



## THE HONORS PROGRAM

**Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation:  
Reflections on an International Service-Learning Capstone**

*An Honors Capstone Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Graduation with University Honors*

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My capstone would not have occurred without these amazing individuals who helped me to learn and grow along the way.

Shirley Shultz Myers

Jerri Lyn Dorminy

Cristina Berdichevsky

Emilia Chukwuma

Geoffrey Whitebread

Mr. Ebot Nuti Ogork

Madame Ogork

### **Abstract**

Te'aira Tucker's capstone is a reflection based upon her experience working on a service-learning project in Cameroon, West Africa. As part of her service-learning project, she conducted an internship with a deaf organization, the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO), partnering with this organization through Dr. Berdichevsky's International Deaf Partnerships (IDP) program. Te'aira went to Cameroon during the summer of 2012 initially to work on an HIV/AIDS education campaign focusing on deaf Cameroonian women. However, upon arriving, she learned that this initiative was not needed, and therefore, she turned instead to a different and pressing need associated with the CDEO and the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf. From her experiences working with the CDEO, Ms. Tucker decided to work with them on their goal to establish a poultry farm for their deaf school, Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf. The Poultry Farm had several goals, including providing a source of food and income to the school while also serving as a means of effective vocational training for the students. The project's vocational training was designed for educating the deaf students to become self-sufficient with marketable skills developed as a result of their experience running the farm. From this experience, Te'aira developed a proposal to Clinton Global Initiative – University (CGI-U) for the purpose of educating the deaf community in the United States about the needs of Cameroon Deaf students while also seeking to fundraise and provide support for the Poultry Farm project. Last, Ms. Tucker ultimately hopes her experiences help prepare others who have a desire to conduct service-learning projects in developing countries. She also hopes that she inspires others to make a difference in the world through projects like hers.

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### **Opening: A Reflection on my Capstone**

Creating a capstone is a beautiful experience because each capstone is uniquely the personality of each person and his or her interests. Prior to my capstone, the Honors Program had never had a student take on a service-learning capstone. I hope many more students will try it. I was the first person and therefore as the first, I experienced many challenges that could help pave the way for others. I truly hope more Honors students will read my work and consider a service-learning project because it is a truly educational experience with opportunities for personal growth and learning.

As of August 18, 2013, this capstone paper is a revision of a project that was once laced with a sense of underlying bitterness. Originally, I completed my capstone document on April 15, 2013, and at that time I had endured countless challenges and consequently I had become full of resentment toward my project and myself. Yet, in May of 2013, I was approached with an opportunity to revise my capstone paper. I was originally hesitant because I had recently graduated and did not want to deal with anything academic during my summer. Yet, I do not like “what if’s,”—what if I could have worked to a deeper experience and a more substantive reflection? On that basis, I decided to take the chance. I am glad I did because I was able to step outside the experience and see how much I learned and grew as a result of this capstone. This revised paper could not have happened without Dr. Jerri Lyn Dorminy. She helped me to understand myself outside initial frustrations and disappointments so that I could see how much I had grown professionally and personally. I did not realize it how much until I took another look through Dr. Dorminy’s guidance. I am forever thankful to her.

Now, this revised capstone paper will attempt to take the reader along on my journey of conducting a service-learning project with a nonprofit organization in a developing country. My overarching realization is that personal moments throughout the project helped shape me into the person I am today. These memorable moments and feeling remain, such as the happiness I felt when I first stepped on Cameroon's soil greeting my hosts; the feeling of disappointment when I realized my original project approved by the Honors Council was not needed; the culture shock I experienced when conversing with a woman who was breast-feeding her child very openly while talking with me; my feelings of desperation to revise and rescue my capstone within a limited time frame when I arrived back in America; my displeasure at how my capstone was progressing after I had returned—for this reason, I believed I had failed those children; my feeling of shock when the Clinton Global Initiative –University (CGI-U) would not provide me full communication access to the CGI-U annual conference; and, finally, my acceptance of the lessons and growth I have experienced from my capstone.

### **What is a Service-Learning Project?**

According to Penny Silvers (2009) the importance of service-learning is to provide students the ability to understand the importance of how their actions pave the way for civic and social action within their communities. It is a form of allowing students to learn while engaging in the experience of addressing a community's needs through critical thinking, reflection and participation (J. Szente, 2008).

### **Reflection: Service-Learning**

In the fall of 2011, when I first decided my capstone, all I had was an idea of basing my capstone in Africa and for it to be related to HIV/AIDS education. I wanted to

gain experience working with a developing international non-profit organization. I had already experienced working at a non-profit organization in America, so that the next first-hand experience I wanted to gain was working with a developing country's organization. I approached this capstone from a service-learning framework, at the suggestion of Honors Coordinator, Geoff Whitebread, and Director of Honors, Dr. Shirley Myers. This seemed to be the ideal project for this kind of work. In addition, the drive to create a service-learning capstone came from three General Studies Requirement (GSR) courses I had taken that all focused on service-learning. I chose those courses because I wanted a more in-depth understanding of what it means to be involved in a service-learning project. I am grateful that Dr. Myers and Mr. Whitebread helped me to step back from the big picture and think about the details of what kind of service-learning project I wanted. They helped keep me grounded on how to approach my capstone and shape it into an experience that I wanted. I knew I wanted it to be a social work service-learning project because I wanted to become an international social worker. I approached different social work faculty but they were unable to commit the time and energy needed to guide me in this capstone.

Luckily, I had worked with Dr. Cristina Berdichevsky, who was my GSR professor (Fall of 2010) and French professor (Spring of 2011), and had experienced working many times with Ms. Emilia Chukwuma on various service-learning or community-based projects. These two professors agreed to work with me as my committee for my capstone. It was their first time working as a committee for an Honors capstone project—my capstone was full of a lot of first times; my committee members did a great job setting me up with their network and establishing my first international

internship. I am thankful they led me to Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation because they set me on the road to learn what it truly means to create a service-learning project. I most likely would not be where I am if it were not for their commitment to this part of my experience. They are strong ladies who have caring hearts for their students and work to achieve student's dreams of working with an international organization. I was not the first person to work with them on such a project, although the first to do it as a University Honors capstone, and I am sure I will not be the last. Because of them, I became a stronger and better person through my internship and capstone.

### **Cameroon**

Before I begin to share my experiences, it is important to understand Cameroon to appreciate various aspects of my internship experience. This section will explain the geography, history, government and language of Cameroon and introduce you to the work of the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organization (CDEO).

#### **Geography**

Cameroon is a sizeable country in West Africa positioned between Nigeria, Chad, Congo and Gabon. The capital of Cameroon is Yaoundé and it has a population of 1.677 million people, according to the U.S. Department of State. Data on the deaf population is not readily available.

#### **History**

Cameroon is a land filled with rich soil, history and a diverse people—tribes, religions, and languages. Cameroon used to be a land where people lived within tribes. In 1919, Cameroon was divided into French and British Cameroon. England and France forced boundaries lines with other countries, which divided families and marginalized local languages in favor of the two colonialist influences, French and English. On

January 1, 1960, French Cameroon became independent. In February of 1961, the northern region of British Cameroon joined French Cameroon, and the land became known as the United Republic of Cameroon (Central Intelligence Agency and Chambers Dictionary of World History, 2011). When I visited Cameroon, the deaf community was spread out throughout the different villages and cities. During my eight-week experience, I met a number of Deaf Cameroonians in the cities of Doula, Limbé, Buea, Kumba, and Yaoundé. From my observations, I believe Yaoundé has the largest population of deaf as the city is big, and I was always meeting a new deaf person.

### **Government**

The Republic of Cameroon is a republic with a multiparty parliament and a presidential regime. The government is a mixture of customary law, French civil law and legal systems of English common law. For this reason, the system of law is a patchwork rather than an integrated system (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). The governmental structure also meshes French and English structures. Like the French, the executive part of the government has a chief of state, the president, who is the head of government, and his cabinet. The chief of state, Paul Biya has been president and head of government since November 6, 1982. In 2004, Biya was again elected and he won, but there were accusations from other parties of fraud. Philemon Yang is Prime Minister, the British contribution to the government's structure, since June 20, 2009 but does not seem to have the power or influence that Biya has as indicated by the fact that Biya's photograph is everywhere (Delancey, Delancey, & Mbuh, 2010).

### **Language**

Cameroon has over 200 tribal languages although French and English are the official languages. French dominates in cities in the south while cities in the north are

predominantly English. The capital is roughly in the middle of Cameroon and includes both languages. The deaf community has three sign languages: Cameroon Sign Language (CSL), French Sign Language (FSL), and American Sign Language (ASL). Each language appears with associated spoken languages. For example, a French/English speaking city such as the capital, Yaoundé, would have ASL and FSL while, in Kumba and Doula, which are English speaking cities, the deaf community uses the language of ASL.

### **Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation**

Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (French spelling) or CDEO is located in the capital of Yaoundé, Cameroon. According to Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (2012), CDEO was founded on July 25, 1995. The main purpose of CDEO is to advocate and provide various forms of support to deaf people in Cameroon. It is a non-government organization (NGO) that concentrates on empowering deaf Cameroonians and building a connection that allows them to network with the hearing world in Cameroon. The organization owns Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf (EID), which is located in Kumba, Cameroon (Cameron Deaf Empowerment Organisation, 2012)

The operational level of the organization is national. Official information reports a staff of 20 (Children Rights Information Network, 2005); however, while I was in Cameroon, I did not see 20 staff members. I believe the organization has 5 staff members: Mr. Ebot Ogork, Madame Ogork, Mr. Kenny Ogork, and Mr. Ayuk Ogork., plus one non family member: Peter Kum Chea. As the names indicate, the organization has become a family business.

The organization promotes awareness of the deaf community in Cameroon on the national and international levels. For example, Deaf Child World Wide, an organization based in England, provides specific information about Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation on its website. The website (2004) listed CDEO's goals as follows:

- To promote human and civil rights of deaf people and their families.
- To unite deaf people and facilitate the empowerment of the deaf community in Cameroon in partnership with other organizations.
- To work for full educational opportunities for deaf Cameroonians from nursery to higher education.
- To facilitate health education for the deaf in collaboration with the ministry of public health.
- To develop and promote Cameroon Sign Language.
- To integrate deaf people in the society and dispel traditional misconceptions surrounding deafness.

Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (2010) has nine diverse programs for deaf Cameroonians:

- Sign Language Programme
- Leadership Development and Poverty Alleviation
- Adult Literacy Education
- Public Education
- Health Education
- Deaf School Partnerships
- Development and Promotion of Cameroon Sign Language

- Promotion of Deaf Art
- Promotion of Deaf Sports

Individual programs that fall into these various categories have their own primary focus, such as children living with HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation of children, children and education, children with disabilities, and rights based on programming.

