

# GW Students Abroad



**GW Student: Lauren Wright**

**Major: Master of International Policy and Practice (MIPP), ESIA**



Lauren Wright is a current GW student at the Elliott School, working full-time as the Director of Programs at Mama Hope, and in her last semester of the MIPP program. Before being accepted to the MIPP program at GW, she started as a Global Advocate with Mama Hope. This fellowship program transformed her life, and allowed her to gain hands-on experience in grassroots community development.

[Mama Hope](#) is a San Francisco-based nonprofit that trains social impact entrepreneurs from around the world, and partners them with visionary leaders around the world to create sustainable prosperity. Working in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, and Guatemala, Mama Hope partners with innovative, community-based organizations (CBOs), who are transforming their communities through human-centered development. Through connecting these

organizations with both financial and human capital, Mama Hope seeks to transform the development sector to one founded in listening and collaboration.

Mama Hope's flagship program is the Global Advocate Fellowship, which is a nine month training program for candidates from all over the world, interested in gaining hands-on experience in international development. Global Advocates spend the first three months participating in an intensive international development and fundraising curriculum, and raising \$20,000 to fund a community-identified project. These advocates spend the next three months in the field, working with their project partners and implementing the project they raised funds for. During the final three months, Global Advocates write an Impact Evaluation based on data collected in the field, as well as mentor the next Advocate placed at their project site.

Lauren spent her time as a fellow in Bawjiase, Ghana, where she raised funds for an orphanage called United Hearts Children Center. United Hearts has a holistic approach to helping children in their community - through investing in a number of sustainable projects, including a maize farm, goats, and a mushroom project, they are able to generate enough income to support the daily operations of the center. They have expanded to build a school, which currently serves more than 250 children in Bawjiase and the surrounding communities.

Being a part of the work at United Hearts as a Global Advocate completely changed her life. Living in Bawjiase gave her insight into what it means to truly live in community, and her first trip of 3 months turned into a total of 2 years living in Ghana. She was able to do in-depth research on gendered patterns of decision-making in Bawjiase, and this field research led her to the Global Gender Policy focus within the MIPP program at GW.

Lauren was able to raise over \$100,000 for United Hearts programs over the past 5 years through the Global Advocate training, and is now the Program Director at Mama Hope. She currently oversees programs in 16 community programs in 7 countries around the world. If you are getting ready to graduate and looking for an opportunity to make an impact, this is it!



*Children playing outside of United Hearts School, which serves 250 children in the Bawjiase Community.*

Visit <http://www.mamahope.org/global-advocates/>, or see our job posting on GWork. The next class of Global Advocates starts June 2017.

