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FINAL REPORT

Question Set #1

1. First Impressions: What have been your initial impressions of your host organization/work site?

The interns and employees at my work site are very welcoming. The pace here is a lot slower than it is in the states, so that has taken some getting used to but I actually enjoy it!

2. Provide a brief overview and thoughts about the kind of work you've started doing.

I first was assigned a project in fundraising and it did not fit my goals very well, so I asked to switch to a project regarding mental health and trauma. The staff quickly put me in contact with the right department, and I now will be doing research regarding my preferred subject. Additionally, I get to spend a lot of time each day in the homes building relationships with the kids. I am very much looking forward to the work that I am assigned.

3. How does the work match your expectations, how does it match your goals?

I really did not have any expectations coming into this. All I knew was that I wanted to work with high risk populations, so I would say that that goal is being reached! Not every intern gets to go to the homes on a regular basis so I feel very fortunate and thankful for this opportunity.

4. What stood out to you the most regarding your arrival?

I think that I was just pleasantly surprised regarding the overall feel and vibes of Delhi. So many people told me that I would constantly feel outcasted and unsafe and that I need to be extra hyper aware at all times, but I do not feel any less safe alone than I would in a big city in the US. The people here are very kind for the most part and have helped me out a lot with directions and suggestions of local food and places to travel.

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

I think my greatest anxiety was being in a foreign city and not knowing how to get around safely and efficiently. I have zero sense of direction and I have little to no experience navigating a city, so it has proven to be a challenge to me. Although, like I mentioned above,

more local people have offered assistance than I ever expected. Transportation is still intimidating, but not unthinkable like it was coming here.

Question Set #2

1. Professional Goals: How are things going at work now that you have settled in for a bit?

Things are actually just now picking up at work. I am meeting with my project boss today to learn what exactly my project will look like. As of now, I have a general idea of what I will be doing, but we will get into specifics so that I can take it from here. I think once that happens, everything will be a lot more settled.

2. How does this work align with your professional goals that you set for yourself?

My main goals were to help this organization and to build relationships with the children. I think that my assignment will allow me to do both of those things extensively. It is my understanding that I will be doing new research for my project boss so that we can apply that information to ultimately help the children. Meanwhile I get to spend time with them and ‘teach them English’ aka play with them every day!

3. What would you like to achieve in the next half of your internship?

I would like to see an end goal in sight with my research. I want to see that the research is applicable to future changes/ improvements that will be made for the children.

4. Personal Goals: How are things going relative to your personal goals?

I think my personal goals generally revolve around diving deep into this culture and learning as much as I possibly can from it in the next few months. I want to learn some of the language, become familiar with the food, local markets, and general customs in Delhi. Doing this requires me to stay open minded and receptive to anything that comes my way.

5. In which areas have you made progress and where do you still have some room to expand?

I will always have room to expand in all of these goals. I think the progress that I have made is just general comfortability and willingness to dive into the culture. I was very reserved at first, and I kept quiet in a lot of situations because I did not want to say or do anything that may be offensive in this culture. Although, I have learned that the people here are very understanding and open-minded, so there is really nothing to worry about. I will continue to do what I know to be respectful, and observe those around me so that I can constantly improve that.

6. What do you want to make sure you address before you leave?

I am not sure I understand what you mean by address. I am keeping my goals and aspirations very broad here so that I can address things as they come and go with the flow. If I am getting my work done well, spending quality time with the children, and exploring the city, I will be very happy.

7. Cross-Cultural Goals: How are things going relative to your cross-cultural goals?

Things have just begun with this. As I stated above, my goals are to simply take everything in and grow from it. I think that understanding of cultural diversity is one of the most important things for a human. It allows you to view the world from another, sometimes opposite perspective, and I think that that is so so important. My goal is to take that all in and do my best to immerse myself.

8. What cultural experiences have stood out to you so far?

It sounds weird, but it has been a huge experience being in a country where everyone is of similar ethnicity. In the US, I can see any race or ethnicity anywhere and I would not think twice about it, but that is obviously not the case here. I never thought of that until I got here. People stare at me, so confused about why I am here and perplexed by how light my skin is. It is so interesting to realize how different the world is outside of the US in terms of race, ethnicity, and culture.

9. What do you want to ensure to experience before you leave?

I just want to travel a lot. Everyone is telling me that Delhi is like “the America of India”, meaning you can find cultures from every part of India being displayed in Delhi. I want to travel to outside cities where they have distance cultural practices so that I can better identify those regional differences as I see them in Delhi.