**Original Plan: HIV/AIDS Campaign: Educating Young Deaf Women in Cameroon**

My original proposal to the Honors Council involved going to Cameroon and interning for eight weeks with the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO). My goal was to gain first-hand experience working with a non-profit organization in a developing country. The plan was to assess the strengths and weaknesses of CDEO in the area of health advocacy and use the data to develop a proposal for the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI-U). The proposal would use data from the information collected during my internship to develop an educational program targeting local men's and women's sexual health, with a focus on HIV/AIDS. I planned to implement an educational dialogue with the local deaf community, in particular with deaf women, about their sexual health. My service-learning project intended to take a different approach, perhaps, from prevailing cultural practice there, to provide an open dialogue with Cameroonian deaf women in order for them to open up about their sexual activity. The dialogue would have taken place after their Health Education lesson provided by CDEO. The short-term goal was to discover if women comprehended the risk of unprotected sex and the need to wear condoms and if they felt that it was their decision or their husbands' decision to allow them to protect themselves. Due to my understanding of Cameroon as having a pervasively paternalistic culture, I believed it most likely that

women's husbands would be in the room when I would discuss those sensitive questions. The main question to address was if it was common for women to tolerate men having complete power over their sex life and, as a result, if women were afraid to refuse protection because they believed they would lose their husband. At that time, it was believed that I would need to work on how to ask those kinds of questions in a culturally appropriate way to ensure that women felt safe and could provide honest answers.

The principal goal of my proposal to the Clinton Global Initiative- University (CGI-U) was to gain support and sponsors for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation's (CDEO) Health Education program related with their HIV/AIDS campaign. The goal was for the CGI-U to recognize the CDEO's efforts and the unique strengths of their campaign and for CDEO to expand and become known internationally and nationally. It was an ambitious plan.

In order for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) to gain international and national sponsors, I needed to understand CDEO's Health Education's program plan. According to Callie Frye, an intern with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment in 2010, the organization does have current and accurate information regarding acquisition and transmission of the HIV virus. Yet, the organization was still trying to bring awareness of HIV/AIDS to deaf schools, which meant that it needed help identifying resources to better fund their campaign (Personal Communication, March 11, 2012).

My long-term goal was to help meet the needs of Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation's (CDEO) Health Program goals, which included training sign language interpreters for deaf Cameroonians to have full access to medical services. Qualified interpreters in the medical field would have erased or at least lessened communication

barriers between deaf Cameroonians and doctors. Moreover, I wanted CDEO to have more benefactors to support their advocacy efforts and help fund their campaign against HIV/AIDS.

Most important, the final step of why I went to Cameroon for my capstone was because I wanted first hand experience not only in a general way, with a non-profit organization in a developing country, but also specifically in advocating for funding for HIV/AIDS education for deaf Cameroonians. Originally, based on my observation of deaf Cameroonians' reaction toward the campaign, my research questions, and observations on their HIV/AIDS education would have greatly benefited the proposal to Clinton Global Initiative- University (CGI-U). I planned to collect data for CGI-U through documenting my observations and experiences through field notes. A sample of my original open dialogue questions and field note journal are in Appendix A. This was my plan to keep track of my actions, observations, thought process, and investigations while I interacted with the community. I planned to remain objective and gain the community's trust so that they could be open with me in discussing HIV/AIDS. My field notes were intended for me to document who I interviewed and spoke with, while also recording my observations of my subjects' behavior regarding HIV/AIDS. Living among Cameroonians for 8 weeks would challenge me to interact with a different culture, communicate in different languages, and collect data through an open dialogue with the community about HIV/AIDS. It was designed to be a learning experience that would provide needed information for my Clinton Global Initiative-University proposal application.

**Reflection: Original Plan on HIV/AIDS Campaign**

When I first decided my project, I wanted my focus to be on deaf women and HIV/AIDS. I wanted my project to be unique in this way. I was nervous and excited about it. It was a once in a lifetime dream and I worked hard on it. I interviewed people, researched information, and just fell in love with the topic. It was something I wanted to do and was passionate about. This kind of work was one of the many reasons why I knew I wanted to become an international social worker. I had all my “I” and “T”’s dotted and crossed: who, when, where, why, and how. It seemed as if it was a fail-proof plan. I thought I could really make a difference and I wanted to learn more about myself in the process. I wanted to help those in need and most importantly of all, I wanted my capstone to be authentic. I was very excited about this opportunity.

**HIV/AIDS Campaign: Cancelled.**

When I arrived June 12<sup>th</sup> 2012, to Yaoundé, Cameroon (the capital), I was ready to start working. However, upon starting my internship work at Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO), I was surprised to find that there was only one program related with HIV/AIDS, and it was not the main focus of CDEO. I found out CDEO’s attention was not on HIV/AIDS; rather the most pressing need for the Deaf in Cameroon was the area they call advocacy and education. Apparently, there had been miscommunication between the organization and me about what I should be doing while in Cameroon. Small deaf organizations in Cameroon were already providing education on HIV/AIDS. Those organizations were hosted by a deaf women’s organization in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The officers of the deaf women’s organization were former students of CDEO years ago. The president and former staff trained them on HIV/AIDS

throughout the years and came to trust them. I was informed from CDEO and the deaf leaders that the deaf community had slowly started to own their own non-government organizations and later became partners with CDEO. As I asked more questions, I was able to comprehend what had happened with the HIV/AIDS plan. It turned out they thought HIV/AIDS Prevention efforts would work best if local deaf women were involved in leading it, not just receiving education as I had planned. The women who formed the program had learned about HIV/AIDS from CDEO and then went out to educate others. CDEO and the deaf leaders were trying to bring knowledge of the deaf community into the program; they were trying to work together. Because of these existing initiatives, my proposed plan to provide education about HIV/AIDS to the deaf in Cameroon no longer seemed feasible or needed.

**Reflection: HIV/AIDS Campaign: Cancelled.**

While I was in Cameroon, I did not have any time to reflect on my feelings toward my HIV/AIDS campaign's cancellation. I did not have any time to process it because there was a limited time frame for me to revise my project and create another capstone idea. I was upset because there were not any clear communications about who was in charge of the HIV/AIDS campaign. As a result of miscommunication, I became desperate and scared of losing my capstone. I did not want to let go of it because I had worked hard on my proposal. With the new development, I realized I had to let go of the idea of creating an HIV/AIDS campaign and working with deaf women who may or may not have HIV/AIDS.

Even though I lost my dream capstone, I wanted something good to come out of it. I remember thinking to myself, "How can I help this organization? What are their needs?"

I felt that it was important for me to do something for this organization. They worked hard on supporting Cameroon deaf community, and I wanted to give back to Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation. I learned a lesson while I was there, when working with an international organization: your plans may not go as expected. Sometimes change can be good because you learn how to adapt. I was able to learn that about myself, that while I could have given up and only had fun while I was in Cameroon, I instead endured in order to learn about the organization and the culture. Most important, I searched for and thrived on finding productive work. If people are able to withstand and learn to familiarize themselves with a foreign culture while thinking positively in the face of change to their project and a carefully laid plan, then they may be comfortable with working for a developing international non-profit organization. I learned I could be that person. It was a marvelous challenge and proof that this work could be my calling.

### **Internship with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation**

My journey started with my going to Cameroon the summer of 2012, to work with an organization, Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO). Mr. Ebot Ogork, the President of the organization, explained that I will work among the deaf community and will be exposed to Cameroon's deaf awareness and advocacy by working with CDEO and would join their meetings with Government Officials. Also, I would meet with the general public in Cameroon to advocate for the need for deaf people to be given opportunities of equality in education, employment and access to Health.

### **Goal of Internship**

The original goal of interning with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) was for me to gain experience working with them, provide assistance to the

organisation, create an HIV/AIDS campaign, and observe Deaf Cameroonians for my case study to Clinton-Global Initiative-University (CGI-U) in order to improve CDEO's HIV/AIDS education. Upon arriving, it was determined that I would not need to focus on the HIV/AIDS education; however another aspect of the internship were still possible such as the opportunity to gain experience working with the CDEO, to provide assistance to them, and in the process, to observe Deaf Cameroonians to identify what their potential needs were and from that to develop a new proposal for the CGI-U.

### **Action Items Agreed Upon for Achieving the Goal**

As part of my arrangement with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO), we agreed on the following actions. First, I would meet with local deaf Cameroon community in different cities in order to discuss and assess their needs and decide how should CDEO help them address their needs. Second, I would meet ministries officials of different governments branches to discuss about Deaf Cameroonians' rights and to advocate the right for Cameroon Sign Language. Third, I would visit local Yaoundé's organisations that focus on people with disabilities and deaf schools to have an understanding of how they operate differently from America's deaf schools. Lastly, as part of my capstone, I would meet deaf women north of Cameroon to discuss with them of HIV/AIDS.

### **Results of the Action Items**

The Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) and I created a plan for my activities for the last four weeks of July, which first involved a three-day seminar on disabled people in Limbé, Cameroon. I was able to go to the seminar, organized by Sight Savers, which I appreciated greatly because I was able to network with organizations in

Cameroon that focus on disabled people and meet people who worked for the Ministry such as Ministry of Social Affairs. I learned about the Cameroonian government's law for disabilities. Unfortunately, I also learned that the government does not implement its law concerning people with disabilities. For this reason, the seminar had an intention of creating a detailed plan with goals they hoped the Ministry would implement. Various disabled group's organizations came together through the organizations' directors to create a five-year plan to submit it to the ministry. Before the meeting started, I was able to help Mr. Ogork create his vision of a five-year plan for deaf people. At the meeting, I had a chance to observe Mr. Ogork lobbying for Cameroon Sign Language, and it was remarkable to see his effort and passion for Cameroon deaf community and the effort he put into in order to sway the government to fund research on Cameroon Sign Language. He inspired me because of his passion and for me, it was rare sight into seeing a person be passionate about the rights of people with disabilities.

When the seminar was over and we went back to Yaoundé (the capital), I became busy with meeting different ministries of the government such as Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Women and Family. I spoke with each person to find out what they do for the deaf community and I advocated for the Cameroonian deaf community to have the same equal rights as hearing Cameroonians related to finding employment and why they should help fund deaf schools. It was interesting for me to advocate for the deaf community because advocacy is part of my field, Social Work. I appreciated the experience because I realized that I did not enjoy community advocacy. Social workers in advocacy have to travel to different areas to talk about issues concerning the people they are advocating for. If I was more familiar,

knowledgeable and comfortable about Deaf Cameroonians' experiences, and if I had lived in Cameroon for at least 2-4 years, most likely, I could have efficiently advocated the needs and rights of their community.

In addition, I strongly believe that in order for deaf Cameroonians' to gain their rights in education, employment and language access, it would need to start within the community. At that time, I was an outsider, a foreigner, whom did not share their pain of having different sign languages, of not having the right to have an interpreter in school, nor the need to fight for a better employment and education system. As an American, I have experienced many rights that deaf Cameroonians' do not have: an education, interpreter services, better employment and language access with a law to enable me to experience and enjoy those rights. It was challenging for me to advocate for them in light of my own experiences.

Most important, how can I advocate for a community when they do not know what they want? They would not be able to learn nor understand what they need if someone tells them. They might not be fully open to outside input if they did not own their own need. I knew what the community needed, but how can I, an outsider, tell them what their needs are? I could see they needed someone with knowledge to advocate for them and to guide and educate them effectively on issues such as their rights to education, employment and language access. However, it was an area that I was not knowledgeable about nor able to guide them about properly. I did try to encourage them to think and to talk with them about their wants/needs in order to find a way to advocate for them.

Cameroon's deaf community did help me to learn about my field, especially as an international social worker, and the importance of understanding a community and their needs in order to effectively advocate for them. I learned I was not zealous about advocating. I did not feel passion for government lobbying. I preferred working with individuals one-on-one.

