Julia Levy

Bettering lives is a full-time gig.

Julia joined the Capital Good Fund team as a Financial Coaching Fellow in May 2014, after learning of the opportunity from a classmate at Brown University. She was drawn to the fellowship because of her interest in economics and development, in addition to her desire to make a tangible difference in peoples’ lives.

Julia believes that empathy and the ability to establish trust are the most important tools that a Financial Coach can possess to building a meaningful relationship with his or her clients. In a one-on-one coaching environment there is no room for insincerity. However, for Julia, knowledge of the material is also key because clients rely on their Coach’s guidance and recommendations. She acknowledges that this can be very difficult—considering the nuance inherent in each client’s individual situation—therefore knowing when to ask her supervisor or fellow Coaches for assistance has been key.

When Julia began her fellowship a year ago, she would not have imagined that she would assist a client in finding a new home or work with a client to get her student loans out of default. Thanks to the stipend she receives, Julia says, “I have been able to make coaching my primary ‘job’ and I have been be able to devote more time to it. Without a stipend, I would have to work more hours at the university gym. Instead, I am able to coach and gain real-world experience that is more beneficial for my professional growth than working an hourly, on-campus job.”

Julia began her second semester as a Financial Coach fresh from six months abroad in Argentina, where she was able to conduct a research project investigating how women who do domestic work were affected by government laws regulating domestic labor. In general, she found that the women’s quality of life improved by these measures, which included the establishment of a minimum wage and the official registration of these individuals as domestic workers. Julia found that she was comfortable conducting these interviews and speaking with the workers about personal aspects of their life in part due to her experience as a Coach with Capital Good Fund. Upon her return to Providence and the fellowship, Julia began to coach in Spanish to maintain, and continue professionalizing, her language skills.

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Her undergraduate experiences, such as her research in Argentina and Financial Coaching, have affirmed her desire to pursue development work, most likely related to entrepreneurship for women. One thing that Julia is certain of is that she will continue to interact and connect with members of her community through service work, whether in Providence or abroad.