

## Question Set 1

### **1. What are your initial impressions of the organization and an overview and thoughts about the kind of work you've started doing; how does the work match your expectations, how does it match your goals?**

I originally thought that Vanastree was a seed collective for local women, which worked with local community members to gather seeds, harvest crops, and sell at the local markets and around India. It was my understanding that the women who were *The Women of the Forest* gathered together routinely to exchange seeds and growing tips. I also knew they had a few outreach projects (with schools and local groups) and sold goods from the "Vanastree Farm."

Now that I am here I have discovered that Vanastree is a collective of women (and some men support things too) who have FHGs (Forest Home Gardens), collect and store seeds, but also make foods, rugs, curriculum, lessons, and have gatherings for local and international groups.

There is no specific Vanastree Farm, but rather a beautiful space where Sunita Rao (director of Vanastree) resides called Huthina Betta (*Termite Hill Farm*). This beautiful home, garden space, and retreat center is kept on the down-low, but is a space for groups to learn and meet, where an ever blossoming Forest Home Garden grows, and where folks from around the globe learn and work. Huthina Betta has a round hut (Golghar) for group gatherings, a cottage for guests and interns, a food Biogas plant/cowshed (currently a wood shed as there are no longer cows on the property), a Mud Hut (formerly home to farm hand), a guest room, 2 Eastern Loos, 1 composting toilet.

Vanastree is a Trust (rather than a profit organization), which reaches the world through a variety of means. The women do not gather together as often as I first thought, in fact, we most likely will not get to see the full group of women together in one place (the annual picnic may or may not happen while I am here). The women also do make money by producing various products, these are now sold through the livelihood program of Vanastree "Vanya," which is overseen by Vivek, who is the son of one of the women that is a large contributor to the overall structure of the Vanastree project. Items are ordered and packed and sent out through the Vanya program. The products are not consistently produced, and sometimes outside sources are used to produce products (such as Kokom Juice). The list of products is vast, so far I know of directly are bags, rugs, red ant chutney (which will be highlighted at the annual international Terra Madre Slow Food Conference in November) Kokom juice, seeds, cocoa, and honey.

There is also an outreach project Punarchith (*New Thinking*), which is located outside of Mysore (a larger city south of the main Vanastree Headquarters [located in Sirsi, India]) that I will visit in November and/or December.

Vanastree also runs seasonal camps throughout the year (less than they have in years passed as the load is often too much for the organization to handle). One example was the Sommaya School day program. This was a program for 8th grade students from a school dedicated to sugar plant workers kids in a Northern portion of Karnataka state. This was a day long food and ecology program that not only explore the diversity of the Western Ghats but had the opportunity to have fresh local food from a local chef and have place-based learning opportunities with one of the main seed savers and collaborators to Vanastree Manorama Joshi.

## **2. What stood out to you the most regarding your arrival?**

It was the colors that stood out the most when we arrived into Bangalore. I took pictures out my window as the plane begin to land: vibrant greens, muddy waters, patchworks of agriculture land spotted with various palm species. Our hour long cab ride to the train station was when the colors really began to pop: the buildings, the garbage, the flora and fauna, the clothes on the lines, the houses made from scraps and palms, the flags from protesters... India for me upon first glance was a myriad of amazing color.

## **3. What was your greatest anxiety prior to departing and how do you feel about that now that you have arrived?**

My greatest anxiety was getting from the airport to Huthina Beta, there were many steps along the way, and it was quite a journey. After arriving in Bangalore, We successfully took a taxi, a train and another taxi to arrive to our home at 12am local time. To read more check out our blog where I highlighted this journey in more detail. <https://kithandkinfarms.wordpress.com/> I feel great now that we conquered this feat, and will continue to face my initial fear with every bus and train I take while here... because this first day prepared me for a variety of traveling adventures.

## **Question Set 2**

### **1. How are things going at work now that you have settled in for a bit? How does this align with your professional goals that you set for yourself? What would you like to achieve in the next half of your internship?**

I have to start by giving a little background for this question. As I explored in my IE3 Global interviews, prior to leaving for India, I was in a bit of a professional spiral. I had developed and ran a small business, had dedicated majority of my time, energy and resources to this NGO and was at a breaking point. I was exhausted, overworked, underpaid... not a unique story for folks in not-for-profit eco-social start-ups. So, when I first landed on this subcontinent I was a wash of emotion, and I was tired. I had not had a full night sleep in many days, for, in addition to packing for my internship, I was packing my home to move to a new location upon my return from India, and packing up my home. Of course this was happening alongside my

efforts to finalize as much as I could for those who were taking over for my in the NGO. Now, after a month here has passed this all seems like it was my rites of passage to a new beginning. I am transitioning my life from a career as the director of an environmental education organization, and agriculture education design, to something new. And, to be frank, IE3 Global offers a means for this change. So, as you ask how I am settling in, in a word: wonderfully. As for the logistics of my personal goals, as predicted, there are some changes that have already taken place.

