CHRISTINA WELSH (PHILOSOPHY) ’16

ASHINAGA UGANDA (NANSANA, UGANDA)
ABOUT ASHINAGA

• Ashinaga is a non-profit organization headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. Ashinaga Uganda was established in 2001.

• Ashinaga’s goal is to provide education support to children worldwide who have lost parent(s).

• I mainly worked under Ashinaga’s “100-Year Vision for Africa.” Announced in 2012, it aims to provide bereaved children with the education that they require to return to their homes as leaders in the fight against poverty, corruption, and exploitation. The vision is to select one gifted but needy student who has lost one or both parents from each of Africa’s 49 Sub-Saharan nations and support them to attend the world’s top-ranked universities.
OUR TEAM

- about 6 full time staff (half Ugandan, half Japanese) working in the office
- about 12 interns from around the globe (primarily from UK and USA)
- our focus was entirely on preparing 22 scholars to be university-ready academically, socially, emotionally, etc., and to apply to these universities
MY ROLE

• I was an official buddy (providing emotional support and just all-around being there) for 3 scholars, but ended up mentoring, supporting, and spending significant time and energy with many scholars.

• I was an official application mentor and college counselor for 2 scholars, but ended up helping many people with their research, personal statements, etc.

• My main teaching responsibilities were as the SAT Writing teacher and SAT Critical Reading teacher for about 12 students.

• I taught a Global Awareness class on gender.

• Along with another intern and intern leader, we installed 2 solar energy systems (solar suitcases from We Share Solar).

• I was assigned to be responsible for photos + videos for Ashinaga Uganda 100 Year Vision

• I took it upon myself to be the social point person of the Juku. I organized a trip to Lake Victoria for the days, organized multiple movie nights, took the scholars to play pool, organized football scrimmages, etc.
spaces. I spent most of my 2 months within this compound, except to sleep in the intern house which was only a 2 minute walk away.
Me and Terakoya kids
Me, Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique), Mama Rebecca (Ashinaga’s Matron)
Me and Mama Rebecca
(Ashinaga’s Matron)
Me and my buddy and application mentee, Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania)
Me and Prudêncio
(scholar from Mozambique)
Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius), Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania), and me in the office
Bernard (scholar from Malawi), Me, Abel (scholar from Botswana), Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius)
Me and Mama Sarah (Ashinaga’s Cook)
Scholar and Interns at a picnic
Scholar and Interns after going for a picnic
Scholars and Interns posing for a photo before saying goodbye to Justin (intern)
Me and Pepe (scholar from Swaziland)
Me and Pepe (scholar from Swaziland) installing a solar panel on the roof
Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania), me, Pepe (scholar from Swaziland) installing a solar panel on the roof
Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania), me, Pepe (scholar from Swaziland) installing a solar panel on the roof.
Pepe (scholar from Swaziland) and Alex (scholar from Kenya) installing a solar panel on the roof.
Abel (scholar from Botswana) and Bernard (scholar from Malawi) at the solar installation location
Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius), Alex (scholar from Kenya), Tobi (intern) with We Share Solar shirts on the day of the solar system installation
Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique) showing Ryan (intern leader) the instrument he made from wire and wood
(Ethiopia), Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius), Christine (staff member), and William (scholar from Lesotho) at the Opening Ceremony.
William (scholar from Lesotho) and Abel (scholar from Botswana) at the Opening Ceremony of the Kokoro Juku
holar from Zimbabwe), Haftu (scholar from Ethiopia), Lambert (scholar from Rwanda), and Djazé (scholar from Ivory Coast) at the
Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique), Lambert (scholar from Rwanda), Abel (scholar from Botswana), Didier (scholar from Togo) at the Opening Ceremony for the Kokoro Juku
Students and Interns at the Opening Ceremony of the Kokoro Juku
Ryan (intern leader) and Terakoya child at the Opening Ceremony of the Kokoro Juku
Aoife (intern leader from England), Lerato (scholar from South Africa), Salimata (scholar from Ivory Coast), Christelle (intern from France) at the Opening Ceremony of the Kokoro Juku
Didier (scholar from Togo), Abel (scholar from Botswana), Lambert (scholar from Rwanda), Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique) at the Opening Ceremony of the Kokoro Juku
Didier (scholar from Togo) and Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique) playing soccer on Sports Day
Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique) and Annet (scholar from Uganda) at Sports Day
Hilary (scholar from Kenya), Pepe (scholar from Swaziland), Djazé (scholar from Ivory Coast) on Sports Day
Scholar, Interns, and Staff for a group picture on Sports Day
Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania) on Sports Day
Idriss (scholar from Burundi) and Cyrus (staff) on Sports Day
Haftu (scholar from Ethiopia) on Sports Day
William (scholar from Lesotho), Abel (scholar from Botswana), Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius), Jerry (scholar from Ethiopia) at Sports Day
Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique) at Sports Day
Didier (scholar from Togo) playing football at Sports Day
The two teams bowing to each other after the football game at Sports Day
Friday (scholar from Zambia)
Imaculada (scholar from Angola) and Jerry (scholar from Ethiopia)
Alex (scholar from Kenya), Jerry (scholar from Ethiopia), and Imaculada (scholar from Angola) on beach day
Tobi (intern from Princeton), Alex (scholar from Kenya), Sakiinah (scholar from Mauritius) on Beach Day
students before beach day
students before beach day
students enjoying the water at Lake Victoria on Beach Day
students and interns playing football on Beach day
Lambert (scholar from Rwanda) and Abel (scholar from Botswana) on Beach day
Christelle (scholar from France), William (scholar from Lesotho), Justin (intern from England), Abel (scholar from Botswana), Prudêncio (scholar from Mozambique)
Pepe (scholar from Swaziland), Jenipher (scholar from Tanzania), Juniour (scholar from Zimbabwe)
Jerry (scholar from Ethiopia) and Imaculada (scholar from Angola)
Abel (scholar from Botswana) and Sayo (staff) at a salsa lesson led by one of the interns.
IIP’S IMPACT ON ME

