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**IVCA Reflection Paper 2019**

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Earlier this summer Nishaad, a Sterling Partners associate and mentor, relayed to me the incredible growth one can incur with a simple daily practice. Day by day growth may seem slow or stagnant, but if one reflects back to the day they started, progress is quickly realized. Although in my case my daily practice as an intern only lasted ten short weeks, the distance between myself on the first day at IVCA and my last day at Sterling Partners Education Opportunity Fund (EOF) is extensive. I will try to articulate some aspects of this growth and the catalysts behind my progress.

Projects were the origin of much of my growth. The major projects I worked on this summer were: an internal contacts/company database for the use in deal tracking, a macroeconomic indicator workbook for the use in industry research, a competitive research deck for the use of a portfolio company, industry research for the use in company analysis, and other smaller tasks. One of my goals for this summer was to use the resources around me to actively tackle areas in which I am less knowledgeable. In the case of the industry research project, I at first felt overwhelmed in creating a thorough analysis and opinion on the investment worthiness of the company given the abundance of information. However, when checking in with Nishaad about the progress, he offered clarity on what to think about when conducting analysis like these. Because of lessons like this, I feel much of what I learned this summer was favorable methods of communication and tools to approach work I am unaccustomed to.

One of the most interesting days of the summer was a day I got to visit Amerigo, one of EOF's portfolio companies. It was incredible to see the tangible impact Amerigo was making on employees, students, and universities. As mentioned by Shoshana during the IVCA visit, private equity often gets a bad reputation for dismantling companies. This visit instilled the fact that PE is not a zero-sum game; all parties involved can benefit. Additionally, it was great to see the operational side of PE. Engagements and experiences like these will be major motivators in my career to work in occupations that actuate positive change.

This summer I was incredibly surprised by how different private equity firms can be from each other. The firm visits I attended were extremely educational for they showed there is much more differentiation among firms than an investment thesis. The visits also introduced me to the incredible network that private capital creates between entrepreneurs, investors, banks, etc. This innovative network is something I know I want to be a part of. In accordance with this realization, my advice for a 2020 IVCA Scholar would be to take advantage of every visit, person, and day of the summer. There was a part of me that was nervous coming into this program because I knew I would be less knowledgeable about almost everything compared to my colleagues. In hindsight, my inexperience proved to be advantageous in that I learned a great deal from every person I talked to. Curiosity and ambition in every event will generate progress as a Scholar.

In sum, interning at the Education Opportunity Fund has been invaluable for it has introduced me to an incredible, passionate, and diverse team that collaborate and succeed. This exposure leads me to seek a work environment akin to that at EOF, and work hard so that I can look back to this summer and realize the progress EOF has inspired me to seek.