



A top working experience at the ICDD in a friendly international working environment

Tonye Somiari

Tonye Somiari is a student from Nigeria. She was happy to participate in the USA Interns Program of the Steuben-Schurz-Society and had the chance to join a team of the ICDD whose objective is: Creation and transfer of knowledge on creating and improving work and income opportunities in rural and urban regions of developing countries in light of globalization, climate change and urbanization.

While I have extensive working experience and have participated in many internships, I would have to rank my internship at the International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD) as one of my top working experiences. Everything from the environment to the work itself was rewarding. When I first arrived at the ICDD, I was unsure of what to expect. I heard many stories of how the German work environment can seem unfriendly and impersonal at first, so I was prepared to meet a strict work environment. Instead, what I was greeted with was a very diverse environment that fully feels as a family.

What I find interesting about the ICDD is that not only is it an internationally focused organization, but also, the people who make up the organization do truly come from all over the world. While the core staff and administration is comprised of Germans, all the other staff and assistants come from all ends of the globe: from Asia to South America and everything in between. This means that I not only got to exchange my culture with Germans, but I also had the opportunity to also participate in cultural exchange with Brazilians, Chinese, Afghans, Cameroonians, and more. I learned new phrases, tried new foods, and learned more about the various cultural differences between Germany, the USA, and all these different countries.



Colleagues of my staff

I truly appreciated that I had numerous opportunities to share about my life in the US. More importantly, it was great to share my view of the “American” way of life as an immigrant from Nigeria.

One of my favorite times was lunchtime, when the staff and resident PhDs would gather and share a meal and conversation. Our conversations ranged from politics and current events to exchanging recipes for cooking.



Celebrating the birthday of one of the PhD students at lunch time

Aside from the environment, I enjoyed the work that I did. I was able to assist in writing my first grant proposal. I helped to organize a major conference. I had the opportunity to travel to Berlin and meet with individuals from major international organizations such as the DAAD and the International Labour Organization. Knowing that all the work I did, projects I helped with, and tasks I completed contribute to the mission of improving employment conditions of highly marginalized groups was a reward alone.

My experience at the ICDD and in Kassel was phenomenal. I am very thankful for the opportunity provided through the Steuben-Schurz Gesellschaft and U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt. I look forward to sharing more about my experience when I return to my university, and I hope other students will have the opportunity to participate in an internship at the ICDD.

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Tel: 069-1310822 - Fax: 069-1310873, E-mail: info@steuben-schurz.org, info@usa-interns.org, www.steuben-schurz.org