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The World Justice Project
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During the summer of 2014, I was fortunate to be able to intern for The World Justice Project (WJP), an international non-profit that promotes rule of law worldwide. The internship was offered by Nancy Ward, Sewanee alumna and current Chief Engagement Officer at the WJP. The WJP was founded on the belief that a clear understanding of and adherence to rule of law principles positively affects every aspect of a community, from socioeconomic development to ensuring that individual rights are respected. The WJP pursues its goal of promoting rule of law in two main ways: first, by creating and publishing a rule of law index that essentially ranks countries based on adherence to a number of rule of law indicators, and, secondly, by providing seed grants to other non-profits worldwide to undertake programs that enhance rule of law. My time with the WJP was spent working in the latter area, with the Engagement Team.

As an Engagement intern, it was my responsibility to begin compiling information for a five-year review of the WJP's seed grant program. The WJP was also in the process of transitioning to a more streamlined, online database of programs and grant funding. Therefore, I was tasked with rifling through files, binders, folders, and boxes to begin to sort out the history of the seed grant program. Programs funded by the WJP span an incredibly wide range of topics, including: resurrecting traditional land-management practices in Lebanon, empowering youth in Brazil through hip-hop, creating an online environmental news source for Peru, and training community leaders in informal justice in Sierra Leone, to name a few. It was fascinating to read about the diverse and meaningful work these organizations had been able to pursue with help from the WJP.

After digging my way out of a pile of binders, I created a 15 page report and accompanying spreadsheet that sequenced past programs, analyzed them for trends, and suggested ways to improve in the future. I thoroughly enjoyed the freedom to create a final product that I thought would accurately represent the trends in the seed grant program. It was empowering to be given such responsibility and, ultimately, praise for my work. Though I was just an intern, my input was valued and respected by staff at the WJP.

My experience with the WJP was invaluable for many reasons, but I am most grateful for the opportunity for discernment. Working in an office setting, even an office filled with amazing people like those who work at the WJP, showed me that I do not possess a talent for sitting still! While I enjoy writing and conducting research, I am most comfortable and energized when interacting with others. And while the WJP does amazing work promoting programs that positively impact people worldwide, I realized I would prefer to work directly with those people instead of communicate with them from my desk in DC. I also enjoy public speaking and I love to share what I have learned with others. Ultimately, the combination of these interests led me to pursue teaching. I am now a Spanish and Introduction to Language teacher for middle and high school students at Lowcountry Preparatory School in Pawleys Island, South Carolina.

I would like to thank Nancy Ward, Rahda Friedman, Beth Davis and all the other amazing people at the WJP for an incredible summer. I am most grateful!