Uganda Studies Program
Social Work Emphasis

Junior and Senior Level Practicums
2013-14

The following are practicum opportunities for BSW students in the USP Social Work Emphasis for the 2013-14 school year. While it is our desire to keep this information up-to-date, due to our efforts to continually improve the practicum opportunities for students, please note that there could be site changes. It is also important to keep in mind that not all social work student opportunities listed will remain the same for every student, every semester. The purpose of this information is to give examples of the type of learning opportunities that can be a part of a student’s experience within the USP Social Work Emphasis. Please contact the USP Social Work Coordinator for more information on these practicums, the placement process and any other aspects of the Social Work Emphasis.

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Chain Foundation

Chain is a Ugandan-founded and run organization in Mukono. It serves orphans and vulnerable children in the area, as well as children with visual impairments from around Uganda. About 120 children live at Chain with host mothers during the school year. There is also an inclusive, integrative school on campus that serves both sighted and visually impaired children. Chain also runs an orphans and vulnerable children project, funded by USAID, which serves about 700 children in the community.

Chain has provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2004.

Best for junior social work students interested in working with children with disabilities, school social work, Ugandan children's homes and child welfare outreach programs.

USP Social Work Student Opportunities:

Children's home: Lead after school/weekend activities, trainings in life skills, health/hygiene & child rights, helping house mothers, report writing, reading/organizing/adding to children's profiles.

School: Assist Braille teachers within integrated school (i.e. creating and grading Braille exams). Tutor and play with children in Resource Room and Library. Participate in pottery lessons for older students and caregivers.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) project – Participate in schools visits, vocational training for caregivers, distribution of school supplies, home visits, parent training and peer education.

A Social Work Student's Perspective:

One of the most important things that I learned in my internship at Chain Foundation was to recognize that there are strengths and areas of improvement in all systems around the world, including child welfare. At first I was skeptical of the Ugandan system, but I began to love many aspects of how Chain worked and see many strengths and reasons why this system works in the Ugandan context. My internship at Chain Foundation taught me to constantly be aware of the system in which you are engaged - know which things in that system are functioning effectively and which things could be adjusted or improved. No system is perfect; nor is there one system that can be overlaid across all cultures to address a problem. The aspect of my internship at Chain Foundation that had the greatest impact on me was the community that I experienced while there. This happened just by being able to journey through the semester with the children - from doing wash, to playing games, to exam time, to reading Bible stories in their dorms on a rainy day. I will never forget the acceptance and love I saw shown between the children - with the older helping the younger ones and the children who were sighted helping at times to guide the children who were visually impaired - and also the love and acceptance I experienced from the children myself. There is a richness in the community at Chain Foundation that I had never experienced before - I could not forget it if I tried, nor would I ever want to.

Stacey, Sr. from Kuyper College
Child Development Centers assisted by Compassion International

USP works with 4 Child Development Centers (CDC) in and around Mukono. These Centers serve as a headquarters for Compassion International’s sponsorship program in their respective communities. Sites can serve between 200-300 or more orphans and vulnerable children through school sponsorship. The program also includes Saturday meetings where all sponsored children gather together at the Centers for classes and fun. Two CDCs also includes a Compassion International Child Survival Program which provides a variety of maternal and child health care services to the surrounding community.

Compassion sites have provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2012.

Best for junior or senior social work students interested to learn more about Compassion’s poverty alleviation model, international child welfare and maternal/child health programs, and US-based organizations.

USP Social Work Student Opportunities:
Child Sponsorship Program: Case management of most vulnerable children in program, which involves working together with families and school administrators to remove barriers that are hindering the growth and development of the child. This includes home and school visits where family counseling and training is conducted. Opportunities also include teaching and leading activities during Saturday gatherings. Administrative tasks include helping children write letters to sponsors, writing reports and maintaining child files.

Child Survival Program: Coordinate and lead activities for expectant and new mothers in community. Train mothers in group and individual sessions on health/hygiene, parenting and other topics. Provide mental health support and distribute basic support to mothers during home visits and during group gatherings. Monitor health and growth of babies. Help maintain client files and assist CDC staff with other administrative duties.

A Social Work Student’s Perspective:
Wherever you are, the social work practicum experience is going to take you out of your comfort zone. As time went on though, I got to a place where the uncomfortable became comfortable. Don't get me wrong, it was still daunting when my colleagues would ask me to teach a class, or facilitate a meeting between a parent (who didn't speak a lot
of English) and child, or even develop and implement a community-wide assessment; but, when you are continually being stretched, your capacity to handle it increases. As a result, I find that now, instead of thinking, "oh I probably couldn't handle that", I think back to all my experiences in Uganda and realize "if I could do [fill in the blank], I can do this!" Overall, the experience increased my personal and professional confidence and courage exponentially, and that's something I wouldn't change for anything.

