

"I had the opportunity to spend 6 weeks at RIIO through my position as an intern for the Center for Academic Global Ophthalmology (CAGO) at Wills Eye Hospital. Under the supervision of Dr. Ciku, I worked on a school screening project in the Gasabo district. Over the period of about 2 months, the team screened nearly 20,000 children at schools in Gasabo and almost 5,000 more in another district. I assisted with the flow of the screening process, data collection and cleaning, and the subsequent logistics of ensuring children referred to RIIO were identified for follow-up. Working on a team of junior and senior ophthalmic clinical officers (OCOs) was one of my favorite parts of the experience, particularly watching the development of the junior OCOs' clinical skills and their increasing interests in rural eye care over the course of the study. The camaraderie and enthusiasm of the team made every screening day a positive experience, despite the challenges often encountered in the field setting.

Being involved in a public health project with such strong organization and the potential to significantly impact the community has reinforced my interest in conducting research at this scale in the future. Dr. Ciku also provided mentorship in other research pursuits, allowing me to contribute to reports ranging from a Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness (RAAB) study to the social impact of the vision screening project.

At the end of my internship, I had the opportunity to accompany Dr. John on a cataract outreach trip in Gisenyi, where I watched manual small incision cataract surgery (MSICS) and helped write notes during and after the procedures. Dr. Ciku and Dr. John's ability to seamlessly incorporate community service and a commitment to teaching the next generation of ophthalmologists into RIIO's mission has inspired me as I begin medical school this year and continue to pursue interests in global eye care."



-Olivia M. Hess: CAGO Intern 2019

