

Institute for Health and Social Justice (IHSJ) Summer Internship at Partners in Health

Background

Headquartered in Boston, Partners in Health (PIH) collaborates with communities around the world to deliver sustainable health care solutions. It first operated in rural Haiti, but has expanded to 12 countries across the globe. PIH recognizes health as a human right; the organization fights for access to primary health care and education on behalf of the most marginalized populations. Their organizational model is community-based and preventative, rather than curative. PIH seeks to eradicate disease, the burden of which is often disproportionately carried by the poor, by addressing its root causes. To do so, they develop and maintain long-term partnerships with national governments and other NGOs, conduct community research, and build primary care centers largely staffed by community members that provide free health care services to sick patients.

The Haiti-Rwanda Commission (HRC) is an up-and-coming nonprofit housed within PIH. The goal of this organization is to share post-genocide experiences and lessons learned in Rwanda with post-earthquake Haiti. As one example of how this is done, the Rwandan government funds fifty Haitian students and future leaders to attend school in Rwanda each year. This exchange of experiences and resources will help lay the foundations for economic, political, and social improvement in both nations. These improvements will in turn lead to long-term community benefits.

Project Description

This summer, I will be serving as an intern for the US HRC team in Boston. I will be overseeing the development of the HRC's website, which will help raise global awareness about the tumultuous, complex histories of Rwanda and Haiti and these countries' potential for mutual advancement in spite of their histories. The website will further provide the HRC with networking and promotion opportunities, thus increasing the HRC's visibility and potential for community impact. I will also play a large role in the HRC's day-to-day operations, allowing for more direct involvement with the Haitian and Rwandan communities with whom the HRC primarily works. Through my work with the HRC, I will have the opportunity to see how a large and empirically effective nonprofit develops connections with national governments. These connections are important in strengthening the political, economic, and social climates of the nations where PIH works – a critical step in the long-term development of a nation's health care system.