

Michael Meneses

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By the summer of 2014, QLF Intern Alex DeParde was wrapping up his work on blueprints outlining an initiative destined to become QLF's new programmatic centerpiece in the coming decades, known as the Global Leadership Network (GLN). That same summer, QLF's Beth Alling received an email from Michael Meneses, a recent Brown University graduate who said that he had heard of QLF through a former colleague at the Conservation Law Foundation, Connor Hedges. Michael asked if the organization could use a hand with any of their upcoming projects. In his email, Michael told Beth that he had met Conner while they were both interning at the Boston-based Conservation Law Foundation back in 2013, had found Connor's accounts of the work he had done through QLF intriguing, and had been meaning to get in touch for some time. Beth returned his message later that day. Before long, Michael made the trip up to Ipswich for an interview, and by the end of the fall had taken Beth up on an offer to join the QLF team for the winter and spring of 2015 to pick up the GLN project from where Alex had left off.

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During his time at QLF, Michael worked with Beth on a number of initiatives, first and foremost being the Global Leadership Network, for which he helped to develop an operations and implantation plan drawing from work put together by a number of previous and current Interns and Staff. In early March, QLF sent a convoy, including QLF's Senior Consultant, Stephen Engle, Beth, and Michael to talk the plan through with a Maine-based, digital-marketing firm. The operations and implementation plan was used as a basis for a conversation about what the Maine-based party could do to help QLF launch the GLN. After a number of in-person and phone meetings, the two parties agreed to form a partnership to implement many of the ideas outlined in that document, particularly those pertaining to the creation of an online tool, known as the GLN Online, that facilitates collaboration between past, present, and future Alumni.

Since discussions with the firm in early March, Michael has also been tapped to help develop QLF's Brand Standardization Guide, and a set of Program Evaluation Metrics for the 2015 Internships, all the while taking every opportunity to get to know the ins and outs of managing QLF.

When asked to describe his QLF experience, Michael said: *I look back on that sunny Providence summer day when I sat down to email Beth, and I am still amazed by how perfectly it all fell into place. There I was, a recent college graduate with no clear lead on what to do next, growing increasingly restless in my Providence apartment—a post-graduation holiday stretching beyond its welcomed duration. I wanted a cause, to find adventure, and to be challenged to use everything I had just learned. Looking through old files I found a note that I'd written to myself a year before: 'must apply to QLF after graduating'. I emailed Beth, and somehow everything fell into place like clock-*



PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING

Michael Meneses, QLF Office, Massachusetts -

work. In my first few weeks at headquarters I couldn't shake the sensation of having been plucked from the crowd to be given something really amazing to work for, and to be a part of.

In May 2015, Michael joined Abt Associates, a consulting firm specializing in research, evaluation, and program implementation in the fields of social and environmental policy, and international development. From there, he plans to transition into a graduate program to study the dynamics of global trade and its impacts on environments and people. He hopes to one day establish a career working at the forefront of ongoing regional and global efforts to ensure that people, culture, and environment always come first, much like his mentors at QLF do today. 