Fortunately, I was able to have some experience with one-on-one service. I provided resources for an individual who had informed me of the need for information on areas such as health, education, and business. I provided the person information step-by-step. I asked what the person wished to do, and I helped provide goals and objectives they needed to do realize their ultimate goals. That experience made me realize that I wanted to work as an international social worker because I want to work in an environment of where the people are not privileged and do not know nor understand how an education or a dream could change their lives. If a person has a dream and wants that dream to come true, they would have to work hard but they can make it happen if they truly hunger for it. It is why I prefer one-on-one because within a group, a person's hunger and passion could become lost in the midst of negativity because of their society's outlook on deaf people.

In the middle of July, I worked with my Supervisor, Susan Ogork, on a providing a seminar for the deaf community in Kumba, Cameroon. I was able to assess the deaf community of Kumba: they wanted to learn how to have a small business. Working with Madame Ogork, we set up how we would teach our seminar, a one-day event, on how to set up a small business. It was a wonderful experience because during this experience, I learned that I enjoy the process of planning a seminar but did not enjoy the experience of

teaching. I realized I enjoyed planning a seminar because I did not have to put myself out of my comfort zone. I do not like the spot light on me; I find joy behind the scenes, and fortunately making a difference does not require a person to be at the focus of everyone's attention.

Although I did not like that kind of teaching, I found another area of work that appealed to me in teaching was teaching life skills. In the second week of July, I was given tours of Yaoundé's hospitals to meet with their directors and see what the hospitals do to help people. There was one Centre, the Centre National de Rehabilitatin des Persones Handicapees, which I believe is a unique center because it is rehabilitation center for people who are disabled, either physically or mentally. It was at this Centre that I saw a school to teach students life skills. I enjoyed the tour greatly and could see myself working in one of those organizations one day in the future, potentially teaching students life skills.

As another part of my internship, I became involved in creating an account for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) on <http://www.volunteer-work-africa.com/> for them to be able to gain volunteers. CDEO is in the process of creating projects for their school; however, they need volunteers and funds. I hope this website will help them secure both.

My last activity with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO), I had the honor of being interviewed by a journalist about the work I have done with CDEO and the deaf community. My main goal for the interview was to try to bring more awareness for the deaf community and indicate how the government needs to become more involved with helping deaf people. I was interviewed on television with a network

called CNTV. It was a good experience, and I enjoyed it. I was asked questions about my work in Cameroon and about deaf people in Cameroon and America. One question the journalist asked really stood out for me: Do fathers in America reject their child if found to be deaf? I explained that, to the best of my knowledge, parents have resources that guide them to learn sign language or otherwise access the best education they could for their child so that they were less likely to reject their deaf child.

### **Reflection: Internship with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation**

The first week, I was able meet with different people during my time in Cameroon. I felt it was an honor to work with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) and the local deaf community. However, I also quickly became displeased with the development of my internship because I felt as if I was not doing anything—nor was I meeting my required internship hours. I had to find work to keep myself busy such as helping two of the deaf leaders to develop their own website. I wanted to work, but I felt as if I was on vacation in the beginning of June. I was touring the city of Yaoundé and talking to the community about their struggles, yet these activities were not enough for me. Last, I was displeased with the miscommunication between the local deaf leaders and CEDO on the issue of the program I had come to work on. I did not wish to be put in the middle. The locals were dissatisfied and felt as if program possibilities were not clear. I understood how they felt, and I explained to them that they should speak with CDEO. If they had a problem, they should not have me be the messenger. Yet, as unhappy as I was with the situation, I decided to have a meeting with the CDEO on the issue of matching the needs of CDEO with an appropriate project.

I decided that I would help the organization with recommendations and how to improve their internship programs for the future. I became proactive and had a serious discussion with Mr. and Madame Ogork about my unhappiness with my internship.

During the meeting, I suggested that it was important for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organization and the local deaf communities to explain that they were partners. When I arrived, I thought deaf leaders worked in the organization, but that was not the case. There are not any deaf individuals who work for the CDEO; only the founder's deaf son is part of the organization and then as a leader or board member, not a staff member. I pointed out that CDEO staff needed to partner with volunteers. Each local deaf leader could have roles within the organization or work on particular programs. Only as I suggested ideas and asked questions did I learn more about how things were going with the deaf community. Every question I had, my superiors would answer, and I am thankful for that. Our meeting concluded with some satisfaction because I was able to become more comfortable asking questions and finding out in more depth how the deaf community in Cameroon and CDEO worked together within the deaf community.

I created a weekly log of my internship with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (Appendix B). It explains in detail what I did while I was in Cameroon doing my internship. For two months, I kept weekly records of what I did; however, week eight is not included because during that week I was in the process of saying goodbye to everyone. Furthermore, I created personal video logs while I was there about my experience in Cameroon. However, nothing could compare to the memories of my time there. There are so many memories I could reflect upon but there are two memories I wish to share.

The first memory began as a learning experience about Cameroon education but became a personal experience in my relationship with one deaf girl. To begin with, I recall an interview I once had with a hearing Gallaudet Cameroonian student name Nji Forishi about his home country. He once told me that villages and cities have different lifestyles because of economic statuses since most of the 260 villages are in poverty. When I was in Cameroon, I visited a few villages, and I have to agree with him. Village lifestyles are completely different because everything is limited such as books, market offerings, and housing. As for Forishi's comment that normally villages are poor and do not have access to water and have limited technology, I would have to have say that it depends upon which village we are talking about and how far away it is from any city (N. Forishi, personal communication, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

Forishi mentioned that his village, Akum, was strict and traditional, while cities such as Yaoundé have a mixture of different traditions and tribes. In the past, he explained, villagers treated all females, hearing or deaf, and all deaf people differently. For example, girls were not expected to be educated, while boys were favored to get an education. The villages normally did not have deaf education or deaf schools at all; however, deaf people including girls are now able to go school.

My observations accorded with his comments. When I visited Kumba, which is smaller than Yaoundé, I saw that girls are now educated. However, it seemed that females in Yaoundé received more education than females in Kumba. Women I met in Yaoundé spoke of dreams and jobs they want to do. They understood that they needed to be educated in order to gain work (N. Forishi, personal communication, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

Village girls' education could be achieved through going to a bigger city, but there is a sad reality if they were to ever lose their opportunity of going to a city and gaining an education. This reality connects to a personal story I wish to share of a village girl. This village young girl was two years younger than me (21yo) and still in high school. She was a live-in help at the Ogork's home, and she was from a village. She comprehended her survival strategies in Cameroon and understood that if she wished to become a teacher, she would need to achieve it in a city. Thus she became a live-in help at the Ogork's in Yaoundé. Madame Susan Ogork was a former English teacher and therefore taught her English lessons.

I had brought a Cameroon phone the first week of June. I saw no need for the phone, however; consequently, I gave it to the village girl to use and to keep it safe for me. It was a cheap Cameroon phone so that I was not worried about it. Two days before I set to was to leave for America, I was asked by Madame Ogork of my plans for my Cameroon phone. I informed Madame Ogork of my plans to give it to the young girl. We decided we would surprise her and give her the phone that night. When we approached her and asked her for the phone, she informed us of her confusion and said she could not remember where it was. I was not upset about it, yet Mr. and Madame Ogork felt she should have remembered where she put the phone. She was subsequently agitated and was crying as she could get fired. I felt it was partly my fault giving her the phone and decided to help her look for it. We searched each room in the house, and then I found the phone and battery lying beneath a chair's cushions—not lost but hidden. Madame Ogork and I explained that we still love her and I told her I was not mad at her but explained why lying was wrong. Once we were done talking to her, she left without telling anyone

she was leaving. She went to her brother's home. That night, they came back with their pastor to plead with Mr. Ogork to allow her to continue to work as the Ogork's live-in help. However, it was explained to her that if she had never left in the first place, she would have had her job. How could they be able to trust her if she had once lied to them? Still, I did not want her to be let go, and I did have a semi argument with Mr. Ogork, even though I did understand his point of view. She was unfortunately fired from her position. Even through I understood it, it made me very aware of the impact of this decision and its impact on her future education.

A young girl who became my friend...I do not know of what became of her education nor if she was able to find another job. A lot can change in three days: day one, she passed to the next level of her education and was full of excitement; day two, the lost phone episode; day three she was fired and packed her belongings. The next day, I flew home. It is a memory I avoid because it was an emotionally charged last week of my stay in Cameroon, and it ended in sadness. I know there will be times when I will have moments of wondering if that young girl found a way to achieve her education and dream of becoming a teacher. I will never know.

The second memory I wish to share occurred when I was in Limbé; I was invited to Madame Ogork's mother's home. It was a personal few days because her nephew had passed away. There was a memorial at her mom's home and family members were there. I remembered I felt uncomfortable because it was a personal family gathering, and I was the first person to get food, as I was their guest. I felt it was not right because it was their home, but I had to keep in mind that it was a part of their culture to offer food to their

guests first. I joined with them as they sang and praised God. That part reminded me of my family, which caused me to ache for Ogork's pain.

Those two memories were my most memorable and lasting memories that demonstrated most profoundly the cultural differences between America and Cameroonian cultures, particularly when comparing my experiences as a Deaf Woman in America from those of Deaf Woman in Cameroon. It is completely different from America, and these experiences changed me the most during my internship.

### **Clinton Global Initiative- University Proposal: Poultry Farm in Cameroon**

The new focus of my internship with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation was setting up an action plan to fundraise money for establishing a poultry farm at the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf (EID) in Kumba, Cameroon. This action plan became the new focus of my proposal for the CGI-U. This section outlines the Clinton Global Initiative- University (CGI-U) work and the goals, plans of action, and results of the action items that were part of this proposal.

### **Clinton Global Initiative- University**

Former president Bill Clinton established the Clinton Global Initiative- University (CGI-U) in 2005, in order to engage college students around the world to become leaders. Every year, an annual conference is hosted at a university in the United States of America. Undergraduate and graduate students from all over the world submit a proposal, either as an individual or as a group, in the hopes of attending CGI-U's conference. There were steps in order for students to apply to the Clinton Global Initiative-University. First, a student from a university could apply through an individual or group application. Second, in order to be considered for admission for Clinton Global Initiative-University,

they would need to make a Committee to Action plan, outlining a project that addressed one of five main focus areas: Poverty Alleviation, Peace and Human Rights, Education, Global Health, or Environment and Climate Change. Lastly, the proposed plan must be new, specific and have measurable data (Clinton Global Initiative- University, 2013).

For 2013, CGI-U's annual conference was hosted by Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri on April 5-7. CGI-U's conference is set up to allow students to challenge themselves and make a difference in ways that would shape them to become leaders of our global world. CGI-U's goal is to connect, inspire and empower global leaders to create solutions to the world's difficult challenges (Clinton Global Initiative- University, 2013).

### **Proposal for Clinton Global Initiative- University**

My original goal for my Clinton Global Initiative- University proposal was to select the area of Global Health as my focus in my Committee to Action plan because it was the original focus of my project on Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation's educational campaign about HIV/AIDS. Prior to my departure for Cameroon, I completed my original Committee to Action plan, titled "HIV/AIDS Campaign: Educating Young Deaf Women in Cameroon," and afterwards, based on my learning experiences and observations in Cameroon, I anticipated I would only need to finalize my proposal to Clinton Global Initiative-University upon my return to the States.

