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In Ghana, one of the most important elements in the culture is to make sure that everyone feels 'akwaaba,' or, 'welcome' and that visitors feel at home. I definitely felt 'akwaaba' in Ghana this summer during my Marketing and Communications internship with Global Mamas. While I was in Ghana, I learned not only about marketing, communications, and social media, but also what it feels like to immerse myself into another culture. I was able to learn more about myself as well as meet some of the most amazing people. My internship with Global Mamas was a perfect mix between my interests in marketing and international peace studies, helping me along the path of discovering what I want to do in the future.

I spent the first week of my internship in Ghana's capital, Accra, working with a Google team that was sent to Ghana to help Global Mamas. Every month, Global Mamas receives \$40,000 in grant money from Google to use on ad-words because they are a non-profit organization. Since Global Mamas didn't know how to efficiently use this money, Google sent out a team to teach them about Google ad-words, analytics, and social media marketing. I was really excited and honored to be able to sit in on these meetings because I learned so much about skills that are relevant to my major and will serve useful in my studies and career. Besides going to the Google office everyday, I was able to explore Ghana's most bustling city, which was a good transition from the United States because Accra definitely has more access to western things than where I was going to stay for the rest of my internship in Cape Coast.

The remaining 8 weeks were spent in Cape Coast working out of the Global Mamas office. Here, I was given my assignments for the semester, which I was very excited to start after the Google trainings. The main focus of my work was to build a social media platform for Global Mamas to use throughout the next year using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube. As an organization, they wanted to have a more consistent message with all forms of social media as to not confuse the mission and goals of the organization. In order to do this, I came up with social media posts with consistent voices and hashtags such as #VolunteerAbroad, #Ghana, #GlobalMamas, #FairTrade, etc. I also continued the Hand Made in Ghana and Volunteer Abroad campaigns that were started by previous Notre Dame Global Mamas volunteers.

Every year Global Mamas hosts its design competition in Cape Coast where all the seamstress and batik mamas are able to submit different designs and patterns which are then judged by the design team. The first place batik and seamstresses are awarded with 100 Ghana cedi and an opportunity to create and sell their creations with Global Mamas. This is a really great opportunity for the mamas to make some money and have one of their own creations being sold around the world instead of the designs they are given by the design department. My job for this competition was to create flyers and a presentation to kick off the event. Because of the language barrier, I presented in English and one of the designers translated for me. During this process I met a lot of the mamas and talked to them about their work, which they were always excited to do. One of the most rewarding jobs I had this summer was the Design Competition reward ceremony where I gave the winners their prize and we celebrated with treats.

Another aspect of my internship was to create a YouTube video that shows what it is like to be a Global Mamas volunteer. Since the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Global Mamas went from 70 volunteers a year to at most 15, and Ebola wasn't even in Ghana! Since volunteer fees are one of Global Mamas' major sources of income, finding a way to attract more volunteers was a top priority. The video was to have footage and pictures from the office, walking around town, our favorite places to eat, mamas, the design competition, etc. Another great thing about volunteering with Global Mamas that I wanted to share in the video were the opportunities to travel around Ghana. I wanted to make this a major portion of the video since Global Mamas makes it a large priority for the volunteers.

During my time in Ghana I took advantage of the opportunities I had to travel and see the entire country (especially since I needed the footage and pictures for my final volunteer video). In the west, we visited Busua beach and took some surfing lessons. In the east we stopped by the Global Mamas offices in Ashaiman and Krobo to learn about the beading and sewing processes. We continued our journey further east to the Hohoe region where we hiked to the waterfalls, played with monkeys, and drove to the Volta Lake. We also took a long travel to the northern region in Tamale where Global Mamas' shea butter is produced. We were able to meet with the shea butter producers and got great content to make a video on the processing for the YouTube channel. We even went two more hours further north and spent a couple of days in Mole National Park doing walking and jeep safaris. We were able to see lots of elephants and were even almost attacked by baboons. Overall, the time spent traveling helped me to immerse myself into the Ghanaian culture and to be able to see a broader picture of Ghana as a country since it is so diverse.

When I wasn't traveling or working on my projects, I loved going to the local markets and picking out fresh produce to cook with and even learning how to cook local dishes, ground nut (otherwise known as peanut) soup being my favorite. I was also able to spend time with the mamas and learn about their lives and careers. I found that a lot of the mamas viewed Global Mamas to be just a vehicle for a source of income in order to support, feed their families, and send their children to school. I think that one major misconception of non-profits today is that they want their workers and people they are assisting to rely on them. This is why I appreciate Global Mamas because they focus on women's prosperity by giving them the skills to eventually leave Global Mamas and start their own businesses.

Overall, my experience this summer in Ghana was everything and more than I expected. Although some times were tougher than others, such as getting two phones and my wallet stolen, as well as my credit card being hacked, I still always felt safe and welcome in Ghana. I find the skills that I learned from Google and Global Mamas very useful and relevant to my future career interests and goals, skills that I would not have been able to learn elsewhere. Although my sunburnt shoulders and tan lines from my Teva sandals may fade, my experiences and memories from this summer will last a lifetime. Thank you Notre Dame, Kellogg, and Global Mamas for such an amazing opportunity.