~ Becca, Sr. from Indiana Wesleyan University

Child Development Centers assisted by Compassion International
Empower and Care Organization (EACO)

EACO is a community-based organization within walking distance of the University. EACO provides a wide variety of services to the community, including income generating activities, water and sanitation projects, HIV/AIDS patient care, child sacrificing prevention projects and a host of public health awareness trainings in the community.

EACO has provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2013.

Best for junior social work students interested in public health, community development, unique African issues such as child-sacrificing, and learning more about the challenges and effectiveness of a small grassroots community-based organization

USP Social Work Student Opportunities:
Collaborate with EACO staff in program development to help meet the various needs in the community including poverty, domestic violence, child sacrifice and HIV/AIDS. Observe social workers empower clients through income generating activities and clean water initiatives. Help lead community trainings on hygiene and other public health topics. Engage in HIV/AIDS patient care. Assist EACO in fundraising efforts including developing proposals and grants.

A Social Work Student’s Perspective:
During my time at EACO I was able to creatively come up with solutions to problems that the agency was trying to address. This process offered a great opportunity to get to know our coworkers and laugh with them as we bounced ideas around. We came up with assessments and solutions to issues impacting the surrounding community, including HIV/AIDS, single mothers with low incomes and domestic violence. After coming up with these ideas, we had the opportunity to create some of the assessment tools that are being used by the implementing team after we left. During my experience at EACO, I found Ugandans to be such an appreciating and encouraging people group and it was a beautiful experience to work for people that genuinely valued and appreciated every thing you contributed! I am now much more open-minded and understanding at how important culture is in our understanding of human behavior. I am more confident in my values and convictions as a future social worker because I have international field experience. Policy-making doesn't seem boring like it did before I went to Uganda, because I was a part of making policies for an organization. It was such a fulfilling experience and crucial to my learning. I am now so confident and proud of the career choice I made because I have seen the difference that social workers make in an
individuals life. The clients at EACO taught me so much, and I know that future clients will do the same. I will never forget my experience in Uganda. It has and will continue to play a role in my future career as a social worker.

~ Jordyn, Jr. from Azusa Pacific University

A Field Supervisor’s Perspective:
The students are cooperative and very eager to learn, they share ideas on different projects that we have. They have helped build proposals in relation with reproductive health and vocational training for school drop-outs. Our partnership is really a healthy one, where by we have more ideas because of USP. We are really grateful.

Emmy, Ugandan Social Work Supervisor @ EACO

EACO
Hospice Africa Uganda

Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU) provides service, education, research and clinical care to those who are suffering from critical illness, including HIV/AIDS. It seeks to provide holistic care for patients and their families through an inter-disciplinary model that is now being replicated throughout Africa.

Hospice has provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2011.

Best for senior social work students who are interested in learning more about HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, palliative care and grief and loss issues.

USP Social Work Student Opportunities:
Work alongside medical and social worker professionals in conducting patient care during home visits; this includes providing basic counseling sessions with patients and their families. Participate in public health awareness trainings and income generating skill development during HAU community days. Join the Education Department staff in training community volunteers and traditional healers. Administrative tasks may include writing Memorandum of Understandings between HAU and partner organizations, creating and updating social work manuals and handbooks, and developing funding proposals to promote the growth of HAU’s efforts in Uganda and beyond.

A Social Work Student’s Perspective:
I learned a lot about social work, patient care, life, love, and God through my internship at Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU) in the spring of 2012. Generally, when I thought of hospice before working with the agency, I assumed that all patients would be near-death. However, many were stable but in need of pain and symptom management. I learned that pain can be multi-faceted, stemming from physical pain to psychological, social, and spiritual pain. HAU focuses largely on meeting patients’ huge range of needs and relieving their pain, whatever type of pain it may be, making their care holistic. There was never a ‘typical day’ at hospice, sometimes I would go on home visits or help out with the daycare for patients with higher social need, and other times I would see patients in the on-site clinic or work on other things like research! The daycare evolved a bit while I and other interns were there, and we began to do baking workshops with the patients so they could learn a new trade to make a little money (see picture). I eventually had a small case load because there were a few patients I was following up with on issues such as family matters or money concerns, and usually these patients figured out solutions on their own, they just needed an ear to bounce ideas off
of! HAU also has a small school sponsorship program for children whose parents died of cancer, so I assisted in checking up on those children, compiling their pictures, and encouraging them to write letters to their sponsors. Even though I can tell you now about all the things I did while at HAU, I saw my main role as that of a learner. It was a unique experience and one that I wouldn't trade because I learned so much.

