travel when you depart your host country? Please be specific in terms of what airlines(s), what cities you will fly to/from, how much your ticket cost (was this travel part of a roundtrip you purchased earlier?) how did you find/purchase your tickets, etc.  
*I was able to fly home using air miles on South African Airways. Thus, my ticket was free which is great since another one-way ticket would have been quite expensive.*
- Any travel tips to share with future Fellows?  
*I recommend booking a round-trip when you start. Even though you can only book a round-trip a year out, it's worth the money to book it and just incur a change fee if you decide to change your departure date later in your fellowship. For Rwanda, the difference between booking a round-trip and booking two separate one-way flights is around \$700-\$1,000.*
- Did you experience any health problems during your stay in Africa?  
*Yes, many. I had spent a fair bit of time in East Africa before and never had health issues, but this year was different. I had a lot of stomach infections, parasites, Amoebas, intestinal worms – everything stomach related.*
- Have you utilized the health insurance PiAf or your host organization provided you? Please describe any interactions or experiences—positive or negative—you have had with your health insurance company or policy. Please include the name of the provider in your response.  
*I was still covered under my parent's insurance so PiAf's insurance wouldn't accept my claims given that I have another insurance option. The insurance reimbursement process was very time-consuming and I am still waiting to be reimbursed for all my clinic visits. They won't give back full repayment and take a long time to process claims. They also require very specific information about the clinic visit for validation – thus, several times I had to return to the clinic to get more information to submit for insurance.*

5. Did you take anti-malarials during your fellowship? If so, what kind and how/where did you acquire them?  
*No, malaria is pretty rare in Kigali. I figured it's better to take the slim chance of getting malaria rather than having the negative health side effects of being on malaria medication for another year.*
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## Your Work

6. Please summarize all of the work you did this year as you would on your résumé or CV.
- *Spearheaded Indego's attempts to establish relationships with local and national Government of Rwanda (GoR) officials*
  - *Secured Indego's international NGO registration in Rwanda for the 2012-2013 fiscal year*
  - *Assisted in administrative functions such as hiring new Indego employees and preparing quarterly financial summary reports*
  - *Conducted Indego Africa's annual 'Social Impact Assessment' and statistically analyzed multi-year data to determine yearly progress*
  - *Led communications by writing blogs, interviewing and profiling female artisans, and preparing fundraising materials*
  - *Mentored and managed a team of 16 Rwandan university students who teach entrepreneurship skills at Indego Africa's cooperatives*
  - *Took the lead role in planning, managing and implementing special workshops for Indego Africa's partner artisans including:*
    - *'Occupational Health Workshop' teaching the women how to avoid work-related injuries*
    - *Sexual Health educational workshop*
7. How would you evaluate your work? How might you have been more effective?  
*I was able to do several large-scale projects at Indego Africa that were very fulfilling and challenging. However, I think my work would have been far more effective if I had been given more responsibility and challenges throughout my fellowship. I also came to Indego Africa at a time of extreme transition where the whole team was in adaptation mode for the first half of my fellowship, so the first half of the fellowship wasn't as fulfilling as it could have been.*
8. List the three things that you are most proud of contributing to your partner organization over the past year.
- 1.) *I am proud that I taught at an Indego Africa partner cooperative for a year and was able to gain a lot of insight into what parts of the Indego Africa training curriculum are beneficial and which need to be updated to better meet the needs of the women.*
  - 2.) *I am proud that I successfully organized all components of Indego Africa workshops targeting over 500 women in 4 districts in Rwanda. This was time-consuming and had many moving parts, such as projecting and managing a budget, hiring trainers, coordinating logistics, and doing M&E in the aftermath. I think I helped establish a successful template for Indego's workshops.*
  - 3.) *I enjoyed the chance to be part of the M&E process by conducting Indego's Social Impact Assessment and analyzing data afterwards. Additionally, I added my qualitative feedback on the progress I have seen in the women over the past year.*
9. Looking back at your 3-month report, question number 10 asks, "What goals do you have for your work in the next 6 months?" What were these goals and did you accomplish them? Did you continue to reevaluate these goals throughout your fellowship year and if so, how?
- *Goals were: Since there has been a great deal of upheaval and uncertainty at Indego Africa with the abrupt departure of our Country Director, I hope that things will stabilize and I will be assigned more*

