

Communications/Marketing and Programs Intern for Episcopal Relief & Development

Episcopal Relief & Development is a church-based international nonprofit organization that works mainly with development projects in over forty developing countries, as well as providing disaster relief for disaster-torn countries all over the world, including the United States. Episcopal Relief & Development is an international nonprofit with its base in New York City, New York. Their mission is to distribute funds contributed by the Church to communities in need of sustainable development and relief. Unlike some other international non-profits based in the development category, the ERD uses established relations through the Church to reach out to the communities' specific needs by assessing the community's resources. The Millennium Development Goals are the motivation for the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund.

My responsibilities were vast due to working with the Communications and Marketing department and also the Programs department. I worked with Programs for the first two and a half days of each week and with Communications for the last of each week. Each department had me working on completely different projects in comparison to the other, which allowed me to take the most out of the internship.

For the Programs Department, I was responsible for the research that I did both internally in the Episcopal Relief & Development database and externally in other international development organizations. I was responsible for learning the approaches and methods used by major development agencies such as WHO, USAID, and UNICEF to complete the projects set before me. To work with resource mobilization I was responsible for the understanding of what makes a good grant and knowing which of Episcopal Relief & Development's programs are eligible for specific grants.

For the Communication and Marketing Department, I was responsible for the upkeep of specific internet programs and utilizing the internal information to rework complex concepts into simpler terms to input into social media. I was also responsible for accessing materials such as

photos and videos to put into various projects for convention materials and the new website designs.

For each department I had a large ongoing project that was intersected with smaller, varying projects and assignments. Each project added more skills into my knowledge database and allowed me more insight into the running of the organization and the work that they accomplish. Each department had a different focus and approach on what they assigned for me to do each week.

The skills needed for the tasks I did in the Programs Department were mainly research based. I analyzed the entirety of the health programs that are currently in progress in every country where the organization is working. With this information I created a matrix or scan of what approaches are being used and what issues are being addressed in the public health programs to learn the strengths and weaknesses of each individual program in the sector. The concepts incorporated into the matrix were taken from the commonly seen work done in other development agencies. This matrix was the large ongoing project that I completed. The matrix was presented in various official meetings to show the concentration of the work that Episcopal Relief & Development is doing in public health work. The template will be used in the other sectors in the future to organize internal information.

Some of the smaller projects that I did were also useful for the health sector program officer's reevaluation and reorganization of the programs. After USAID's release of its child survival program, I was given the task various research tasks on the topic of child health, maternal health, and child survival. This included looking into other organizations and comparing each concept and issue across different sectors and learning about the various approaches and methods to lower the child mortality rate in children from birth to age five. I compiled lists of commonly used terms in gender, child health, and public health from external organizations and created standard definitions to be used throughout Episcopal Relief & Development's program department. I also worked with the Resource Mobilization officer to

seek and commence writing grant applications that Episcopal Relief & Development's integrated gender programs were eligible to apply for.

The impact of these projects was very powerful as they were necessary in the reevaluation and restructuring of the health programs in the organization. All of the resources that I created helped the program officers understand more clearly the issues that they were addressing and the popular and successful approaches that other organizations were using.

The skills I utilized in the Communications and Marketing department were vastly different than those used with the Programs department. The large project that was ongoing was the photo database that I was creating using Flickr. This database consists of tens of thousands of photos that have been scattered across the internal database for a decade. I created a system of organizing and cataloguing the photos to be put in an easy-to-search database accessible to each employee in the organization. As a closing to the ongoing project, I created a document that helped program officers learn to correctly and easily upload their photos from field visits into the database without needing the extensive help of the Communications Department. I presented this at the official weekly meeting that included phone conferencing with program officers in the field and at the Ghana and Sri Lanka offices.

As smaller sub-projects with the Communications Department, I worked on compiling resources for the important General Convention held over the summer while I was interning. These tasks included creating slideshows to be shown at the convention booth, organizing and accessing the materials needed for promoting the organization, and reconfiguring the laptops to be used at the convention. I worked with cataloguing videos by breaking down the videos and creating written descriptions for each section of video so it can be easily used in compiling official information videos.

I was able to contribute my views and ideas as a young adult in the process of helping with the new website redesign. My outside views as a student of a university helped to give ideas to the Communications team about the layout, presentation, and content of information

placed on the site. I worked to create layouts for specific pages, rework country program content into the most important information wanted by outside readers, and help to create toolkits for fundraising campaigns focusing mostly on high school and college aged young adults. The toolkit was especially an interest of mine as I have a strong focus on community service work at Sewanee from being a part of Alpha Phi Omega.

The most important thing that I learned was the importance of understanding the organization and its ins and outs. I learned the process of the maintaining a successful international development organization that focuses strongly on continuing its work, while continually keeping up with the new research and approaches that have been deemed the most effective. Throughout the internship, my knowledge of development work expanded and grew as I researched specific issues and learned the programs of Episcopal Relief & Development.

The complexity of the Programs department was very different than the simplification that was used in the Communications and Marketing department. The focus of who uses the information is the main cause of this. The communications team is not reaching out to the people who are already informed on development work and their lingo. They used simplification to help those casually interested to understand the work that is being done and the issues being addressed.

Talking with various people doing different types of jobs in the nonprofit allowed me to better understand the formation and structure of an organization such as Episcopal Relief & Development. I realized that I was interested in all aspects of the organization from fund raising and accounting to program development and social media upkeep. Each role in the organization is important for the successful running of the programs and there is a lot of transfer of information between all departments. Working mainly between two of the many departments showed me the differences in approaches used in the organization as well as the communication difficulties that arise out of these approaches.

After working extensively with only one sector of the Program Department, I learned that I most appreciate working with more integrated programs than focusing exclusively on one. I would have really enjoyed working more with the agriculture and micro-finance aspects along side of public health. The only part of the organization's process that was disappointing to learn was how hard it is to get the funding to support these programs and the hoops that are jumped through to get the funding to help these communities.

This internship positively affected my career choice to work with an international non-profit organization that has a focus on development. I received an outlet of achieving that goal through the connections I made and the work that I accomplished. Learning about the different sectors in development helped me to learn about ways to create integrated approaches to include all forms of development such as agriculture, micro-finance, and public health to initiate more effective and successful programs in needed regions.

I was able to observe a different model of development work through Episcopal Relief & Development's model of Asset Based Community Development. This model showed the effects of working in a community while using the assets already in place to better lives of community members. Learning about this approach helped me form a more comprehensive idea of the skills, experience, and knowledge needed to most successfully implement a development program to address the specific needs of communities.

Talking with different people in the organization let me understand the processes that they used to get into the career that they are in now. Working for an international development organization has many different paths leading to it. I learned that most of the program officers came to the organization after finishing graduate school with some form of international development focus studies then working for other smaller development agencies. A large portion of the program officers spent some time with the Peace Corps in addition to other experience. These inputs have helped me in considering my next steps after I leave Sewanee. Each person I talked with was completely happy with the job they were doing and were

passionate to be working with Episcopal Relief & Development. Seeing this passion really helped to ignite my own passions for working with an organization doing so much good and creating so much change in struggling countries around the globe.

Working for two and a half months with Episcopal Relief & Development helped me reevaluate the work that I would like to do in my career as it was essentially the career I am seeking. I did realize that I would like to work more in the field than I saw the program officers do in the organization as Episcopal Relief & Development does its work through partners in the communities to create positive change. The internship gave me hope to work in the international development world as well as giving me experience to use in going into the career once I have finished my education. I would recommend this internship to anyone interested in pursuing a career in international development.