

SUMMER VENTURES

REPORTS FROM IPED'S
SUMMER FELLOWS

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SUMMER 2008

The Graduate Program
in International
Political Economy
& Development



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY



*Bridget Bucardo Rivera (center)
with a fellow intern (right)
and a FINCA client*

Bridget Bucardo Rivera, FINCA-Nicaragua

I never thought I'd be so happy to see coconuts. It's 3 o'clock in the afternoon and after finishing a full day of client interviews, I rush back with my fellow teammate and two FINCA loan officers to make the last bus back to town, a three-hour ride along a bumpy, dirt road. After waiting an hour and a half, our hope is waning; we'll have to find somewhere to stay for the night in this little town with no hotels. Out of the blue, a big truck full of coconuts rumbles by and offers us a ride. Thankfully, we make it back to town that night, riding high atop a mountain of coconuts.

This summer I had the opportunity to work with FINCA International as a Client Assessment

Research Fellow. FINCA is a microfinance organization that provides small loans to low-income microentrepreneurs around the world in order to help them increase their assets and improve their lives. The role of the Client Assessment Research Fellows, sent each summer to about 15 countries where FINCA has operations, is to gather internationally comparable data on FINCA clients' standard of living and satisfaction with FINCA loan products and services by conducting in-depth client interviews.

My fellowship took place in Nicaragua, where I spent ten weeks traveling around the more rural areas of the country as part of a

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IPED'S SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS 2008

Internships

Bridget Bucardo Rivera – Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), Nicaragua

Julie Cerqueira – United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

Miriam R. Delos Santos – Philippine Embassy, Madrid, Spain

Go Rui Du – United Nations Development Program, New York

Jason Gehrig – Catholic Relief Services, Central America

Paloma Gutierrez – Women in Progress, Ghana

Ryan Jones – United States Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington, DC

Joshua Post – Ernst & Young, New York

Stefan Riecher – Emerging Markets, Peru

Amy Rossnagel – United Nations Development Program, New York

Majda Sedej – United Nations Development Program, Tanzania

Kevin Stevens – Investor Relations, Indian Harbor, LLC, Connecticut

Chengguang Zhao – Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), Tanzania

