

WHAT GRACE HAS MEANT FOR ME.

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So far the journey with GRACE has been a life changing one and has meant several things for me. I will summarize this in point form since there is so much to write about.

Capacity building in research-The capacity building in GRACE research has been one of a kind. Not even the kind offered in some of the best Universities in the world, and this I say with a sincere heart. I did research in school but that was nothing compared to what I have gained in the GRACE journey. I just wish we met more frequently or longer for the same, but thanks to the coordinators for the books provided including the GRACE readers which have helped me continue with the process of learning. The internet communications has also facilitated this learning process. My capacity has increased tremendously in research methodologies, writing, awareness of women's issues, ICTs, research for change etc.

Mentorship- I have gained from mentorship relationships and advice from the GRACE coordinators and researchers in the network. Their continuous communication and support through this process has been positively transforming. I have also become a mentor to several young people.

Networking- GRACE has provided a space for networking through the different workshops held for members in the network. I have also been able to attend several other sharing and presentation workshops and conferences and established networks with different organizations and research teams.

Opportunity for career advancement-I have experienced progression in my career in research by offering consultancy services, this has made me more grounded in gender research and opened doors for career advancement. I have also seen the publication of three papers/chapters through the first GRACE research. Other than the publications through GRACE, I have been able to publish with other networks and the publication process is unending. I am currently writing two papers and looking forward to publication of the same. Through the continuous capacity building, mentoring and reading each publication gets better and better and I can clearly see the difference between current and previous publications.

Self development - GRACE has provided me with a platform for self expression in which I have gained confidence to interact with people and share/express my opinions freely, I am no longer the shy girl who used to hold back. Interacting and sharing with different researchers in workshops and conferences has contributed to this. Reading and the self-care exercises/practices have also been of great help. I have been able to achieve some of my dreams and have developed new dreams.

Apart from these, it has been a great pleasure and wonderful opportunity meeting people from different cultures and learning from individual cultural experiences. This has enabled me to understand and embrace diversity in individual characters and behaviours.

I sincerely look forward to continuing with this journey since I believe there is still much more to learn that will enable me to impact and change my life and other people's lives.

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