In my original proposal, I had a strong interest in helping people with HIV/AIDS; with this plan in mind, my original application to Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI-U) focused on the area of Global Health with the intention to gain funds for educating deaf women in this area. My trip to Cameroon was intended to aid my Clinton

Global Initiative-University application by giving me the opportunity review the needs of the community and to collect the data in order to draft a proposed plan of action. My committee members, Dr. Cristina Berdichevsky and Ms. Emilia Chukwuma, both had previous partnerships with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) and were integral to securing my internship with the CDEO. My proposed project to CGI-U augured success because it was uniquely focused on creating awareness of deaf Cameroonian women in the areas of HIV/AIDS. The proposal would have contained information based on my interaction with deaf Cameroonians, observation of deaf Cameroonian women, and field notes from my time in Cameroon. It was important that my proposal reflected a new, specific and measurable plan based on data as part of the requirement to submit to CGI-U.

As mentioned earlier, once I arrived to Cameroon, I learned HIV/AIDS education campaign was not a needed area of focus for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO). However, after spending some time in Cameroon and working with CDEO, it became apparent that there was a different and more pressing need at the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf, located in Kumba, Cameroon. I learned about the proposed idea of starting a project related to establishing a chicken farm on school grounds. I had met children at the school and understood that by establishing the chicken farm, students would learn how to maintain the farm and market the chickens, which would make a significant difference to the school and in their lives after graduation.

Thus, when I arrived back to America, I had to make some changes to my original CGI-U proposal based on my experiences working with the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO). Rather than focusing on Global Health, I selected

Education as the focus of my Committee to Action focus area because the CDEO's Poultry Farm would be used for providing vocational training lessons for the children. My short-term goal was to gain support and funds for the CDEO's project to support the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf and my long-term goal was to see these funds go towards the actual establishment of the poultry farm. The plan of action for this plan is outlined below.

### **Goal of Poultry Farm Agreement**

The goal of the Poultry Farm Project was to improve children's education through their work on the farm and teaching them to use it as their main source of food and income. The best course of action to raise funds was through fundraising, networking, and gathering support of the deaf and hearing community in the Washington, D.C. area as well as through the Clinton Global Initiative- University.

### **Action Items Agreed Upon for Achieving the Goal**

Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf (EID) needed funds in order for the Poultry Farm Project to become a reality. The estimated budget amount for the project was \$10,000, which includes the costs of chicken coops, chickens, roasters, food, and water. We believed the best way to raise funds would be through fundraising, networking, and gathering support of the deaf and hearing community in America. Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation has a network at Gallaudet University through Dr. Cristina Berdichevsky, a professor in the World Languages and Cultures Department. She agreed to allow her class, French Level 2, to help with the Poultry Farm project. A summary of action plan to fundraise for the Spring 2013 semester is below.

- A. Spring 2013: In a French Level 2 class at Gallaudet University, students will educate the U.S. deaf community about the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf's

Poultry Farm Project and ask for donations to the project fund.

a. Education and fundraising

1. Set up booths during Gallaudet University's Common Time (12:30-2 pm Tuesday and Thursday when no classes were scheduled) to sell Cameroonian food, art and crafts.
2. Host several Cameroonian cultural events such as setting up a fundraising dinner with the purpose of bring awareness about the Poultry Farm in Cameroon.

B. Spring 2013: Develop an online blog and/or Facebook page to educate the public about the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf's Poultry Farm project to gain support for our project and establish a fundraising site through [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com) to collect donations and track progress toward our goal of \$10,000.

Additionally, I intended to submit my proposal to Clinton Global Initiative- University in order to gain funds and along with the fundraising plan outlined above, these would support the Poultry Farm. If the Clinton Global Initiative-University proposal was a success, then I intended for the Poultry Farm to be built during the summer of 2013 as part of the long-term goal. I truly did believe it could be achieved.

The timeline for fundraising and building the Poultry Farm was:

- a. Spring 2013 through Summer 2013: I would post on various volunteer websites to solicit 5-10 international volunteers to build coops in Cameroon—room and board at the school would be provided.
- b. Summer 2013: First chicken coop built on school grounds.
- c. Autumn 2013: Purchase essential equipment and chickens for the project.

- d. Autumn 2013: 1-5 students enroll into the program
- e. Autumn 2013: Establish farm and financial records for transparency of the project.
- f. Winter 2013: Market final result of the project.

Summer 2014: Finish all ten coops and write final report of our process to Clinton Global Initiative- University.

With all this worked out, on January 30, 2013, I submitted a proposal, “Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf’s Poultry Farm,” to the Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI-U) in order to share my project to build awareness and secure funds for the Poultry Farm Project. My trip to Cameroon aided my CGI-U application. I was able to draw on my experiences and observations in Cameroon as well as on the data I collected, which allowed me to have a better understanding of the importance of gaining support for the Poultry Farm. The trip challenged me to interact with a different culture, communicate in different languages (French Sign Language, Cameroon Sign Language and French speaking language), and it was a learning experience that I applied to my Clinton Global Initiative-University application (Appendix C.)

A month later, the proposal was accepted, and I was on my way to the CGI-U Conference in April. While it was an honor to be accepted, this acceptance brought some surprising challenges, which are outlined in a later section of this paper. The next section outlines the results of the proposed plan to CGI-U.

### **Results of the Action Items**

In the spring of 2013, I planned to fundraise with the French Level 2 class, a small online course offered at Gallaudet University. Originally, we planned to educate the deaf

community at Gallaudet about our goals of purchasing chicken coops for deaf Cameroonians students' education. However, as a result of miscommunication on my part for not following up and clearly explaining the fundraising plan, the French class instead focused on creating a PowerPoint to educate the Gallaudet community about Cameroon as part of their service-learning requirement. Their presentation contained general knowledge about Cameroon such as food, language, and cultural information. Moreover, there were not enough resources to plan out for a fundraising event as the online class had a small number of students. I believe if more students registered for the course, there most likely would have been a strong motivation involved in fundraising because a large group of students would likely be more committed when others are working hard and enjoying themselves as well.

Whenever there was a fundraising event to sell artwork with the French class, I did try and be there but I was never able to meet the students. If I was available more often to the students, most likely I would have been able to lead, motivate and inspire them to create a successful fundraising experience. If I had led and met regularly with French Level 2 class, I would provide them of my knowledge of the Poultry Farm and how to market the Poultry Farm to Gallaudet University's community.

We had one fundraising event in February, and though it was not focused on the Poultry Farm it did focus on raising money for Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf and a deaf Cameroonian artist's work, whose name we did not know. The fundraising event was small but still considered successful because we raised money for the school. Lastly, the gofundme.org event did not work out. While I did create an account with the website, I did not prioritize the time to maintain it. I felt as if I could have done better yet I learned

I could not do everything. I learned not to take on too much and not to have such a high standards of my fundraising plan because in the end, it was about gaining experience and making a difference. I learned a dollar could make a difference because one person might have understood the importance of my fundraising event. That person could one day become an intern with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation.

Unfortunately, because I was not able to gain enough money toward fundraising, the plan to build the poultry farm in the summer did not work out. Originally, I planned to go overseas to Cameroon after I graduated in order to help build the Poultry Farm during the summers of 2013-2014. I had already planned to take a year off in order to service a community, be it in Cameroon or in America. However as fundraising was not a successful enough to reach at least \$1,000, therefore I would hope to pass along my work to Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation's next intern.

I am currently still involved with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation as a member. I will pass on the lessons I learned about fundraising for the Poultry Farm. For example, I learned that fundraising would work best if it were a two to three year fundraising plan. Thus, even if I had been able to give it more time, the timeline I established for this project was not realistic. This kind of work takes years. I learned that fundraising takes planning and commitment and requires a number of resources, including people, to ensure the success of the project; therefore deciding within months to fundraise and then establish a farm does not work. My framework did not go as I intended but nonetheless the experience the fruits of my labor were not wasted because I gained a sense of what fundraising entails, including what makes a realistic timeframe. Another factor in determining what is realistic is how many are involved. Doing it alone

made my timeframe unrealistic. If I had created a team of 4 people, each of us would have had specific tasks: a person in charge of marketing, a fundraising planner, a person in charge of community outreach events to Gallaudet University and hearing Cameroonians, and, last, a volunteer coordinator for their events. If I was a part of a team, most likely the fundraiser would have met my framework outline. Whichever job I have in the future, my experience from my capstone will help me professionally to work with a team.

### **Reflection: Poultry Farm in Cameroon**

During the spring of 2013, I had many plans and ideas such as selling Deaf Cameroonian art work, setting up booths during Gallaudet University's common time in order for the community to become more familiar about Deaf Cameroon's artwork and the culture of Cameroon, and selling Cameroon food. However, I learned that I could not do everything due to my workload and with no support team; I was not able to carry out these plans. I admit it was not what I wanted because at the time of my internship, I knew it would require a lot of work for me to change the focus of my capstone proposal, particularly when the Council had already approved a different project. Nonetheless, I determined that such challenges are part of international work, and I needed to reflect on my experience and what I could have done differently to make this project work and be of real service to the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation.

Now as I look back, I realize I did not disclose to anyone my worries and concerns related to the change in my capstone. I went with the flow and did not check with myself nor did I express my feelings to anyone. I should have opened up to at least one person about my worries and concerns. If I had spoken to someone, most likely I

would not have felt bitter toward the end of my capstone, and others would have provided me some guidance and support for figuring out next steps. I am a private person, and I am not comfortable discussing my feelings, which is interesting because I prefer to listen to others, discuss their feelings, and ask for their opinions.

### **Clinton Global Initiative-University Conference: April 2013**

The Clinton Initiative Global-University (CGI-U) Conference was an interesting learning experience for me as a Deaf American Woman. While I was honored that my proposal was accepted and I was invited to attend the conference, it came with its own set of challenges: one was finding funding to attend and a second was arranging for access through sign language interpreting. I secured partial funding (for the flight) and paid the rest (hotel and food) myself. CGI-U despite providing interpreters in past CGI-U's conferences for deaf attendees for all three days, this time limited access to Friday's opening and Saturday's sessions, though they would not provide an interpreter for the session in which I had been invited to present, a session called the Clinton Global Initiative- University Exchange. The staff of CGI-U justified that due to money, they were not able to provide interpreter services for the full weekend. I was disappointed and surprised about not getting full interpreter services for the entire weekend. Even though America has interpreter services and real-time captioning, as a deaf person, I still struggle to gain full communication access. The entire reason as to why I decided to apply for Clinton Global Initiative-University's annual conference was for the deaf students to gain the ability to support themselves and their families by learning life-skills through the Poultry Farm in order to support their families. Yet, here I was, in America, struggling for my own rights for services. I was in disbelief at first, but it stirred within me the

desire to fight and advocate for my right. For that event, however, the short notice forced me to accept what they were able to give me. I know that next time I would contact the state's local agency for their help in gaining me full communication access.

On April 5, 2013, I left Gallaudet University to catch my flight to St. Louis. I was very excited yet half way to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport I realized I did not have my poster with me. I had to make a quick decision, either go and get my poster and miss my flight, or go to the Clinton Global Initiative- University (CGI-U) empty handed. I chose to go to the CGI-U empty handed because even if I did not have my poster with me, I would be able to talk with other students about my project.

When I arrived to St. Louis, Missouri, I met a group of Clinton Initiative Global-University attendees at the airport. It was a big group from California. They were a nice group, and I remember thinking it has been so long since I have been around hearing people trying to hold a conversation without an interpreter. I explained to them my Poultry Farm project and they explained to me theirs as well. They were impressed about my capstone and wondered if my team was with me. I explained that I was working on it alone and they started asking more questions. It was difficult to understand each other as we were using our phones and voice to communicate (my voice is soft and I could not understand their voice); therefore, I was not able to catch all their questions nor do I remember everything I did catch. While it was a little awkward trying to communicate, it was nice in the end and I took a picture with them before leaving for the airport shuttle to go to my hotel.

