Describe the projects and tasks you worked on and the results that were achieved.

What were the skills you used most often in your internship?

I had three major projects in which I worked on. The first one was an online how to marketing guide for small partner NGOs. It explained what fundraising was, the different kinds of fundraising, fundraising donation platforms (website vs button, such as Paypal), crowdfunding options and my personal recommendations on each of them. I wrote summaries of each option, created a graph outlining basic factors in prices, and put on a video presentation while on the phone with various partners in Guatemala. My second project was watching the Judicial Congress conference in Peru that happened in 2015 and finding memorable moments in them as well as summarizing major points in all the videos. The summaries were in Spanish but the final outline that explained overlapping themes was in English. My last project was another how to guide, but this one on the process of conducting interviews, why they’re important, and different contexts they can be used in after the interview process. I also did other smaller projects such as translating internal documents and partner grant proposals and researching data on reproductive rights laws for different countries.
What difficulties did you have and how did you address or overcome these difficulties?

One of the biggest difficulties for me was actually balancing my time. I was lucky enough to not have to relocate and spend money on that, but I live approximately 2 hours away from my internship (including traffic, without it it’s 45 minutes). That ended up taking much more of a physical and emotional toll on me than I expected. Including the travel to and from there plus the internship itself I probably had around 3 hours to myself before going to sleep and starting the day over. I’m not sure if that’s typical for most people with full time jobs but for me it was exhausting to say the least. I had to learn how to manage my time as well as my hobbies in a way that didn’t burn me out, which I still am in the process of learning.

Another difficulty for me would have to be the actual act of working a sedentary job. Beforehand I worked as a bartender and then on film sets so I’m used to being engaged in a very active way and the adjustment was very difficult for me. That might sound like a silly thing to consider, but learning methods of dividing up your time and letting yourself stand and walk around is paramount in a job like this.

In regards to the actual work itself, the most difficult part would have to be researching sources on reproductive rights in Spanish. Doing the former is difficult enough but finding Latin American resources on reproductive issues was even more so for me. Luckily I reached out for help (a lot!) and was able to adequately do that. To whatever future RRASC that has the privilege of working for LARO, please never be scared to ask a question. They go above and beyond to try to help as much as they’re able.
What do you view as the highlight(s) of your internship experience?

The highlight of my internship experience would hands down have to be the connections I made in it and the ability to try my hand in a field I was interested in working in without fully committing to it. While I’m still very interested in reproductive rights and would consider working in it in the future, I learned through my work at LARO that I don’t want to be a lawyer and that sort of work doesn’t suit me despite my passion for human rights. As far as the connections, I honestly consider most of the employees there my mentor in some form because they truly made it a wonderful and supportive place to learn and work in. While I learned a massive amount of information about reproductive rights, it also is outside of just RJ work as well, I learned a lot about time management with them and also how to deal with more women centered issues such as negotiating a salary and tips on how to present projects.

How did your academic studies help to prepare you for this internship?

My academic studies were surprisingly integral to this internship. My filmmaking knowledge came in handy when it came to the marketing work I did. I did have to look up what I didn’t know, but the basic premise remained the same. I also used my filmmaking experience when it came to crafting the interview guide because of my familiarity with documentaries and interviewing subjects. I also used a lot of the research skills I learned at Hampshire to find and disseminate information quickly which was really helpful in the Judicial Congress video project. In regards to the Judicial Congress video project, my human rights studies came in handy because without it I wouldn’t be able to understand a lot of the legal terminology.
How did your internship contribute to your career goals or life path?

This internship completely changed my life. I came in with a double concentration in film and human rights, straddling the fence between these two very different subjects. I was very unsure in what I wanted to do with my life. Part of me wanted to be a lawyer, and part of me wanted to work in the film industry. I was very lucky to have a wonderful supervisor who understood that and gave me diverse projects that fit into one or the other academic interest. Through these projects I applied my knowledge and got hands on experience in each respective industry. Ultimately I learned that although I am a champion for human rights, I wouldn’t be happy as a lawyer. I also learned that I have a knack for marketing and applying my film skills to nonprofit communication strategies, which trust me is a lot more fun than it sounds!

What did you think of your internship and the organization?

Trying to find the right words to adequately sum up my time working with Planned Parenthood Global this summer feels impossible. It was an eye opening and impactful experience for me, both on a reproductive rights and personal level. As I’ve said various times before, working with everyone was wonderful. As for the organization itself, while I’m very proud of the work that Planned Parenthood does nationwide, I feel like it’s still an organization centered on whiteness. During the various tragedies that happened this summer, they did not handle it adequately. Also, another minor thing is the sheer amount of bureaucracy to do anything, but most especially in the paperwork to get started working. There was a lot of unnecessary papers the other interns and I had to do that wasn’t even relevant to us (a lot of it was info on the NY or New Orleans office). That
wasn’t LARO’s fault however, since it was headed by the Planned Parenthood HQ instead of the Latin American regional office.

**Did you learn more about the intersections of reproductive rights and social justice issues?**

Through working for Planned Parenthood, my knowledge in reproductive rights expanded tremendously. Through joining the CLPP Student Group at Hampshire College and of course going to training and the CLPP conference, I had a good amount of knowledge about sexual and reproductive rights, but not enough to talk about it super confidently. The entire first week of my orientation with Planned Parenthood Global was a crash course in not only reproductive rights but how the climate in each partner country is. For example, I had no idea that LARO works in Nicaragua even though technically abortion is completely banned there. I also learned how they intersected with other various organizations that aren’t specifically RJ related. For example, in Guatemala they work with local environmental organizations as well as local indigenous shamans to reach people. Also, something super interesting that they do is that local organizations there work with youth to help distribute contraception, known as Youth Peer Providers (YPPs).

**Do you have suggestions for potential future interns?**

For future interns, I feel like the biggest advice I can give you would be to not be intimidated by the reproductive rights aspect of it. I know that sounds completely counterintuitive but just hear me out. The RJ movement needs people from a wide variety of different fields, not just those directly working in activism or reproductive rights. They
talked a lot about that very same thing during the CLPP conference this year, and I saw it in action at Planned Parenthood. At LARO, although there were lots of people there with Masters in Public Health there were also people who worked in communications and a lawyer working there as well. As someone who is primarily interested in film, it was really interesting to see my knowledge in that applied to other fields such as communications and marketing to further along our ultimate goal. Also at LARO, I learned that they could even use help with things such as making a website and graphic design which is something no one even considers when talking about reproductive rights.

The next thing I recommend for them goes hand in hand with diverse skills. In order for the organization to use them, they have to know about which requires you to be outspoken and let them know exactly what you’re good at. Personally, that’s something I regret not doing right when I started. When I finally did get comfortable with the organization and told them about my skills in photography and graphic design, it was too late for them to use them and I was already engrossed in other projects. Also, if you’re ever doing a project and really feel like you don’t have the skills to do it for whatever reason, try first and if it still feels impossible, communicate with your supervisor. At the end of the day it’s all about communication!