



## Intern Completion Report

Prepared by: Jayde Lavoie, WASH Intern Coordinator

August 14, 2018

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the four-month internship conducted by Canadian student, Jayde Lavoie, over the course of May-August 2018. It is written from her perspective, and aims to include both practical aspects of completed tasks as well as intimate reflections on successes, challenges, and advice for new coming interns.

The report begins with an introduction outlining the reasoning behind Lavoie's decision to come to India as an intern, and a brief overview of her experience with HEEALS. Following the introduction is the job description that Lavoie worked based off of, as well as her four major completed tasks over the course of the internship.

Lavoie created a short stop-motion film celebrating International Menstrual Hygiene Day, using the medium of stop motion. The film explored the 2018 theme of #NoMoreLimits, and the limits that Indian women face regarding their menstrual hygiene management, due to accessibility, awareness, stigma, and discrimination. Her second major task was a series of blog contributions over the course of the internship, on a variety of topics related to health, education, environment and livelihood. Her third major accomplishment, alongside the HEEALS team, was the creation and implementation of the small-scale development project “Water Filters



For Gurgaon & U.P.”, which sought to purchase and distribute 40 Water Filters in communities across rural Haryana and Uttar Pradesh without access to clean drinking water. Her fourth and final accomplishment was a short film exploring India's issue of child marriage, including research and interviews regarding the justifications for child marriage, the impacts of this practice, current legislation regarding the issue, the legislative gaps in eradicating such an issue, and where third-party interveners have the potential to fill these gaps.

The report then outlines some of Lavoie's perceived successes over the course of her internship, from both a practical and a theoretical perspective. Practically, Lavoie gained experience in project proposal and report-writing, which is an integral skill to gain in any development work. The HEEALS team also managed to raise 34% over their fundraising goal for their development project “Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P.”, allowing them to purchase 40 filters, as opposed to their initial goal of 30. Lavoie also had the opportunity to hone her skills in professional correspondence through her communications with other NGOs during her internship. Theoretically, Lavoie had the opportunity to gain familiarity with the inner-workings of a grassroots NGO in a developing country, experiencing exposure to both rural and urban slums of India in the process. Lavoie also learned adaptability and flexibility in new working conditions, being a Canadian student interning in the culturally diverse atmosphere of India.

These successes also came alongside a variety of challenges that Lavoie explores in the subsequent section of the report. The three challenges that she seeks to identify and explain are as follows:

- Keeping pace with the consistent changes involved in implementing a small-scale development project
- Working beyond the language barrier (Hindi - English)
- Emotional detachment from the harsh realities of human rights contexts in India

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Lavoie gives a truthful explanation of how these challenges surfaced throughout the course of her internship, and how they helped her hone her skills as an active community member through being forced to rise above them.

The report then seeks to deliver advice to new coming interns at HEEALS, listing a series of questions one should consider before embarking on the experience. Finally, Lavoie concludes by extending her sincerest thanks to all those who contributed to such a unique summer.

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## INTRODUCTION

A third-year University student from Ontario, Canada, I chose to intern with HEEALS to fulfill my first COOP position, contributing to my graduation in the field of Conflict Studies and Human Rights. With most positions available on our University job board consisting of a 9am-5pm office schedule, I naturally wanted something different; This is why, when I saw the position for a WASH Intern Coordinator in New Delhi, India, I jumped at the opportunity to be involved in something that would make a tangible difference in the world around me. And I am so glad that I did.

My internship with HEEALS has been a highlight in my University career, and this report seeks to detail how my completed tasks, successes, and challenges contributed to a work experience that has shaped me for the better. Each obstacle provided me an opportunity to grow and learn, and each success rewarded me with a reminder of why I have chosen to dedicate my life to this type of work. With the help of an incredible team, and inspiring employers, an internship with HEEALS will challenge you in just the right way, so long as you are willing to be challenged. I sincerely recommend it.

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## JOB DESCRIPTION

My position with HEEALS was described as being “About 20% To 30%... field work. Which includes visit of school ,villages ,slums or refugee camps or meeting with marginalized communities of the village or orphan homes. And About 70% To 80% of the volunteer project work will be in the office.” The listed intern work responsibilities included, but were not limited to: research and development, fundraising, report making and documentation of my work, documentary film making, photography, social media networking, proposal-writing, and regular contributions to the HEEALS Blog. I am pleasantly surprised to report that over the course of my internship I gained experience in all of these tasks, and more.

