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I spent this summer working with the Institute of Local Self-Governance and Responsible Citizenship (ILSG) in Udaipur, India. The experience I had was incredible. In addition to having been given the amazing opportunity to visit a country as culturally unique as India, it opened my eyes to the problems of development and the ways in which people, both locally and internationally, are attempting to solve these problems.

The project I was assigned to work on was conducting an evaluative study of Anganwadi Centers, focused particularly on those located around Udaipur. The Anganwadi Centers were developed by the program of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), which is a program of the Central Government, working to improve the psychological, physical and social development of young children thereby improving their capacity for health, nutrition, and education as they mature. The Anganwadi Centers have six primary functions: supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, preschool education, and nutrition and health education. The target groups of the Anganwadi Centers are pregnant and lactating mothers, children from birth to age six, and adolescent girls.

I first gathered the information provided by the ICDS to prepare a case study depicting an ideal Anganwadi Center. Once I had a thorough understanding of what the government's expectations for these centers were I visited four different Anganwadi Centers located in the Badgaon Block, Udaipur District, Rajasthan. These four centers were Madar First, Madar Second, Varda First and Varda Second. I conducted interviews with the Anganwadi functionaries and beneficiaries at each of these four centers and the elected representatives responsible for supervising these centers. I also interviewed the supervisory personnel for Badgaon Block, who

are responsible for all the centers I studied. Additionally, while visiting each center I completed a detailed inspection with the help of a checklist; the same checklist elected representatives are provided during ILSG's Panchayati Raj training. After conducting my field research, I first performed a detailed analysis of the individual circumstances of each center and wrote four corresponding case studies, one for each center. Then I assembled all the data together to analyze the overarching trends and flaws that existed at Anganwadi Centers, at least in this region. In addition to the information I had gathered at the Anganwadi Centers, I was provided the opportunity to interview a few Anganwadi functionaries and elected representatives who were not from Madar or Varda, but still located within the Badgaon Block. These additional interviews helped to widen the scope of my study slightly. I concluded my project by analyzing the gaps that exist between the ICDS' standards and the reality, based on my findings. I also provided my suggestions for ways some of these gaps can realistically be closed.

Additionally I was tasked, due to the extensive knowledge I had gained regarding the Anganwadi Centers, with designing a poster entitled "Anganwadi". ILSG expressed the interest in creating a poster that would sensitize the beneficiaries, functionaries, and elected representatives about the functions of these Anganwadi Centers with the belief that a better understanding of the way these Centers should work, will encourage the members of the community to complain and bring attention to any Centers that are not meeting the standards.

While I believe I was successful in completing my project I do wish I could have spent a longer amount of time working with my NGO, as I would then have been able to create a plan for the implementation of the changes I suggested and oversee the implementation itself. As I was not able to stay longer than my nine weeks, I trust my supervisor will use my report and hopefully, pass my project along to the next intern who works with him. Although I was not able

to do as much for my NGO as I desired, I still think my work has helped the local communities, even if my supervisor chooses not to continue my work with the succeeding intern. The research I conducted was extremely time consuming and would not have ever been looked into by the Institute if I had not been interested in pursuing this project. Through the report I put together, the Institute has access to all the information I gathered, with minimal time put in by the full time staff. As the Institute's primary work is to educate the community elected officials on their duties to the community, which include the monitoring of the Anganwadi Centers, they can now incorporate my research and suggestions into this teaching. The local officials will then be better able to ensure their community is getting the full benefit from the Anganwadi Centers, even if the Institute is not directly involved in bringing about these changes.

In addition to the experience I gained from my project, my time in India also improved my understanding of the political, economic, and social dynamics of this nation. I was exposed to several distinctly different lifestyles throughout my stay. My host family was a middle class, urban family, as were most of my colleagues at the Institute of Local Self-Governance. Due to the nature of my living and working situation, therefore, these were the Indian citizens' whose lives I was able to observe most fully. Additionally, through my research work, I was exposed to the farming communities living outside the city. This group included many members of Scheduled Tribes, who are economically disadvantaged groups in the Indian government. The difference in culture and lifestyle and living conditions that I witnessed between these communities and the urban community were innumerable. Being able to meet and speak with members of these rural communities, and to see firsthand the expectations they have for their health, hygiene, education, job opportunities, gender equality, etc. showed me the many ways in which these communities are still extremely under developed. Being given the chance to see the

inequality between peoples, living less than a dozen kilometers outside the city, has helped me to grasp some of the issues that India is struggling with.