Question Set #3

1. Describe a day in your life: What is your work schedule like?

I work Monday-Friday from 10-4 in the office, then I go to one of the homes from 5-7.

2. What activities and tasks are you doing day-to-day?

In the office, I am completing several projects. These include aide in the fundraising department, developing powerpoint, and editing writing that I have collected from the kids. I am running a project in the background where I collect Postcards from each girl, in which they write

about their inequality as girls in the education system. I then edit them and send them to Malala, who is running the postcard campaign, to be posted on her website. In the home that I work at, I simply spend time with the girls and work on bridging the language barrier so that I can build relationships.

3. What do you do after work?

After work I will usually meet with other interns to get food. On the weekends, we travel and explore together as well.

4. How do you balance your time between work and exploring life outside of work?

It is quite easy. As long as I am getting my work done, I am given a lot of freedom. We are often allowed to work from home, so if I want to travel, I can leave early on Friday and work in hotels or on the train rides. The international interns are like a little family here, so we always encourage each other to explore.

5. Housing: What is your living situation like?

For the last month, I have been living in a very nice hotel that is walking distance from the head office. After meeting a lot of people, I was referred to a hostel which I will be moving into on August 4th.

6. Knowing what you know now, are there other options you would have chosen instead?

I am paying a lot to be in the hotel, but I have felt very secure and well taken care of there. Now that I am more comfortable with the city, I am excited to complete my month stay and move a little bit further away into the hostel. It all has worked out very nicely.

7. If you can provide some resources for future interns, that would be most helpful.

I really struggled with finding proper living accommodations. Being that this is such a big city, I was very anxious to come (as you know haha). I think if I had solidified my living situation earlier, a lot of that stress would have been minimal. Although, I am very pleased with how it worked out.

8. Finances: How is your budget working out for you?

I spend almost nothing here. If I didn't travel on the weekends, I would be spending something like 30 dollars per week. Every time I do a conversion from rupees to dollars, it is astonishing.

9. Are you spending more or less than what you expected?

Much less than expected.

10. How much do you typically spend on food, recreation, travel, etc?

A 30 minute uber ride is less than 2 dollars, and my lunch that I get every day from my favorite nearby restaurant is 60 cents. Very easy to stay on a budget here. Travel is the most expensive thing, but even that is a fraction of what I would be paying at home.

11. What would you do differently knowing what you know now?

I would just reassure my dad that I wouldn't be blowing through all of our money. I am actually probably saving money by being here for the summer.

12. Travel and Transportation: How do you typically get around town and to work? Are you satisfied with that choice?

I walk to the office, and it only takes me 5 minutes. Other than that, I usually use the autos to get around town and to the homes. At night, I use Uber, as it is the safest. I can read the drivers reviews and ratings before I get in the car, so I have not had any problems.

13. Would you recommend other options?

The autos are the best. You have to be good at bargaining, but once you get that down, they are the cheapest mode of transportation. There are also very nice busses which are very cheap in USD, I used those to go to Jaipur. To get to Agra, we actually reserved a driver to take us there and back. 5 of us went, so splitting the driver only cost me 20 USD (Agra is 4 hours each way).

14. Do you have time to explore the surrounding area on your time off? How do you manage that?

I have explored many places in Delhi, including the local markets, the Lotus Temple, Qutub Minar, local parks, and the Tibetan Refugee community town. Some interns and I also paid a visit to Jaipur and to Agra to see the Taj Mahal.

15. Where do you recommend exploring?

Everywhere! Anywhere and everywhere. Every place is so unique here, that it is worth it to see it all.

Question Set #4

1. Professional Learning: Describe the workplace culture at your host organization. How does your personal cultural lens work within the culture of your host organization?

Everything here moves at a slow pace. The workplace is very relaxed and easy going. The employees show up late every day, and they even take 1-2 hours for their lunch breaks, so they have the same level of expectations with the interns. When they tell you that they want to meet with you at 1:00, that usually means 2:00, or sometimes even later. This was very hard for me to get used to due to my cultural lens. I am very used to having deadlines and prompt meeting times with everything that I do. In America, if you are taking a water break, you are wasting time. So, not seeing the urgency to get things done as quickly as possible was very difficult to get used to. Now that I am, though, I really appreciate the culture of it. Things do not get done as fast, but the environment is a lot more friendly and social.

2. What parts of your work have you enjoyed the most? Is there any part of your work that you find particularly challenging?

My favorite part has to be working with the girls in the orphanage home. I say this a lot, but the language barrier there is very very challenging. The girls are all so sweet and we have a lot of fun playing together, but I don't feel like I can ask them questions or connect with them on a deeper level because we don't understand each other's language. They are all studying English in their schools, but it is just basic conversation, so I have been working hard to teach them more English and communicate in different ways.