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## COMPLETED TASKS

### Menstrual Hygiene Mangement: Stop-Motion.

In lieu of Menstrual Hygiene Day, which falls on May 28th each year, I was tasked with creating a film that explored 2018's theme of #NoMoreLimits. I chose to create a film using the medium of stop-motion, which I have worked with several times in completing personal and academic projects in the past. Stop-motion films are created by repeatedly photographing a single frame, while props are consistently repositioned to create, when played in sequence, a moving image. For this project, I chose to use coloured paper, cut into thin strips, as my prop for creating words and simple images (ie. the female symbol, a flower, a question mark, a globe, the Indian flag, etc). During the week of May 21st-25th, I would spend mornings creating letters and images using the coloured paper, and repositioning them on a framed wall using tape. The project consisted of a total of 262 photos, played in sequence at a speed of 0.5 seconds per photo.

The film explored some of the limits that women face regarding proper menstrual hygiene management, due to factors such as accessibility, awareness, stigma and discrimination. It includes startling statistics that highlight these barriers, such as that 20% of female girls drop out of school due to their periods, that 66% of girls do not know what their period is before menarche, and that in rural areas, girls walk more than 2km to dispose of used sanitary pads. It closes with acknowledgement of the 2018 theme for Menstrual Hygiene Day, #NoMoreLimits. The film was released on May 28th, and the day was celebrated by distributing sanitary pads to local Gurgaon women, along with attending NIINE's Menstrual Awareness Conclave held at the ITC Maurya.



### Blog Contributions.

Over the course of my four months interning at HEEALS, I was tasked with contributing to HEEALS' intern/volunteer blog on a variety of topics related to health, education, environment and livelihood. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to explore topics that interested me within these sectors, and put forth a

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diverse variety of content. At the beginning of my internship, my colleague and I discussed a malleable schedule to refer to for contributions, and for the most part, this schedule governed when we would be tasked with writing articles.

Because my internship focus was on water and sanitary hygiene and child marriage, the majority of my contributions revolved around these topics. Under the sector of water and sanitary hygiene, I produced two pieces, entitled “Safe Drinking Water Should Be Our Primary Priority”, and “The Thorn In India’s Environmental Side: Open Defecation And A Review Of Swachh Bharat”. Under the sector of child marriage, my piece “Child Brides in India” explored the justifications, impacts, legislation, regarding child marriage in India, the barriers that the country faces in eradicating this issue, and the potential role that NGOs can play in filling the gaps left by inadequate legislation. Beyond my mandate of WASH and Child Marriage, however, my surroundings and experiences in India drove me in directions that influenced my work, and my employer was enthusiastic about the opportunity for me to explore different issues. My piece “Stepping Into A Dream: A Week In Manali” was inspired by a work trip taken with my colleague, and discussed the pristine environment of Northern Himachal Pradesh in comparison to the polluted streets of Delhi, and how to keep it that way. My fifth and final contribution, titled “A Rising Need to Combat a Rising Population”, contextualized India as the second largest country in the world by population, and the issues this creates in distributing basic human needs and resources.

### **Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P.**

The project “Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P.” was implemented over the course my four month internship, and included four phases: preparation and research, fundraising, distribution, and monitoring/evaluation.

During the preparation and research phase, the organization determined an achievable number of filters to distribute, a likely cost for the equipment, and schools without access to clean drinking water. In the subsequent fundraising phase, the team created a GoFundMe campaign with the goal of raising a total of \$3,500 CAN, or roughly INR 185,000. The organization surpassed this fundraising goal by \$1,690, allowing for the opportunity to purchase and distribute an additional 10 Filters, bringing the total to 40 (36 R.O. and 4 Manual). In the distribution phase, the team travelled to villages in Gurgaon, Bhogapur, Kaushambi, Jewar, Rohi and Meerut. While the team had a goal of distributing all filters in a total



of 4 trips, obstacles in timing required the team to budget for an additional trip to Jewar/Rohi, using costs allocated to this purpose in the miscellaneous section of the budget. In the monitoring and evaluation phase,

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the organization sought to follow-up with beneficiaries and ensure proper installation through both photo confirmation and on-site visits.