I knew there would be a networking event at 5:00 PM, but since there would not be an interpreter, I did not go to the dinner meeting. When I attended the evening opening

session, I learned that I would have two interpreters with me that night for the evening session and the next day for the various sessions. At this session, I saw former President Bill Clinton and Chelsea Clinton as they talked about the global village and what it means to make a difference. I enjoyed the event very much. Afterwards, we took a big group picture. There were a lot of us, and I had an opportunity to network with students. Unfortunately the interpreters were not available for the networking, so it was again a challenge. After working hard to communicate for a long while, I realized I could have stayed to meet more people, but I was ready to go back to my hotel and rest up for the next day.

The next day, on April 6<sup>th</sup>, I had an enjoyable time attending many sessions throughout the day from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. With the interpreters available, I was able to network more effectively during most sessions and also to participate in group assignments with other students. Everyone had something to say, and it was interesting to meet people from all over the world who shared the same opinions and passion as I have for service work. The highlight of one session was meeting Jada Pinkett Smith and getting a picture with her! It was cool. Then the final session of the evening was a presentation by Stephen Colbert with Bill Clinton, which again was cool. I enjoyed myself and, despite the issues with the interpreters, the Clinton Global Initiative - University conference will always be a fun memory for me to look back on.

In spite of those challenges of trying to gain interpreters and trying to interact with students at the Clinton Initiative Global-University conference, I learned the importance of advocating for myself in getting the access I need in order to make the most of the experience. Even without full access, I made the most of my time there. In

fact, I wanted to so much that there were moments when I wished I had picked a hotel that was closer to everyone so that I could network with the group that weekend. I also learned that it is a good idea to bring along business cards, to talk to and network with at least 5 people, and to make sure I make the most of the experience for my own personal and professional development.

Overall, while it was not easy navigating the conference without ready access through interpreters, I enjoyed myself while I was at the event. It was a wonderful experience for me to meet inspiring students from all over the world. It was a chance to network and learn from one another. I met many students who had dreams of making the world a better place. I remember the excitement that was in the air because that weekend many of us were able to connect with others who shared the same desire to create a change in this world and have an impact. I learned the world is not only full of bitter and jaded people but also many individuals who truly want to make a difference. They reminded me of my younger self and in a way inspired hope within me again. I hope that one day I will create something to improve the world that I would love and share my love of it with everyone.

#### **Reflection: Clinton Global Initiative- University**

One of my most positive experiences was the new improvement upon my capstone toward the Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI -U) because it allowed me to learn how to be flexible toward challenges and change. When I discussed with the programme director, Madame Susan Ogork, about changing the category of my proposal to the Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI -U) from Global Health to Education based on Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation's main focus area, education, I

could not have possibly known the outcome of that decision. I did not allow my capstone to drop but instead decided to focus on what was best for the organization. In order for me to address CDEO's other main focus, the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf (EID) located in Kumba, Cameroon, I created a plan to raise money for EID through fundraising money at Gallaudet University in order to set up a poultry farm for the students to sign up and learn how to take care of chickens, with the understanding that this would greatly help the children's future. I could not have typed my proposal to the Clinton Global Initiative-University (CGI -U) without the help of Mr. and Mrs. Ogork as well as Dr. Shirley Shultz Myers. They were a great help in shaping my proposal.

### **Overall Reflections**

When I stepped out of the airport and breathed in the oppressive Cameroon summer night air in the summer of 2012 to begin my internship and service-learning capstone, I did not think of where I would be in Spring 2013—not far in miles but far from the original plan for my service-learning project and so much wiser. When I landed, I remember I felt relief because I had overcome many barriers to get to Cameroon, Africa. And I felt the excitement of signing with my host and getting to know Cameroonians. As I looked forward to my internship and progress on my capstone, I thought my struggles were over. Little did I know that I would experience the high and lows, both personally and professionally, and that it would greatly have an impact on my life. Most importantly, I gained valuable lessons.

### **Reflections on my Strengths**

The beginning of my internship with the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) was a balance of satisfying and disappointing experiences. I had

expected that the CDEO would at least keep me busy with work. Nevertheless I learned that organizations in Cameroon, or at least in developing countries, do not operate the same as America. In the beginning, I was visiting other organizations that focused on people with disabilities, to see and understand their work. While this was useful, I was bored. I hungered to create a project or at least do some productive work such as drafting documents or emails.

My experience became positive once I set down and spoke with President Ogork about my concerns because I wanted my work to be important. I wanted to contribute in productive and meaningful ways. I did not want to simply be there for fun but wanted to make a difference over the course of two months. I intentionally sought to improve my experience and make contributions only after I advocated for myself, took chances with many questions, and asked for meetings to create meaningful activities for my internship. I realized that this is one my strengths, my ability to work hard and to thrive to learn new skills and to contribute in meaningful ways such as organizing a small seminar for the deaf community in Kumba. Indeed, I did something every day; some activities may not have been what I would have wanted, but each one did bring growth and taught me something new that helped me gain a better understanding of working with Cameroon's deaf community as well as helped me gain a better understanding of myself. If I ever decide to go back to Cameroon, I know have a better framework for how I can contribute more effectively to their work.

Toward the end of my internship, there were many changes to the schedule but one goal remind the same throughout. I learned what it means to work for a nonprofit organization in a developing country. I loved it because I had the chance of working with

deaf people and, at the very least, help them realize they could achieve their dreams. I learned different methods of communication and learned how different American and Cameroonian cultures are from each other. For example, the way Americans eat: I normally mix my food together such as rice with meat or corn with rice. A deaf Cameroonian told me that I should not allow my food to touch. I asked why I could not do that; he could not explain why, only that it was part of their culture to eat the rice first and then the meat. I thought that was very interesting and different.

I truly enjoyed my time with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation. They took care of me and treated me as if I were a family member. They welcomed me and invited me into their community. I ingrained myself in their culture and developed their habits. It was such an amazing country and it is a country I would visit again. There were many unexpected surprises in this place that is certainly not the same as America but enjoyable on its own terms. Indeed, I enjoyed life there and what I learned about myself. I learned not to take life too seriously and to be happy with what I have. I learned to value my family, faith, home, education, friends, the ability to travel wherever I wanted, my identity as a black deaf young woman and most of all, my sense of self.

Returning from Cameroon and beginning the academic year to finish up my capstone was challenging. In the spring of 2013, at the peak of my capstone, I was entirely worn out; it is not a time of my life I would wish on anyone because when you are a senior with 21 credits, a job, an internship, positions within organizations and a capstone, you spread yourself thin. It is challenging to decide where you will focus your time and energy. There was a moments of despair toward the end of April in 2013, when I thought about my capstone and wondered to myself, "Is it selfish of me not to want to

be involved with this project anymore? “ At that stage, I thought it was selfish of me. I knew I had invested a lot of my time and passion into my capstone, but I had just lost all motivation. I did not want any thing to do with it anymore. I was ready to move on to something new and different.

I knew I would always have an interest in non-profit organizations, but I learned that I prefer to work in a non-profit organization that focuses on areas of my interests such as: HIV/AIDS, immigrations and refugees, and public health. My capstone was an amazing work because it changed me in more ways that I could have never imagined. I learned how important it was to create something you will love, and that is the beauty of the Honors Program because you invested time in something you want to learn professionally and will benefit you in your future, and in the process, you figure out if this is your niche or not.

My capstone helped me to learn that it is important to be healthy and learn how to handle stress. You cannot give 100% of your time to everything, for one thing, and I learned that the hard way. I learned I should have set priorities and not spread myself too thin. I should have scheduled in time to enjoy myself instead of working so hard and being overly involved to the point of burnout. I learned how much I could and could not handle. I was not taking good care of myself because I was not eating healthy food, not working out, and not making time to step back and look at everything I was doing. It is important to have some breathing space in order to think and stay focused, thus gaining more energy and not stressing out. I have always had a strong control over my emotions, and I knew I should have stepped back from my project and focused on the big picture. Handling a lot of stress is not good for anyone’s body, mind and soul, and I knew that. It

was one of the reasons why I decided in the fall of 2012 to go to mental health center at Gallaudet University. I needed someone to talk to although one hour a week was not enough. Nevertheless, it was enough to help me see how controlling I am with my emotions and as a result I learned how to open up to others. I am naturally friendly, but I pride myself on handling problems alone. It is not easy for me to open up to others and ask for help. Now I will remember it is okay to step back from my project. It is okay to cry about it and to still keep a positive outlook, and most important, it is a good idea to have a supportive person whom you can talk to and process your experiences with, someone who will be with you every step of the way during a capstone.

### **Reflections on my Challenges**

Fall of 2011, I was full of ideas and spoke with the Honors Program about what kind of capstone I wanted to do. I was wide eyed with excitement because there was not any limit of what kind capstone I could create. I did not know the challenges I would face nor the bitterness I would struggle against. Creating a project that could truly challenge you mentally in order to prepare you professionally for the real world or graduate school was a truly amazing opportunity. At some point through those two years, my capstone became a bittersweet experience for me. It certainly allowed me to understand realistically what international development work entails. However, due to a second chance of rewriting my capstone, I am able to step back and revisit my experience, and I have come away filled full with a renewed and deepened sense of contentment.

During the spring of 2012, the first course for Honors students to start their capstone planned for one year and a half to complete a project. In the spring 2013 course we invested our time in writing a proposal for the Honors Council to approve. I was eager to interview with others about their time in Cameroon, and I did a lot of research. I loved

this experience of doing the research for the capstone. I wanted to understand Cameroon, the culture, the government, the deaf and hearing communities, their languages and so much more. I was full of enthusiasm. I had a bounce in my feet everyday. I was nervous and excited about the trials ahead of me, and I knew I would have to handle challenges such as language and culture, but I did not anticipate other challenges that would await me.

Summer of 2012, I expected to have to deal with communication barriers between deaf and hearing Cameroonians while I was in Cameroon, not only because of deafness-related issues, but also because Cameroon is a bilingual—French/English--country with different regions that speak one or the other language. When I arrived to Yaoundé, Cameroon, the capital, I noticed the majority of the population spoke French; although some people did speak English, it was not the commonly spoken language in the city. Although officially the country has two colonialist languages, my experience in the capital was that French is what most learn when they are babies in French speaking cities, and English is their second language. Again, what language dominates otherwise depends on the city. And few are bilingual so that French-speaking Cameroonians, for example, do not like to travel north where only English is spoken. Translators are common, but only on an informal basis.

As I mentioned, I expected to have to deal with communication barriers between deaf and hearing Cameroonians while I was in Cameroon, but I found an additional challenge was dealing with two spoken languages. I overcame barriers because I was an eager and fast learner, and I was quickly able to converse in several signed and spoken languages. When I was in Yaoundé, I was absorbing French Sign Language, Spoken

French, and Cameroon Sign Language. The people I stayed with, President Ogork and Madame Susan Ogork, spoke French and English; therefore I was able to communicate without difficulty. I was prepared for this polyglot situation because of previous Gallaudet students. Hillary Roberts, who worked in Cameroon two years ago, mentioned that she used Cameroon Sign Language and French while Callie Frye, a former intern at CDEO, used French Sign Language, spoken French, and American Sign Language (H. Roberts, personal communication, March 11, 2012; C. Frye, personal communication, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012). I learned which areas in Cameroon primarily spoke either French or English: Yaoundé, as I noted, spoke primarily French and secondarily English. I went to four other cities, Doula, Kumba, Limbé, and Buea. Because they are all in the north, people there spoke English.

