

Summer Internship Report 2017

Sandy Milien, C'17

Hometown: Miami, Florida



**Friends of Canon Gideon
Foundation
(FOCAGIFO)
Kampala, Uganda**

(Sandy is in front, third from the left)

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation is a non-government, non-profit, non-partisan, faith-based organization with the aim to first of all support Canon Gideon in his ministry to break the silence about HIV and AIDS in Africa and around the world, but also to mobilize support for others infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. My responsibilities as an intern were to assist the executive director James Claude Mutyaba in planning for the celebration of the 25 years of the foundation. In addition, we were assigned to teach about Community Health as well as Leadership skills to the students of the Hope Institute. We were also tasked with leading and preparing different activities for the foundation, such as a leadership workshop for university graduates.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During my internship, I was able to have a tangible experience on what it is like to run a foundation and also an institute. I think I am now ready to go into the world of nonprofit work with a better understanding of what it means and what it takes. I'd like to think that I made a difference by showing a sincere willingness to work and by not questioning the way things were done, instead, I acknowledged that it wasn't right or wrong, but different. Not only that but, I think by engaging with the students, spending time with them and sharing my knowledge I was able to build relationships and strengthen them as young adults. Something that really helped me appreciate the value of the work being done in the foundation was the commitment and the self-sacrifice of all the employees. For example, the principal of the Hope Institute lived very far from the Institute and didn't have a car, but that didn't stop her from coming to work and not leaving until all her work was finished. That showed that she loved her work and especially making a difference in the lives of the students in the Institute. I now know the real meaning of self-sacrifice.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

Part of the internship was to teach classes during the week to the students of the Hope Institute which is part of the foundation. Our first week we noticed that many of the students weren't showing up to class so we decided to, first of all, inform the academic registrar and the principal, then do what we saw fit to make our classes work. We decided to talk to the students and see which topics we could teach that interested them, in addition to giving grades for participation. As an International and Global Studies major and an immigrant I've learned that foreigners are a lot of times frightening and intimidating to people. I think that's one of the reasons why students weren't showing up; to fix it, I decided to start talking to them outside of class and sharing my story, my life as an immigrant in the US and my journey to learn English. After that many of them that were afraid to talk in class because their English wasn't "that good" participated more often and felt more comfortable around us.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

My teamwork skills were strengthened because I was put in work situations where I had to work in a team. It was fine, it just took a bit to adjust to since life and work here tend to be very individualistic. For example, I was given the task to create a document/scale to measure the success of the students in the institute, from when they begin until they graduate. For this task, I had to work with some of the (Ugandan) interns, and it was the best work we did because we were able to use each other and the knowledge that we had to do our work. That really helped me to notice my strengths and delegate people in a group to use their own strengths for the benefit of the job.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

This internship affected my career plan in a very positive way. It allowed me to continue studying things around my field/major and it also helped me clarify my passions. Through this internship, I now know for sure that I want to go into the field of nonprofit, faith-based work because I've had a taste of what my future could look like.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

This internship will make you encounter people of different backgrounds from your own. Not only because it's across the world on another continent, but also because Uganda itself is very diverse. To be able to communicate effectively I asked many questions of things I didn't know or understand, always with an open mind because it was a different environment. I learned to be proud of where I come from and who I am, not only that but to treat others with the utmost respect so that it will be reciprocated. In addition, I learned to adapt and adjust to the new environment, the people, and the culture because just as I was adjusting and adapting, they were also adjusting and adapting to me.

Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?

If you decide to participate in this internship, strip yourself of all the privilege you have or think you have. Be open to new, difficult, but also rewarding experiences. You'll be lucky to have the chance to live with the Family of Canon Gideon which will take you as one of their own. Keep in mind that Uganda is a developing country which means all the luxuries you have here you won't have there. However, that shouldn't be a reason not to apply or be discouraged, on the contrary, it would make your experience much more rewarding.

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Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to you for your kind support. Without your support, many of these summer internships wouldn't have taken place, especially the one in I was part of in FOCAGIFO (Uganda). Know that your support is greatly appreciated, and Sewanee is ten times better after a student is able to have funds to participate in an internship. Not only that, the support you provide also helps some of the communities in which we work. Overall, thank you for being the root of our growth as Sewanee students and as young adults.