My first professional goal was to learn more about Seed Saving. Truth is, I am not really here during the correct season for this. I have worked at my home site (Huthina Betta) in organizing the small seed bank here, have had a nice seed lesson with Sunita, planted a variety of seeds in the Hutina Betta Forest Home Garden (FHG), and reviewed the seeds of a Vanastree Member at her home. I have not learned anything new about Seed Saving itself, but a lot about growing seeds here in the tropics. Sunita does have some videos on the saving process that I plan to get to when the time comes.

As a career exploration, my second professional goal was to learn more about ecological agriculture and food forests. This has begun through work in the FHG at Huthina Betta, where I have spent a good amount of time in the soil. I am also learning about Indian Row-Cropping for tropical areas, and this has been a great experience for me. I have also toured and/or stayed at over 7 Vanastree Members FGHs and have interacted with many members of the collective. I have used this time to explore through photography, ask questions, and have even had some opportunities to harvest and weed in the managed orchards of the area.

My final professional goal was to learn more about what it means to run agriculture based collective. This is the goal where I have, at this point, had the most exposure. Observing, planning and participating in programming have been a large portion of my experience here so far. My first week I helped with a 1-day camp program, and by the end of my 2nd week was in the midst of an 8-day program with MUWCI (United World College) students from Pune, India. Additionally I have observed the harvesting and preparing of products highlighted through Vanya (the livelihood branch of Vanastree) such as banana fig. A great opportunity was to observe and co-create videos of wild edible harvest for the Slow Food Conference taking place this week (November 1-5) in northern India.

One of the most inspiring parts of my observation has been to watch Sunita, as program director, meet and greet with all the Vanastree members and supporters. She has a rich and personal relationship with all of the members, and this is evident in all the home-to-home visits she does, and the way the members admire, love and respect her: Sunitika (sister Sunita) is a hero in the Western Ghats. The collective is really about connections. Sunita works with Manarama & Vevik Joshi (mother & son) to create a thriving program. These three, in my opinion are the backbone of the Vanastree program. There are also several supporters that keep things running, volunteers, artists, activists, harvesters, cooks, cleaners... these are what keep the

collective alive. Without them the collective would cease to be. There are many team players: all working, questioning, and learning as a whole.

**2. How are things going relative to your personal goals? In which areas have you made progress and where do you still have some room to expand? What do you want to make sure you address before you leave?**

Whether I liked it or not, within my first days here in India my goal for setting limits on how much I give of my time to others, was put to the test. I really was not allowed to help. I tried to work in the kitchen for an event: was pushed out, tried to help serve a meal, was ignored, tried to help clean up, was told to go... this was amazingly difficult for me. My first couple weeks I really struggled with not being able to lend a hand, I was treated, according to my world view, as a child... unable to cook, clean, create... to be honest this was frustrating for me. I had moments where I questioned why I was here if I was not allowed to help. And then, it dawned on me... this is my forced way to let others take the lead, and just observe and learn. This has been very good for me.

(I do want to note that I still have some uncertainty and questions and even apprehension about all this simply because of the caste system here. I do wonder how much of the way I was originally treated was because there was the assumption I belonged to a different so called caste as them due to my assumed background. I am, as a woman from working-class family who has spent many years in manual and service based work, and so I am still trying to come to terms with all of this, and am listening and observing whenever I can.)

My second personal goal has also been forced upon me (in a great way). My goal is to slow down long enough to listen to my Voice; well, I get this opportunity with every new person I meet it seems. "Slow" they say, "SLOW, slow." I am asked to slow down with my walking, with my talking, with how I climb hills, with how I cross bridges, with how I eat: slow. And so, I am slowly slowing, and listening, and now, am waiting.

One would think with all of this slowing my final personal Goal, to create space and meditate and do yoga (being still and introspective) would be a synch. Well it hasn't been in the literal sense, and that is just fine. It is great actually. What I have been giving myself is time to read. Time to relax with books... what a treat. I finished a book I had been working on for over half a decade, another from Sunita on Hinduism, and am nearly done with a book I started in 2002. This has been such a rewarding, relaxing and centering activity for me. I would like to get in the routine of some morning and/or evening stretches as I know having this routine is something I benefit from greatly in my day to day life and would like to establish a simple routine I can bring back with me to the states when I return home in December.

