

D. M. Payne Fellowship

Summer 2016



Welcome 2016 Fellows!

Summer Edition

Meet the Fourth Cohort of Donald M. Payne International Development Fellowship Program!

**2016 USAID Orientation
Highlights**

P.2

**DC Summer Program —
*First Impressions***

P.3-4

**USAID Mission Intern-
ships — *From Theory to
Practice!***

P.5-6

**Payne Program Graduates
— *Reflections from 2014
Cohort***

P.7-8

**Updates & Closing
Remarks**

*Program Manager, MaRaina
Montgomery*

P. 9



Mariela Medina Castellanos, Brittany Thomas, Ellexis Chapman, Kayden Hoang Bui, Jolisa Brooks, Suegatha Kai-Rennie, Stephanie Ullrich



“ There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men—true nobility is being superior to your former self. — *Anonymous* ”





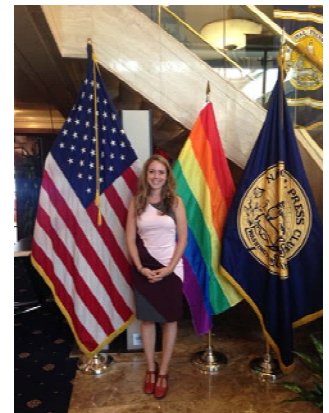
“My experience on Capitol Hill far exceeded my expectations. It was a privilege and in many cases I was offered exclusive access to people and places that make up our government. Besides having access to a wealth of information, both on the Hill and at USAID headquarters, my most prized experience this summer was sitting in on a Congressional Black Caucus gun violence press conference with Rep. John Lewis, Rep. Shelia Jackson Lee and other notable Congressional leaders. Their fervent spirits for justice reminded me of why I have the privilege to be a USAID Payne Fellow. Additionally, this summer was a period for power networking and building an invaluable bond with my cohort. I am excited to begin graduate school knowing that what I previously had to offer the classroom setting has been enriched.” —**Suegatha Kai-Rennie, Boston Univ.**

“In three words, I would describe the summer program as: enlightening, humbling and fun. Enlightening because I learned something new every single day; working in congress and gaining a deep understanding of our legislative branch and how it collaborates with other agencies is invaluable for my future career in the Foreign Service. Humbling because of all the wonderful people I had the opportunity to meet. I was fortunate to meet brilliant people who work at USAID and Capitol Hill to make the world and our country a better place. I can now call friends the dedicated people who manage the Payne Fellowship, the current and past Payne fellows, the Rangel and Mandela Washington Fellows. Last but not least it was fun! Whether I was learning, working or spending time with the other fellows, the entire summer was an exciting and unique experience that I will never forget.” —**Mariela Medina-Castellanos, Tufts Univ.**



“My first summer as a Payne Fellow has been full of learning experiences that have made me excited to begin a career in USAID. I have enjoyed getting to know the other fellows through our critical issue presentations on international development and I have gained stronger professional writing skills from interning in the Ways & Means Trade Subcommittee. I am grateful for the insight I have received through meeting so many professionals within the field of International Affairs. Important lessons that I learned this summer are the importance of humility and making a genuine effort to listen to another person's story. Even in the haste of DC's Rush Hour, there is always time to connect with others and help how I can.” — **Brittany Thomas, Yale Univ.**

“I worked in the office of Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett (Virgin Islands-At large) on Caribbean-American issues. It was an exciting experience working for a Representative who recognizes the growing importance of the Caribbean Basin to trade, innovation, and national security. I assisted the legislative staff with the Agriculture Committee and the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. This summer I worked on diverse issues ranging from food security to domestic poverty. I gained valuable first-hand experience in learning how legislation is formed and how it can have an impact on the international stage.” — **Stephanie Ullrich, Columbia Univ.**





“The Congressional experience is unparalleled. As a fellow in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs I was able to research and contribute to legislation on women's rights, education in under developed countries and conflict mediation. My most rewarding opportunity was working on a project with the goal to craft legislation that will appropriate money that will allow Foreign Service officers to better access mental health care and post-tour counseling. Another meaningful experience occurred one afternoon while sitting with Ambassador Perkins. He told me, "...too often young people want to change the world, but then grow tired when they realize the magnitude of that challenge. Never get tired and never give up." As I prepare for a career in the Foreign Service I'll remember that change requires consistency and faith."

