

*“To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”* (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 3) This quote speaks perfectly as to why I am attending the University of Denver to acquire a master’s degree in International Administration. By being true to my heart’s desire and pursuing a career I am passionate about, it will follow that I will be placed in a position to help those in need. A higher education will provide me with the tools needed to serve others to the best of my ability by implementing international projects that fulfill human needs in a way that promotes the sustainability of natural resources.

I believe my purpose in life is to help others in need, and I plan on doing that by establishing community development project through international non-profit organizations. To do this, I need an education, skills, and experience. Because of the grant that the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation awarded me, I was able to experience living and working in a foreign country to help implement an ecotourism project headed by a local non-profit organization. That experience helped me to grow not only on a professional level but also on a personal level. It is one thing to take classes and be exposed to ideas and concepts that I should try to incorporate in my career working in international development, but it is a completely different thing to actually work in a developing country and apply those concepts that I have been learning.

Specifically, my area of interest in international development is food and water. These are fundamental necessities of life and, I believe, a basic human right. The availability and quality of these resources are the major determining factors of an individual’s health and well-being. The families living in Sabacché, Yucatan, struggle from day to day just to have enough money to be able to afford to eat. I feel passionate about creating and implementing international community development projects that provide these two essential resources. My goal is to develop projects that not only are context-specific and provide culturally appropriate technology to address these needs but also to promote environmental sustainability in the process.

I cannot thank the board enough for deciding to fund my participation in the ecotourism project in Sabacché. While living in Sabacché for three months, I was able to experience what it is like to live in poverty. The funding the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation provides to individuals like me helps to impact people around the world and to improve the lives of both the interns and those they are trying to serve. That experience has transformed who I am and the way that I view the world. It has strengthened my desire to help those in need and to go to any lengths to help improve the lives of the poor. I feel like I have even more dedication to my studies and career after having worked in Mexico this past summer.