

Final Internship Report

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DC, USA

At a glance

Please give a one-paragraph summary that will give someone a taste of what this internship and experience are about. Who are you? What did you do? If someone is flipping through the binders at Dickey, what are the most important things you'd want them to know about this internship?

I'm a QSS major (with a concentration in international development). I'm passionate about social justice issues, particularly human trafficking. I spent the term working at International Justice Mission, a nonprofit dedicated to protecting the poor from violence. They work to rescue and restore victims of human trafficking, land grabbing, and other forced labor. I worked on their Global Partnerships division, which mobilizes key partners/actors (think corporations, transnational organizations, governmental organizations!) to help transform justice systems in the places where IJM has field offices. My day-to-day tasks included data analysis, project management, and policy writing. While I worked in Headquarters in DC, they also have field office internships around the world.

Overview of the Internship

Use this section to give a brief summary of your internship. If someone was looking to get the jist of your organization and experience, how would you describe it in 1 paragraph? *1-2 paragraphs*

International Justice Mission works to rescue and restore victims, bring criminals to justice, and strengthen justice systems around the world. They have ~40 field offices around the world, and headquarters in Washington, DC. I interned at Headquarters, where I helped to do writing/research, data analysis, and worked with different stakeholders and partners around the world.

Projects + Types of Work

This is a big section. Talk about the “meat” of your internship – what did you do on a daily basis? What types of projects or other work were you tasked with and how did you accomplish these? Did you work independently or on teams? Was your work field-based or desk research? Try to give a real sense of what interning with this organization entails. *¾ page – 1 page*

This description only pertains to internships at headquarters. Many interns are deployed out into the field, and their tasks probably look a lot different. A little background on their theory of change: most of the world’s poor lives with a lack of functioning law enforcement, unprotected from violence—afflicted by things like rape, trafficking, and police brutality. More than 40 million people are held in slavery worldwide. IJM works to rescue and *restore* victims of human trafficking, forced labor, and land grabbing, as well as charges criminals and strengthens justice systems in the places their field offices operate in. For me, I reported to a supervisor and helped her on whatever tasks she had for me. Some of them included:

- Drafting a new internal “Vulnerable People Policy” to replace their old “Vulnerable Child Policy.” The policy acted to set guidelines for how the organization (and partners) treat rescued victims—things like anonymity, putting proper safeguards in place, etc.
- Data analysis for their Monitoring & Evaluation team—looking at the efficacy of programs
- Justice Data Solution: working on a standardized system for Field Offices around the world to input their data (i.e. volunteers, advocacy, partner organizations, etc.)
- Working with Responsible Business Alliance to create training materials for labor audits (some companies want to make sure their supply chains are ethical and free of forced labor, so they hire RBA to perform audits)
- Working with the Polaris Project Global Slavery Directory to provide administrative support and update IJM’s information on their website

I worked on many different projects during my time at IJM, which I thought was really helpful for my own professional development, especially to see what tasks I did excel or enjoy at and which ones I didn’t. It was a good mix of crunching numbers and reading/writing. I worked on the “Global Partnerships” team, but mostly did my own

work. However, that's not to say it was lonely at all! IJM usually hires at least 25 interns for their headquarters during each "cycle" (fall, summer, and spring), and they put on many programming events both during and outside of the work day. We got to hear from many experts in the field during brown bags, and most of the executives have had prior experience in the international development field (and are happy to talk about it!). Overall, great experience! I would recommend to anyone that's thinking about it, and am happy to talk about it if anyone is interested.

Expectations vs. Experience

Use this section to describe how your expectations varied from your experience in country, particularly around the internship experience. Were the projects different than you anticipated? Was the organization and/or leadership different than anticipated? This is a good place to address misconceptions another intern might have when looking at your organizations brochures. Let us know what it's actually like! *2-3 paragraphs*

I thought I would really hate doing an 8-5 job, but I actually was excited to go to work every day! I expected to be doing the same menial tasks, but the day was split into chunks once meetings and intern events were dispersed in. It was a happy balance of working and soaking in information/experience from those around me.

The organization was much more hierarchical than I had expected for a nonprofit, but I think it made things run more smoothly. With the more focused teams, we were able to focus on very specialized things (i.e. grants, corporate partnerships, etc.).

Work Environment + Work Life Balance

Describe the work environment and cultural differences you encountered in the workplace. It may be helpful to use bullet points here. Also talk about whether you were able to adjust socially? Was it difficult to find a social network abroad? How did you cope with this? *3-4 paragraphs or equivalent bullet points*

The work environment was interesting because all the employees that worked at IJM were Christian. Of course, they rescued people of all religions, and had no intent to evangelize or anything like that, but it was interesting to be immersed in a community where most people had the same values. It was also really awesome to be surrounded by people that cared about the same social justice issues that I did, and to learn from people who had worked at places like the UN, USAID, etc.

Adjusting socially was really easy. Most of the interns were American, and DC was a wonderful city to be in.

Personal Growth, Skills Learned + Cultural Differences Encountered

What did you learn? How did you grow? What are specific challenges you encountered and what specific skills will you take with you?

¾ page – 1 page

It was really great to be able to apply what I've learned in my classes at Dartmouth to the field that I worked in. In my Development Economics class, we had talked about how violence is a cycle and keeps the poor in a cycle of poverty. My Geopolitics of 3rd World Development class gave me a critical lens in which to view different development institutions. I honestly came into the internship with a fear that IJM would be another organization with a “white savior” complex, but their field offices are almost entirely staffed with locals, with the exceptions of the unpaid interns. I really agree with that model of community input and building the community through those that are actually on the ground, so I think that wherever I work in the future, I want to continue to examine my organization's theory of change with a critical eye.

What I've found challenging is feeling connected to the mission while being at headquarters, away from the field offices. Because we're so far away, a lot of the actual rescues and aftercare feel very far, but it helped to remind myself of *why* I was doing what I was doing. I think I'll have to take this to whatever job I end up going to—because there will inevitably be days where I'm tired, or burnt out, but it will be helpful to remember why I chose the job in the first place. As for specific skills, I've learned a lot about how to communicate with other people, and how to make myself heard. There are, of course, times when you don't necessarily need to make yourself heard, but when you believe in something, you should say it! After all, who knows what impact that voiced opinion could have?

Lasting Impact

Ultimately, what do you think the impact of this internship will be? Will it affect your academic, professional or personal plans? *1 paragraph*

The impact of this internship will honestly be lifelong. Academically and professionally, I'd love to delve deeper into the field of development and how to frame the world using quantitative tools. Personally, I think it would be cool to one day live abroad! I think that was one part of the internship I wish I could have changed—being in DC is certainly a different experience than being abroad. Overall, I'm incredibly grateful for Dickey for this opportunity, because it changed my life trajectory (in a good way!).