



BEYOND BORDERS

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FORDHAM | IPED

Fordham University's Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development trains graduate students in the advanced interdisciplinary analysis of global economic relations and international development issues. Graduates frequently pursue professional careers in global finance, international economic policy, global environmental policy, and international relief and development.

Beyond Borders shares the experiences of IPED students who underwent internships with Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Over the course of the summer, interns are assigned to the development projects of CRS abroad, where they gain invaluable experience in international relief, humanitarian aid, and development.

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John Briggs Honored for Work in Guatemala



Photo Credit: Bruce Gilbert

Originally from North Carolina, John Briggs (Class of 2009) moved to Guatemala as a teenager where he graduated from high school. He moved back to the U.S. to earn his Bachelor's in Business Administration and went on to work in investment banking before joining the U.S. Peace Corps in Nicaragua. There he focused on small business development before joining the IPED program at Fordham.

Briggs gained his first connection with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) through IPED; he did an internship with CRS in Brazil as a student and then joined CRS in Honduras through the International Peace and Development Travel Scholarship. "Since joining the organization as an intern in Honduras, I have held several positions with CRS. First, I was an International Development Fellow in Uganda. Then, in 2010, I became a Program Manager in Afghanistan, leading projects focusing on agricultural and enterprise development, women's development, and soil and water conservation. I was later appointed Head of Office for the Bamyán sub-office in Af-

ghanistan.

"In my current role as Head of Programs, I am responsible for the management and growth of the CRS Guatemala country program with a diverse portfolio and an annual budget of approximately \$20 million. I guide the strategic direction of the country program to ensure sustained and integral human development. I lead a team of approximately 100 staff working in sustainable agriculture, nutrition, emergency response, education, youth development, and migration. In this role I direct the financial and operational management as well as the quality implementation of projects funded by public and private donors. I am responsible for developing alliances and partnerships with a diverse group of stakeholders, including government, local civil society organizations, universities, and the private sector."

In recognition of his all the work he has done, Briggs was presented with Fordham University's Swanstrom Baerwald Award on March 13, 2019. Briggs is the sixth recipient of the award which is only

Diaeddin Sharaf Helps with Disaster Relief in the Philippines

I flew out of Manila hours before an earthquake, only to witness another one, 350 miles away, in Tacloban City, where CRS is implementing a resettlement project for communities affected by a typhoon that claimed 6,300 lives and damaged more than 1.1 million homes. That's the reality of a beautiful country vulnerable to typhoons, earthquakes, volcanos, storm surges, and armed conflict.

IPED's International Peace and Development Travel Scholarship gave me the unique opportunity to intern with the Catholic Relief Services in the Philippines. CRS has been providing Filipino communities with long-term development aid through various programs since 1945. Their current portfolio includes disaster risk reduction, agriculture, emergency response and recovery, shelter and settlements, governance, and peacebuilding. Being the sub-regional office, Manila supports CRS' field offices in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Micronesia as well.

In January, during my first few days, I supported CRS' emergency response to a tropical depression that caused landslides and flashfloods in the Bicol region. The disaster destroyed homes and infrastructure and left thousands of families in evacuation centers. While the government provided essential food items, CRS responded with immediate assistance delivered through



