

2018 Blum Center Summer Fellows - Questionnaire

Objective: there will be a reunion with our 2018 Blum Summer Fellows to obtain feedback regarding project implementation during the summer. The Blum Center would like to give you the opportunity to talk about your experiences and hear from your peers. We want to identify what went well in your project and what could have been better. We want to hear your comments.

Please take a moment to answer the following questions. They will be discussed in person during our Blum Reunion in November.

Once you complete this questionnaire typing your answers, please save the document in a Word format (no pdf or Google doc link please) and submit it to Lili Larson (lklarson@ucdavis.edu)

1. What was the most positive fact/event that happened during your trip?

We were able to connect with a large ethanol production plant in Sierra Leone and the management agreed to supply free ethanol for our research.

2. What was the funniest situation you encountered there? What about the saddest/most troublesome, if any?

The funniest might have been when we were traveling by motorbike through the Eastern district and got a flat tire. We were hours from the nearest town so decided to walk to a nearby village where we stayed the night with a very kind drug peddler called Abraham. It was a really weird experience that demonstrates the willingness of Sierra Leoneans to help all people.

3. Did anything go wrong or different from initially planned? What happened?

We originally planned to recollect the stoves after the research but we decided to leave them with the families on long term loan instead. This way the households from the research phase can continue to use the stoves and buy fuel moving into the market traction phase of the project.

2018 Blum Center Summer Fellows - Questionnaire

4. How was your adaptation process? Were you homesick? How did you deal with that for the entire month? What helped?

It was helpful to stay with a friend from school and to live with a local family. I definitely experienced phases of boredom because the pace of life is much slower in Sierra Leone.

5. Did you accomplish your project as anticipated? Did you need to take a different course? Was there anything that could not be finished?

The project aim was to introduce ethanol cookstove technology and to conduct preliminary market research for ethanol fuel. We were able to contribute to this mission though it will likely be a decade before Ethanol becomes a mainstream fuel in Sierra Leone.

6. Tell us about your interaction with the NGO, local support, or community leader. How did it go? Do you feel that you received all the support necessary or you did mostly everything on your own?

We had the great advantage of working directly with Martin Kailie, founder of the NGO Desert Water. Martin studied at UC Davis on a Humphrey fellowship prior to this project which was hugely beneficial as we were able to plan most of the work in advance. Unfortunately Martin's NGO had become inactive in his absence and did not contribute anything to the project. Martin himself was very helpful in making connections and providing insights as we executed the project.

2018 Blum Center Summer Fellows - Questionnaire

7. Do you feel that the participation in this program has influenced you in the choice of your career path, decisions about graduate and/or professional school, choices of majors/minors and in regards to global awareness and citizenship?

Living in Sierra Leone exposed me to many different mindsets and world views. Some of these broadened my perspectives but others I found challenging. I attribute these more challenging mindsets to be the product of intellectual isolation. Lack of education and poor exposure to and acceptance of different ideas can create mindsets which perpetuate rather than solve problems. For these reason I hope to direct my career towards the sharing of information and ideas for the benefit of all.

8. What do you think of the idea of mentoring new grantees as they prepare to implement their projects abroad? In which ways this could be a beneficial experience to both you and the new awardees? Would you like to be a part of this program?

I would of course be interested but as a recent graduate will no longer be living in Davis. I could get involved over email or Skype perhaps