



Beyond Borders

Reports from IPED's International Peace & Development Fellows

**What is IPED's
International Peace &
Development Travel
Scholarship?**

All matriculated IPED students in good academic standing are invited to apply for IPED's *International Peace & Development Travel Scholarships*. Up to four 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 Spring 2013, these travel scholarships were in partnership with *Catholic Relief Services*. Students were assigned to Ecuador, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza.

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Erin Lewis, CRS Rwanda



Catholic Relief Services-Rwanda implements integrated programming in nutrition, agriculture, and savings-led microfinance. My work as an International Peace & Development fellow was focused on how the intersection of the latter two sectors can create and strengthen livelihood opportunities for vulnerable people.

One of my major tasks here was to work with a cross-cultural team including students from *Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business*, CRS, local Caritas partners, and staff from the *Education Development Center*. We designed and implemented a market assessment of opportunities for poor and marginalized youth in rural areas. This is part of a larger USAID-funded *Akazi Kanoze* project which aims to empower youth with the tools and resources

to improve their livelihoods. Within the project, CRS-Rwanda works with local partner organizations to provide small groups of youth with training on community-based savings and lending, business skills, and work readiness.

To conduct the market assessment, our team first developed and refined a set of data-collection tools to gather ideas and information from government officials, cooperatives, microfinance institutions, youth, farmers, and consumers in the targeted rural districts. We spent the better part of March interviewing them and other key informants to understand key economic trends and consumer insights. Since returning to Kigali, we have begun processing and analyzing the data.

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Matthew Konsa, CRS Latin America

I was assigned in the Catholic Relief Services' Latin America office here in Quito, Ecuador for my International Peace & Development fellowship. My task was to directly assist the Head of Programming of the five active CRS Latin American countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil. In addition, I also assisted with editing and translating project reports to donors in the U.S., participated in the development of new proposals and produced communications materials for our website and donor relations.

As economic development continues to move forward in Latin America, CRS faces the challenge of adapting its role and focus areas. This is to accommodate the changing landscape for development organizations that are increasingly shifting larger proportions of their scarce resources to other areas of the globe. I worked on supporting projects across the Latin America region in the area of indigenous rights. I also assisted in projects concerning natural resource management, disaster risk management/reduction and the prevention of human trafficking.

My comprehensive educational experience at IPED greatly enhanced my experience and effectiveness as an intern with CRS. During a three-week trip to Peru where I worked with a small team in the elaboration of a major USAID proposal, I consistently found myself referencing skills and knowledge gained during my

time in the IPED program. The courses at IPED prepared me in many important ways for a successful career in international development: from economic and political analysis skills that enabled me to think quicker and have a more thorough understanding of problems and their contexts, to research and organizational skills that allowed for more effective and impactful report and proposal writing.

For more information on CRS' important work in South America, please visit: <http://crs.org/latin-america/> ©

What is IPED?

It stands for Fordham University's Graduate Program in International Political Economy and Development. Fordham IPED is a program that trains graduate students in the advanced interdisciplinary analysis of global economic relations and international development issues. Graduates work in the diverse fields of research, policy planning, economic analysis, public administration and general management.

Heather O'Neil, CRS Sierra Leone



This year is an exciting time to be an International Peace and Development fellow with Catholic Relief Services in Sierra Leone, as the organization celebrates 50 years in the country. Since my arrival, I've been working with the *Livelihoods* team, where I contributed to the development of the *Integrated Savings and Agricultural Development* (ISAD) II project. The project aims to promote food security among farmers in northern Sierra Leone by addressing bottlenecks in production, post-harvest processing, access to finance, and marketing. Building off the successes of a recently completed project, the project will promote improved rice production, handling, and processing techniques. It will also strengthen market access to increase farmers' productivity and revenue.

I contributed to the ISAD II project design process by conducting field surveys to identify constraints and potential solutions in the rice value chain. I also engaged in proposal writing and stakeholder

development process. The ISAD II project will be implemented by a local partner, *Caritas Makeni*, and will work in close collaboration with the *Ministry of Agriculture*. With these initial activities completed and the project newly underway, I spent the remainder of my time working to successfully guide the implementation of this project. I did this through effective management, technical support, and monitoring.

The CRS fellowship enabled me to further my professional development and expand my international field experience. I also applied the skills and knowledge I gained in the IPED program towards a practical development solution. My courses in *Project Planning and Implementation*, *Agriculture and Development*, and *Economic Development Policy* enabled me to become more effective at proposal writing, and project implementation and monitoring. The courses also served as an avenue for me to better understand development economics and use a market-based development ap-

proach. All of these aspects enhanced my pursuit of a future career in international development. ☺



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Finally we will vet the resulting recommendations again with the targeted youth and share our results with all the stakeholders involved. Most importantly, this final step will involve providing sound business advice to youth.

In all of my assignments at CRS-Rwanda, I have drawn heavily on the practical and theoretical foundation I learned from IPED. In particular, classes in *Project Management*, *Agriculture and Development*, and *Community Economic Development* taught me to develop proposal logframes, conduct economic analyses of fertilizer policies, and design an impact evaluation. ☺

Bea Lumanas, CRS Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza

While there is a strong consensus that aid alone will not help Palestine, NGOs unquestionably play a vital role in the Palestinian national movement. CRS has been serving the Palestinians since 1961. Their first three decades of programming focused on infrastructure development, health, education, and relief assistance. More recently, CRS Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza (JWBG), where I was assigned, has diversified its focus to include advocacy, peacebuilding, civil society development, and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

The internship exposed me to different focus areas, however, there were two projects where I was more directly involved – a conditional food voucher program in the West Bank and a peacebuilding program in Israel.

The *Voucher for Work and Training* program combines food security and environmental development as a strategic intervention towards long-term resilience of Palestinian communities who suffer from economic restrictions in the West Bank. My role in the program involved reporting for donor compliance, developing a monitoring and evaluation plan, and integrating a data collection and monitoring system for more efficient data collection. Meanwhile, *GEMINI* is a peacebuilding program which creates venues for dialogue and action among university-level youth. My role in GEMINI was also directly related to monitoring and evaluation which covers baseline analysis and reporting for donor compliance.

Apart from assisting program managers individually, I was fortunate to take on a bird's eye view of how CRS operates at a country-wide level. As assistant to the Head of Pro-



gramming, I also actively participated in the project proposal development and the strategic program planning processes of the country program. One of the memorable sessions I was involved in was doing the *MacMillan Matrix* for competitive analysis of programs. The participants of the program identified which sectors CRS JWBG has a competitive advantage given its track record. Needless to say, I am incredibly grateful for this chance to be part of CRS' work even for a short period of time and I share the hopes of many for a just peace and a viable state for the Palestinians, no matter how elusive it may seem at present. ☺



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