I spent two weeks in Masese Uganda, which is a very impoverished village on the northern bank of Lake Victoria. The purpose of my trip to Masese was to begin researching a developing jewelry business for my senior honors thesis. During my time there I was able to meet many of the women who make the jewelry. These amazing women are beginning to lift their families out of poverty by making jewelry from recycled paper. They then sell it to the organization I traveled to Masese with, HELP International, who proceeds to sell the jewelry in America. HELP then uses all the profits from the jewelry to fund their community development program in Masese which includes a school, feeding program, adult business education, an orphanage and much more.

In my time in Uganda I accomplished many things and was given many learning opportunities. I learned about the Ugandan culture and how it is much more collective than America, additionally the perception of time is different they view it as fluid and that things will get done when they get done. Both of these elements were things I had to consider daily when working with Ugandan's to ensure that I did not press my views onto them and judge them based on American standards.

I worked directly with approximately 90 Ugandan women, I spent several days purchasing jewelry from them for HELP International, and I taught a business model class. In this class we discussed topics ranging from the importance of understanding and catering to your customer, to managing your money and reinvesting in your business. It was very eye opening and inspiring listening to women who have lived in poverty their whole lives tell us their plans to start micro-businesses in their community. Overall, through this class I learned about how their business functions and I believe that I opened their eyes to opportunities they have.

Not only did I learn about these women and their business aspirations but I also learned their processes. They taught me what it takes to go from paper to a necklace—which let me tell you is quite the process. Additionally, I was able to travel to the capital of Uganda, Kampala and priced out all their materials. That was a very vital step in information collection for my thesis, which is focused on the supply chain of these women's business.

I can successfully say that traveling to Masese Uganda was one of the most educational experiences I have ever had. I am excited to get to work on my thesis where I will focus on an inventory management system for the jewelry here in America. This system will aid HELP International in selling the jewelry so they can continue to support these amazing women.

Thank you for funding part of my trip and fostering authentic education, I am proud to be a CSU Ram.
These boys are spelling out “CSU”—I taught them the CSU Rams chant and the whole time they would run up to me and should “CSU RAMS”

Thank you!