Language Studies

John Briggs – Portuguese, Brazil

Anthony Cotton – French, Burkina Faso, West Africa

John Hollwitz – Mandarin, China

Patrick O'Connor – Spanish, Bolivia

Rike Sohn – French, Madagascar

Summer Ventures Editorial Board

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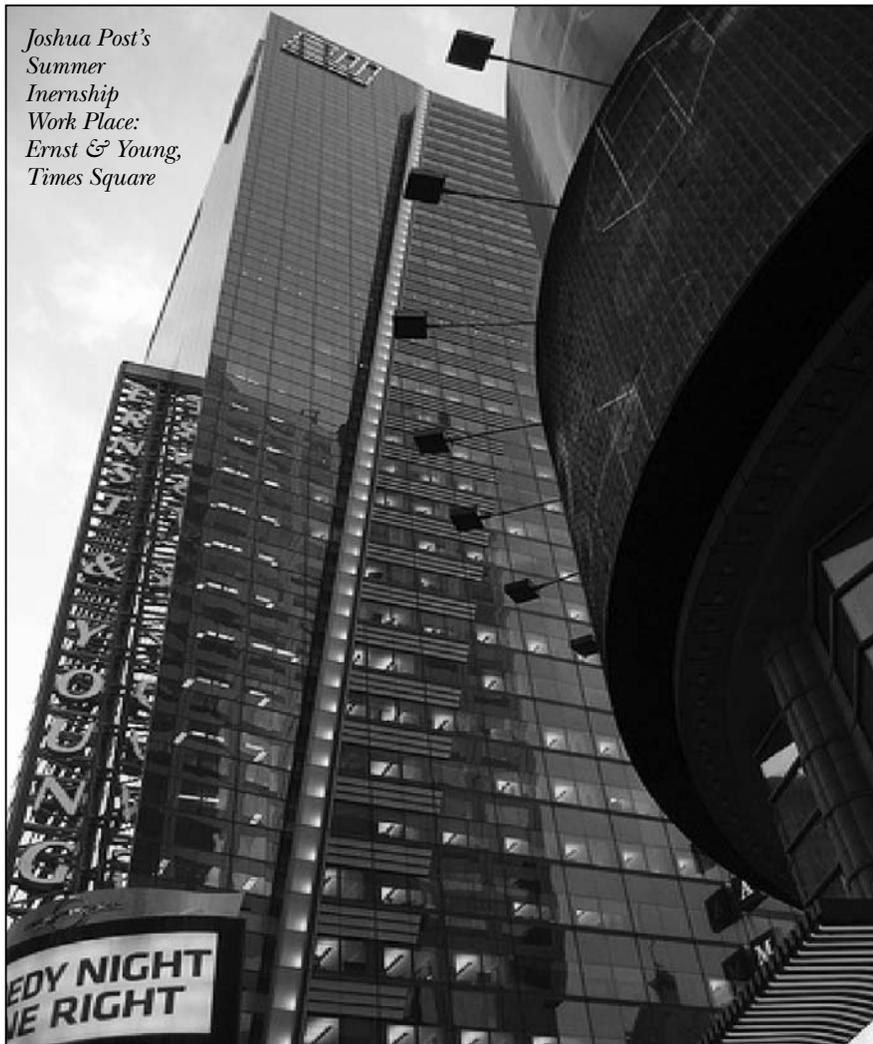
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Joshua Post, Ernst & Young-New York



*Joshua Post's
Summer
Internship
Work Place:
Ernst & Young,
Times Square*

their respective country so they can tax it. To ensure that this happens, they write transfer pricing rules. These rules stipulate that an MNC must charge a subsidiary an “arms length price” or the price it would charge an unrelated company for the good or service in question — the MNC can’t just give something away or over charge. Furthermore, the IRS demands that the MNCs provide documentation that shows that their transfer prices are truly “arms length.” This is where EY comes in. MNCs come to them when they think they might be audited by the IRS and EY goes through all their international transactions and produces hundreds of pages that show that the prices charged are, in fact, “arms length.”

I had various responsibilities while at EY, not all of them glamorous. The most interesting thing I did was write industry analyses. I would look at industries and describe trends, new developments, forecasts and the client’s place therein. I also participated in “fact finding” interviews during which clients were drilled about every aspect of their operation followed by hours analyzing their income statements. At the other end of the spectrum, I became pretty adept at using the photocopier. I was still an intern after all.

EY does not become one of the “top places to work in” simply because of the work itself. My summer was filled with dinners to fancy New York restaurants, sailing trips around Manhattan, “team building” days in Central Park and, the grand finale, a weekend in Orlando learning why EY is the best place in the world to work in. It was pretty rough, but somehow, I survived. And the job offer at the end was not so bad either.

Unlike most of my classmates who spent the summer gallivanting around the globe, presumably saving it, I spent my summer at the center of the world — 5 Times Square. I worked in the Transfer Pricing Group at Ernst & Young (EY), saving multi national corporations’ (MNCs) money. Although some have tried to make me feel guilty about this choice (since I am a former Peace Corps Volunteer) calling me such things as a “sell out,” I contend that efficient MNCs will help to spur global growth and, therefore, global development. Although my concentration is in Finance and Banking, I have not completely forgotten the D in IPED.