— **Jolisa Brooks, Yale Univ.**

“The Payne Fellowship has been one of the greatest learning experiences I've had as a young professional. During our first week of orientation, we met so many people at USAID who were invested in seeing us succeed, some of whom included the previous cohorts of Payne fellows, our mentors, and especially Raina. My favorite moments during the summer are when the other fellows and I are in an Uber together and we talk openly and honestly about our week, concerns, hopes, current events, simply sharing our lives with each other. The multiple presentations that we were assigned to facilitate, helped foster a non-threatening space in which we learned from each other's experiences, current affairs, scholarly research, and to reflect on the significance of our own lives and perspectives. Though I have not known my new Payne colleagues for long, I consider them as part of a new family. ”

— **Hoang Bui, Harvard Univ.**



“As a fellow in Congressman Whitfield's office, of my hometown district, I was given the unique opportunity to see my representative in action and work on issues that affect me, my family, and my hometown. The Hill itself is a unique place to learn and see our nation's government work firsthand. Over the summer, I attended an average of one briefing or hearing a day and learned about a plethora of issues that American citizens face each day. It was impressive to have an abundance of knowledge at my fingertips and an intellectually stimulating environment that made me excited about going to work each day! ”

— **Ellexis Chapman,**

Johns Hopkins Univ.





“Learning about the architecture of international health aid organizations has been fascinating to learn in my first year of graduate school. One of my first lectures addressed the roles of super-national structures, contract/implementing partners, and consulting firms. At my USAID/Tanzania internship placement, I have had the opportunity to visit sites that are financially supported by USAID and executed via implementing partners. My graduate studies introduction to how partnerships work has been solidified and enhanced through studying the relationship between the donor, partner, and beneficiary in Tanzania.

In my first week, I developed a user’s guide for Agreement Officers’ Representatives and Contract Officers’ Representatives in the Health Office to monitor quarterly performance of partners working within the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The guide provides guidance on how to populate the necessary programmatic and budgetary data for analysis. In the coming weeks, I look forward to participating in site improvement monitoring at the community and facility level. I look forward to bringing my newly acquired knowledge of partner performance tools and monitoring back to the class room during my final year of graduate school.” —**Lea Claye, Tulane Univ., USAID Tanzania**

“My training in GIS and urban planning have proven very valuable during my overseas internship at USAID/Uganda. Being able to bring innovative analytical methods and ideas to the table have enabled me to make meaningful contributions and get right to work! Being placed in the Program and Policy Development office has also allowed me to work across sectors and often with the Front Office. Along with continuing my mastery of geospatial analysis, I am also now compelled to expand my knowledge of research and project design, and how to most effectively facilitate analysis-driven decision-making and design.” — **Jeanne Choquehuanca, Univ. of Maryland, College Park, USAID Uganda**



“Studying public health at UC Berkeley School of Public through a Health and Social Behaviors and Global Health lens is preparing me to practice global health and international development. The knowledge I have gained in my epidemiology, qualitative methods and theory of health and social behavior courses has given me a leg up in understanding the Southern Africa HIV/AIDS epidemic. I feel more able to understand its complexities in disproportionately affecting key populations such as young girls and women, men who have sex with men (MSM), and female sex workers at a far greater rate than the general populations.

In my last year at the SPH, I plan on reinforcing my awareness of HIV/AIDS and food security, while enhancing my public health budgeting and finance skills. I will take classes in international development economic policy, health and human rights, impact evaluation and family planning and population change in the fall. I am thrilled for the opportunity to gain the necessary skills needed to be a Health and Development Officer with USAID both through theory and practice through the Payne Fellowship.” --**Marvin Crespin-Gamez, UC Berkeley, USAID South Africa**



"I realize the summer placement provides hands-on daily experience with tangible expectations, whereas, my first year in the Development Practice Program at Columbia University gave a theoretical and knowledge based framework and core preparatory tools. During my internship, I have acquired several differences in perspective while working here in the USAID Education Office in Liberia. The access to development projects has piqued my interest to further explore possibilities for cross-sectorial collaborations, mainly with the USAID sectors of health and economic growth. Being present on the ground has also been critical to identify competencies for me to continue mastering for the role of a Program/Project Development Officer, such as budgeting, M&E, donor coordination and project design.