*long-term projects rather than just pitching in on a daily basis wherever help is needed. I want to truly spearhead my own project. I hope to successfully lead and conduct the Sexual Health Workshop that will be held at all Indego cooperatives. I hope to take over more programmatic responsibilities at Indego, such as leading the Generation Rwanda Trainers who teach at Indego's cooperatives.*

- *I did achieve my goals. Things at Indego stabilized and I was able to take on several long-term, larger-responsibility projects that tested me and helped build my skillset. I was able to successfully lead the Sexual health and Occupational Health workshop. I also took on more programmatic responsibilities.*

10. What kind of a person would do well in this fellowship or one like it? Do you have any specific advice for future Fellows who are interested in this position?

*Definitely needs to be someone who is very flexible. There will not be a concrete job description and there will not be much in-country leadership or guidance. Thus, it needs to be someone who is willing to take initiative, create their own projects, and able to be flexible to help out various members of the team when needed. For future fellows, I would say that Indego Africa is a great place to work, but the structure in place with the Rwandan office team leadership means that there will be little to no professional mentorship or guidance, so if that is something you are looking for, this is not the post for you!*

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## Your Reflections

11. During PiAf's Pre-departure Orientation in May 2012, you listed three things you hoped to gain from your experience as a PiAf Fellow. What were they? You re-addressed these goals at the retreat in March 2013. What were these goals at around the halfway point of your fellowship? (To refresh your memory, we have recently emailed these to you.) Did you achieve these goals? How has your fellowship affected other personal and professional goals you have/will set for the future?

### Orientation Goals

*1. Gain experience in field of international development → definitely gained experience in international development and specifically social enterprise.*

*2. Solidify what aspect of African development I hope to pursue in the future → I learned that I enjoy social enterprise and more generally using business models to tackle poverty. This year confirmed that I want to pursue an MBA in the future and gain a strong business-related skillset, leveraging those skills to effectively and sustainably tackle poverty. For now, my fellowship year helped guide me to another job that uses business solutions to combat poverty, this time in the health sector.*

*3. Form deep friendships → DEFINITELY achieved this. Made great Rwandan and expat friends who I will most definitely stay in touch with. Was able to see different aspects of Rwandan culture through making close local friends and meeting their families.*

### Retreat Goals

*Make a lasting impact at my organization and form lasting ties with our female beneficiaries → I feel I made an impact in the programmatic sphere at Indego, and formed very deep relationships with Indego's female artisan partners*

*Make impact through initiating a program/project/activity that will last after I leave the org. (At least 1 project/program) → Successfully set the model for future workshops*

*Take initiative/ownership over all stages of the program → Yes, achieved through Sexual Health and Occupational Health workshop. Took ownership of the whole program*

*Work with others at my org so that they understand the project, value it and thus will continue it after I leave → Everyone, Rwanda and NY team, understood importance.*

12. What did you find most inspiring about/during your fellowship experience?

*The most inspiring thing for me was interacting with Indego Africa's female artisan partners. Forming close relationships with these women, and seeing their perseverance and generosity in spite of the many challenges they face on a daily basis, was very inspirational and helped to contextualize my own life.*

