To whom it may concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Sustainable International Development (SID) Program at The Heller School for Social Policy and Management. One of our graduate students is interested in doing a practicum with your organization, so this letter introduces our program and the benefits of hosting a practicum student.

The SID Program is a community of concerned students and faculty from around the world. Our mission is to help build a new generation of development policy makers and practitioners for whom a global society free of poverty, preventable disease, and environmental degradation is achievable. The Master of Arts Program in Sustainable International Development (MA/SID) is a two year program. The first year is in-residence study at Brandeis that provides broad-based training in interdisciplinary, applied, and critical approaches to international development. In the second year, students do a field practicum. The practicum is a professional-level experience in which students apply their skills to assist organizations such as yours address development issues.

To focus the second year, students select a development problem. They then identify an organization doing valuable work on the problem and seek a practicum placement within that organization. The student would serve full-time with your organization for a minimum of six months, under your supervision, doing professional-level work that is useful for you and also will enable them to learn about addressing the chosen problem in the field. Based on this experience, the student will write a Master’s Paper exploring what s/he learned about solving the problem, using a case study approach. Prior to starting the practicum, the host organization will develop a terms of reference to ensure clarity on both sides. We want to emphasize that the student would be working for you, doing what you need during the practicum and, while we hope will produce a paper of use to your organization, is responsible for writing the Master’s Paper on his/her own time under supervision of an SID academic advisor. All students must return to the Heller School in May to present their case study at the MA/SID Capstone Seminar.

Most SID students are already development professionals with three to five (or more) years experience, are fluent in more than one language, and have lived and worked in diverse cultures under challenging conditions. While the field practicum is part of their graduate training, our students have much to offer you. Past students have completed practicums in hundreds of development organizations of all types – intergovernmental (all UN agencies), national governments, a range of NGOs, policy and research institutes, private sector, and bilateral and multilateral organizations (World Bank, regional development banks, USAID, JICA, etc.). Host organizations have consistently provided positive feedback, which we are happy to share with you, and have often hired students for regular positions after graduation or even during the practicum.

We hope you will consider hosting one of our students and look forward to working with you. I encourage you to visit our web-site http://heller.brandeis.edu/sid/. If you need more information, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

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