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Through a grant from the Kelloogg Institute, I received an internship with the Foundation for Sustainable Development, an organization that places students with locally run NGOs. I had an interview with the FSD Jodhpur staff, in which I was asked what type of NGO I was most interested in working with. I identified my primary areas of interest as women's services and legal aid. As a result, I was placed with Vikalp Sansthan, an NGO working in 12 districts of Rajasthan to combat domestic violence, son preference, and child marriage through awareness raising, training programs, and legal advocacy. The group was founded in 2004, and has had a great deal of success in the past several years, earning grants from UNICEF, Oxfam, and the Rajeev Gandhi Foundation to implement various programs.

FSD encourages all of its interns to go through a process of assessing the needs of a target community, designing a project to address these needs, and implementing that project. Being there for such a short period of time, and lacking much of the technical expertise necessary for program design, made this goal a bit unrealistic. However, I still felt as though I was able to contribute a substantial amount to the work that Vikalp does.

I worked on four major projects during my time with Vikalp. The first project involved drafting a proposal for a three-year continuation of funding from Oxfam for current programs aimed at eliminating domestic violence. This involved assessing the successes and obstacles of current programs and adjusting activities accordingly, creating a three-year activity plan, and designing a tentative budget. This project was exciting because I was able to attend a conference involving representatives from all the project areas, talk directly with volunteers who work in the

field, and hear their perspectives. I was also able to incorporate my own ideas for future activities into my proposal.

Later in my internship, I used what I had learned during the Oxfam proposal and took the initiative to find a prospective independent donor and create my own proposal for an entirely new project. I designed a project for expanding legal aid access to more remote areas of Rajasthan, and incorporated the feedback from my supervisors to prepare a proposal. This independent work came at the end of my internship, and gave me a strong sense of accomplishment. I was able to apply a lot of what I had learned and feel as though I had gained extremely practical skills.

The one part of my internship that was at times frustrating was the tendency of my supervisors to assign work to me that I was subsequently unable to complete due to scheduling problems. Vikalp is run by a very small full time staff, and relies primarily on volunteer commitments, which often leaves the Director and Secretary very busy with organizational problems. In my case, my supervisors had me take on two projects that I was unable to follow through with because the end of my internship came up very quickly. The first of these projects was to design a gender sensitization training for young males. I really enjoyed this project, which involved both attending a training session and researching modules and strategies for conducting workshops about gender. However, I was disappointed by the fact that I did not have time to implement my training and measure its effectiveness.

The other project that I was unable to complete involved preparing a state level legal consultation that brought together lawyers, advocates, NGOs, and service providers to discuss the effectiveness of current legislation that provides relief to women victims of violence. Again, the research for this project was extremely interesting, and I felt as though I learned a lot about

violence and the Indian legal structure. The conference was originally scheduled to take place in early July, and my responsibilities were to have included participating in the consultation, providing feedback, and drafting a follow up report. As a result of scheduling delays by my supervisors, the conference did not take place until the last week in August, which limited my involvement to research and the formulation of documents sent to the participants before the consultation.

The inability to complete two of my four projects was out of my control, and for that reason it was somewhat frustrating. In spite of these frustrations, I would still consider my internship to be a success. I conducted extensive research in areas that interest me, and was able to begin experimenting with my own ideas for projects and trainings. I developed a wonderful relationship with my supervisors and was able to learn a lot from them about the ideologies as well as the practicalities of running a grassroots NGO. I was also able to contribute to Vikalp in several ways. Most importantly, I brought knowledge of donor relations, which enabled me to put together strong proposals for the organization.