

First Two Weeks at Girl Rising: Outreach, Connections, and Empowerment!

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So far at my internship at Girl Rising, I have had an incredible experience. The nonprofit's New York City team is based on West 26th street in the Chelsea neighborhood, and shares a 7th floor open workspace with another company called

the Documentary Group. Girl Rising was originally a documentary produced by the 'Doc Group,' but the team decided to continue to spread its mission through the creation of a separate nonprofit several years ago. By continuing the production of short films, digital storytelling initiatives, and celebrity influencer-led campaigns, the organization hopes to gradually shift social norms regarding girls' education and possibilities. While they do have a free curriculum program that is used in schools around the world, the overarching objective is not to furnish or provide schools, but to reframe cultural mentalities about the importance of an education.

As an intern so far, I have had a broad range of responsibilities, which connect to the intertwined missions of NCI and Girl Rising. The first week, I was introduced to most of Girl Rising's New York staff, and spent two days thoroughly reading an onboarding guide, familiarizing myself with Girl Rising's office policies, and absorbing all of their film and curriculum materials. We downloaded online programs like Basecamp that help you assign and check off tasks, learned how to run a conference call, and went over a brief outline of our responsibilities as interns, which included a range of group and independent projects. I immediately learned that Girl Rising values an open and communicative workplace, where the absence of office walls represents their encouragement of asking questions and working as a team. There are also spaces, however, where it is not appropriate to interrupt a supervisor. I had to discover this careful, dynamic balance throughout the first week.

Now, two weeks into my experience, I am always busy in the office. Our primary role as interns is outreach to partner organizations, and our entire team has been connecting with other individuals and nonprofits that advocate for gender equality for a Girl Rising HP story challenge. NCI values women's equality-focused initiatives, and learning the ways to properly connect to others with Girl Rising's focus on gender equality is helping us unify related organizations and create a stronger global force. Another extremely valuable aspect of Girl Rising's intern approach is allowing us to attend major calls, meetings, and status updates, and I look forward to continuing to develop my professional knowledge about the way a high-profile organization runs. These professional skills will be applicable to my own leadership development skills, a core value of the Newcomb College Institute, and will help me learn to advocate for gender-focused values with other projects in the future. Specifically, observing Girl Rising's extremely targeted branding, pitches to potential donors, and extensive outreach efforts has informed my view of the work required to promote this mission to the public. Finally, chances to research on my own

independent case study project about government education funding in Latin America has continued to expand my knowledge of the unique challenges facing girls and women in communities around the world.

I feel incredibly lucky to have secured my position at Girl Rising, and encourage future interns to apply to nonprofits for their internship experience. I originally learned about the organization several summers ago when the original documentary was screened in my hometown in Washington, exposing me to nine inspiring stories of girls empowering themselves through education. Later, based on an immediate connection I had felt to the organization's mission and my interest in international development, I reached out to Girl Rising in an email indicating my interest. I received a reply that fall, scheduled a phone interview with the Girl Rising team, and was offered my position as a general intern in January. To anyone seeking an internship at a nonprofit or organization with a mission intertwined in social justice, I recommend reaching out to multiple organizations with a statement of interest, cover letter, and resume. Although many will not reply, I believe that Girl Rising appreciated my tailored interest and early application (during the end of last fall).

As my internship progresses, I look forward to developing my personal research project, gaining insight about the inner workings of a nonprofit, and securing new skills and knowledge about Girl Rising projects. By attending presentations and meetings, I hope to continue to learn about the skills and professional procedure for forming partnerships with major organizations like Citi and HP, and leverage these partnerships to create an impact. I also want to leave this summer with increased knowledge about educational challenges facing refugees to use in future engagements at Tulane and beyond. I can't wait for the rest of this amazing summer experience!