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The Foundation for Sustainable Development places interns at local community-based and non-governmental organizations, so I spent my summer working specifically with Women Rights Initiative (WORI) in Jinja. My organization had only existed for about a year, so given the resources they had available – and the fact that I was only going to be there for 9 weeks – I decided to focus on a capacity building project. I had come into my summer wanting to do some sort of educational or community interactive project, and WORI was very open to these ideas. However, I knew that if I tried to implement my own program, it would not be able to be continued upon my departure. At the time, WORI was operating out of the executive director's quickly depleting personal funds. They had recently been forced to stop two projects, one on women's empowerment and one on HIV/AIDS education, due to a lack of funds and rejected grant proposals. With that in mind, I knew that the best way to contribute to WORI would be to help organize their infrastructure. It was hard realizing I wouldn't be directly working with a community, but I tried to comfort myself with the fact that my project could indirectly impact women and youth in the future.

When I came to WORI, they had already implemented six different programs, but they had no information, documentation, or pictures from any of the communities. This had created a problem in securing funding and partners, since the abstract descriptions they used to describe their missions compromised their credibility. So for my project, I first traveled to their past communities to collect documentation of previous projects. These simple trips showed me that WORI was doing much more than they had been

managing to articulate. I helped staff to develop an evaluation program to use in their different communities, which pinpointed quantitative factors like population and need for services in addition to specific lesson descriptions and community participation – all factors that interested partners and donors must see. Also, using the pictures, interviews, and stories collected at the sites, we created an updated brochure and internet blog to further communicate exactly what WORI was doing, how they were doing it, and what results were being achieved. We also completed training sessions to ensure that the blog and brochure could be updated in the future.

To build capacity with the organization, I arranged grant-writing workshops with a partner NGO. The workshops covered grant-writing basics, but more importantly, we used them as a chance to revise previous proposals. To cover the grant-writing session costs, I myself went through a grant-writing process with the Foundation for Sustainable Development. My executive director accompanied me to all the revision and editing sessions, using it mostly as a learning experience.

It is difficult to measure the results of my project, especially so soon. But I think some small improvements have already been achieved. First of all, no member of my staff had ever been trained in capacity-building, so the grant-writing processes and lessons have been extremely beneficial. By the end of the summer, we had drafted two new, effective grant proposals. One is for sexual and reproductive health and peer education in four rural secondary schools. The other is for general operating support, which will help cover administration costs and allow WORI to embark on further projects. We researched potential donors, sent letters of inquiry, and within one day, had heard back from three potential donors – the staff was ecstatic. WORI also managed to

form some new, solid partnerships during the course of the summer. Most notably, they have begun working with the Uganda Human Rights Commission. The UHRC operates by addressing complaints brought to them – but they currently do not go out to grassroots areas to educate, advocate, etc. They are excited to work with WORI and have begun drafting a conjunctive radio program project. My hope is that WORI will find lasting partners and support, allowing future interns to undertake projects more directly with the community.

As for myself, I came into my internship with a very open mind as to what I would be doing and focusing on. I had the broad goal of learning more about development work, which I had heard could be long-winded, tedious, and not always rewarding. Consequently, I wasn't really disillusioned when my work sometimes seemed to fit that description. I learned all about the little logistics of starting and maintaining a small CBO. It's crazy how much must be taken into account for something so simple as spreading awareness about HIV/AIDS. Mobilizing community members, funding transport, finding a common language for communication – all of these could be crippling problems for my organization on a given day. I found myself often conflicted on how I could best make a difference – is it the lawyer, the funder, the grant-writer, the program director, the community educator, or the researcher who has the most essential contribution? I know the answer is that each person is equally important, each a small mobilizer in the greater scheme of change. I feel confident that the skills I used with WORI, especially in project organizing and grant-writing, could be beneficial for any organization I work with in the future.

But, obviously, the benefits I gained were not only work-skills in the least. I formed great relationships with the other WORI staff members, and we had a lot of fun every day at work laughing about our latest cultural misunderstandings. Further, any regret about a lack of community interaction was satisfied with the best part of my internship: my home stay experience. The chance to live in a home stay is one of the strongest and most persuasive factors for choosing an FSD internship. I lived with a woman called Hajati Sarah on a farm in a neighboring village, though I just called her Hajat. Hajat spoke limited English, but we always managed to communicate quite well, be it through dancing, singing, theatrical interpretations, indecipherable emotive noises, or another translating family member. There were about 14 people living in my house throughout the summer, a mishmash of workers, orphans, and friends that Hajat welcomed into her home. I have never met people as open as these: they always treated me as an honored guest, but were similarly receptive to my efforts of engaging in household chores, cooking, and interactions. I went to traditional ceremonies, learned how to cook chapatti, played soccer with my brothers, peeled vegetables and matooke, spoke the native language Luganda, bathed out of a bucket in the backyard, and watched ridiculous translated Mexican telenovelas with them nightly. I even learned a traditional tribal dance and performed it at a wedding! My family provided me with a fabulous cross-section of 14 very different Ugandans, all with their own story to tell.

There are a lot of things I am excited to come home to, namely the ability to find a toilet at any time, the capacity to digest food without incident, and the confidence that I will not be attacked by bugs in the middle of the night. But those are greatly outnumbered by what I will miss, things like the welcome cheers I'd receive each

afternoon upon arriving home, the surprised reactions when I'd greet people in their native language, the verbal haggling arguments I'd always win with taxi drivers and boda men... and of course, the people. True, it sounds cliché, but everyone who told me about their wonderful experiences in Uganda and its people were 100% accurate. Add me to the list of those who will never regret their summer in Uganda and who hope to return again.