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Un Techo para mi País
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I spent ten weeks interning at the central office of *Un Techo para mi País* (UTPMP) in Santiago, Chile. UTPMP is a youth-led Chilean NGO that builds transitional houses and implements social inclusion programs for families living in precarious slums in 19 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The central office is divided between about 75% *Un Techo para Chile* employees who work exclusively on the organization's programs in Chile, and 25% UTPMP employees who deal with every country except Chile (*Un Techo para Chile* is the precursor to UTPMP). UTPMP employees coordinate fundraising, multiple-country events, communications, constructions, and social inclusion program implementation with the employees in the regional country offices. About 60% of my time was spent writing grant applications for constructions or social inclusion programs to private companies' charitable foundations, non-corporate foundations, and international donor bodies; 25% was spent doing translations; and the remaining 15% was spent assisting my supervisor with other tasks.

Grant applications generally follow a standard line of questioning: What sort of work does your organization do? How long has it been doing it? What communities do you serve? Can you briefly describe the project for which you are requesting funding? How can you guarantee that it will produce sustainable results? And, most importantly, how much is it going to cost, to the cent? Working in fundraising means you are at the administrative heart of the organization when it comes to resources; without money, UTPMP cannot function. I had to seek out viable donors, match their funding priorities with UTPMP's programs, and craft a grant that would be viewed as worthy of funding and effective on a long-term basis.

I strengthened my writing as a result; I learned how to use buzzwords to signal certain concepts to a donor. For example, if a foundation was focused on youth, I would emphasize the organization's extensive work in mobilizing youth, and I would frame every piece of the grant around that specific issue. In my first grant, I had to become intimately acquainted with the technical specifications of a plasma water purification system UTPMP had developed. Although some grants were very similar to one another, I was afforded several very interesting and unique opportunities, such as the water purifier grant, that were different from most of the work I was doing.

With respect to how successful I think I was at the organization, it is difficult to tell for two reasons. First, statistically, most grants are rejected. Hundreds of organizations apply; only one gets the grant. As UTPMP's numbers of houses constructed and families benefitted improve, and as it becomes more visible in the international aid world, more donors are willing to fund its projects. Still, I would be happy if one out of the ten or so grants that I completed comes to fruition. One aspect of the job future interns may find challenging is the fact that you might never receive any feedback. Grants take months to gestate within the committees to whom they are directed at foundations and donor bodies. My first grant proposal will not be accepted or declined until January 2012; I turned it in on the 25th of June. Consequently, as a percentage, I do not really know whether I was successful or not.

Second, I do not think grant writers can be judged on whether they get the grant or not, but rather whether the grant puts the organization's best foot forward. I spent over a month gathering details from industrial technology firms and UTPMP's Innovation Center, and even a letter of recommendation from a scientist who had worked at the CERN facility in Switzerland, for the water purifier grant. By the time I was finished, I can say with absolute certitude that it

was the best possible product I could have produced, and I am extremely proud of that grant. However, we were one of 700 applicant organizations. If some other NGO produces a similar water purifier for one dollar less, they will receive the grant, through no fault of my own nor that of UTPMP. Overall, though, I feel that I was successful at UTPMP because I produced my best possible work. Future interns should approach the job with the same mindset so as not to become discouraged.

I hope that UTPMP benefitted from having a fluent native English speaker on staff. I revised grant templates in English, translated presentations and communications materials, and was able to assist my co-workers with anything they needed in English. I felt that one of my main imperatives was to utilize my language skills effectively, as I can write grants in both English and Spanish. I also hope that I provided UTPMP with a fresh pair of eyes from the perspective of someone who had never seen UTPMP "at work" before. During meetings, I think I was able to offer constructive suggestions for ways to improve fundraising and how to structure the UTPMP team so as to make the most efficient use of its time and resources.

Although the vast majority of my time was spent in the office, the ten days I spent building in Argentina held some of the most personally transformative and incredible experiences I have ever had in my life. I am extremely grateful to Kellogg and UTPMP for the opportunity, and I encourage any prospective interns to consider this internship as both an office and a field experience. Although interns spend 90% of their time in the office, the ten days they will spend building will be, without a doubt, the most important.