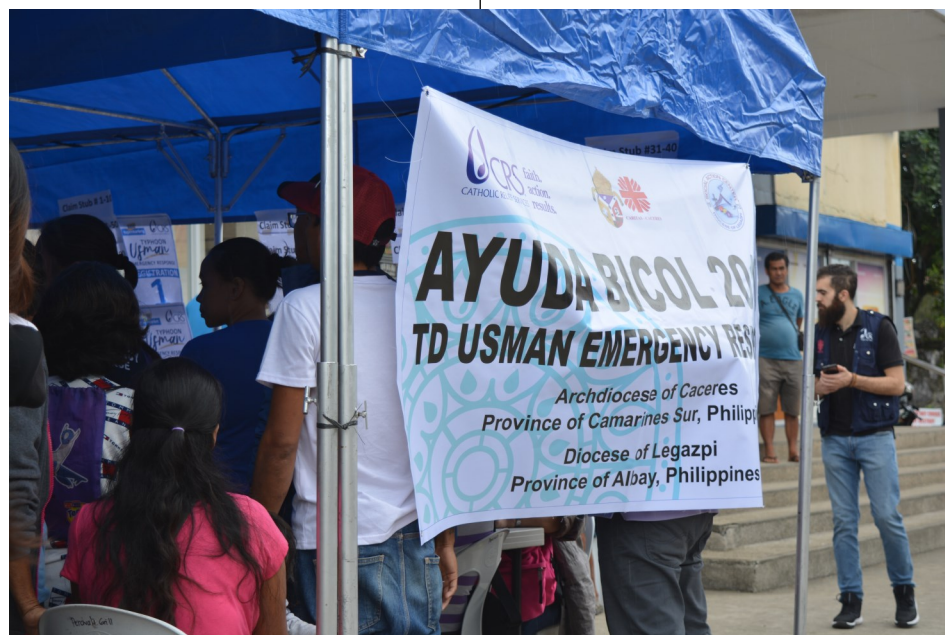
Diaeddin Sharaf in the Philippines

commodity vouchers for non-food and hygiene items, with the effort to meet the immediate, lifesaving needs of targeted households in the affected communities. I had the opportunity to assist in planning and implementing the intervention, assisting the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning team in designing, and later analyzing, the Post-Distribution Monitoring survey, and finally reporting back to the donor with the final report. In May, I revisited the region to participate in the After Action Review and present the Post-Distribution Monitoring results and final

report to CRS staff and the partnering organizations.

As an intern, I support CRS with various projects in the country, and the sub-region, often by writing periodic and final reports to donors, and gaining exposure to a variety of sectors in the field. I'm also assisting the business development department with multiple proposals. For one proposal, I had the chance to travel with the team to Davao, to participate in a proposal design workshop, with CRS' expert staff, for a Conflict Management and Mitigation program for the conflict affected regions in Mindanao. IPED has prepared me well for this experience; working with loads of data was simple after the Econometrics course. Program strategies, problem statements and theories of change would have not made any sense without the IPED's development policy courses, and the skills I gained from Dr. Schwalbenberg's Project Management course became second nature in the office.

I found CRS to be very supportive of the development of its staff. With access to the many learning resources CRS offers and the mentorship of well experienced and passionate staff, this internship has been a tremendously fruitful learning experience. I am extremely grateful to IPED and CRS for this opportunity that is granting me field experience, constant learning, and professional growth as I continue on building important skill sets for a successful and impactful career in development.



Diaeddin Sharaf with CRS in the Philippines

Clare Pressimone Assists Emergency Response in Malawi

I was awarded the International Peace and Development Travel Scholarship by IPED in the fall of 2018. I applied for this prestigious award because I wanted to gain invaluable skills working with a renowned international development agency and engage with real, “on the ground” development. However, I never imagined that this experience would turn into a crash course on emergency response.

My internship was determined to take place in Lilongwe, Malawi. When I arrived, I began collaborating with the program managers, learning about their varying projects in agriculture and livelihoods, nutrition and early childhood development. I was learning a lot and witnessing the skills that I would need if I was going to be a successful program manager. Much of my time with the program managers was observation and asking clarifying questions. My main project was organizing our office’s celebration of International Women’s Day. This was a great opportunity to engage with all of my colleagues, getting their input and bringing them together for a day of solidarity and growth. We learned how Malawian women are challenged when they enter predominantly male fields, and also gained some feedback from our male colleagues on how they plan to support more gender balance in the work place, at home and in their greater societies.