3. Describe a professional accomplishment that you are proud of - be specific.

I am actually very proud of my confidence to advocate for myself to get a project that I genuinely enjoyed. I was given 3 projects that I knew I would neither enjoy nor be good at (such as data analysis and excel projects). Each time, I professionally discussed it with the assigned supervisor, and switched projects. In the past, I have been able to stand up for myself in the workplace, but not to this extent and definitely not in a completely different culture. But, with the advise of other interns who were finishing up their internships, I was able to advocate for myself until I got the project that I was very very pleased with.

4. Cross Cultural Learning: Describe an event where you misunderstood something due to cultural differences. What did you do? What would you do next time?

There are a lot of instances where I misunderstand small social cues, but those usually are just small funny embarrassing moments. For example, instead of nodding your head to say yes, Indian people tilt their head to the side. To me, this means "I don't know" or "ehhh okay I guess", but here it means yes, and it can get very confusing when they gesture "yes" and I

assume it is a “I don’t know”. There was one time, though, that I deeply regret and feel sorry about. I went to the Taj Mahal with a few other interns, and we were taking touristy photos. I asked my friend to take a photo of me from a certain angle, but it turned out that where I told him to stand was on a Muslim prayer rug. One of the men that was there to worship told him to get off, and we apologized profusely and left. Now I am more aware of these things, especially in places of worship. He was very understanding because we were tourists, but I never want to disrespect someone’s religion, tourist or not.

5. Personal Growth: What are the most important things you have learned about yourself thus far through this experience?

I have mostly just learned about all of my biases that I have been blinded by in America. I have developed a new understanding of the privileges that I have, as well as the cultural aspects that I have missed out on. There is a young girl in the home that I work at who broke her arm a year ago and had to have surgery to put her phone back together. Her scarring covers her entire forearm, and is very poorly done. Her skin is pulling apart and her hand is almost useless now. She does not have access to physical therapy, let alone a proper surgeon. I had the same surgery several years ago, and even though I have chronic tendonitis, I have a functioning hand. It rarely holds me back from doing anything, I can even continue playing volleyball. This was an unexplainably humbling moment for me. I complain about my tendonitis all the time, while she tells me she is thankful that Udayan was able to pay for her surgery. Overall, I have just learned how to take a step back and realize what I have.

6. What has been the greatest personal challenge? What has been the greatest reward?

Patience is absolutely my greatest personal challenge here. It takes patience every day in order to accept the culture here and fully immerse myself. For example, lines are not a thing here, people just crowd and yell and shove to the front of the group to order food, drivers honk to tell you they are near instead of using their mirrors, and as mentioned above, things move very slowly and are always late. Practicing my patience with all of these, and constantly reminding myself that it is not my culture, it is theirs, honestly has been the greatest reward as well. I am learning how to embrace the differences through patience instead of becoming irritated by them.

Question Set #5

1. Professional: Have you learned about any new possibilities for career paths?

Being that I know specifically what I want to do, I haven't learned about possibilities of a new career path. I know for sure that I want to work with survivors of sex trafficking/sexual abuse, but I am always open to learn about different careers to do so. So far, I have not come across any new career paths on this subject since I have been here.

2. Have you done any informational interviews (formal or informal) to learn about the field?

I have had several conversations with coworkers and people from my hostel about the issues of sex trafficking. It is very fascinating to talk about it with people here because everyone is from different countries, so they all have a different experience with the issue. Again, careers have not come up but it has definitely been a topic of conversation.

3. Cross Cultural: Looking back at your pre-departure journal or notes, how have your impressions of the host culture changed?

My impression has had a full turn around. Based on the information that I was given from family and friends, India was going to be very dangerous. I expected to constantly have to be on my toes and hyper aware of everything around me to avoid getting sexually assaulted or robbed. This meant no stepping foot outside at night, no traveling alone, and no relaxation. Instead, India is one of the most relaxing places that I have been. The people here have been so kind to me and welcoming. Last night I even played basketball in the neighborhood park at around 10-11:00 pm. I feel as safe here as I would playing in a park at night in San Francisco.