The decision to implement this project was the result of a several-day brainstorming session between my employer, my colleague, and myself. We were able to contemplate the realistic scale of a project that could be implemented over the course of four months, and create a detailed project proposal that outlined what the deliverables, target region, budget, work breakdown, and timeline for this project would be. I maintained consistent tracking of the budget using an Excel chart conducted in both INR and CAN currencies. Throughout the course of project implementation, I maintained consistent documentation of HEEALS' work using mediums of both photography and film. Following the successful implementation of the project, I created a followup report detailing project actions, successes and shortfalls, an overall evaluation, and recommendations/next steps in implementing future projects as an organization. I also created a post-project Photo Essay, titled "The Beneficiaries Up Close", which sought to contextualize the scope of our work. Using the Apple Photo Library technology, I was able to format the photo essay into a 20-page book that is to be printed for both organizational benefit, and as a personal memento.

### **Child Marriage Documentary.**

My major content-creation project throughout my internship was a short documentary detailing the current status of child marriage in India, titled "Today is Not My Wedding Day." The film sought to explore child marriage as it currently stands in the country in a way that was both explicit and easily-digestible. The structure of the film mirrors an article that I had written regarding child marriage, and covers several topics in the following order: various perceived justifications for child marriage, impacts of child marriage, the current legislation regarding the issue, where the legislation lacks in effectively eradicating this issue, and where NGOs/third-party interveners have the potential to fill this gap.

All filming and interviewing was done individually, with translation help from my employer, Gaurav Kashyap. For stock footage, I filmed Delhi and the surrounding area in its natural habitat. This included footage of traffic, individuals, and landscapes. I sought to capture a modern India so as to contrast the ancient practice of child marriage, showing how unsuitable this issue is in today's India. For my interviews, I prepared a series of short questions posed to each individual:

- What do you know about child marriage in India?
- What are some of the impacts of marrying a child underage?
- Have you seen/heard of any instances of child marriage, either in your personal circles or in the news?
- What do you think stands in the way of ending child marriage in India?

I aimed to get a variety of interviews from representations of different members of societies; To get a more modern, youthful take on the issue, I interviewed several students of the University of Delhi. To get a more experienced view on the issue, I interviewed principals of schools in rural Uttar Pradesh. I was thankful to get representation of both male and female, rural and urban, aged and youthful. And to get a more nuanced view of the issue, I engaged with HEEALS volunteer Deeraj in a conversation about the differences between child marriage and a fixed marriage, and how a lack of communication about these differences can lead to confusion between the two. In the end, the documentary is to be released on the HEEALS Youtube channel, and circulated on the personal networks of all team members.

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## SUCSESSES.

### Practical.

#### **Gained experience in proposal and report-writing.**

In the four months of my internship, I gained experience in all aspects of implementing a small-scale development project. To bookend the distribution of 40 R.O Water Filters, I was tasked with writing a project proposal and post-project report. This being my first experience in this type of report-making, I was concerned about insuring I had the correct format and writing style to accomplish the task. In order to develop my skill, I enlisted in help from my colleague who had prior experience in project management. I was also sure to engage in consistent and clear dialogue with my employer regarding his expectations for my work. Finally, I went through a meticulous editing period for both reports, eliminating overlooked mistakes. Although no expert, I am confident that my experience in proposal and report-writing will be of benefit to me in career opportunities going forward.



#### **Fundraised 34% over our initial campaign goal for *Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P.***

One of HEEALS' major accomplishments over Summer 2018 was the successful fundraising for our small-scale development project, "Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P.". In aiming to purchase and distribute 30 water filters, the organization created a crowdfunding campaign with an initial goal of \$3500 CAN. We opted for a time limit of three weeks for the campaign, so as to encourage

donors to contribute before a particular deadline, and to ensure the funds would be collected in due time to start the implementation in early July. The campaign was primarily shared through word-of-mouth, and on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. The team offered an incentive of a personalized thank-you card, written by the students of Rohi Government School. In a period of just nine days, the organization not only reached its goal, but actually surpassed it by 34%. Because of this, the team was able to revise its initial goal of 30 filters, and purchase/distribute a total of 40. The sheer motivation of the team to implement this project was seen in the spectacular fundraising phase, and it remains one of the proudest moments of my internship.

