

Pete Freeman

Graduation Year: Junior

College: Arts & Letters

Major(s): Sociology, Gender Studies

Minors(s): Peace Studies

Scholar Group Membership: Sorin Scholars

Did you received other funding for this project?: Gender Studies Program

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance? As a student from a low-income family who would not have been able to afford the cost of college, let alone Notre Dame, without considerable financial assistance, the Eagan Fellowship made the difference between a summer at home in Central Indiana and a summer spent conducting international research to further gender equality in a European country whose most innovative women are too often denied opportunity because of their gender. The Eagan Fellowship's \$5000 enabled me to complete my project efficiently and effectively.

Project Title: Gender Differences in Entrepreneurship: Motivation and Entrepreneurial Training of Mother Entrepreneurs in Switzerland

Project Location: Geneva, Switzerland

ND Faculty Mentor: Richard Williams

Project Type: Research, Eagan Fellowship

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Research/experience necessary for senior thesis or capstone project, Prepare for national fellowships, Career discernment and/or preparation, Internationalize your Notre Dame experience

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Very Much

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: A Little

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: Very Much

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:A Little

Tell us about your experience.

For the second summer in a row, the Eagan Family's generous support has given me a life-changing research experience. This past summer, through the Eagan Fellowship, I conducted extensive research on the effects of Swiss family policy on women's entrepreneurial ventures in Switzerland. Specifically, I measured motivations and causes for women in Switzerland to pursue entrepreneurship, and how a European nation with a comparatively androcentric and patriarchal culture inadvertently oppresses its most innovative and enterprising women. Not only was I able to further my original research begun in December 2014, but I was also able to conduct my first regression analysis with the extensive data I collected this summer.

This study on “Gender Differences in Entrepreneurship” satisfied two research objectives. The first objective is to provide an analysis of the key characteristics and context of female and mother entrepreneurial activity and how that may differ from that of their male counterparts. The second objective is to provide a comprehensive study of the role played by women involved in entrepreneurial activity in Switzerland. This study contributes to the larger body of research on mother entrepreneurship. The study utilized qualitative research methods including literature review and interviews. The interviews and questionnaires were completed by over 30 female Swiss entrepreneurs. The anonymous information collected from the study was used to create a report that provides insights and advice for Swiss entrepreneurs, as well as future women’s empowerment projects.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

The Eagan Fellowship's impact on my academic endeavors extends beyond conducting international research. I have also published my previous findings in a Portuguese research publication, and my findings from this summer will be used in a future publication. The Fellowship also allowed me to serve as a guest writer and researcher for Aspire Switzerland this past summer. Founded in January 2014, Aspire offers women a program of workshops, mentoring and events to increase their advancement and become the leaders of tomorrow. One of the women entrepreneurs I worked with through Aspire even invited me to a meeting on entrepreneurship and development at the United Nations! The meeting, and subsequent tour of the campus, was a fantastic experience that furthered my commitment to equality for women entrepreneurs, as well as social entrepreneurship for international and community development.

The people I worked with during my Swiss research project benefited from my current and past research experience. While serving as a guest writer and researcher, I shared insights with a community of Swiss women entrepreneurs. My work with this community led me to publish four articles on their online blog: <http://www.aspireme.co/blog/>.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

My research project will contribute to my senior thesis, which explores the motivations and behaviors Swiss women entrepreneurs in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to my senior thesis, this research will be presented at research conferences in spring 2017 at the University of Notre Dame and in Lisbon Portugal at the CIEG Perspectives on Gender research conference.

My summer research project has also allowed me to better discern graduate school programs. After researching in Geneva, Switzerland, I aim to pursue a master's degree in Evidence-Based Social Intervention to further study how social entrepreneurship can be used to create measurable, positive effects in small communities of women, children, and marginalized peoples.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

My advice to students who are planning to pursue similar projects is to apply for the Eagan Fellowship! Without the Eagan Fellowship, I would have been unable to spend a summer in Switzerland researching social entrepreneurship and family policy and my previous summer in Cape Coast, Ghana interning with Global Mamas - an organization of over 600 Ghanaian women artisan entrepreneurs. The Eagan provides not only funding for research and internships, but also extensive faculty support from CUSE.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.

undefined
