

Timothy Machasio

Graduation Year: Junior

College: Arts & Letters

Major(s): Economics, Applied Mathematics

Minors(s): None

Scholar Group Membership: Hesburgh-Yusko, Kellogg International Scholars' Program

Did you received other funding for this project?: No

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance?

Project Title: The Future of Kenya's National Safety Net Program - Politics, Inefficiencies and Opportunities

Project Location: Kenya

ND Faculty Mentor: Wyatt Brooks

Project Type: Research

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 graduate school (MA or PhD), Prepare for national fellowships, 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]: Very Much

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

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:Very Much

Tell us about your experience.

I conducted interviews with senior officials and beneficiaries of Kenya's National Safety Net Program (NSNP - the country's flagship social protection program) to better understand challenges the institution was facing with regard to geographic reach, technocratic capability, political support and long-term sustainability. I also sought to better understand the nature of the agency's different cash transfer programs (cash transfer to orphans and vulnerable children, old people, the disabled, and those afflicted by hunger).

My research expedition shed some light on the different circumstances surrounding each cash transfer program within the NSNP. Inefficiencies within the consolidated social protection program (the NSNP) seem to have spurred from the incompatibility of the individual cash transfer programs, as well as internal politics at the highest level of leadership.

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

This project afforded me a deeper appreciation for the scope of NSNP's work. More importantly, it helped me understand the similarities and differences between its individual cash transfer programs. The NSNP has been unable to reach the mandate it set out to achieve by the end of 2016 because while some elements of the cash transfer programs were similar (such as the cash disbursement mechanism), some were irreconcilably different (e.g. the Monitoring and Evaluation protocols for each). Bringing every cash transfer program under the same roof, thereby standardizing all the associated protocols, seems to have been a mistake.

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

My research during the Winter Break will build into my research for the Summer of 2017 (bordering on the utility implications of conditional vis-à-vis unconditional cash transfer programs to beneficiaries), and eventually into a senior thesis for the Kellogg Institute's International Scholars' Program. I hope that the research capabilities I will build throughout my undergraduate endeavors will lead me towards a research focus for a graduate degree in a public policy – related field (I am considering graduate degrees in Global Affairs and/or Comparative Social Policy).

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

Seek IRB approval as early as possible. Plan, plan, plan. Allocate enough time to converse with each of your interviewees – the quality of your interviews is more important than the number of interviews you conduct.