~ Ruth, Sr. from Messiah College

A Field Supervisor’s Perspective:
I love having students do their practicum at my organization. They have helped in the assessment and management of patient’s psychosocial issues as well as drafted social work manuals and handbooks together with me, the social worker here. They have been so resourceful.

~ Doreck, Ugandan Social Work Supervisor @ HAU

Mirembe House & Suubi House

Mirembe House is a Youth for Christ program in Kampala that provides housing and services to teenagers experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Suubi House provides housing and services to teenage mothers. Both ministries provides counseling, life skills and vocational training, bible study and discipleship, English language classes, as well as aftercare services with the goal of family reunification.

Mirembe House has provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2012. Suubi House since 2014.

Best for senior social work students interested in working with pregnant teens or teenage mothers, and interested in a relational ministry, learning about issues effecting women in Uganda, and US-based organizations.

USP Social Work Student Opportunities:
Build healing relationships with girls living at the center through leading trainings and activities, conducting Bible studies, counseling, mentoring and spending time with girls as they process the life change and challenges they are experiencing.
A Social Work Student’s Perspective:
In the short time that I was able to spend at Mirembe House, I was blessed to work alongside some amazing men and women who had devoted their lives to showing teenage girls the beauty and freedom of God's grace. I learned during this time how deep-rooted the problem of teenage pregnancy is in Uganda. I was made aware of the effect that polygamy could have on children, and saw the way that HIV/AIDS truly has an unwarranted hold on families and individuals. I grew as a professional as a result of this internship, by being able to practice individual and group counseling, and having an opportunity to design a mentorship program. However, as a Christ-follower, being able to see the hope that was brought to girls in quite hopeless situations had more impact on me than anything else. The ability that Christ's love has amidst cross-cultural barriers was encouraging and humbling. I felt blessed to have the opportunity to complete my professional semester at Mirembe House.

~ Mary, Sr. from Dordt College

A Field Supervisor’s Perspective:
At Youth for Christ Uganda (Mirembe House) we have greatly benefited from USP students in the following ways: They have helped expecting teenagers cope during their time of crisis and also given them ways to help them love their babies, such as introducing baby books. They have used art therapy to counsel the girls and introduced creative activities to connect with the girls. These creative expressions passed on a message of love to the girls. They were involved in home visits and hospital visits to encourage the young mothers and their families/relatives. Their involvement at Mirembe House has eased the staff workload. They are involved in counseling and encouraging the girls. We appreciate the relationships they build with the girls and the staff!

~ Mary, Ugandan Social Worker @ Mirembe House

Mirembe House
Off-Tu Mission and Academy

*Off-Tu Mission* is a children’s home and outreach program in Mukono focused on the rehabilitation of former street children. It also includes a ministry to street children in the city of Kampala, an outreach to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in a slum area of Kampala, and community activities that minister to OVC in Mukono.

*Off-Tu Academy* is a school where children from the Mission attend as well as other children in the community in need of affordable education.

Off-Tu has provided practicum opportunities for USP students since 2004.

Best for junior social work students interested in working with orphans, abandoned and street children, social work practice in an Ugandan ministry and/or school setting.

**USP Social Work Student Opportunities:**

Learn from Ugandans about Ugandan social work and ministry to street children. Tutor students and lead trainings and activities for children living at the Mission. Attend ministry outreach in Kampala at a street children drop-in center and a slum area. Conduct case assessments and participate in home visits for the most vulnerable children in the outreach program. Provide encouragement and empowerment to parents and children using basic counseling skills, teach at the Academy, participate and lead portions of special programs (such as worship services) in the community.

**A Social Work Student’s Perspective:**

The patience, cross-cultural communication skills, adaptability, and sensitivity that I learned during my time at Off-Tu Mission made me into a more culturally competent professional. These skills allowed me to better interact with diverse clients at the agency where I conducted my senior practicum in the United States, and shaped me into a more well-rounded social worker. There is diversity within our own culture, and it is important to learn how to interact and effectively communicate with people who are inevitably different than us. Off-Tu exposed me to the realities of street life for children in Kampala, Uganda and informed me of the options for addressing the issue. I learned about the complexities of this macro level social issue while addressing it on a micro level.

~ Ashton, Jr. from Olivet Nazarene University