13. What have you learned about your own values and worldview through living abroad this year?  
*I have learned that I will never be content pursuing a job merely because it pays well. I have also learned that I like being in-country in development efforts, directly interacting with the people I seek to help. Moreover, I have realized that I believe in taking more of a business approach to poverty alleviation rather than purely charitable approaches that often fail.*
14. Looking back, what does PiAf mean to you? How did this experience affect you? What did you learn or gain from your fellowship? (This is another chance for you to give us good fodder for our marketing materials!) ;)  
*Princeton in Africa has truly been an incredible, life-changing, and very formative experience. Without PiAf, I'm sure there would be little to no chance to get to Africa in a professional capacity right out of university. PiAf provided the opportunity to not just volunteer abroad, but to have a real job that was challenging and gave insight into what it is like to be a working professional in Sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond my professional growth and gaining insight on my future career plans, I was able to form deep relationships with Rwandese colleagues and friends. This year has been incredible and is something I will not soon forget.*
15. What will you miss the most once your fellowship has ended?  
*Hands down the people. My colleagues, female beneficiaries, and friends in Kigali truly made this experience what it was. I will miss them, with their humor, generosity, hospitality and warmth.*
16. Are there a number of things in your life that once seemed unusual but now seem normal? Please share a few...  
*Taking a motorcycle around terrified me at first but now seems completely normal. Being the only American in a group of Rwandese friends at first seemed culturally strange and made me aware of being different, but now seems quite normal.*
17. What perceptions of Americans/expats have you encountered while in Africa? Are there any common misconceptions?  
*I have encountered lots of perceptions, especially regarding American women. Many men have misguided notions of American women as being very free and interested in casual sexual relationships (likely got these perceptions from movies and TV shows they watch). This was difficult when interacting with males who assumed that friendliness meant something else. Other perceptions included that all Americans are wealthy, so money is no issue. Also, that all parts of America are perfect and developed, which is certainly not the case.*
18. What misconceptions do Americans/foreigners generally have about the country in which you are living?  
*I think that Americans tend to make everything about the genocide in Rwanda and see it as a place of suffering, sadness and little hope. That is certainly far from the truth – the genocide is an indelible part of Rwanda and always will be, but there is a lot of hope, energy and joy in this beautiful country!*
19. If you could go back to the start of your fellowship year and do anything differently, would you? If so, what? What do you know now that you wish you had known at the beginning of your PiAf fellowship?  
*I would try to be more assertive about taking on work responsibilities at the start of my fellowship. Since my organization was undergoing radical change when I first arrived, I didn't want to rock the boat more by demanding more responsibility or trying to take on big projects. Thus, I would try to create my sphere of work responsibility earlier.*
20. Do you have any specific suggestions for improving your fellowship position or Princeton in Africa fellowships in general?  
*Try to work with the Indego NY team to see if they can do leadership development with the Indego Rwanda team. I think the fellowship would be far more fulfilling if the Rwandan leadership focused more on mentoring and feedback to let the fellow know how they are doing and how they can improve.*

21. After your fellowship year, do you feel more, less, or equally committed to a career that involves Africa? Do you feel more, less or equally committed to being involved in Africa in your personal life? Please explain.

*I think probably the same, meaning that I am still very committed to a career that involves Africa. But instead of seeing that as a career in the NGO sector in Rwanda, I am fairly sure I want that future career path to involve approaching Africa's development from a business perspective. Definitely more committed to being involved in Africa in my personal life – I'm sure if I move back to the States I will desperately seek out East African friends and cultural activities!*

22. How do you think Princeton in Africa board members and staff helped you over the year—or could have helped you more? Do you have any specific suggestions for improving interactions with the PiAf office or program representatives?

*I think the PiAf staff was helpful over the year, especially when I had issues with my visa and almost got kicked out of Rwanda. However, while the PiAf staff was extremely helpful when visa problems got bad, I wish that PiAf staff and my org (Indego) had better consulted beforehand to figure out the visa challenges I was going to face rather than just reacting in the case of crisis. For the future, I think the PiAf staff needs to take Rwanda visa challenges seriously from the start, and be assured they can successfully secure before sending over new fellows.*

23. Any other comments/suggestions to share?

*This year was great, thanks so much to PiAf. And the retreat in particular was fabulous – highly recommend it for all future fellow groups!*