• Through my experience with Ashinaga I know that for a career, I need to be working with people, not chained to a computer at a desk. I especially would be interested in working with young people. However I do not love academics; I would not want to be an English teacher. I just do not love the subject of English enough to be a teacher of English. However, I did love teaching my Global Awareness class on gender (although it was only 4 hours long). My favorite time, and the time where I think I am performing my best and helping me the most is when I am 1 on 1 or in small groups. I especially loved being a counselor and a “Buddy” where I got to know the scholars very well and got to know their personal, vulnerable, and intimate thoughts or stories. Therefore, I think a career in social work would be the most ideal path I can think of as of now.
MY EXPERIENCE

• I worked 7 days a week and most of the time worked from 8am - 10pm. I did not really take time to exercise, read, or relax but it was my choosing. I could not say no when the scholars asked for my help and I genuinely just wanted to spend all my time with the scholars and pour my entire self into the experience. I spent all my time for 2 months with the scholars. I am not sure exactly why, but I feel that I connected better with the scholars than I do with most people at Princeton.
MOST REWARDING

• My most rewarding moments were with the scholars. Multiple times, scholars individually came to me and ended up crying and sharing their troubles. On the day I left, I felt entirely undeserving and unworthy of the scholars’ words and the letters they wrote me about how thankful they were for me everything I had done for them. I was incredibly touched by their words, to know how much I impacted their lives and how much I mean to them.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

• Ashinaga is an incredibly unique organization, I feel extremely lucky to have been a part of it for 2 months.

• I cannot quantify or express the personal growth or the impact this IIP has had on me. I just feel so honored and lucky to have had this experience.

• I am not quite sure exactly why, but I became friends and connected with the scholars better than I do with most people at Princeton. I love them so much.