

#ProudtogrowwithAdvans

International Women's Day 2018

Advans employs over **2,500 female professionals** and empowers over **375,000 female clients**

This year, for International Women's Day, Advans asked some key female staff members to talk about their experience at Advans, their own professional goals, and what advice they would give to other women looking to advance their career.



Estelle Darie
Executive Director, AMRET

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

I am an Executive Director at Amret, so I am back in an affiliate after a three year phase at the group's head office. My days are all different, made up of various steering committees, working sessions on operational projects, problem solving discussions, performance reviews or capacity building sessions.

I would say that my days are all very busy and often full of surprises! This variety and the richness of the exchanges with my team members, colleagues and clients make me happy to go to the office every day and contribute to the success of Amret and the Advans Group.

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

Advans, since its creation, has offered me the opportunity to work in various positions (support, operational management), different worlds (in Ghana, Tanzania, France, Cambodia), to learn a lot, often by doing, and to face various problem solving issues.

What do you want to accomplish while working at Advans and how will Advans help you reach that goal ?

I want to participate in proving, through the success of the group, that we can operate responsibly in microfinance in a sustainable manner, that we can all win, staff, investors and clients, implementing a humane and professional corporate culture.

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

I would tell them that we have to give ourselves the means to follow our dreams, and we should always choose a work environment that corresponds to our personal values. It's so much easier to work and contribute when you believe in what you do and who you do it with ...



Solène le Bleis
Investment Officer,
Advans International

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

I am an Investment Officer for Advans International. I support Advans affiliates in their governance and funding activities, as well as in defining their strategy. A viable and well-managed microfinance institution is more capable of meeting the needs of its clients. These customers, the micro, small and medium-sized enterprises served by Advans, are at the heart of the local economic market and therefore bring sustainable economic development for the countries in which the Advans Group is present. That is what motivates me on a daily basis

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

Before joining Advans, I worked for a microfinance investment company in the Netherlands, an organisation that finances microfinance institutions. With Advans, I had the opportunity to improve my knowledge of operations and business. Advans institutions face multiple external and internal challenges, and it is through constant innovation that they overcome them. The innovative nature of the group also appeals to me and is one of the aspects I wish to develop in my career.

What do you like about working in microfinance and being part of the Advans Group ?

I particularly appreciate the work environment at Advans. My colleagues, within the group's affiliates and in Paris, are committed and resilient and this motivates me even more!

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

Have faith in yourself!

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Anaïs Joseph
 Risk Officer, Advans
 International

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

I work part-time as a Risk Officer, providing technical assistance to affiliate risk departments and oversee the Advans Group's risk exposures, including credit risk, operational and compliance risk, country risk. The other half of the time, I work in the Organisation unit of the Operations Department where I work on different operational projects (currently, the reliability of banking software data and credit scoring). Apart from the direct impact that our activities have on our final beneficiaries, I really appreciate the contact with my colleagues in the affiliates, it is very rewarding to contribute to the development of their skills and to help them achieve their professional goals.

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

Through Advans, I was able to take specialised training in microfinance risk management. I have also learned a lot in terms of working remotely with teams on the field, cultural sensitivity and coaching and training practices.

What do you want to accomplish while working at Advans and how will Advans help you reach that goal?

I wish to continue to develop my expertise in the field of risk management. This year, I have had the opportunity to begin to contribute to projects within the Operations Department, and I hope to be able to seize other opportunities in other departments to better master the various aspects of the microfinance business.

What do you like about working in microfinance and being part of the Advans Group ?

The opportunity to discover different cultures and countries, and to work for a company that promotes the economic development of the private sector in our countries of intervention. I really like working at Advans because the work atmosphere is particularly enjoyable, and there are several opportunities for career development.

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

The ideal would be to work in a company where you feel at ease, where women are valued. It's important to be surrounded and to be inspired by other motivated women who are successful in their field. Finally, you have to define your own values and your own expectations in terms of your professional and personal career, so that you can make the right decisions at the right time.



Elizabeth Odetayo
 Chief Finance Officer,
 Advans Nigeria

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

I am currently the Chief Finance Officer of La Fayette Microfinance Bank. My daily activities include the coordination of the Finance Department of my institution, the follow up of the performance of Treasury functions and reporting. I also provide support to other senior management in the institution including the CEO. What motivates me in working for Advans is the institution's reputation which promotes team spirit and also offers opportunities for career advancement!

