

Student Information:

Adrienne Bowles '12  
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Environmental Science Major

Location: Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District, Belize

Organization: Sarstoon-Temash Institute for Indigenous Management (SATIIM)

SATIIM is a non-governmental organization that works mainly in southern Belize. It was established in 1997, primarily as an organization to supervise the day-to-day management of the Sarstoon-Temash National Park. However, the organization's current objectives and duties have expanded since then. Rather than solely focusing on maintaining the ecological integrity of the area, SATIIM currently helps ensure the sustainability and well being of the local Maya villages who depend on the forest for their cultural, social, and economic longevity, through aid and education programs.

Internship Description:

January 4-22, 2010

The beginning of 2010 marks a transitional period for SATIIM, many of their management plans for the national park and the sustainability of the organization expired at the end of 2009 and they were also in the process of hiring a new development officer upon my arrival. In lieu of these various factors, my primary duties as an intern at SATIIM were to focus my efforts more on program development and fundraising; specifically writing grant proposals and helping revise and summarize current management plans to help prepare for their upcoming renewal. I also helped members of the SATIIM staff in community organization and sensitization efforts in the villages, in order to prepare for the launching of their new sustainable forestry project. Additionally, I accompanied SATIIM staff members to the national park and local indigenous villages in order to understand the execution of their management plans on a first-hand basis.

Reflection:

While at SATIIM, I gained a lot of first-hand experience through my exposure to community organization efforts and the day-to-day administration of the organization. Because SATIIM was undergoing a transitional phase, I was able to take on a great deal of responsibility and consequently gain valuable experience in the process of the implementation of sustainable forestry management plans and writing of grant proposals. Working at SATIIM gave me important skills that will be very useful in future internships and eventually jobs. I had previously learned about land rights and preservation conflicts in Belize, but being able to see the work of SATIIM first hand and understand how various programs are actually implemented will forever be an invaluable experience.

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