

MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

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Having come to Ghana for the first time, I am truly honoured to have been introduced to various dimensions of the political, economic and social landscapes of the country, the West African region and the African continent through the lens of the communications work at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Accra.

Throughout my time with UNIC Accra, I was able to closely analyse the impact and necessity of the United Nations by working in partnership with various agencies such as UNHCR, UNESCO, UNCTAD and the UNU. The most incredible part was observing how the UN in Ghana is interconnected and actually work in unison in order to reach its goals.



My time here was most definitely well spent and allowed for my personal and professional growth. There are various milestones I was able to reach at UNIC Accra, such as having an article published, drafting a feature, and representing a media team alongside my supervisor where we administered crucial interviews at a UNESCO capacity building workshop. In addition, I was able to enhance my team work skills in a professional environment. All interns had both the opportunities to lead and also to follow during the planning of events and programs within UNIC Accra and in partnership with other UN agencies, local government and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Furthermore, I learned that within the field of event coordination and media monitoring the delicate balance between creativity and efficiency is crucial. At the onset of my internship, amidst all the first day emotions of fear and excitement, I was taken to the World Summit of Mayors and Leaders from Africa and of African Descent, there I already was afforded the opportunity to write my first report. I was excited to do so because the discussions and necessary discourse that had taken place throughout that day were things that I am passionate about. The summit covered topics such as, healthcare, gender equity, and statistics on the shifting trends in human capital. At the summit, I saw the necessity of the UN agencies because of the wealth of information they offered to those in attendance.

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As an intern, dealing with media and communications for the UN taught me that being knowledgeable on a range of topics is fundamental. The necessity to have well rounded understanding allowed for my background in a liberal arts education to be put to practice. Amongst these skills, I also practiced various aspects of journalistic etiquette, somethings seemingly simple, such as always making sure that the technical equipment is ready for use, but also nuanced skills such as writing a person's views within context when editing to avoid miscommunicating their ideas; things which I was unaware of before my internship.

A definite highlight was going to Cape Coast to mark the UN Decade for People of African Descent and the Diaspora, and being able to observe and contribute to a UNESCO regional workshop.

My experience at UNIC Accra was underlined by a particularly important year for the UN, as it is turning 70 and creating a post 2015 development agenda. The Millennium Development Goals which were so prominent in my formative years are now entering a new stage of Sustainable Development Goals. I am hopeful for the UN mandate in Ghana as it evolves.

This was an important experience for me as a believer in global interaction through a pan African lens. I have experienced working for an organization that I hold in high esteem in the Ghanaian and African context. It was an invaluable experience and the skills I learned will prove useful within my personal, academic and professional life.



Ms Linda Phiri conducting an interview at a UNESCO-organised workshop