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## **Final Report**

When I first arrived to CSAGA everyone was very friendly and welcoming. Ms. Laura spoke the most English, so I mostly spent time talking with her and Ha about what the expectations would be before I started the next day. The work has been a little boring so far, but I think things will start to pick up soon since CSAGA has a lot of projects that are taking place in the next two months. Mostly I have been editing a lot of proposals and doing research on LGBTQ organizations in the US. Although boring, it does match up with my goals on wanting to get an idea of all the ins and outs a nonprofit must go through day to day. I hope eventually I will be able to get out of the office to attend events, or maybe help with other things besides research!

My arrival to Vietnam went very smooth and I wasn't left with much to worry about. Having the local buddy helped me get situated at my apartment, introduce me to new foods, get my money exchanged, and find a sim card for my phone. Although after my local buddy left I struggled with trying to find food. My apartment is in a very local area where there is no English on the menus and 99% of people speak no English. This made trying to order food very intimidating! Thankfully everybody in Vietnam is friendly and patient with me when I would try to order.

I think my greatest anxiety is/was that I would start to feel lonely and get homesick. This weekend I started to feel a little lonesome. Hardly anyone around my apartment speaks English, so it makes it hard to find someone to talk to which can make you feel slightly isolated. I decided to venture out to the Old Quarter to some touristy areas just to talk with some other English speakers. After spending an evening there and connecting with some other tourists I immediately felt better.

The last couple weeks I feel as though I haven't been very busy. Most tasks I am given are to edit documents that are in English. Another small portion of work given to me is researching things, like how other non-profits in Vietnam find their funding. Even with this work given to me, I still spend a lot of time sitting at my computer fiddling around on the internet. Although, I understood before I came to Vietnam that a large part of non-profit work is finding funding and writing grants (that is something I did want to learn about), I thought a larger portion of this internship would be learning more in-depth about how Vietnam is handling social injustices, more specifically, how they assist their vulnerable populations. As far as my professional goals go, I would have to say I now know that non-profit work is something that I do not see myself going into. That's what internships are for, though! Figuring out what you like and what you don't like.

As far as my personal goals, which were to learn better communication skills in the work place. I'm obviously not doing very well on that because I haven't brought up to my supervisor that I feel like I'm being given mostly busy work, with little instruction on anything. I hope to figure out a way to address

my issue. Hopefully I address this issue ASAP. I want to contact Ha and maybe fill her in, but I like everyone here, and I don't want to create any issues here at CSAGA.

Cross-cultural goals are something I have been moving forward on. I have learned a lot about Vietnam, and its culture. Things that stand out to me are how friendly everyone is, and how interested they are in me and why I am in Vietnam. Before I leave want to make a Vietnamese friend who will invite me over for a traditional Vietnamese dinner!

I usually work Monday-Friday 9am-4pm with a two-hour lunch from 11:30-1:30. After work I like to try and explore the city and find new places to eat and hang out. I usually end up trying to do a lot of walking to make up for all the time I spend sitting at a desk during the day. Hanoi has been a very good city to get a lot of walking in. CSAGA has been very flexible and encouraging about taking three day weekends, here and there, to do extra exploring!

For my first four weeks in Hanoi I lived in a pretty traditional Vietnamese neighborhood. I enjoyed getting to see what a traditional Vietnamese neighborhood was like, but after a few weeks there I was starting to feel a little isolated. I found myself using a lot of Uber moto rides to get to other areas of Hanoi to eat and walk around to explore. There weren't a lot of great options for places to eat near where I was staying on Cau Gaiy. After my fourth week I decided to move to an area I found more appealing. I moved to a street called Tran Hung Dao, which has wide variety of restaurants and things to do and see within short walking distance. Although closer to some of the more touristy attractions, it was still far enough away that I got to experience Vietnamese culture that wasn't catered to westerners. I used Airbnb to look at different options for places to stay. The commute is longer than the first place, but it has been worth it. It takes about 20 minutes to get to CSAGA compared to the 10 minutes it took me before.

I've spent a little more than I thought I would spend initially. Before I came I thought I would spend more time in Hanoi on the weekends, but I have been going somewhere different almost every weekend. This has caused me to spend more!

When eating Vietnamese food only, it's easy to keep food costs low! After some time here, I started to get a little tired of Vietnamese flavor for every meal so I started to seek out more western style food, this gets a little more expensive, but still quite a bit cheaper than in the US. I would say getting to and from places on the weekend has been the most expensive, but still cheaper than what you would typically spend in the US. I've probably spent about \$350 on flights since I have been here. I think that's for about 7 flights! Factoring in taxis from to and from the airports that's about another \$150. I usually tried to share these taxis with other travelers to keep costs down.

