

Final Internship Report

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My name is Chadani Timsina and I am a '26 majoring in Anthropology modified with Biology. During 25X, I was fortunate enough to gain funding from the Dickey Center to pursue an internship with Institute for Rural Development (IRD) in Kathmandu and Pokhara. In Kathmandu, my days consisted of planning the awareness campaign and the clinic day. My work involved reaching out and creating connections with organizations that had the knowledge of doing such work. With these new connections, I received guidance and resources that I could utilize in the internship. I was also tasked with creating materials like posters and infographics.

In Pokhara, I did a lot of community outreach and also finished up on the work I had started in Kathmandu. I also practiced the flipchart to be used for the awareness campaigns, re-learning Nepali and figuring out how I can make it impactful to the women I was presenting to. Then, I planned where and how it would happen with the help of my mentors in the US while simultaneously planning the clinic day.

Projects & Types of Work

In Kathmandu, I was mostly preparing for the actual internship that was to take place in Pokhara. I started out by reaching out to different organizations and people to seek guidance and resources for the awareness campaigns but also for the clinic. This led me to Nepal Fertility Care Center (NFCC) who helped me rationalize my goals and how to be successful in them. They also provided me with a flipchart that they used in awareness as well as an info slip that had phone numbers they could call to know about HIV vaccination and cervical cancer treatments. The flipchart had information about cervical cancer but also breast cancer and I spent a few days with the organization practicing it especially since I had to do all of the awareness in pure Nepali, which was something I wasn't used to. While I was doing this, I was also researching how much awareness there is on cervical cancer and also what kind of help women have, especially in the rural areas. I wanted to understand what could be some of the barriers in health and how I could work to tackle them. With the connection I was making, I was also able to shadow and learn from nurses that do such work.

In Pokhara, I did community outreach. I met and talked to my host family and the people they know. I researched the environment of Pokhara and the kind of stigmas that exist. I also finished up with the posters, flyers, and certificates I had started and printed them. I started creating questionnaires for potential future research for the organization as well as consent forms for the clinic. I was simultaneously practicing the flipchart as well. In this phase, I made lists of

things required for the clinic such as supplies, compensation for the nurses and meal plan for the day for the workers. I reached out to different organizations in Pokhara as well. One of the organizations was Marie Stopes. They were able to donate 20 speculums for the clinic and they sent a worker to our awareness campaigns and clinic to communicate about the service they provide. When it came to the awareness week, I went to the site, did the presentation on both cervical cancer and breast cancer, handed out information slips and answered any question or concerns they had. For the clinic day, I went and prepared the place beforehand and on the day of the clinic, I oversaw the program and gave tasks to everyone while helping the nurses with things like making gauge, cleaning the speculums and holding flashlights for the check ups. I had also created a Gofundme page to fund all of the costs.

Costs

The printing materials were 1 flipchart, 9 badges, 150 consent papers and questionnaires, 2 flyers, 1 banner, and 9 certificates. These accumulated to a total of 5 thousand rupees which is around \$35 usd. The rest of the costs were for clinic supplies and for the clinic day. Clinic supplies such as acetic acid, gloves, masks etc. cost a total of 2400 rupees. Paying the nurses and volunteers cost 6.5 thousands: I paid the nurses 1500 rupees and the other volunteers 500 rupees. For the day of the clinic, everyone working there got lunch (veg or non-veg) which accumulated to 3800 rupees. The total of the outside cost was 20,930 rupees equivalent to \$150 usd. The GoFundMe page ended up raising \$351 and \$50 from that was used towards the internship and the rest will be given to IRD for future programs. I contributed the rest of \$135 out of my own pocket.

Expectations

Heading into the internship, I did not really have much expectations. I thought that I was going to have as much guidance as I wanted and I won't have to be clueless about my tasks. I was just really excited for the work I was going to be doing but also really nervous because I was not sure how to start. But I did expect my experience to be good I guess. I remember writing in my journal that I wanted to learn and grow from this.

Experience

Since I didn't go into the internship with concrete expectations, I mostly experienced things as they happened. In the first week of the internship, I felt lost and aimless, not knowing where to start. I communicated those feelings to Laxman dai and he was able to help me get my thoughts together as well as giving me tasks that I could start out with. This helped me create a more firm schedule and get started on the internship. This pushed me to reach out to people and organizations who could support my work, which resulted in some incredible connections and experiences. They brought valuable knowledge and expertise related to my plans and were genuinely willing to help me turn my goals into reality. Though the mentorship provided by Laxman dai was helpful throughout the internship and guided me through all my doubts and

tasks, it was often difficult to communicate because of the time difference. The mentorship besides with Laxman dai was not as I expected and I thought I was going to have more help in Nepal but that was not the case. I had to figure things out myself and pull a lot of weight, which I did not mind but the expectation vs. experience was just different. I loved that I was getting a lot of exposure and experience doing something like this independently especially after I started getting used to it.

