

Sam Schneidman

Tonya Internship Executive Summary

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My internship (June 15 – July 18) at Grameen Bank was a wide-ranging experience, offering me unique insight into the bank's its sister companies activities. My first days were spent learning about Grameen Trust and Grameen Shakti. In studying Grameen Trust, I learned how Grameen exports its philosophy and business model around the world, while also gaining a great understanding of why the Grameen Bank is successful in Bangladesh. Learning about Grameen Shakti was particularly interesting because it gibes with my academic interests in the environment, and, more specifically, the economics of alternative energy. Shakti's mission is to address the "issue of poverty of energy," a particularly vexing problem in Bangladesh. After studying Grameen's philosophy in Dhaka, I went of a four-day field visit to see the Bank's philosophy in practice. This was a very rewarding experience, because I was able to build off my experience as a community organizer for the Obama campaign and learn how community organizing takes place in the developing world. Our first day in the village was spent talking with borrowers and attending center meetings. We saw how the loans were dispersed and how efficient the meetings are. Another interesting aspect of my field stay was visiting local businesses set-up through Grameen loans. In addition to seeing Grameen's social impact, I was able to see how the bank facilitates local economies. This is the key to large-scale change: building from the bottom up, from local communities and villages. After returning from my village stay, I spent the remainder of my time at Grameen researching its various projects and helping to enter data. My time at Grameen only strengthened my resolve to pursue a career that will have a lasting social impact.