

## **Summer Internship Report 2017**

**Kate Perry, C'17**

Hometown: Birmingham, Alabama



### **Partners in Agriculture CFFL (Zanmi Agrikol) Central Plateau, Haiti**

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

This summer I, along with two photography interns, worked alongside Haitian team members to help evaluate and assess the Family Security Program (PSF). This Program was funded by the Kellogg Foundation and put into action by the Centre de Formation Fritz Lafontant (CFFL) to address the nutritional, financial, and family security needs of the most desperate families involved in Zanmi Agrikol (Friends in Agriculture)--a program started by CFFL to reintroduce agricultural practices to residents in the Central Plateau region of Haiti. Our responsibilities included visiting all families involved in PSF in order to collect GPS data and create a visual representation of the conditions faced by families involved in the program. Alongside our visits, we were also tasked with conducting ten in-depth interviews with select family members in order to assess qualitatively how the two-year-old program was doing--where it was succeeding, where there were still gaps, and most importantly, why it needed to continue to receive funding. During this time, we also spent a day visiting farmers involved in Sewanee's Zanmi Photo (friends in photography) project and collecting the cameras of some farmers in order to print their pictures back at the school.

**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?**

I produced a 13-page quantitative assessment report that was given to Kellogg in order to continue funding for a program that showed real promise in the years to come. I learned what it was like to do long-term data collection and participate in fieldwork. I got to practice creating survey questionnaires and conducting interviews and learned the value of face-to-face communication. I also picked up some Creole, and strengthened my French

**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?**

Because I had past research experience, I helped form and finalize the questionnaire we used for surveys and understood how to conduct our research in order to achieve the results we were looking for. From being an International Studies major, I had experience and understanding on how to interact with a culture that was different from our own and I also utilized the French I learned at Sewanee

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

Working with two students with less experience than I in this field definitely brought new understanding to my definition of teamwork. A specific example was our first day we worked with the team that did not speak English to conduct interviews. While I had experience in working in situations where communication is difficult or lacking entirely, I learned to set aside my expectations for my Sewanee team members and instead worked to uplift all parties involved in order to conquer the task at hand. Delegating tasks based on ability, as well as allocating the same energy and patience to everyone I was with was a difficult lesson to learn, but an extremely valuable one.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

I was reaffirmed that the type of work we were doing was the type of work I wanted to pursue as I began my search for post-college work. I do not know if I want to pursue research as a final career, but I really loved being able to do field work and the freedom it gave me to interact with my environment and the people I was interested in getting to know. I now have a degree in International and Global Studies and spent four years studying issues faced by developing nations. I loved being able to be somewhere physically and study these issues on the ground at an individual level, especially as it was in the context of assessing a program that aimed to address them.

**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?**

While I had worked in similar situations before, this was the first time I had ever had to work with a group that spoke very limited English--one of our two teams. My French was stretched to its limits and I had to pick up some Creole fairly quickly! I learned the value of patience and understanding, and how to not become frustrated by miscommunication. Practicing humility was essential in these interactions, especially as we observed how well our team members did their jobs and how much they cared about the communities in which they worked. If anything, I learned the importance of learning a language, especially in the type of interpersonal work we were doing.

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

I absolutely loved the work I was involved in this summer, and felt extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in a program and place Sewanee has been involved with for years. The people I met and the work that I did provided clarity in my search for what's next and connections that will not fade. Thank you for making this summer possible, I could not have gone if it had not been for funding.