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

I get very frustrated at the pace that takes place here. The work pace is excruciatingly slow. If I want to order a coffee, I have to set aside 15-20 minutes of waiting just to receive the order. Alternatively, the roads are very crazy and loud and rushed. I get frustrated with the urgent honking and the running lights and speeding, especially because they are speeding somewhere just to work leisurely. This has been a huge adjustment for me, especially since I am in a workplace myself. What is rewarding, though, is learning how to practice my patience and let go of that frustration so that I can better immerse myself in this culture. The only reason why it frustrates me is because it is not the reality that I grew up in in America. So, when I am able to adjust and go with the flow and pace that is set here, I feel like I accomplished something. It feels really good to try to embody the culture that you are surrounded by.

5. Your Culture Curve: The period of cultural adjustment is often represented by a “W” curve with various peaks and valleys:

I know this sounds a bit rare, but I do not feel that I experienced any kind of culture shock since I have gotten here. In fact, instead of starting on the honeymoon stage, I started in a valley. I was extremely overwhelmed coming here to a hugely populated foreign city. I did not know who to trust, especially after all of the things that I was told by friends and family that I mentioned above. There were a lot of interns here at the time, and they welcomed me in right away. By day two, I learned that life here is not as dangerous and scary as I was told. My new friends took me around the city and taught me how to use the metro. From then on, I have been on a mid to high peak. Of course things happen in your day or at home that may drop your mood, but I truly am loving it here. I was staying in a hotel for the first month, and that got pretty lonely sometimes. Loneliness was difficult because there really was nowhere to go, especially at night. But now, I live in a very social hostel. I have a private room, so I can have alone time when I want it, but I never get lonely. All of these accommodations have helped me avoid deep valleys of culture shock. Another thing that has helped me is that almost everyone speaks English here. I think that if there was a stronger language barrier, I would have been struggling a lot more. Instead, it has been pretty smooth sailing since I got adjusted after that first week. I think going back to America is going to be a bigger challenge for me.

6. Articulating your Experience:

India is a place for soul searching. The amount of professional, cultural, and personal growth that is available to each individual here is like nothing I have ever experienced before. I work in a professional environment that is very different from any professional environment I have experienced in the US. Here it is very slow, relaxed, and consequentially disorganized. Adjusting to this was a big change for me, but it is a system that works well for Indian people. Adjusting to the pace reflects the growth that I have embodied since arriving here. It is impossible not to gain cross-cultural growth in a country like India. The people here are so culturally rich, it seems as if nothing else matters. To an American, that is very hard to fathom. I deeply admire anyone who can whole-heartedly dedicate themselves to a practice, way of life, or belief system. In my opinion, this way of thinking, this dedication, is a quality that the majority

of America is missing out on. I love to learn from the locals here how to give your life to one thing. This leads into my personal growth. I think that most of my personal growth here is due to observing and learning from this culturally deep society. It is opening my mind a lot and reminding me that I can go down any path that I choose. All I have to do is set my eyes to it and dedicate myself to that direction. None of this is easy. I don't like learning that all this time I have been biased and close minded to alternate ways of life. But, it is so rewarding learning these things and knowing that I am becoming a better person because of it.

Question Set #6

1. Looking back at your pre-departure journal or notes, how have your impressions of the host culture changed?

I have been keeping a little blog for my friends and family to read, and even the titles of the blogs show my drastic change in opinion of India. The first blog is called "My Emotional Rollercoaster Blog" and the most recent one is called "My Changing Perception of Life". I came to Delhi absolutely terrified and full of anxiety. In my first blog, I wrote about my emotional breakdown on the 17 hour flight, and my first experience on the hectic streets. I won't sugar coat it, Delhi is definitely not heaven on Earth. It is indeed dirty and crowded. I do have to stay aware of the safety of my belongings and myself. But, it is nothing to be anxious about. I quickly came to find that the majority of the people here are extremely kind and welcoming. I get stared at everywhere I go, but they are stares of curiosity. They want to get to know my culture as much as I want to know theirs. I have found a sense of openness and comfort here that I never expected to find.

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

India has a culture that is so deep, it goes back generations. They may have traditions that you don't understand or agree with, but they practice these traditions because they have given their entire lives to their culture. It is crucial to stay open minded about these differences. Not only that, but try to partake in some of these things! Visit their temples, learn their prayer rituals, ask them about their culture. It is going to be very different than the way your mind works and the way that you perceive the world. You probably won't fully believe in what they tell you, but it will absolutely open your mind to think about things in a different way. I have had to let go of

my pride a lot, too. As a woman, I am fully aware that I am oppressed here. Gender roles are strict, and what we would consider not modern. But again, there are some things that even if I don't agree with, I have to accept. Gender roles and modesty is a part of the deep culture that is so unique to India. You are not here to 'help them progress', but rather you are here to learn from them. And I promise, they have a lot to teach you.