I also realized that I may have held unspoken expectations I hadn't recognized before. One of those experiences occurred in Pokhara with my host family. My expectations or more so knowledge was that they were going to help me bring in the community together for the awareness campaigns. While working with them, I often felt that my input and knowledge were overlooked, and that decisions were made without fully communicating the details to me. I understand this may not have been intentional, but it left me feeling unheard especially because I had put so much work and effort into making it all possible.

Work Environment

I did not really have a set work place. I had the freedom to work from anywhere I liked, especially in Kathmandu which I thoroughly enjoyed. I would go to a new cafe everyday and work on the flyer and posters since everything was accessible on my computer. I did my meetings at cafes and at the place I stayed at which was very convenient.

In Pokhara, it was a little more difficult to do the same routines because I was pretty far from the city hub. I had to take an hour-long bus everyday to visit organizations, people, and to print things. I still made the trip because I was not able to focus at the house.

Work/Life Balance

I had a really good work-life balance. I made sure to do a little bit of work everyday but I did them at new places. I tried new food, met new people and saw different places. This took place on the weekdays and on the weekends, I explored Kathmandu and its cultural sites. I was also able to help and participate in other activities in the organization. I went to schools with the other interns to support their work and learn about their amazing projects. I was also able to visit a village nearby for a project spreading menstrual health awareness. We gave out geometry boxes and a sticker filled with menstrual hygiene tips to 3 schools. I am really grateful that I was fortunate enough to do my work but also contribute to the organization and the community in other ways.

Work-life balance came a little harder in Pokhara but I still made sure to do my work but also give myself space to do the things I love. I would make time out of my week to watercolor, read and call loved ones and it really helped especially when I started getting really overwhelmed.

Personal Growth & Skills Learned

My internship at IRD was very fulfilling. It taught me how to manage a project, how to reach out and make connections, how to take initiative and advocate for myself. This internship truly got me out of my comfort zone like never before which has led me to be more confident in my abilities. I came into this internship feeling scared and expecting a lot of guidance and help throughout but I soon realized that I will be the one executing the awareness campaigns and the clinic. It was really difficult at first because I had never done something like this before and I was doubting myself and overthinking about how it was going to happen. This led me to use one of my skills of communication! I talked to Laxman dai about it and he helped me ease my anxiety and helped me set some goals. Then, as I started checking things off my checklist, I started making plans and seeking resources. This improved my communication and people skills as I emailed professionals and met with them to discuss the project.

I also learned what it takes to make an event happen, whether it be for the awareness campaigns or the clinic. Besides just the planning, I was juggling multiple different tasks at once, whether it be creating, budgeting, printing or getting everyone on the same page. Working with IRD has given me a new sense of confidence, knowledge, skills and understanding that I will be able to carry into Dartmouth and beyond.

Challenges Encountered

The most difficult part of my experience took place in Pokhara. I struggled with the living conditions in the host house, especially the heat with no way to relieve it. I also faced challenges with the host family around boundaries and communication. At times, it felt like my work for the internship was being underestimated, and when I tried to communicate my concerns, I often felt brushed off, though I also recognize some of this may have been due to cultural norms. One of the hardest parts was that personal things I had shared were spoken about to others without my consent. When it became too difficult to manage, I reached out to Laxman dai and my mentor, who spoke with the family. While the situation improved somewhat regarding the events, there was still animosity afterward that left me uncomfortable. Through it all, I tried to remain calm, understand their perspective, and remind myself that I was there for the women and as long as I could reach them and help, it would be worth it.

Lasting Impact

I hope that my work will leave a lasting impact on both the women who participated and the organization itself. For the women, the awareness sessions and clinic provided not only access to screenings, education and referrals, but also a safe space to openly discuss cervical cancer, something often silenced by stigma and limited resources. Even though only a few women tested positive, many more left with knowledge that could protect their health and

families in the future. They are now better equipped to advocate for their own health and to teach their neighbors and daughters the importance of screening and seeking medical care. It truly felt like I was making a difference when women came to me after the awareness sessions thanking me and telling me how big this is for their community. This was all I had wanted starting this internship and it felt like I had achieved it.

For the organization, the internship strengthened community ties and underscored the importance of continuing such initiatives in rural areas. The networks and groundwork established through this effort will serve as a foundation for future programs, ensuring that the work does not end with a single camp but continues to expand. This internship allowed me to give back to my community, pursue my passion, and help lay the foundation for greater impact in raising awareness about cervical cancer. I have learned so much about myself and the people I was supposed to impact have impacted me too and I will forever be grateful.