What is “Transfer Pricing?” I must admit that I had never heard of it before I received an email describing this internship opportunity. Even after checking Wikipedia’s entry for transfer pricing, I only had a slight understanding of what it was. After eight weeks of working in the field, however, I can give a brief description. A transfer price is the price that an MNC charges an international subsidiary whenever there is an exchange of goods or services. MNCs would like to charge subsidiaries a price that would move profits from high tax jurisdictions to low tax jurisdictions. The IRS and their international equivalents are not so keen on this idea. They want MNCs to report profits in

Julie Cerqueira, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations-Switzerland



Julie Cerqueira (second from left) with fellow interns

Thanks to an e-mail from an alum at the United Nations, I was able to spend three months in Geneva working for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. They were looking for someone to assist the Asia-Pacific Unit and I was looking for an internship that would expose me to human rights issues in the UN. My colleagues were more than kind, offering wonderful guidance on everything from the best weekend getaways to carving out a career at the UN. They entrusted me with myriad assignments, none of which were photocopying but most of which would ultimately end up in country profiles, seminars with States or even the Secretary General's (SG) report to the General Assembly. I spent most of my time conduct-

ing research on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in order to supply material for the human rights reports of the SG and the Special Rapporteur. When I wasn't researching, I was participating in meetings of the Human Rights Council or attending trainings at other UN agencies. Each morning, I would read local Bangladeshi newspapers to analyze trends in elections, the judicial system and the human rights situation on the ground. I tracked the ratification status of various countries and human rights conventions to create a quick reference for use in an Asia-Pacific conference sometime in 2009. Though I will not bore you further with the details of my work, it is also important to note that life in an international city was, in itself, worth going to Geneva for.

It's hard to find a better place to network if this is your desired field (except maybe New York) and the quality of life is unbeatable. I found that even the other interns had incredible pasts — most spoke at least a handful of languages and had lived, not just travelled, in as many countries. Together we bonded over the mysteries that lie ahead, understanding we would perhaps meet again because we are all in this for the same reason and the human rights theatre is awfully small after all. ■

Bridget Bucardo Rivera

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three-person graduate research team interviewing nearly 1,000 FINCA microfinance clients. Although the job was intense and challenging at times, it gave me an invaluable opportunity to see microfinance in action, understand how it works, and meet with low-income micro-entrepreneurs to hear their opinions about microfinance. Microfinance is an area of development of interest to me, so the opportunity to gain hands-on professional experience working with a microfinance organization was very appealing. Those interested in microfinance and development experience for their summer internship should go to www.villagebanking.org for more information.

The FINCA Client Assessment Fellowship is no office job. As a fellow, you will travel a country, learn about microfinance directly from clients, and be part of the larger effort to measure the impact of microfinance on clients' well-being. You may even ride atop a truck full of coconuts . . . all in a day's work. ■

Ryan Jones, Foreign Agricultural Service-Washington, DC



Ryan Jones' Summer Internship Work Place: the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington DC

This summer, I was an Economic Assistant at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. The Foreign Agricultural service is one of four government agencies that enlist U.S. foreign service officers in achieving strategic objectives for the U.S. government (The other three agencies are the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Commercial Service within the Department of Commerce). FAS

Washington, DC. My job as an economic assistant in FAS's Office of Country and Regional Affairs gave me firsthand experience in seeing and helping to develop agricultural trade policy and prepare high-level officials, including the Secretary of Agriculture, for meetings with ministers of Agriculture and heads of state from countries across Asia, the region for which I was responsible. As the point person for these countries, I helped coordinate offices across the agency, from the negotiators to

has the primary responsibility for negotiating and enforcing agricultural trade policy abroad as well as administering the U.S. government's food aid programs. It is also the primary point of contact for international collaboration and discussion on international food and agricultural issues.

I worked in FAS's main offices, in the USDA office building, on the Mall in

scientific and technical specialists, to professionals in development and capacity building.

The primary countries in my portfolio for the summer were Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I supported other desk officers with their work on other South Asian countries. Focusing on this region gave me close exposure to the devastating effect that food and commodity price inflation were having on the populations of the less developed countries in the region, where even the prices of staple crops rose precipitously. I took part in facing the challenges to develop a coordinated government response to this urgent need, and the public announcement of a U.S. food aid package to Pakistan late this summer was incredibly rewarding for me.

Following my experience at FAS, I have decided to apply for the Presidential Management Fellowship Program, a program to help recent graduates of graduate schools find rewarding employment in the government. If you have any questions about interning or working full-time in public service, feel free to talk to me.