### **3. How are things going relative to your cross-cultural goals? What kinds of experiences have stood out to you so far? What do you want to ensure to experience before you leave?**

My cross-cultural goals all seem to groove together. I had one on language, one on visiting the Siddi people, and a final on traditional clothing for women in India.

I am practicing Kannada whenever I can, and carry around my phrase book and homemade word cards whenever I enter a new situation. A group of local folks at an extended homestay got quite a kick out of my words, and are not afraid to correct any mispronunciations.

My Goal to interact with the Siddi Community was reach and beyond (in fact I wrote my first IE3 scholarship blog about my experience there) it was one of the most outstanding and life-changing experiences I have had. While in the Siddi Village I practiced words from around the house with the teen boys and this was a great and fun (quite silly too) opportunity for me.

I am learning about clothing through observation and through questions when I can. I had a wonderful conversation with a couple of Indian woman who are of a similar worldview and interests as myself and it was great to ask them about traditional clothing, the adornments they do or do not wear (daily or at all). It was also fascinating to see how some of the rural women wear their "home clothes"/"nighties" out in the country (while working at home or in agriculture or house work) simply because they are more comfortable than the traditional Saris. They giggled when I asked them what the dress was called, "it supposed to just be worn at night," one woman told me, "but we just wear them all the time."

### **Question Set #3**

#### **1. Describe a day in your life - what is your work schedule like, what do you do after work, how do you balance your time between work and exploring life outside of work?**

I laughed a little out loud when I read this question; there is no "day in a life" here for me. Everyday has been totally different than the one before. We did set up schedules in the beginning, but this was a futile adventure. Even on days where I am set to go to "the office" things seem to change in a flash, or something doesn't work (i.e. the internet), or someone comes to visit. Now, after 5 weeks of irregularity, this has become the norm. The next 10 days may disprove this theory as Whitney and I are independent and can live out the established schedule as Sunita is at a conference (Slow Food). During this stint we are caretaking the farm we are doing independent projects at Huthina Betta, and at the Vanastree office.

As we were informed (by past interns reviews and by our conversation with a past Vanastree intern), there is not a whole lot of separation between work and not work

here. This ends up being okay most of the time as the work is generally low-stress and often is relaxing in itself (creating signs, gardening, hiking, observing, and visiting). My biggest stress has been computer time, as we have not had the access to the Internet I presumed we would. When we do get to do this work I find myself being frustrated with how much I have to get done in a limited amount of time. I am now, even as we speak, working on a new system to alleviate this stress. I am pre-writing everything, and so when I do have access to the internet (no matter how slow), I can copy and paste my emails, paper drafts, important correspondences, and so forth and not feel as bound by my lack of time. When we are at Huthina Betta I do tuck myself into my room to read and/or journal, however we have been out-and-about a good amount too. This are all observations, not meant as criticisms, my worldview is expanding substantially through all of this.

I did have one wonderful 3-day weekend that was very nice. Whitney and I spent 3 nights at the beach and this was a great opportunity to relax and get to know this part of the world without any of the constraints of work. Such a treat

**2. Housing: What is your living situation like? Knowing what you know now, are there other options you would have chosen instead? If you can provide some resources for future interns, that would be most helpful.**

Huthina Betta is a little paradise. I adore living here... I was on a 5 day homestay last week (which was incredible) and on the way back to this site I felt so at home. The home stays have also been wonderful, I am grateful for Huthina Betta to come home to. It is really a little oasis, where things are comfortable, relaxed and charming.

One bit of information I do want to share because I find it to be noteworthy, is that I remember reading that a past intern was concerned that the price for rent high due to the typical cost of living here. I actually think it is the perfect price. First of all we have all of our food covered (while on site or on any excursion), second of all, everyone who comes to to stay at Huthina Betta is paying a sliding scale cost. Although many of us are coming to India on Scholarship funds, or outside support, we are, buy global standards (and especially Indian standards) wealthy, and should be paying the highest of the sliding scale costs. I think it is important to consider this when thinking about how much we as interns pay versus what folks that live here year around pay.