Currently, I oversee a project monitoring tool, which assesses the progress of multiple education activities occurring simultaneously. I accompany staff on site visit meetings with implementing partners to gain insight on the status and next steps for projects, and I am co-creating employment and education objectives for the launch of a new youth project. Another particularly exciting aspect of my role involves working on the implementation of the "Let Girls Learn Liberia." I was especially excited to speak with First Lady Michelle

Obama when she came to the country to officially launch this program. It was awesome to share my educational background with Mrs. Obama and to let her know I was working with the Education sector of USAID.

Furthermore, I have gained insight into areas I would like to continue studying for independent research and problem-solving proposals. These areas include gender-based material to advance the equitable inclusion of women and girls, nutrition and food security, and the development of value chain analyses for application in low-income countries. This experience has been overall eye opening and awards an ideal outlook into what I may encounter next summer when I officially join the USAID Foreign Service." — **Keisha Herbert, Columbia, University, USAID Liberia**

"At the Mailman School of Public Health, our first semester of the core curriculum provided both breadth and depth in many of the cross cutting areas within public health.

My coursework in epidemiology, research design, behavioral science and capacity assessment informs the ways in which I am able to engage with the practical experiences I am gaining in Abuja, Nigeria. The Mission in Nigeria is home one of the largest USAID health offices in the world, which for me has meant access to a robust and diverse portfolio and a wealth of informative encounters with the technical experts that support and lead all of our programs in Nigeria. As a Payne fellow in the Office of HIV/AIDS & TB a majority of my responsibilities have been anchored in conducting site visits with the objective of monitoring implementation and conducting focus groups with beneficiaries to assess the quality of service delivery. In the remaining half of my fellowship, as I engage in some data collection and analysis activities, I am looking forward to using my last year of graduate school to take courses on multiple data analysis packages to build on the knowledge I have acquired during my fellowship."

--Berhan Hagos, Columbia University, USAID Nigeria





"The Payne Fellowship has been a tremendous blessing. I can't point to any one moment that I hold more fondly than all others. Graduate school was a time of broad growth for me. I explored subject areas that I had never considered, engaged with people who challenged my worldview, and was deeply encouraged by my professors', classmates', and visiting speakers' optimism to work in public service. I have sincerely enjoyed my friendships with the other Payne Fellows and found both the Capitol Hill and overseas internships extremely valuable. What everything boils down to for me is engagement and access. The Payne Fellowship gave me access to people and experiences that I never would have had access to. It set the stage for me to engage with people, theories, and challenges in ways that were deeply impactful professionally but more importantly, very personally." — **Tracey Lam,**

Harvard University, Crisis, Stabilization and Governance Officer

"Having now officially entered the agency, I am even more grateful to the Payne Fellowship for the opportunities it provided. One of my favorite experiences was the summer spent at a Mission overseas. I was placed at USAID/Cambodia in Phnom Penh and both the health team and the larger Mission community immediately welcomed me. I still grin whenever I think of the FSNs taking me to lunch in the market every week, so that I could be properly educated about Cambodian food; my supervisor giving me valuable insight into the career of a Health FSO; the Program Officer breaking down the inner workings of the Mission and how projects went from an idea to reality; and exploring the beautiful country with the new friends and colleagues I made. Even beyond making life-long memories and connections, the summer at the Mission finally helped me truly understand what it means to be an FSO and how USAID works in the field." -- **Emma Din, Harvard University, Population/Health/Nutrition (PHN) Officer**



"This spring, I obtained my MPH in Global Health from Columbia University, and this summer, I joined the USAID Foreign Service as a Health Officer. As I reflect on my Payne Fellowship experience, I cannot help but marvel at how fast these two years went by, yet how much I was able to learn and grow throughout this time. This Fellowship provided me with many amazing memories, but some of my fondest include my placement with USAID/Ghana last summer (and jollof rice!), graduation day at Columbia (a childhood dream come true), and the invaluable friendships I was able to build over the last two years, especially with my rockstar mentor Rachel Cintron, my Payne cohort, my Columbia family, and of course our USAID family.