This activity, among others, provided me the chance to further understand the Malawian context and have a greater appreciation for the work that is being done

by CRS in Malawi. The country, region and me were taken by surprise, however, when the same weekend as International Women’s Day Cyclone Idai arrived and flooding devastated countless communities. Malawi is not typically considered an “emergency” country (the last major disaster was back in 2015 when other floods ransacked the southern region of the country), so the government and international actors had to quickly act and decide how they were going to respond.

CRS determined that through its local partners in the Catholic Church, it would respond in three districts in the southern region: Chikwawa, Phalombe and Zomba. I was fortunate enough to be selected to join the CRS response team. In the immediate response, a full-time staff member and myself were tasked with assessing the situation in Zomba and orchestrating the distribution of non-food items (NFI) in several camps surrounding the city. Within a week and a half, we were able to assess the living situation and needs of residents in camps; register the households of four targeted camps; and distribute NFI kits to 1,433 households. These kits reached more than 6,000 individuals. Though this just scraped the surface in responding to the needs identified.

The classes and practical experience which I gained through the IPED program have prepared me to appropriately engage in this response and become an instrumental team member. I have been able to use the program management skills which I



Clare Pressimone (middle) with her fellow International Women's Day committee members, wearing chitenje (a type of fabric) dresses made for the occasion

cultivated, my greater knowledge of poverty and emergency situations gained through classwork, and experience with data collection to assist the CRS team in their life-saving efforts for those most impacted by the floods.

Response is on-going and will continue for several more months. Houses have been destroyed; crops devastated; poverty increased. Many people within these communities will be striving to return to their pre-flooding normalcy for years. Now that we are a few months out from the initial crisis, we have begun seeking longer lasting responses, including improved shelter, latrine construction, hygiene messaging and access to viable water sources. In order to ensure that our interventions are appropriate, I am leading a team to do a rapid needs assessment within the camps and communities as people have begun to return to their homes. It is imperative that we ensure they are returning to areas where they can live safe, secure and healthy lives.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with CRS in Malawi, especially as I have gained invaluable experience working in an emergency situation. I am confident that my experience with CRS will allow me to achieve my goal of pursuing a career in international development. Thank you IPED and CRS for bringing me to Malawi! Zikomo kwambiri!



Clare Pressimone (middle) distributing NFI kits in one of the camps in Zomba

John Briggs, Guatemala

(Continued from page 1)

given to alumni who have excelled in the service of faith through the promotion of international peace and development.

Briggs believes that IPED helped to prepare him for his career at CRS by offering a wide range of skills and courses; “The variety of course work (political, economic, macro, micro, and sector specific courses, such as agriculture) at Fordham that are taught in an integral way is the most practical aspect of the IPED program. While I have more experience and background on the economic side of the program, the poli-



John Briggs (left) during his CRS Internship in Honduras.



John Briggs (3rd from left) receiving the 2019 Swanstrom Baerwald Award. (Photo Credit: Bruce Gilbert)

cy course work challenged and prepared me as it pushed me to evaluate all dimensions of development work. As my experience grows and I better understand integral human development, I observe that development cannot be achieved at a meaningful scale in a lasting way through stand-alone projects or by addressing individual elements of the issue. The integral coursework at Fordham is very practical in understanding how to think about development challenges, bring together diverse small- and large-scale efforts to generate evidence, and then influence structures and systems to create sustained impact.”

Briggs has three key pieces of advice for IPED students looking to focus on the field of development: learn more languages, be patient and keep learning especially if development is your chosen field, and take

advantage of the connections that Fordham can provide.

International Peace and Development Travel Scholarship

All matriculated IPED students in good academic standing are invited to apply for IPED’s International Peace and Development Travel Scholarships. Up to four scholarships are offered each year. Scholarship recipients spend six months at the conclusion of their studies working overseas with an international non-profit relief and development agency.

For 2019, two travel scholarships were awarded in partnership with Catholic Relief Services. Students were assigned to Malawi and the Philippines.



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