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“There is so much need out there and not enough social workers to create relationships among systems to help bring about social justice at the international level.”
— Nevila Gremi, NCSSS IPA

“The experience in the Philippines provided me with an increased admiration for those serving in the social work profession.”
— Jennifer Green, NCSSS IPA

“This opportunity was empowering and educational.”
— Fatoumata Bathily, NCSSS IPA
The World is Waiting for You

The Catholic University of America’s National Catholic School of Social Service (NCSSS) is offering international social work experiences to NCSSS undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral students. All students who have completed the foundation year of field placement are eligible to apply.

The International Program Associates (IPA) aims to respond to the increasing need for international social work. In addition, the program serves as an educational and professional opportunity for NCSSS students to engage and partner with international agencies as well as learn about the various issues that are facing people all over the world today.

The IPA began in 2006 at Catholic University. Currently, NCSSS is partnering with international NGOs and community-based nonprofits to create social work experiences in the Philippines, Nicaragua, Kenya, Jerusalem, and Tanzania. NCSSS continues to open the doors for further international relationships for the future.

Benefits of IPA

• NCSSS’s International Program Associates program provides students with the opportunity to gain professional international social work experience.
• The program immerses students in a different culture, enabling them to utilize their skills to assist local communities, international agencies, and most important, the people themselves with their problems and solutions.
• The program enables students to apply the knowledge they’ve gained in the classroom.
• In addition to working with individuals and communities, students will have the opportunity to practice a variety of skills and tasks: grant writing, program evaluation, strategic planning, needs assessments, operational planning, conceptual framework or programs, and capacity-building projects.

Placements

Philippines

IPA students will work with Community and Family Services International in Manila, an international non-governmental organization focusing on issues of social development and conflict resolution, operating primarily in Asia and the Pacific. CFSI is committed to peace and social development, with a particular interest in the psychosocial dimension. The organization’s programs focus on humanitarian assistance, social development, child and family welfare, health promotion, and research. Placement opportunities in the Philippines include youth programs, group work, program administration and needs assessments.

Jerusalem

IPA students will collaborate with the Spafford Children’s Center in their medical, psychosocial, cultural, or administrative departments. The agency is located in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Nicaragua

The Instituto Tecnico Especializado de Juan Paolo II serves high-school-age adolescents who come from the poorer areas of Managua, the capital of the country. The roles of IPAs may include clinical individual and group work with students, assistance and support for teachers, as well as grant writing and program assessment. Ability to speak Spanish is required.

Kenya

Catholic Refugees Services of East Africa serves urban refugees and their families through a network of Catholic parishes.IPA duties include both clinical and macro assignments such as organizing, program planning, program evaluation, case management, and counseling. Prior international experience is recommended.

Tanzania

IPA students will collaborate with WomenCraft, a community-driven social enterprise that connects talented rural East African artisans with regional and international fair-trade markets. Its members create high-quality, handcrafted products that preserve local traditions and incorporate environmentally sustainable local materials. WomenCraft pays its members fair wages and uses its profits to provide services to its members, their families, and their communities. As a result, members build business acumen and gain practical skills so that they can eventually take ownership of the enterprise. IPA students will stay in a local guesthouse near the agency.

Timeline

CUA students selected for the program will spend 10 weeks during the summer working in the international placement. The tentative dates of the placements are the end of May through the end of July.

Application Process

All interested students must complete an application form by the designated deadline. Interviews will be scheduled shortly after the application deadline. Applicants will be selected by a committee comprising faculty, past IPA participants, and international field agency staff members. Applications are available online at ncsss.cua.edu.

Funding

Students selected will be responsible for paying their travel, room, and board. Expected expenses for the trips range from $1,500 to $3,000 for 10 weeks. Limited financial aid is available based on need.