My next challenge was the culture of Cameroon, but as I have mentioned, I interviewed knowledgeable Cameroonians at Gallaudet University to prepare myself. One such student, I interviewed was a hearing Cameroonian named Nji Forishi, and he answered my questions about life in Cameroon. We discussed Cameroon's culture and he mentioned how village life and city life are different from one another (N. Forishi, personal communication, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012). Nji Forishi, a hearing Cameroonian, stated that Cameroonian ways of socialization, language and customs would be a shock for me. The young are expected to respect the elders and not talk back, French and English languages would be spoken among the people, and polygyny (a man married to several women) is a normal part of Cameroonian customs. Forishi's information was accurate. And, although he prepared me for shock, I could not avoid it altogether. Just when I thought I was primed for the culture, there were some unexpected lessons I learned about Cameroon's

culture that became more personal to me. They revolved around the expected respect for elders in Cameroon. I respect my American elders, but the ways I did so did not count as respect there. For example, if I asked an elder in the U.S. if they wanted something to eat, I showed concern and respect for the well being of my elder. But in Cameroon, it was not respectful because they are older, and asking such a question seemed impertinent. Also, I should not ask older males if they wanted something to eat because it is the role of a wife to concern herself with feeding a man. It was odd for me to be cautious with what I said, especially for behaviors I had always regarded as polite if not respectful.

Sometimes instructions slipped my mind. I should have remembered it was improper of me to address elders by their first names even if I became friends with them or lived with them. The only reason I was reminded that it was not proper was because I explicitly asked if I might have accidentally insulted someone or was behaving inappropriately. I was informed then that using first names was not proper and that I should address elders by their family name.

In contrast to this formality, some other aspects of the culture were a bit shocking in their informality. For example, the relaxed attitude toward breastfeeding, as Callie Frye recalled a cultural shock for her when women would breastfeed in public (C. Frye, personal communication, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012). When I arrived, I thought I would see many women breastfeeding in public, but remarkably I never saw it until the last week I was in Cameroon. A woman did breastfeed her daughter right in front of me while talking to me, and, yes, I was shocked! But breastfeeding in public is a part of their culture so that such behavior was regarded as perfectly normal and acceptable, whereas in the U.S. it is rather controversial.

Fall of 2012, when I arrived back to America, I had to make some changes to my proposal based on my current plan for the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation and some changes to my proposal to the Clinton Global Initiative- University. I felt pressured because I had a lot of modifications to create, but I felt I really did not have the time and resources to really follow through on this project when my motivation was not there and I had numerous other commitments. I had many thoughts running instead my head such as: “ What’s my long and short term goal?” “What is the purpose of this project?” Those were questions I asked myself. As I look back, I am not happy how my capstone turned out, but do I regret the “alteration” in my plan of creating a Poultry Farm? Honestly, I have to say no because I was able to make critical discoveries about myself and about the nature of work in nonprofit groups in developing countries. For certain, I learned how I would not give up on this capstone.

I realized in reflecting on my experiences that I should have turned to my committee and processed my challenges and thoughts with them. I learned I should have asked for help and not allowed my pride to get in the way and lessen my responsibility. I was told by my mentors at Gallaudet University to step back from my obligations. I did not listen. I learned they were right. If I had taken their advice, I would have potentially had a different experience wrapping up this capstone. It is important to reach out to teachers, mentors, friends and most of all your committee for help. It is not a sign of weakness at all. While I always prefer to handle my own problems alone, I realized that communication is the key for part of the learning process in a capstone experience. Sharing your challenges with your team or committee gives you the opportunity to work through the problems and come up with solutions. While in hindsight, I wish I had done

this, I also realized that my capstone helped me to learn the reason why it is important to have a committee as your support system as they have knowledge to help undergraduates to develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding to achieve professional levels and gain a higher education.

Spring of 2013, it was a semester full of regrets, but it is important to note that I do not regret working with the idea of the Poultry Farm because of the children. They do not have a bright future as American kids do, and therefore I wanted give them that chance. In the future, those Cameroonian kids could support their families and maybe one day have their own poultry farms. If I could turn back time to spring of 2013, I would have reminded myself that my capstone was worth it simply because this project could have achieved my goals of having those Cameroonian students fed and learn how to create their own poultry farm through vocational education. It would have enriched their learning experience and most importantly they could support their families financially.

Dr. Shirley Shultz Myers greatly helped me with my capstone in the spring of 2013. Dr. Myers was my fighter and the person who would argue with me when I did not listen to her advice and encouraged me to think outside the box and to stay on course in completing my capstone. I honestly do not think I could have completed my capstone without her help. At the end of the semester, she encouraged me to continue to work with Dr. Jerri Lyn Dorminy during the summer of 2013. They both felt I still had some learning to process. I struggled to overcome my bitterness toward my capstone throughout my summer. It was a personal challenge. Dr. Jerri Lyn Dorminy helped me to face the truth about myself and to understand how far I have come within two years. I thought my capstone proposal was pretty good, but I did not consider it an amazing piece

of work because I thought I had failed it. I have come to realize that that creating a service-learning capstone was something the Honors Program never had before. I also realized that even though it did not turn out the way I had expected it to, I learned a great deal in the process.

### **Professional Growth**

If someone asked me the best way to develop professional growth, I believe every intern who desires to learn and to grow should go work in a developing country. They would learn humility and the real meaning of what it means to be an intern. An intern is meant to learn from their internship by gaining experience providing service that addresses the needs of that community. If a person wants to go to a different country, they should read about that country, their language, customs, government, culture and most of all meet and talk with other individuals who either interned or lived in that country. Every country has something unique, and it is important to keep an open mind, be flexible, to adjust to their way of life. The social cues are completely different from America. For example, I loved the greetings in Cameroon because women would hug cheek to cheek while males would shake hands; if it was an elder person, the younger person would not look the elder person in the eye and would instead shake the elder person's hand differently by using the dominant hand to shake and the non-dominant hand would rest on their forearm. I strongly encourage research and interviews of knowledgeable natives of a developing country in order to how to greet, avoid insulting someone and be welcoming in a community

Now, professionally I learned a great deal while I was in Cameroon because I have acquired the ability to be open-minded toward a foreign country's government.

While I was at the Sight Saver's seminar in Limbé with Mr. Ogork, I had an interpreter, who also works as a teacher at Buea School for the Deaf. He explained to me about the Cameroonian government as I had many questions. I was not able to join in the meetings because my ideas came out of my own very different context and experience as an American and what the American government would do. But I was able to learn during that time how much I know about my country and our laws, unlike most Cameroonians. They do not know their laws because they are not encoded—a shocking fact for me to learn. I cannot imagine living in a country without access such as internet, books, or a public access building for me to gain information to laws that would protect me or allow me to know what is my right. I have always known that every government differs in how things are done, but that seminar brought me an immediate; firsthand experience an understanding of differences.

Although I could not participate directly at the seminar due to my lack of experience with Cameroon's government, I did find a way to make one contribution to the deaf community. At this seminar, I noticed that several organizations had disabled persons working as part of the organizations, and they spoke on behalf of the blind and the physical disabled because they themselves were disabled in these ways. None of the organizations other than Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) had a deaf individual, and I thought that absence was interesting. Later I spoke with the deaf leaders about becoming involved with various disability organizations so that they could speak on behalf of the deaf community because those organizations had funds from the government. They did not like the suggestion because they believed hearing

organizations would control their small organizations and would not fight for the deaf. I tried to understand their reasoning.

My experience with the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) sincerely helped me to grow professionally, and, for that reason, I did appreciate my time with the organization. Though it may appear limited as a family organization, the leaders are very passionate about deaf Cameroonians' rights. Mr. Ebot and Madame Susan Ogork are the parents of a Deaf son Ayuk Ogork. They do not know signs very well, but they do try their best to communicate with Cameroonian deaf community. They have set up programs for deaf people and fight for deaf rights to have access the same as hearing people in Cameroon enjoy. They are enthusiastic about their school, Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf, and always find ways to discuss how to improve their students' futures. This organization will most likely not be the same as a non-profit organization in America because they do not have enough staff or employees working under them or teams of people whose work could focus on different areas such as community outreach, advocacy, and education.

I honestly believe that more students should be sent to Cameroon because they would be able to learn something there as I did. The value of working internationally is many-fold: non-profit management; creation of volunteer outreach programs; lobbying and advocating for a community; and community outreach. As an intern to an international organization, a student would work in various areas rather than be restricted in one division as has happened in other organizations. I already experienced working in non-profit organizations in America (Peace Corps Headquarter and Bread for the City). At these organizations, I only worked in one department and was given the chance of

collaborating with a different unit, but in Cameroon I was able to work in different areas within one organization. For example, I was able to learn how to lobby for a policy, conduct community outreach with Kumba and recruit volunteers by researching information on volunteers and creating accounts on websites in order to recruit.

### **Personal Growth**

I developed friendships while I was in Cameroon that are still intact thanks to Facebook. I learned and grew from each person I met because his or her life was completely different from life, as I knew it, in America. I developed the habit of not wasting my food, walking to meet my friends more often instead of relying upon transportation, and most of all, valuing my freedom to learn and to earn an education.

In the summer of 2012, while I was in Yaoundé, Cameroon, there were some men who wanted to marry me because they thought they could go to America if I were to marry them. Some of them were joking but most still seriously thought I would say yes. Over the next two months, as the men started to become familiar with me and accepting of my boundaries, our conversation became about differences between Cameroonian and American culture, language barriers, and dreams they held to even while hopeless of achieving them. I noticed I became friends with both men and women but a particular feature of my friendships with men was their protectiveness of me. They showed friendship by making sure I was all right.

It does amaze me how quickly I became friends with deaf male Cameroonians because before I went to Cameroon, I discussed with Dr. Berdichevsky and Mrs. Chukwuma my concern that, due to a pervasive paternalistic culture, most likely women's husbands would be in the room when/if I asked sensitive questions about their

private sexual relationship. I had this concern with my initial project on HIV/AIDS education for women. Yet that did not happen when while I was there during the summer; in any situation, women would tell the men to leave if they wanted to have a private conversation with me. Moreover, people were not reticent about this topic. In fact, the people I was with most of the time prided themselves on knowing current information about HIV/AIDS. Not only that, but I also had a frank discussion with men about polygamy and gay marriages. It was interesting for me to chat with them about their culture in a respectful intercultural exchange.

Originally, I was concerned with how I would address the issue of sexism since descriptions of the culture led me to believe it was common to tolerate men having complete power over women in their sex life and, as a result, women would be afraid to refuse wearing protection because they believed they would lose their husbands (Personal Communication, March 21, 2012). When I was there, however, I found that most of the women I met were independent—so much so that they could go out and sleep with whomever they want. It was a completely jarring divergence from what I had imagined. What I came to understand is that rules for single women differ from those for married women. The single, independent women I met did explain that once they marry, their lifestyle becomes different—more restrictive: They are not able to travel to other cities or countries without their husbands; even worse, husbands can (and do) beat their wives; and husbands can tell a woman to stay at home and not go to work. Men do have that power. It is glaring how men are made superior to women through these practices.

Last, I will always remember the week before I was to depart back to America. One of my personal growths occurred that very week. My great-grandfather died. It was

the most difficult time because I was busy in Cameroon, and yet I wanted to leave Cameroon early to go home in order to support my family. I remembered looking at tickets and found they were too expensive. I felt really bad that I was not able to be there with him on his final day, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012. On that day, I wrote him a letter.