Paying rent has really been my only point of confusion. We are asked to pay in cash, and can only take out 1/8 of the rent at a time from the local bank. This has required me to walk around with 10, 000 INR in my pocket at a time, and will end up totally about 2,400 INR for the withdrawal charges (from the local ATM). It may be helpful to figure out a more streamlined way for students to pay this rent.

**3. Finances: How is your budget working out for you? Are you spending more or less that what you expected? How much do you typically spend on food, recreation, travel, etc? What would you do differently knowing what you know now?**

Since we have been working most of the time, there have not been too many opportunities to spend excess money (which is great). When I went to Gokarna I thought I was spending way over budget, but in reality I was under what was predicted for our "monthly recreation" amount on the provided cost calculator.

Our transportation from Bangalore to Huthina Betta was so far the largest expenditure. The bus to Sirsi is about \$1 a day (to and from) so ends up being just over \$10 a month (if I stick to the scheduled 2x a week trip).

So far, the cost calculator has been correct with all of the India side predictions.

**4. Travel and Transportation: How do you typically get around town and to work? Are you satisfied with that choice? Would you recommend other options? Do you have time to explore the surrounding area on time off? How do you manage that? What do you recommend for travel options? Where do you recommend exploring?**

Most of my time is spent in the field, at Huthina Betta. So far, I have gone into the Siris office for Vanastree half a dozen times or so. Riding the Bus to and From Sirsi has been quite an adventure. The walk to the bus stop is nice, and the bus ride is beautiful. Getting back has been a little more adventurous as it is very busy at the bus stand, and everything is in Kannada. The routine is becoming easier, and I am becoming less and less hesitant about just asking everyone I see in Uniforms (for bus) "Sonda Bussu?" As with many things, the timings seem to be a little different from day to day, but overall I think I am getting the hang of it.

As mentioned above I have not had a lot of time for independent exploration. There is a great walk to a Local Temple (Huse Honda), and have gone down to the local river with a couple of groups. This week I hope to visit the local Bird Sanctuary, and there are some local waterfalls I would love to visit as well.

Gokarna was a great get-away and I would highly recommend it to other interns. I do give the warning that the bus ride through the Western Ghats is not for those with a weak belly or who are prone to motion sickness. It was very inexpensive, but perhaps a sleeper bus (if available) or spending the extra cash and hiring one of Sunita's trusted drivers would make this journey a little easier.

#### **Question Set #4**

*Great set of questions; these forced me to look deeply into myself and this experience.*

**1. How well did your coursework prepare you for your internship? What knowledge of your field has been most important so far?**

My coursework in Environmental Education prepared me for this experience in unexpected and not-surprising ways alike. I have worked, learned and taught in outdoor settings and this prepared me to be flexible, as you never know what is around the next corner, or what the natural world has changed since you last visited a location. This understanding prepared me for an internship in India: where everything is fluid, and things change often. Also, because of my fieldwork in diverse natural settings I was prepared for the actual work in nature that was full of surprises, new creatures, bites, allergies, and plants. This work additionally gave me the skills to work with folks in the field; the forest home gardens as well as the acrea orchards. My understanding of both the perspective dangers of working in the wild, and the challenges associated with agriculture work gave me empathy and a bold spirit to dive into tasks with host families or on my host site.

I have additionally gone back to classes in my undergrad, both in history and cultural anthropology, this background in social science helped give me insight to new and surprising interactions or scenarios I came to during my internship. My experiences here have been so vast: from amazing homestays to outreach sites to the work at Huthina Betta--all revealed the varying elements of agricultural practices in India. My graduate school course work in agriculture and ecology gave me the background understanding and my time here gave me the practical application.

This has been a great experience in using what I have learned intellectually and through book knowledge and seeing what i knew through study in real-life application. For example, I did my thesis on traditional farming, that works with the systems of Nature, and here in the Western Ghats I was able to see what this looks to implement traditional methods without the interruption of industrial agriculture.

## **2. Have you learned about any new possibilities for career paths? Have you done any informational interviews (formal or informal) to learn about the field?**

Since one the purposes of this journey was to uncover where my career heads next, I have tried to pay attention to this along the way. I have not had a huge “awh-haw” moment that gave me clarity, I have however, had many moments that shaped my passions.

- I love working in small scale agricultural settings. I enjoy learning about new ways--old ways-- of growing things. I am passionate about agriculture systems that grow within the patterns of Nature.
- I am skilled as an educator of agricultural concepts of to both adults and students, even with cultural and language barriers.
- I love doing outreach projects with groups that enhance their understanding (as well as mine) of the Natural World.

