

INTERNSHIPS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Benefits and Challenges of Interning on Community Development and Environmental Programs Abroad

With an increasing number of students taking part in internships domestically and abroad, there is a growing need for internship opportunities in more unique locations and diverse academic areas.

For millennials we also see a trend towards becoming more globally-aware, and socially conscious in a marketplace which is bringing the world of business and philanthropy together like we've never seen before.

56% Millennials would take a pay cut to work somewhere that is changing the world for the better.
(2012 study by The Intelligence Group)

93% Millennial consumers say they would buy a product because of a cause association.
(Cone Millennial Cause study 2006)

Countless studies on the Millennial generation show how the expectations for business to get more involved in addressing social issues will drive a future marketplace where skills in development become a valuable commodity!

(<http://www.mslgroup.com/insights/2014/the-future-of-business-citizenship.aspx>)

Challenges and Considerations

- **Identifying genuine projects with a good level of organization and qualified supervision** – work with trusted on-site partner who understands your requirements
- **Identifying and managing ethical issues surrounding development** – Challenge providers/partners on experience in service and their ethical stance. Good providers have staff who can all answer these questions automatically.
- **Managing onsite support and risk management standards** – ensuring you have a trusted on-site coordinator
- **Health and safety concerns that arise in rural /less developed locations** – working with established incidents and emergency procedures
- **Challenges arising from communication between cultures or language barriers** – having cultural orientations in place and coordinators experienced in dealing with Western students
- **Concern over contact with and oversight of student at the location** – establish available methods of communication and ensure a local coordinator provides 24/7 support
- **Managing student expectations** – establish the importance of learning, observation and humble appreciation and address the problem of 'savior complex'
- **Managing the expectations of host communities and organizations** – Having a coordinator who recognizes the potential for local over-expectation of the student's skills and abilities
- **Faculty/International office inexperience with advising on unknown destinations** - Request the information you need and ask partners to assist in advising, even at the inquiry stage
- **Questions surrounding the stability of political climates or ongoing turmoil with neighboring countries** – maintain an oversight on Department of State warnings. Many destinations are either stable or have only very localized problems

Placement Opportunities with Positive Impacts



Medical Internship in Belize

Working with local staff in hospitals and clinics in areas such as nursing, specific hospital departments and health education, learning about local practices, structures and approaches.



Pre-Vet Internship in South Africa

Working with local veterinarians involved with game movement, wildlife reserve management and habitat conservation, exploring the challenges of urbanization.



NGO Development Internship in Thailand

Write reports, run English training sessions, review website content, develop grant proposals and outreach to communities within the structure of an operating NGO.



Fair Trade Internship in the Ecuadorian Amazon

Community development through workshops, eco tourism projects, social media, forest conservation, support social entrepreneurship initiatives.



Sports Development Internship in Swaziland

Develop sports curriculum's for children, work with online marketing content, coach sports, community events and research impact of sports on children.



Rainforest Habitat and Wildlife Conservation in Costa Rica

Working with environmental scientists on sea turtle monitoring, species studies and tracking, and biological assessments surveys.

Benefits of Internships in Development

How do these placements benefit the student, your institution and our society?



FOR STUDENTS

PERSONALLY

- Exposes students to the reality of the issues involved in tackling social and environmental problems in the real world
- Provides an understanding of different global work contexts and issues influencing operations in development and overall in these areas of the world which are increasingly important in today's growing global economies
- Offers great personal growth through the challenge associated with adapting to less familiar, non-westernized cultures
- Opportunity for greater responsibility, involvement and achievement exists in resource-poor organizations, because the need for an intern is greater in comparison.
- Improved language and communication skills can be developed working in environments less reliant on technology

FINANCIALLY

- Scholarships are available for non-traditional locations and there is often a higher chance of getting them because there are less students applying
- Cost of living is often much cheaper in developing locations which can increase the opportunities for students worried about financial burden of going abroad

FOR FUTURE CAREERS

- Sets intern apart as a risk taker who is adaptable and willing to address challenges head on.
- Shows flexibility and important cross cultural communication skills
- Demonstrates that the student is interested in different ways of learning and new perspectives
- Marks a candidate as a good prospect for roles requiring global travel and social corporate responsibility
- Provides an interesting context for discussion that can make a candidate more appealing to interviewers



FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

- Enables you to offer for-credit options for service activities
- Expands offerings and locations
- Offers opportunities in niche academic areas and markets
- Potential to offer more low-cost program options
- Through all these factors, provide an opportunity to increase number of students going abroad by offering options to previously underrepresented sectors in study-abroad
- Increases institutional competitiveness



SOCIALLY

- Improves international and intercultural understanding
- Offers unique, first-hand experience with global issues and problems
- Develops global citizens who are more culturally aware and competent