“Granddaddy,

I love you! I am sorry I was not there to say goodbye and to give you a kiss on your cheek. You have been in my life for so long and it will be hard to say goodbye to you. I am sorry I won't be there for your funeral. I am sorry I did not go and visit you before I left. I am sorry that it has been months since I last seen you and give you a hug and a goodbye kiss. I wish I were there in the hospital room with everyone. I am so sorry. I love you!! I am lucky to have known you because you are...you were my great granddaddy. I am thankful that I got to know you and I wish so much that I get to say goodbye. I know you were in pain but I just wanted to say bye and how much I love you. I am so sorry. The day when you get buried, it would be the day I would blow a kiss in the wind.”

I decided to share that letter in this international service-learning capstone because sometimes when you are alone in a foreign land, someone dear to you might die or other situations may arise. You will not be able to be there to support your family, and that's the hardest part about working in an international field. You cannot buy a 2,000-dollar ticket at the last minute. It is tough, and I do regret that I could not be there, but I do not regret my choice of going to Cameroon. My mom told me that my great grandfather understood I was doing something great. It did not stop the guilt, but over time it gets better.

### **Conclusion**

Gallaudet University's Honors Program had never had a service-learning capstone. I am the first person to create this and, while it was a challenge, I am honored. Writing this final capstone reflection was something I struggled with everyday because I did not want anything to do with it, particularly since I had not achieved the new goals I had established and was unable to see the value of my experience. But I persevered and learned so much more. I learned how strong I am to be able to endure working on my capstone and how I struggle to remember why it was important. Sometimes I would have to remind myself that it is not entirely about myself but rather those students in Cameroon.

This section is addressed to future honors students who will face many challenges. It is easy to become frustrated and bitter when it seems things are not working out as you planned. I am not saying it will happen to you, but rather it did to me. I did not care about my capstone anymore, but it does not mean I did not learn from it. I have always believed that people should be passionate about their work because it is something they enjoy putting their energy into. I strongly still believe in that, but I have learned that even if you are not passionate about your project, you can still develop personal growth.

A service-learning capstone will help you to know if service work or international work is for you or not. More often than not, the pay is not good and most likely you will not become rich in the eyes of society. Rather, I believe your outlook on life will change because you will find joy in helping others to achieve their dreams and find riches in simply things in life. Do not give up in the midst of gaining funding to go to the country

of your desire, do not give up while you are setting up your service-learning project, and most of all do not give up on your capstone. Be prepared to adapt. Your capstone is similar to a tree, if you water it and give it some sun, it will bloom. My capstone has helped me in so many ways—most important in showing me that I want to become an international social worker. Because of this capstone and my internship with Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation, I was able to find my answer as to whether this profession was for me. I no longer have to wonder if I have what it takes to be an international social worker. Thanks to my capstone, I know that it is meant for me.

I still have the passion to improve the lives of others; yet I must acknowledge that the highest achievement of my capstone is personal growth. I have learned so much about myself such as: my determination, my resilience, my skills, my talents, and, equally important, my limitations. I am unsure if I will ever do another service-learning project again, certainly not in the near future, because it is an all consuming project and long process that eats your heart, time, tears and mind. Yet, it is worth it. If I were ever asked if I would do it all over again, I would say yes simply because I grew so much and learned a lot about the world and myself. Last, I learned lessons from each person who helped me along my journey. I have a note I wish to share.

“Thank you for helping me in providing me words and wisdom, and most of all thank you for believing in me. This capstone could not have been possible if it were not for all of you. So, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Love, Te”

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Original HIV/AIDS Field Notes and Dialogue Proposal

Date and Location	Field activities	Investigations	Observations	Thoughts
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<b>Open Dialogue Questions: Circle of Women</b>
Q1: What do your children could learn from the campaign?
Q2: Do the lessons at the program help you?
Q3: How do you feel after learning about HIV?
Q4: Do you know anyone who has HIV?

<b>Open Circle Questions: Circle of Women and Men</b>
Q1: What do you hope to learn from each other?
Q2: If you had HIV, would you still have a sexual intercourse with one another?

<b>Open questions: Meet Individually a Female</b>
Q1: How do you feel about the Health Education program here?
Q2: Does it make you want to have safer intercourse with one another??
Q3: What parts of the previous lesson do you or do you not understand?

**Appendix B: Log of Internship in Cameroon**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Date:</b>
	I rested the afternoon after I had a private meeting with Mr and Mrs. Ogork.	Meet with the board of Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation and select changes to the programme	The result of the meeting allowed for me, the intern to explain what I can and will do for Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation. The roles of the board were explained to me and we discussed the programme.	June 13rd
	I explored the city of Yaoundé and met other deaf people.	Visit some important places in Yaoundé in the company of Mr. Atangana.	I met with one of the deaf leaders name, Atangana. He took me to a non-profit organization and its celebration of African children. The organization hosted an event at the blind school for different organizations to learn and support the blind school. The children preformed for us and it was a joy to see.	June 14 <sup>th</sup>

Afterwards, I was led to explore the city of Yaoundé and met other deaf people.	10-12AM Attend some Cameroon Sign Language classes accompanied by Ms. Ntonga and visit ESEDA 1-4PM Visit CHDHL	I was unable to attend Mr. Atangana's class due to the conflict of the time. I was able to attend CHDHL's event related with African children day. I was called to speak and I spoke a little on what I will be doing and why I was in Cameroon.	June 15 <sup>th</sup>
I explored the city of Yaoundé.	Join deaf community in sports at Briquestterie to be organized by Mr. Nte William	I understood that sports are important to the deaf community and to Cameroonians.	June 16 <sup>th</sup>
	10:30-12PM Attends the deaf church in Mokolo at Eglise Evangelique du Cameroun in Mokolo	I met with several deaf people at the church. I learned new Cameroon culture rules such as in a Christian church, I was not to cross my legs (as in one leg on the floor and the other crossed on top) however I was supposed to put both legs on the floor	June 17 <sup>th</sup>

			and women cover their heads when they are in church. It was something I never heard of and therefore next time I would be better prepared of what to do.	
Mrs. Ntonga Mireille arrived before my second meeting. We discussed the items I would need to make my stay in Cameroon easier such as a cell phone and the correct shoes to wear.	Ascertain what HIV/AIDS Programmes have so far been carried out in Cameroon for the benefit of the deaf community and prepare notes to be delivered o HIV/AIDS Prevention in the deaf community (consultatins to be made with Mr. Ataneana and other deaf leaders so as to come up with an elaborate programme to be made and followed up.	I met with Mrs. Ogork before the official meeting begun at 11AM. I discussed with her regarding the project of CGI-U and we discussed ideas and decided on the theme of the project. I meet with Mrs. Susan Ogork and Mr. Peter Kum Chea. We discussed the programme and our expectations of each other.  Next, I had my afternoon meeting with Mr. Evouna and Mr. Atangana. We discussed our expectations and their	June 18 and 19 <sup>th</sup>	

		organizations. I decided I would create a website to help both organizations bring awareness to their work.	
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**Appendix C: Successful Application to Clinton Global Initiative—University**

## CGI University 2013 Application

We have received your application for CGI-U 2013. Please keep a record of the application ID number included in this email, as we will use this to reference your application in the future.

Your application ID # is 3841

All final application decisions will be made by February 28, 2013. Please do not purchase airline tickets or make travel arrangements for St. Louis until you have heard from us.

Please add [cgiu@clintonglobalinitiative.org](mailto:cgiu@clintonglobalinitiative.org) and [cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org](mailto:cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org) to your safe senders list (or check your junk mailbox regularly) to avoid missing any updates on your application from CGI U.

If you have any further questions, please email us at [cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org](mailto:cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org)

Sincerely,

The CGI-U Team  
[cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org](mailto:cgiu.applicant@clintonglobalinitiative.org)  
 212.710.4492

**Submitted application:**

<b>Name:</b>	Te'aira Tucker
<b>Please note that one of these email addresses should be your school email if possible. Primary email:</b>	<a href="mailto:te.aira.tucker@gallaudet.edu">te.aira.tucker@gallaudet.edu</a>
<b>Secondary email:</b>	<a href="mailto:te.aira.tucker@gmail.com">te.aira.tucker@gmail.com</a>
<b>Phone: (no symbols or spaces)</b>	2054755172
<b>Date of birth:</b>	08/31/1990
<b>Gender:</b>	Female
<b>Race:</b>	Black or African American
<b>Please select your university using the searchable field below. If you attend an international school, please enter the name of your school in the next field. Note: If you attend a graduate school or specialized program within a university, please provide the name of the</b>	Gallaudet University

<i>university. Ex.: New York University rather than NYU Medical School)</i>	
<b>School state:</b>	DC
<b>School category:</b>	Liberal Arts
<b>Major:</b>	Social Work
<b>University status:</b>	Undergraduate
<b>Expected date of graduation:</b>	05/17/2013
<b>Country of citizenship:</b>	United States
<b>I am a foreign citizen who will be TRAVELING FROM another country specifically to attend the meeting.</b>	No
<b>I am a foreign citizen who will be STUDYING IN the US in April 2013.</b>	No
<b>Current or school address:</b>	800 Florida Ave North East Washington, D.C 20002 United States
<b>Permanent address:</b>	141 7th Ave South East P.O. Box 1543 Alabaster, Alabama 35007 United States
<b>How did you hear about CGI U?</b>	Professor
<b>Please write a short biography of yourself in the third-person and include any relevant campus activities, leadership roles, or organizational affiliations. (word limit: 150)</b>	Te'aira Tucker is a social work major and University Honors student at Gallaudet University where she developed her life goal of international advocacy. Her first job note taking for another student sparked her interest in service. Working with diverse people, Ms. Tucker has served as a Peer Mentor with first year students, Public Relations officer for the Black Deaf Student Union, and vice-president of her sorority where she has volunteered for numerous community service projects. Work as a resident advisor supporting international students inspired an internship at the Peace Corps headquarters and led her to decide on a career in international social work. This past summer of 2012, she interned with the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organization (CDEO) in Cameroon as part of her Honors Service-Learning capstone. Currently, she is interning at Bread for the City that provides Washington, D.C.'s vulnerable residents food, clothing, medical care and social services.
<b>Link to headshot (optional) Please paste the URL to a headshot (.jpg) of you in the space below. Please link specifically to the URL of the image</b>	<a href="http://sphotos-b.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ash4/482999_10151480312431929_835227508_n.jpg">http://sphotos-b.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ash4/482999_10151480312431929_835227508_n.jpg</a>

<b>alone, which can be found by right clicking on a photo (including Facebook), looking at its properties, and copying the image hyperlink from there. The URL should end in ".jpg".</b>	
<b>Any additional relevant link:</b>	<a href="http://www.cdeoocrs.org/">http://www.cdeoocrs.org/</a>
<b>Commitment name:</b>	Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf Poultry Farm Project
<b>Commitment type:</b>	Individual
<b>Commitment focus area:</b>	Education
<b>In the fields below, please select primary and secondary keywords that best apply to your CGI-U commitment. This will enable you to find and contact other meeting attendees who are doing similar work. Primary keyword:</b>	Agriculture
<b>Secondary keyword:</b>	Economic Development
<b>City where commitment takes place:</b>	Kumba
<b>State or region where commitment takes place:</b>	South West Region
<b>Country where commitment takes place:</b>	Cameroon
<b>When will you complete this commitment?</b>	2014
<b>1. In the third person, write a 2-3 sentence summary of your CGI-U Commitment to Action. (word limit: 100)</b>	In the United States, Te'aira Tucker is representing Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organization's Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf in its goal to establish a Poultry Farm as a source of food and income to the school and as a means of effective vocational training for students. The project will enable them to reach their educational goals of producing self-sufficient students with marketable skills to search for employment, be employed, and reduce unemployment. Ms. Tucker will lead key efforts to fundraise \$10,000, specifically, as a context for donation requests, she will educate both deaf and hearing Americans the benefits of the project.
<b>2. CGI-U students work to address specific global challenges. What is the problem or issue you are working to address? (word limit: 150) (If you reference statistics or facts, please cite your source(s).)</b>	The overarching global issue of my project is economic self-sufficiency, particularly sustainable sources of food and income. Specific issues at the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf in Cameroon are the lack of food for the students who board at the school; of insufficient income for the school; and of appropriate vocational education that attracts more students and allows them the skills to support themselves.

and their multi-generational families.