I think my whole time here has been a giant interview. Working side by side with

### **3. Describe an event where you misunderstood something due to cultural differences. What did you do? What would you do next time?**

This is a difficult question to answer, or at least takes some great consideration.

Overall, the misunderstandings were subtle for me...but not uncommon. Everywhere I went there were stares, and sometimes, comments, and often questions that I did not know how to answer “correctly”.

I think I felt misunderstood most because I was a foreign woman in a male dominated society. One example of this is when I arrived to the train station in Mysore with fellow intern Whitney. We were instructed to grab a quick bite to eat at the train station after we arrived. Since we were unfamiliar with the area we took this to mean inside the train station itself, this ended up being one of the few moments I felt truly uncomfortable. From the moment when we placed our order it was a strange and uncomfortable encounter. We were the only women in the small establishment, and when we ordered they only allowed us to choose from 2 items rather than from the full menu listed. We ordered our food and paid, they did not give us change. We were told to sit down. It felt, in the moment, that any man who worked there, or anywhere near, there was called out to take a look at us, I felt very out of place. A man came in after us and received change and his meal (from the menu) and we waited. We asked 2 more times for our change, and then waited for our food to arrive. When it did arrive I felt stared at and ready to leave before I had my first bite. We rushed through our meal, asked again for our change and then finally received it. Later we asked Sunita about this, asking if we had done something culturally insensitive, or didn't understand the situation, and if this was just common in the area. She told us no, they should have given us our change, choose from the menu, and had no reason to treat us any differently than any other customers.

I think if I were to do this again I would just choose to not eat there and look for other places, or honestly, skip a meal (something I rarely do!). It was a reminder for me that I do not have the strength of voice as I do in the USA. I grew accustomed to being treated like a “second class” citizen, but this didn't mean I needed to stay in uncomfortable situations. My voice could be my ability to leave a situation and find something better.

### **4. What is the most frustrating aspect of your host culture? What is the most rewarding aspect?**

The most frustrating element for me was the garbage situation. The lack of systems for waste was really challenging for me. I just kept thinking about how many jobs could be created by implementing some sort of recycling, compost and garbage system. How education about burning plastics could lead to better air quality, how setting up area to leave waste for cows to eat could lead to an overall more pleasant landscape in cities and rural areas alike. The waterways that were black with muck

were very hard for me to see... and I recognize that I was in a relatively clean area (even whilst living in Mysore).

The most rewarding was the food and hospitality. I was so honored to be in people's homes, to eat meals with their families, to listen to their stories, and share time with folks in their villages. The folks of Karnataka were so kind and generous, I was awed and honored by everyone we met.

I also loved the flexibility of the culture... if something didn't work out the way we had planned, it was not a big deal, everyone went with it... if a ride was late, you just grooved on, if things turned upside down, a new perspective was given.

### **5. What are the most important things you have learned about yourself thus far through this experience?**

I learned that I need to be understood. I struggled not being able to speak Kannada. I wanted to share thoughts and concepts and questions with folks and I felt so limited. Amazing friendships were fostered and yet some were only able to go so far because the language barrier made it hard to get ideas across. One example was with Chandri who would work at Sunita's farm. I saw her every day and although we developed a sweet connection, I was not able to talk with her like I enjoy doing with new folks. I had so many questions I wanted to ask: about farming, her family, her life... I like to have this ability and feel limited without language to help me along. This was very interesting for me to see about myself.

### **Question Set #5**

**1. Now is the time to begin thinking about how to articulate all your experiences you have been gaining for your next endeavors (job search, graduate school applications, etc). Identify 3-4 accomplishments or successes in your internship of which you are most proud. These can be professional, personal or cross-cultural. Explain them briefly below.**

I took time for me... I read books, I went on walks, I let myself ache for things I let slip by me the last couple of years because I hadn't taken time for many years. I sat and let myself feel...this was challenging and really one of the most important things I could have done for myself and for those who care for me. Another element of this was taking time to connect with folks from home I care about. I took the time to invest in folks (thank you technology) who, although they were a world apart, suddenly felt closer than they had in years. I really think that in order to apply yourself to a job or school or any work, a strong and healthy connection to yourself and your support network is integral.

I wrote curriculum that really spoke my language: I have been creating various types of curriculum for several years now, but something was able to really thrive for me as

I co-wrote Seed Saving, and Food Justice lessons. I didn't have anyone giving me expectations about what these should look like, and this gave me a new freedom to explore writing curriculum for a wide audience.