I don't think I would do anything different regarding my budget. I could always use more money, but I haven't gone over my budget, and I plan on still having what I wanted to have saved for when I return home.

Getting around town I typically use Uber Moto. It is very cheap and a lot quicker than taking the bus or

a taxi. I usually spend about \$2 a day for transportation to and from work. I would highly recommend any students coming here to set up an Uber account if they don't have one already. Uber car prices are much better than Taxi prices! With Uber, a trip to the airport is a set price of \$12, where a taxi can cost anywhere from \$15-\$25! After getting home for the evening I usually walk most places. The bus is very cheap, but it takes a very long time and gets very crowded. If finances allow it, take Uber. If not, a bus pass is provided by Student Exchange Vietnam. There's also another app called Grab, that seems to work just as well as Uber and sometimes the price is cheaper.

I have been able to explore a lot of Vietnam while being here! I would recommend flying most places. Round trip flights are super cheap (around \$45) especially if you book two weeks or more in advance. If you don't book as far in advance they are around \$55-\$100. Most the flights are no more than an hour, too. Sleeper trains are a good option, and I have taken that a couple times on Sunday nights to get back in time for work on Monday, but it's usually is cheaper to just fly!

Places I went that have been my favorite are:

Mai Chau- This is only about three hours by bus from Hanoi and covered with rice patties! Very beautiful!

Sapa- 5 hours from Hanoi by bus and lots of hiking and trekking to do!

Hoi An- Hour flight from Hanoi. I had a few pieces of clothing here, and I went twice!

Phu Quoc Island- I was given a few days extra to take off for Thanksgiving so I spent 4 days here. The beaches were amazing! Taxis were expensive compared to the rest of Vietnam. It's a good idea to get a motorbike there to get around to all the different beaches.

Can Tho- The floating markets and a bike ride through the villages are what made this place special, otherwise there's not much to see.

I feel like my course work did a good job at preparing me for this internship. I felt prepared because I was taught a lot of information on how to be sensitive and open to others situations. The one class that has stuck out that I kept feeling thankful for repeatedly was a grant writing class I took during Spring term. CSAGA spent a lot of time writing new proposals and asked me to write different portions. Without the grant writing class I took I don't think I would've been about to help with many of the things they asked.

I haven't learned about any new career paths. I do feel as though the non-profit sector might not be for me.

I'm not really sure if this is because of a cultural difference, but I was asked to create a 40-minute presentation for some of the CSAGA members for a proposal they were working on. I wasn't given much clarification on what they were looking before besides they didn't know much about the topic, which was "Humanitarian Aid". I kept trying to get an idea of what exactly they were looking for because it was such a broad topic, but wasn't getting much information back from them, only that they wanted "theories on humanitarian aid". I should mention they asked me to come up with the presentation in two days. When the time came for me to present, I presented a very broad overview of humanitarian aid, and the different types of aid there are and the processes to go through to deliver those types of

aid. It ended up not being anything that they were looking for, and I didn't even have a chance to finish my presentation because it was so off base. After a 30-minute conversation with them, I could figure out exactly what they were looking for. Next time when I am unclear, I will be more direct and ask exactly what is expected.

A frustrating aspect of the culture is how the Vietnamese aren't very direct about certain things. I became frustrated a few times because I felt as though things were left unclear and I spent just as much time trying to figure out what they wanted as I did on the actual task.

A rewarding aspect would be how everything is so go with the flow, and the people are very, very nice. It's almost like there are no rules here, which is nice coming from a place where rules are such an important and intricate part of our culture.

I feel like their "go with the flow" attitude also must do with how they aren't very direct. I guess what I find the most frustrating is also a part I like the most, if that makes sense.

I would say my independence and ability to figure things out on my own surprised me. I've travelled alone before, but this experience seemed different. When traveling I usually have found other people to make friends with, and we would go places together. Here I went through most everything alone. My boyfriend did join me, but I was here alone most the time. I figured out how to live day to day here. I figured out my own transportation to and from work, figured out my own housing when I decided I wanted to move, how to get propane for the stove, and one of the big water jugs, in the new apartment, I figured out how to re-up my data on my phone when I needed it, etc. Those things were kind of difficult. People don't speak English here in Vietnam like they do in the other places I have traveled. Most all cab/Uber drivers don't, and same with people at the restaurants, and the stores I was shopping at.

Having previous experience in SE Asia, I was expecting Vietnamese culture to be somewhat like the Thai culture. I came to realize how unique the Vietnamese culture is. The Vietnamese are much more conservative than I had imagined, and I think this must do with how uninfluenced they are by the westerners. After travelling around Vietnam I was able to realize how diverse their country is. I was surprised to discover that Vietnamese people in the north have difficulties even understanding people from the southern area at times, vice versa. The country is so small; this was surprising to me!