Pursuing the Payne Fellowship was one of the best decisions I ever made, and I encourage everyone to spread the news about this innovative program far and wide. We need more fresh, young minds in the agency – and in public service overall! " — **Krina Patel, Columbia University, Population/Health/Nutrition (PHN) Officer**



“I have enjoyed and am grateful for every aspect of the Payne Fellowship experience—from the opportunity to work as a Congressional Fellow to my overseas internship in Uganda. Some of my fondest memories of the program include: developing great friendships with other fellows over the past two years—both within and among cohorts, spending the 2015 Winter term in Amman, Jordan assessing government responses to the complex refugee dynamics in the region, contributing to the country conflict assessment in Uganda, and connecting with my wonderful USAID mentor throughout grad school. As I complete Week 1 of orientation with USAID, I could not be more grateful for this fellowship and the amazing opportunities it has offered.” — ***Sofia Quesada, Harvard University, Crisis, Stabilization and Governance Officer***

“The Payne fellowship has been such a tremendous collection of experiences that it is hard to pick just one that stands out above the rest. The Washington summer was a fantastic crash course in how the agency operates, and how it relates the work back to congressional priorities. My time at the USAID mission in Senegal was a chance to contribute to our development mission under the guidance of dedicated mentors. Perhaps most transformatively, the fellowship's assistance helped make my graduate school experience at MIT possible, when it would not have been otherwise. Since I knew that I was headed to USAID afterward, I was able to tailor my program and coursework directly to the agency's work. Now, I'm thrilled to be embarking on a career advancing USAID's mission as a Crisis, Stabilization, and Governance Officer.” — ***Anthony Medeiros, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Crisis, Stabilization and Governance Officer***



“It has been an amazing few years moving through the Payne Fellowship. As I think about this experience, I remember the many individuals who met with us and supported our development, as well as the mentors I had in DC and at the Tanzania Mission. Without the Fellowship, attending graduate school at Georgetown would have been out of my reach. This experience has laid a foundation that I know I will draw from as I move through my career. I hope to stay connected to the Payne network for many years to come and to support future fellows as they grow and develop into FSOs.” - ***Taylor Adams, Georgetown University, Program/Project Development Officer***

The Payne Fellowship Program has just completed its fifth year! Having grown from providing three to seven fellowships for academic and professional development that culminate in a Foreign Service career at the United States Agency for International Development has been an accomplishment and testament to the value of the program. Currently, there are nineteen Payne Fellows, eight of which have successfully been inducted into the USAID having completed their masters degrees with an average GPA of 3.7! As Program Manager, it has been a pleasure to work with USAID to further institutionalize the Payne Fellowship Program into the fabric of the Agency. At Howard, it has been a joy coaching prospective applicants and contributing to the institution's mission to "...produce leaders for America and the global community." Next year, the program will work even harder to increase the number of applicants *and* the number of admitted fellows! A mention of gratitude to all those who helped make this past year a true success!

—MaRaina Montgomery, Program Manager



Thank You!

A Big Thank You to all who helped make the 2016 Donald M. Payne Fellowship summer Program possible!

Speakers & Workshop Facilitators: Gayle Smith, Lawrence Hardy, John Simpkins, Maria Detherage, Yoshea Berry, Ronald Carlson, Megan Hill, Monica Bautista, Stan Sienkiewicz, Clifford Stammerman, Chris Kosnik, Tom Marr, Brionne Dawson, Ven Neralla, Matt Cullinane, Paige Alexander, Ann Marie Yastishock, Anthony Cotton, Regina Jun, Elise Kleinwaks, Hakim Hasan, Eric Naranjo. **Congressional Officials & Staff:** Rep. Eliot Engel, Rep. Charles B. Rangel, Mary B. Mazanec, M.D., Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr., Rep. Juan C. Vargas, Rep. Stacey Plaskett, Rep. Edward Whitfield, Rep. Barbara Lee, LaVerne Alexander, Alexis Anderson, and Special Thanks to Sharmon Thorton. **USAID Payne Program & Mission Staff:** Tom Davis, Creighton Lee, John Mark-Winfield, Carell Laurent, Pam Foster, Tajae Freeman, Celia Champion, Natarshia Murphy, all Payne Mentors, HCTM, and the USAID Mission Staff in Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, Liberia, & Nigeria. **Howard University & Ralph Bunche Center Staff:** Dr. Anthony Wutoh, Tonija Hope Navas, Patricia Scroggs, Darryl Stephens, Lydia Nzinga, Chuka Iroabuchi, Cynthia Valentine, Danielle Gantt-Hudgins, Lucinda Acquaye, Daniel Bellido, Justin Knight. **Payne Selection Committee:** Carl Rahmaan, Maria Carland, Denise Rollins, Linda Whitlock-Brown, and Constance Morris Hope. **Special Thanks:** American Association of Black Ambassadors, Thursday Luncheon Group, GLIFFA, the 2016 Howard Washington Mandela Fellows, and the Council on Foreign Relations.



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