

Partners in Health Internship Final Report

Over these past nine weeks in Boston with Partners in Health as the Haiti-Rwanda Commission (HRC) intern, I have delved into South-South collaboration, experienced and managed the difficulties of running a small but growing nonprofit program, and gained new skills, from website design to policy report writing. As one of two HRC staff members in the US, I was involved with most of the Commission's projects. I was able to use my past experiences to inform my work, but my time at PIH was primarily an incredible learning and growing experience.

Since my mid-term report five weeks ago, I have continued my program development work with the HRC's projects. For the Education and Leadership Program, I wrote human impact stories highlighting two of the program's Haitian students studying at university in Rwanda; for the project, I interviewed them about their lives in Haiti, their successes in Rwanda, and their goals for contributing to Haiti's reconstruction after completing their university education. I worked extensively on the evaluation reports for the students in this program. These evaluations were used to assess the students' academic and professional strengths and areas for improvement. I also had the opportunity to draft official correspondence for Rwandan government ministers updating them on the Education and Leadership Program. For the Women and Girls Initiative, I developed an agenda and activities for a three-day retreat for girls living in Haiti's tent camps. The retreat focused on girls' empowerment, self-esteem building, leadership skill development, and cultural exploration. I also provided feedback on a trailer of the documentary the HRC is producing on Rwanda's post-genocide progress. The film will ultimately be shown to Haitian audiences, among others, with the hope of highlighting Haiti's own post-earthquake potential in terms of development, NGO coordination, and decentralization and strengthening of the government and public services. Lastly, I spent a significant portion of my time redesigning the HRC's website and organizing its content. The website will launch this fall, and will play an important role in educating HRC supporters about HRC programs and connecting them to the communities with which it works.

The Haiti-Rwanda Commission has exposed me to the possibilities of South-South cooperation. In the case of Haiti and Rwanda, this cooperation is leading to exchanges around the areas of decentralization, women's empowerment and inclusion in government, diaspora, and NGO coordination. I am excited to see how Haiti and Rwanda continue to build connections and share best practices that lead to stronger systems and communities. On a personal level, I am excited to remain connected with PIH and the Haiti-Rwanda Commission. I plan to continue developing and tweaking the website with the HRC's leadership until its launch later this year, and I also hope to work on various PIH mental health projects while at school this fall.

Through my experience this summer, I have gained a clearer vision of what I want to accomplish as a future physician and health advocate. I want to help build stronger health systems that expand access to care and define health in terms of education, mental and social support, and economic opportunity as well as medical

treatment. PIH has developed a model that does just that, and it was a wonderful opportunity to learn from the organization and its many mentors. I am excited to continue exploring how I specifically want to contribute to this work as a future clinician, and I am immensely grateful for the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation's support this summer as I further refined my passions and niche.