

Wrapping up at Mama Maji

Thu, 08/21/2014 - 00:00

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This week ended my short, yet meaningful, time working with [Mama Maji](#). I have taken away what felt like years of experience in just two months.

One of my learning objectives was to strengthen my community outreach skills by gaining more experience with public education and public speaking, and I feel this was something I absolutely was able to accomplish. A lot of my time was spent doing outreach about the organization and their new on-campus club not only to my

own networks at Tulane, but to new departments, groups, and individuals who had not previously had any kind of relationship with Mama Maji. While it was not one of my goals, I ended up also learning a great deal about my own community at Tulane, the resources that are available within it, and what kinds of things some of my amazing peers are working on. These are things I will certainly be leveraging in the future. On the public speaking end, I was given excellent one-on-one training from my supervisor who really took the time to help me improve and to challenge myself. I think my speaking skills have definitely improved and I feel much more confident to use this ability in my classes, at future jobs, and just when advocating for my own endeavors.

I also wrote in my objectives that I would like to learn the most effective ways to increase both financial support and awareness for a certain cause, and to ensure that this responsiveness is sustained. The last task of my internship was to launch and complete an online fundraising campaign for the next water kiosk that Mama Maji will be building in Kenya, but before I did that, I was given valuable advice on the best ways to successfully fundraise. My supervisor, Brian, really emphasized the importance of self reflection and digging deep to discover my own motivation for doing this before I could even begin to think about motivating others to become involved—let alone donate their money! He helped me craft my personal story as well as the project narrative, which I then used on my Indiegogo [campaign](#). I know I achieved this objective because my campaign has only been live for 48 hours and I am only \$115 away from my \$500 goal. I now feel comfortable enough with the process to be able to fundraise in the future.

Another goal I had for my time with Mama Maji was to learn more about the global water crisis, and be able to educate others about it as well. This might be the only objective that I'm not 100% certain I have achieved. I definitely know much more about this issue than I did when I began, but I would have definitely loved to learn more about the operational specificities in terms of the actual water kiosks that Mama Maji helped create. I know I could, however, at least on a very basic level, be able to engage someone in conversation about the gendered issue of water. This is also not the end of my work with Mama Maji, as I will be an active member of their Catalyst Club on campus, so I am sure they will help me continue my education about the water crisis.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of my experience at Mama Maji had to do with my fourth objective, which was to connect with female change makers within the New

Orleans community, and to help them connect with women abroad. On my first day, I learned the exciting news that I would be working alongside two brilliant women who were part of the Young African Leadership Initiative. Soon after, I was introduced to three other amazing young women who are part of the Mama Maji team. Towards the end of my internship, I had the task of doing outreach in order to recruit two campus coordinators for the fall. Through that process, I got to connect with even more amazing female leaders, many of whom I will be working with in the future! Each and every person I met as a part of this internship has taught me something invaluable and has inspired me to continue to build this network of remarkable, ambitious women who not only want to see change happen, but be a part of it. The greatest thing about Mama Maji in my opinion is their emphasis on empowering women, so issues of gender and social justice were ever present in my learning journey.

Finally, I was able to gain important skills vital to a career in the non-profit sector of international development. I plan to build off of these lessons in the very near future and take them with me into every single professional setting that I find myself in. I've learned that making an impact is not an unattainable goal for people my age, and that our positions as students can even amplify this effect. I have also gotten to experience first hand the way a new organization operates, as well as what it take to make said organization successful and sustainable.

While my internship was brief, I really think I was able to help the growth of Mama Maji through my own work. I would (and will!) recommend that other students work with Mama Maji. They are a young organization with an amazing vision and a commitment to the success of each individual they work with—and it will absolutely be a positive experience if you want to work hard and make it one.