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

My job at Advans has greatly enhanced my interpersonal and professional skills.

What do you want to accomplish while working at Advans and how will Advans help you reach that goal?

Working at Advans, my goal for the future is to spend my time trying to develop my team members. skills while achieving Advans' goals. It will be interesting for me to model a result-oriented team of go-getters, to move through the company and have a long and fulfilling career path with Advans.

On a personal note, I hope that through demonstrating my ability to lead my team and achieve targets will enable me to be considered for an executive position.

What do you like about working in microfinance and being part of the Advans Group?

Working in a Microfinance bank and being a member of the Advans Group has given me the opportunity to contribute to reducing and alleviating poverty, and enhancing economic development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

My advice to women looking to advance their career would be that they stay focused and hardworking. They should understand that hard work will help them to make their dreams become a reality. Additionally, they should try to learn as much as they can in any field they have chosen. However, it's important for them not to forget to balance their career with their personal lives.

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Jana Kadian
 Managing Director, Advans Myanmar

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

Advans Myanmar started operations beginning of 2017 and I am fortunate to be its first Managing Director. Starting an institution in a new country, building a team and creating a new Advans family is a challenging and deeply rewarding experience. My daily motivation comes from knowing that the work the Advans Myanmar team is doing has a clear and valuable purpose.

Advans Myanmar will improve lives of thousands of rural people in Myanmar by giving them access to financial services that are fair, sustainable and designed with their specific needs in mind.

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

I joined the Advans Group after working 13 years in microfinance management. Nevertheless, starting a greenfield microfinance institution with the Advans Group has been a unique opportunity and both an exciting and humbling experience. I am still learning to understand the Myanmar culture and what motivates people, the needs of our clients and the way business is done in Myanmar.

What do you want to accomplish while working at Advans and how will Advans help you reach that goal?

My professional goal is to build a sustainable, customer-focused, and robust microfinance institution that will grow to prominence in the Myanmar market. Thankfully, as part of the Advans Group, I can rely on Advans' proven model for successful institution building. In addition, the team of professionals in Paris provides critical support through the start-up phase and expansion. On a personal level, my family and I enjoy living in the beautiful, interesting, and warm hearted place that is Mandalay.

What do you like about working in microfinance and being part of the Advans Group?

Working in microfinance is personally satisfying because my efforts help to create opportunities for people to improve their lives. That is the case both for customers, who gain access to fair financial services, as well as staff, who can build valuable, long-term careers with an institution in which they can take pride, Advans Myanmar.

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

Women in microfinance succeed in much the way men do. We build a strong skill sets by boldly taking on new challenges and committing to success. If having a family is part of one's definition of success, it will take family commitment. Microfinance can take you to parts of the world you may never have imagined exploring, and if your family sees that as the wonderful adventure that it is, rather than a sacrifice, you can all enjoy a rewarding family life.



Marie Pierre N'Guessan
 Head of HR, Advans Côte d'Ivoire

What is your current role at Advans and what do you do on a daily basis? What motivates you about working at Advans?

As Head of HR I define the HR strategy for Advans CI and ensure that fundamental HR activities are carried out. I oversee the activities of my team on different HR functions (Recruitment, Training, Payroll, Social benefits, Training and Skills Development, Staff Evaluation, Personnel Administration). I assist Managers on HR topics for their teams. My main motivation is to help the development of the skills of each employee and thus allow everyone to climb the ladder and take on more responsibilities.

How has your job at Advans impacted your career development?

During my time at Advans CI I have been given an increasing amount of responsibility, I have had the opportunity to manage more staff, benefit from the Group's technical support on various HR topics and have periodic exchanges with teams from other affiliates.

What do you want to accomplish while working at Advans and how will Advans help you reach that goal?

My goal is to help Advans CI teams become exemplary models in their respective fields, both at group level and in our industry. In addition, I want to boost the level of commitment of our staff, their motivation and the pride of belonging to Advans.

What do you like about working in microfinance and being part of the Advans Group?

Working in microfinance means helping people develop and grow their businesses. At Advans CI, special efforts are made to provide assistance adapted to the needs of local populations (Agricultural Project, Mobile Money, etc.).

What advice would you give to women looking to reach their goals?

The same as with any other staff member: to have confidence in yourself, to trust your skills, to work hard, to express your ideas and suggestions. One of the strengths of Advans is that we give equal opportunities to all, regardless of gender, age ... or any other quality.