

Day Five at the International Center for Migration, Health and Development - Opportunities Ahead

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Hi all! I'm Angelica Nahalka, a rising sophomore currently invested in the study of political science, public health and international development. For the next two months, I will be a research intern at the International Center for Migration, Health and Development, a nonprofit fittingly located in the humanitarian capital of the

world, Geneva, Switzerland. Its mission is to protect the health and welfare of those affected by migration through research, training and policy advocacy. I will be heavily involved in creating the research reports that go on to inform the actions of the ICMHD. I have not yet received my formal research assignment, as my supervisor, executive director of the ICMHD, Dr. Manuel Carballo, has been working on a project in Kuwait for the past week, but when I find out this coming Monday, I'll be sure to keep everyone updated!

Despite the fact that I do not have a project as of yet, my first five days at the ICMHD have still been busy. I will be presenting in the ICMHD's first journal club meeting, where I will describe the findings and methods of a research article published in an academic journal, thus starting a discussion of the work. I've never done anything of the sort and have been working on the accompanying PowerPoint whenever I am not reading all I can about the organization and the issues and events that affect its work.

I have also had the pleasure to meet the staff currently at the ICMHD, many of whom have worked extensively for the WHO or UN, and two other interns, Mikayla and Sarah, who have helped me feel right at home in the large office we share, of which I have attached a picture. We all work within a house on the outskirts of Geneva, located in the town of Vernier, unlike many of the other nonprofits which are located nearer to the UN which is in the central part of the city. Once a day we gather for lunch in the house's dining/meeting room for a home-cooked meal prepared by the ICMHD's technical officer, Gangyan Gong.

These lunches are a perfect opportunity to ask questions and learn all I can from the vast experience of those around me, gaining insights into the complexities of international development, both in its practice and how to enter this field. The environment is friendly, and to my pleasant surprise, quite relaxed. Everyone is talented and skilled in what they do, and many have had years of experience. The work will, however, be challenging but I have no doubts that it will be extremely valuable.

To back track a little to how I even ended up in Geneva, I took the first steps to getting this internship opportunity when I found that Tulane, and particularly my International Development 101 professor, Dr. Colin Crawford, had substantial connections with the ICMHD. I asked Dr. Crawford if the organization would be willing to take me on as an intern. After the exchange of a few emails with Dr.

Carballo, I found myself with an amazing opportunity, evidence for the importance of reaching out.

Even though I have only been living in Geneva since stumbling into my hostel dorm room at 2 am last Sunday, I have already come to love waking up every morning and walking through the sloping cobblestone streets of the old town, where my hostel is located. Even more importantly, I am making my way towards an incredible opportunity not only to gain connections and experience, but to observe and learn close up, truly immersing myself in the center of work I believe is essential to the creation of a world in which I would like to live.