In Cameroon, families pay to send their children to school. Families expect a return on their investment in the form of educated graduates who can support their families. Years of ignorance, prejudice, and inadequate educational resources have led to the belief that deaf children cannot learn sufficiently to support their families; thus, families choose not to expend often meager financial resources on sending their deaf children to private deaf schools. The result is undereducated, impoverished, and stigmatized deaf Cameroonians and their families.

To provide food for the children, income to the school, and effective vocational training for life-long sources of food and self (and family) support, I will lead key efforts to fundraise at Gallaudet University to gather fund, support, and awareness of the Poultry Farm Project.

My key efforts involve fund-raising in the United States in these ways:

(1) Spring 2013: In a French Level 2 class at Gallaudet University, students will educate the U.S. deaf community about the Poultry Farm Project and ask for donations to the project fund.

Other ways these students will fundraise are:

a. Setting up booths during Gallaudet University's Common Time (12:30-2 pm twice a week when no classes are scheduled) to sell Cameroonian food, art and crafts.

b. Hosting several Cameroonian cultural events.

(2) Spring 2013-Summer 2014: Keep an online blog, Facebook page to educate the public, gain support for our project through [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com), and track progress toward our goal of \$10,000.

Building Poultry Farm

(1) Now through Summer 2013: Post on various volunteer websites to solicit 5-10 international volunteers to build coops in Cameroon—room and board at school provided.

(2) Summer 2013: First chicken coop built on school grounds.

(3) Autumn 2013:

a. Purchase essential equipment and chickens

**3. What activities will you/your group (and, if appropriate, your partners) undertake to address this issue? (word limit: 250) (In this section, we want to understand how your commitment is SPECIFIC and attainable. Define your goal, outline your planned activities, discuss how they will be carried out, and include a timeline for these activities.)**

**4. How is this different from what you have done before? (word limit: 150) (In this section, we want to make sure your commitment is NEW. Each commitment must be a new project for the individual or group making the commitment. If the commitment is an expansion of an existing effort, consider focusing on a different geographic area, working with new partners, or fundraising for a cause new to your interests.)**

**5. How will you know you are successful? (word limit: 150) (In this section, we want to know how your commitment is MEASURABLE. Identify specific results on which you want to report back. The impact of your commitment can be determined in many ways, whether you're measuring funds raised, volunteers engaged, or progress towards goals.)**

for the project.

b. 1-5 students enroll into the program

c. Establish farm and financial records for transparency of the project.

(4) Winter 2013: Market final result of the project.

(5) Summer 2014: Finish all ten coops and write final report of our process.

The goal of my internship in Cameroon during the summer of 2012 was to provide AIDS/HIV education to deaf Cameroonian women. Once there, I learned this education had been provided recently, and a different need at the school associated with the deaf organization I was interning at was more pressing. I understood the solution of chicken farming on school grounds because I had met children at the school and understood how learning to maintain and market chickens would make a significant difference to the school and in their lives after graduation. Although I have had experience fundraising for organizations at my university and various service-learning projects, I had not fundraising for an international cause, nor for one with a potential impact of this magnitude. My Cameroonian contacts are still important, but my commitment has led me to two new partnerships connected to Cameroon but living in the U.S.

School officials have already determined the location of the coops as well as the number of chicken coops, chickens, roasters and the amount of chicken feed and water needed to meet the needs for a food source and training facilities. The amount of money we shall raise will first be used the summer of 2013 for construction. Through the help of 5-10 international volunteers, a coop will be complete by autumn 2013. We will keep financial records, farm records and reports of the project; in addition, we will analyze the reporting system, market final product, and write a final report to analyze the success of the project by summer of 2014. Success of the project will be base on students' reports after the project, the number of chickens produced, the amount of profit, and the number of students employed later after graduation.

I would like to know if Clinton Global Initiative University will provide an American Sign

**Additional comments or questions:**

<p><b>BY SELECTING THE "I AGREE" OPTION BELOW, YOU ARE CONFIRMING THAT YOU HAVE READ, AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY, THE FOREGOING RELEASES, RULES, TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AND THAT YOU WILL BE 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND ENROLLED IN AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT THE TIME OF THE CGI-U MEETING.</b></p>	<p>Language interpreter for the event?</p> <p>I agree.</p>
<p><b>Emergency contact:</b></p>	<p>Tanya Tucker</p>
<p><b>Relationship to emergency contact:</b></p>	<p>Mom</p>
<p><b>Contact phone: (no symbols or spaces)</b></p>	<p><u>2054754758</u></p>
<p><b>May we share your contact information with members of the media if there is an opportunity to highlight your commitment? (By selecting yes, you allow CGI-U to share your commitment information, biography, and contact information with members of the media. Please note that CGI-U will not disseminate your personal information, but seeks to spotlight select commitment-makers in various media outlets.)</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Is your application complete? (You will be able to review the application before it is submitted, but you will not be able to save your work and return at a later date. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of submitting your application, the application was not properly submitted.)</b></p>	<p>My application is complete.</p>

**Appendix D: CDEO Proposal and Financial Record**

<p>CAMEROON DEAF EMPOWERMENT ORGANISATION <b>C.D.E.O.</b></p>		<p>ORGANISATION CAMEROUNAISE POUR LA RÉINSERTION DES SOURDS <b>O.C.R.S.</b> O.C.R.S.</p>
<p>28 Avenue Biyem-Assi P.O. Box 12284, Yaoundé Cameroon, Central Africa.</p>		<p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@cdeocrs.org">info@cdeocrs.org</a> website: <a href="http://www.cdeocrs.org">www.cdeocrs.org</a> telephone: (237) 77 43 45 67</p>

Yaoundé, 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2012

REF#: CDEO/A0/235/22012

SMALL SCALE POULTRY INCOME GENERATING PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR EPHPHATHA INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF, KUMBA (EID)

I. INTRODUCTION

**The Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation (CDEO) is a non profit, non-governmental organization that owns and runs the Ephphatha Institute for the Deaf, Kumba (EID). EID is a Primary and Secondary/Vocational boarding Institute. There are a total of 88 students this academic year. The modest fees paid by some parents cannot cater for the tuition, boarding and running expenses of the school. There is therefore a dire need to carry out educational activities that can at the same time generate some income for the School and to enable the students feed better. These projects can also become personal projects of the students when they graduate from School. It is for this reason that EID, Kumba has chosen to carry out intensive Poultry farming as one of such projects.**

II. OBJECTIVES

1. **This activity will increase student's knowledge on poultry farming.**
2. **It will generate income for the school and increase the protein intake of the students.**

### III. TARGET POPULATION

**The targeted groups are the EID students, the population of Kumba, Meme Division and surrounding cities and villages in the South West Region.**

### IV. DESCRIPTION

**The broiler production will run for 8-9 wk, with a 10 days dead period. The birds will have an average weight of 2.5kg/bird and 5-6 cycles per year. There will be no waste in the project.**

### V. EXPENDITURE

#### A. Investment Capital

<b>N o</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>unit price</b>	<b>Tot. Cost</b>
<b>1</b>	Refurbish existing carpentry shop to a semi permanent structure (5x6)sq.m	30	15,000	450,000
<b>2</b>	Feeding troughs (1 per 50brds)	4	20,000	80,000
<b>3</b>	Watering troughs (1 per 50brds)	5	10,000	50,000
<b>4</b>	Purchase of Equipments(2 spades,2 buckets, 1 cutlass, 1 wheel barrow, 2 poultry cages, work boots and 2(30L)metal drums for heating)		130,000	130,000
			<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>710,000</b>

#### B. Running Capital

<b>N 0</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Qty</b>	<b>unit price</b>	<b>Tot. Cost</b>
<b>1</b>	Day old broiler chicks	200	400	80,000
<b>2</b>	Broiler starter feed for 4 weeks @ 0.06kg/brd/dy. (sold in 50kg/bg)	7	17,500	122,500
<b>3</b>	Broiler finisher feed for last 4-5 weeks @ 0.16kg/brd/dy. (Sold in 50kg/bg)	18	18,000	324,000
<b>4</b>	Vaccination drugs	200	400	80,000
<b>5</b>	Wood shavings @ 50kg/bg (i.e. 1.25bg/sq.m)	37. 5	500	18,750
<b>6</b>	Disinfection of poultry house		10,000	10,000
			<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>635,250</b>

### C. UNFORSEEN CONTIGENCIES

**Consider unforeseen contingencies at 5% = 31,765Fr.s.CFA**

### D. ANALYSIS

**A total cost of 1,377,015F.CFA (approximately U.S. \$2,754.03) is needed for the first batch of 200 birds to be raised.**

### E. STATISTICS

**Consider:**

- 1. The period of maturity for broilers is = 2 months**
- 2. The number of broilers at maturity (less 5 %) = 190 birds**
- 3. The average weight at maturity per bird = 2.5 Kg**

**\* Assume market price/ bird @ 3500FCFA**

- 4. The selling price per bird @ 2,800 F.CFA.**

$$190 \times 2,800 = \underline{532,000.CFA}$$

- 5. Assume droppings (manure) production @ 0.007kg/Brd/dy/Cycle.  
79.8kg/cycle**

- 6. Assume 1(50kg bag of saw-dust) to weigh 25kg.**

- 7. The minimum weight of manure generate in 1 cycle = (25x37) + 78.8 =  
1003.8kg.**

- 8. Assume sales of droppings (manure) @ 250FCFA/Kg.= 250,950F.CFA**

## VI. INCOME

The total sales of 190 birds at 2,800F each and 1ton of manure generated = 782,950 FRS.

## ANALYSIS

1. From the first batch of birds a profit on the running cost is realized at  $782,950 - 635,250 = \underline{147,700 \text{ Frs.}}$
2. It is possible to increase the number of broilers in the second batch by 25% for the same quantity of feed purchased since there will be some left over from the first batch and raising the profit to 184,625 Frs.
3. It is possible to increase the number of broilers per batch depending on the market trend.
4. It is possible to raise 6(45 days) cycles or batches in a year as explained above.
5. The price per broiler can increase depending on the weight and demand.
6. In one year, under good management, the cost (investment capital) will break even.

1<sup>st</sup> batch profit @ 147,700F.CFA

2<sup>nd</sup> thru 6<sup>th</sup> batch profit @  $(184,625 \times 5) = 923,125\text{F.CFA}$

Total profit for batches = 1,070,825F.CFA

A good sign of profitability.