

YOUR NAME
STATEMENT OF INTEREST
UNDP/ANGOLA

I am writing to express my interest in a summer internship with the UNDP in Angola. I believe that both my professional experience and academic qualifications would enable me to make a strong contribution to UNDP's efforts to strengthen democratic governance at all levels to further Angola's recovery from civil war and long-term poverty reduction goals.

The majority of my professional career has been in Viet Nam, a country seeking to shift from a highly centralized socialist economic and political structure to a more decentralized model in order to improve government accountability and performance in the delivery of basic services. My work with both NGOs and UN agencies working to strengthen city- and provincial- level capacity to engage with participatory planning and delivery of basic services has exposed me to the political, bureaucratic, and capacity challenges that accompany decentralization. The negative effects of international agencies' often contradictory and overlapping governance interventions also highlighted the urgent need for both strengthened coordination and a more nuanced understanding of the different needs and challenges at different levels of government. My experience facilitating an official partnership framework for joint UN, INGO, and government disaster assessments and interventions provided concrete examples of the advantages of a more coherent approach that builds upon a shared understanding of objectives and of the unique role of each institutional actor.

My varied experience has provided me the opportunity to be involved in all phases of programming, from proposal development to final evaluation. I have led strategic planning processes to identify new areas for interventions, and worked with agency staff and government partners to design and successfully obtain funding for new projects in HIV, disaster management, child trafficking, and poverty alleviation. I have managed teams of up to ten people implementing different yet inter-related projects, helping to identify linkages and promote internal learning and knowledge management processes. I am fluent in French and Spanish and have experience designing and launching monitoring systems both internally and in tandem with government partners, improving both technical and fiscal execution.

Through my studies at Princeton, I have gained a deeper understanding of both the conceptual and practical issues relating to public administration and civil service reform in the developing world. Classes on the politics and psychology of public policy combined with research for UNDP on the role of legislatures in crisis prevention and peacebuilding have strengthened my knowledge of the best practices and shortcomings of governance programmes in post-conflict settings. Quantitative courses in statistics and program and policy evaluation have also provided me with the tools I need to conduct more rigorous assessments of the impacts of development interventions. Theoretical courses have provided me with a more solid grounding in the importance of integrating rights and gender into all phases of the program cycle.

In sum, an internship with UNDP/Angola will afford me the opportunity both to contribute my experience and skills as well as to deepen my own understanding of governance and decentralization. I am also excited at the prospect of rejoining the UN community in the challenging context of ongoing reforms and the introduction of the One UN system. For these reasons I hope you will look favorably upon my candidacy.