I had the opportunity to re-focused some of my skills as an educator. When I left for this journey I was so burned out, I wanted as much space from educating students as I could get. I was tired. Being in India I had opportunities to remember how much I do love leading groups of people (teaching) but in a more informal and specific atmosphere. For example teaching with one of outreach program of Vanastree (Punachith) gave me the time and space to teach people aged 18+ about growing their own food, about being conscious citizens, about food justice and social equality through some very effective means. This was good for me to remember, and as I look for work now, I am searching for opportunities to use this skill in some way or another.

**2. After identifying 3-4, pick two of these and expand on them with the following:**

- **Outline the context of the situation**
- **Describe any challenges you faced**
- **Describe the actions you took to overcome the challenges**

As I have disclosed in much of this report, I came to India to gain a new perspective, to give time to myself to reconnect with what I wanted from myself. My personal goals were all wrapped around self-care. The challenge I faced in reaching this goal was that although time was very "flexie" we had full schedules. We had a busy yet slow existence. Taking time for self in this sort of environment did take some work. Since there wasn't a tight time frame finding the time to take-care could be difficult. For example if the "plan" of the day is "when we all have a chance, let's get together and discuss...A, B,C..." it leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Sometimes I might be *ready* for self time, and this is the time that other are *ready* for our group time. When I did find the time it was so rewarding, and honestly, it wasn't until my last day that I was able to say, "my only goal left is to go to the park and take some time alone." We had other group projects to complete, but this was the one thing I knew I had to do. I think this is a great step for me as I adjust to life back in the USA; taking time for self is essential for all other elements of my life to work well.

Having the opportunity to write curriculum and deliver lessons for Punichith was really enlightening. My fellow intern Whitney and I were given the loose task of creating a day long curriculum about seeds... What evolved was a beautiful hands-on collaborative lesson plan. One of the biggest challenges for me was trying to make sure it was all applicable and accessible to the full group as well as collaborative. Although Whitney and I have worked together in other situations (food industry and farming collective) this was a new venture for us. What transpired was a great opportunity to learn more about ourselves and each other as we collaborated. We hunted for supplies, shared our ideas with others, and used our

varying skills to work together to create something new and unique. The students, staff and visitors who took part in the lessons were impressed and engaged. I took great pride in what we had accomplished together.

### **3. Describe the workplace culture at your host organization. How does your personal cultural lens work within the culture of your host organization?**

As mentioned previously there was not a set workplace so I will talk to the overall working culture of Sunita. As the leader of the collective Sunita has a very full plate. I think that as an organization Vanastree, and Vanya have many things they are trying to address and the best way they have found to handle all of their load is through handling one project right before it happens, see this through fruition, and then move onto the next project. The work ethic is strong, and also a bit manic as the schedule ebbs and flows.

The work environment for me was very positive for the most part. I liked the diversity of projects, it was very enlightening. I think my experience as a small organization director played into my experience, and this was in fact my cultural lens. I saw Sunita take on too much, I observed (first hand) that Vanya needs a lot of Sunita's support to function, I saw huge potential in so many areas, and also really appreciated that they are keeping small and functioning within these projects. I do wonder how they might break down all of the amazing things that the organization does into bite-sized branches of the organization and have different managers (for lack of a better word) oversee each area. For example, I was sad to learn that this year will be the last season for the Malnad Mayla in Bangalaru. Sunita explained it is too much work for her, it is a big stress, there are too many elements for her to organize... etc. I totally validate that Sunita should not have this on her list, but wonder if there is someone who is brought on specifically to organize this amazing event for Vanastree. I do know that there are questions with funding, but also have heard first hand that there are sponsors who are looking to support Vanastree's efforts.

### **4. What words of advice do you have for future interns as they prepare for this internship and living in your host country/culture?**

Be flexible, and ready for amazing and overwhelming and beautiful adventures with every change.

Be ready for stares... and more stares, and a few more.

Prepare yourself for garbage and pollution.

Let go (as much as you can) of Ego... it will only weigh you down. You will most likely be treated like you are helpless at times, you will be catered to at others, and then in the next breath, you might be expected to know how to do something you

have never even heard of (proficiently). This is all part of the journey, and makes for great reflection (or venting) later.

**To all at IE3:**

**Thank you. This experience was outstanding. I was so honored to be a part of the work. It provided me with a new perspective on myself, on the world, and on community work.**

**It was an unbelievable experience, please let me know how I can support the work of Vanastree and IE3 global for the future.**

**Best,**

**Aliesje M. King**