

For eight weeks this summer I was fortunate enough to work with the Ford Family Program as an intern in Nkozi, Uganda. Ford has a partnership with Uganda Martyr's University (UMU) and the parish of Nnindye (near Nkozi) to work on developing Nnindye. As an intern, I was able to work with people from UMU, both students and the Outreach Research team faculty, and the community members of Nnindye along with Ford. The partnership conducted a baseline survey of the village in the past few years, and from this they decided which areas were of primary concern to Nnindye's development. It was decided that the three areas to focus on were agriculture, water and sanitation, and health care. Throughout the year before I arrived for the summer, the Ford/UMU partnership worked very hard with the village leaders to plan initiatives in each of these areas.

With all of this work done and plans in place for each of these sectors, I arrived at UMU with the option of choosing a project from any of these sectors to focus on. While it was difficult at first to understand exactly what was expected out of our projects, I was finally decided to work in the water sector on water intervention histories that have taken place in the parish, something that my supervisor, David Nnyanzi, told me they were really hoping to have better records of and to make use of for future interventions. With this as my decided project, I worked with my UMU student partner, Dennis, on going into the villages to find out two things: the basic facts about all of the boreholes/shallow wells that had been put in by NGOs in the past (which NGO, what year, how deep the well was, the condition of the well, etc.) and the community's feelings towards the wells, NGOs, and how interventions had affected the traditions and culture that had previously stood around fetching water.

Going around the villages was a truly amazing experience. We were very lucky to have the Chairperson of a few villages walk us around to all of the water sources in his or her village and stop at homesteads along the way. Actually walking in the villages and talking to people about their daily experiences and how they have changed, both good and bad changes, with all of the interventions that have taken place, the water issue became incredibly complex but also much more realistic. I loved getting to work on this project because I really found that while it was focused on water, it relates to all fields of development, and the challenges faced are the same as those with health care and agriculture and so many other areas. I would sit down and just think about all of the information I was taking in around me and try to process all of the problems and the attempted solutions and how successful they were. It was incredibly frustrating to see so many efforts that were undertaken with good intentions go sour and really do more harm than good. Worse than that was looking at the problems and seeing that every possible solution also has its negative consequences. Once I finished all of my research on the water intervention histories, I typed up notes and analyses on each village and on the parish as a whole for future work in the water sector.

With that project finished, the other interns and I spent the last part of the summer conducting school nutrition surveys for a grant that Ford had received to help with agriculture and nutrition in education in Nkozi Sub-County. For these surveys, we went to fifteen schools and interviewed the head teacher, two pre-selected teachers for the program, and six students at each school. These surveys were both a great and really challenging experience. It was really interesting to see the schools in the area because we hadn't really gotten a chance to see any yet. It was kind of surreal at first because almost every school has signs all over their yard saying things like "avoid cross-generational sex" or "AIDS kills," and that was really one of the most striking aspects about this part of the summer. For some reason this was the biggest evidence to me that the kids are growing up there with a completely different set of worries than most kids

that grow up in the U.S. They are growing up with the threat of AIDS all around them, whereas most kids in the States barely know what it is until Junior High or so. At the same time, most of the teachers we talked to were really motivated and you could really tell they loved teaching and wanted what was best for the kids, and that was great because it is truly a universal feeling to want children to have the best opportunities they can, and the teachers really believe that education is their ticket to those opportunities.

Sometimes though, the teachers were not quite as easy to talk to and much less inspirational. One of the most trying surveys I conducted was with one teacher in which we had a very large communication barrier. Not only could he not understand me in any way I phrased a question, when he read the question off the paper he couldn't understand it either. Once, when asking a question about having problems with the water, he responded that there wasn't any really, and right before I was going to ask the next question he stops me and asks, "Wait, what benefits am I not receiving by answering 'no' to that question?" I was really speechless; I didn't know how to explain that I was really just there to ask him the questions and that I really wasn't scavenging around for things to buy for the school. I ran into that problem a few times where because of my skin color people thought I was just from another NGO there to give them something.

This story is actually one of the biggest struggles I had while I was there and really was something that benefitting me a lot. I really went into the internship hoping of course that I could help out Ford, but also to answer some of my own questions. I wanted to try and find what I found was the best model to development: did the efforts need to be community based or start from the top? What were my overall thoughts on current approaches to development? And even more personally, I really wanted to know if this was something I truly wanted to work on the rest of my life. It's amazing because I really got an answer to everything I was looking for. I decided that I really believe that there needs to be some kind of government stability and faith in the

government before any sustainable changes can be made. I also decided that the all-too-common NGO approach of just dropping off supplies or a borehole is really not the best approach because it isn't sustainable. There needs to be a combination of efforts at the very top of a country as well as at the bottom working hand in hand with communities to help actualize their goals. Overall I got so much out of my summer, from small things like making great friends and learning to love the cultural foods that I couldn't initially stomach to deciding what I want to do with my life.

Sadly, I don't think I made any contributions quite so great to Ford as they did for me. While I tried to work hard all summer, there's nothing too incredible that I could have done in eight weeks. I truly hope that my outsider opinions, remarks, and suggestions I made on the water situation will be helpful in the coming years with efforts in the water sector. I also hope that the schools can benefit from the agriculture and nutrition grant. I often wished while I was there that I could have done more for Ford, as I often felt like I had a lot of free time that I could have been helping them out.

Outside of just Ford though I think it was great for both us and the UMU students we worked with to be with each other all summer. We really learned so much from each other and about each other's cultures (such as introducing one of our partners, Henry, to a hamburger for the first time) that I think we both really benefitted from that and that the UMU/Ford partnership will greatly benefit from continuing to partner up interns.