#### **Corresponded with professionals in the NGO sector.**

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HEEALS provided me with an email to correspond with other organizations, potential donors and foundations throughout the course of my internship. This was extremely useful in terms of developing professional correspondence etiquette, and resulted in several unique opportunities. On May 28th, I had the opportunity to represent HEEALS at NIINE NGO's Menstrual Awareness Conclave, in celebration of International Menstrual Hygiene Day. The event was attended by health care professionals, activists, entrepreneurs, government members, and entertainers, all with the common goal of making menstrual hygiene management more accessible for Indian women! Another unique learning opportunity was provided through my work in creating a short documentary on child marriage throughout the summer. My research pushed me to reach out to local NGOs who work in combatting child marriage through education. I was able to meet with an employee of IIMPACT NGO, who works in mobilizing non-school-going youth in India. These opportunities highlight the unique environment that HEEALS provides as an employer, in establishing networking relationships within India's human rights contexts.

### **Theoretical.**

#### **Gained familiarity with the inner-workings of a grassroots NGO in a developing country.**

Coming from Canada, I naturally have work experiences that differ greatly from those offered in a developing country, let alone from a grassroots NGO. HEEALS allowed me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the inner-workings of a grassroots organization in an interactive way, as opposed to simply through observance. I was able to witness the benefits and shortfalls of this type of development work through seeing the NGO in action, and through performing the actions that I was tasked with. I personally gained from the lack of bureaucracy and hierarchy that plagues larger, more established organizations; At the very same time, I experienced the struggles that small organizations face in attracting donors, gaining credibility and securing government funding. I was allowed an opportunity to truly engage with my work at this level, and I believe that this will serve to inform my career choices in the future, which is all I could hope for in any employment opportunity.

#### **Experienced exposure to rural, urban and slum sides of India.**

HEEALS' work in content creation, resource distribution and workshop implementation drives the organization all over some of the most marginalized communities in India. Working as an intern on water and sanitary hygiene workshops, as well as on the "Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P." project, I was lucky enough to tag along of visits to schools and communities in rural, urban and slum areas across Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The field work component was undoubtedly an integral turning point in my internship and career; As a student of Conflict and Human Rights, I spend the majority of my post-secondary degree learning about the conditions of developing countries around the world. However, to see issues such as poverty, colonialism, patriarchy and inequality effect populations first hand is something that no lecture or book could ever teach me. Engaging with vulnerable populations reminds me of the reason why I chose to do this work, as well as the privilege that I have in having been raised in such favourable circumstances.

#### **Learned adaptability and flexibility amidst a new culture and working conditions.**

As previously mentioned, gaining experience in a new work environment was exacerbated by the fact that I was simultaneously acclimatizing to a new culture. Working in India has allowed me the chance to practice my



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flexibility in terms of expectations of myself, of others, and of our collective goals as a team. There were several times throughout my internship that I had to let go of things that I saw as important, that were not valued to the same extent by others. This was of no fault of anyones, but simply a result of individuals with completely different upbringings trying to find common ground. While occasionally uncomfortable, it was being pushed out of my comfort zone that allowed me to hone my skills in adaptability, and this is a skill that will be incredibly useful in the working world going forward, in terms of reconciling personal differences so as to achieve a common goal.

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## CHALLENGES

### **Keeping pace with the consistent changes involved in implementing a small-scale development project.**

It is typical for one without much experience to admire the final product of a project implemented by established, multi-national organizations (ie. Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF). However, what isn't relayed in the pristine post-project reports are the obstacles regarding budgeting, scheduling, and communicating that plagues any project, let alone one implemented by an NGO with less resources. I did not expect to encounter as many revisions to our initial "Water Filters For Gurgaon & U.P." proposal as I did. Without following up on promised aspects of our initial proposal, such as monitoring/evaluation and consistent workshop delivery, it felt as if the team was daydreaming an ideal project, only to implement a fraction of what was anticipated. I believe that it was my half-blind optimism in being exposed to the work of established organizations that led me to be caught off-guard by the consistent changes involved in implementing a small-scale development project. Going forward, I believe that exposure to this reality of development work will allow me to manage my expectations without letting them get in the way of my capacity to implement good work.

### **Working beyond the language barrier.**

While I know significantly more Hindi now than I did in coming to India, I am nowhere close to being even conversationally efficient in the language. And although I am blessed to know a language that has become universally acceptable, most local conversing naturally occurred in local dialects, primarily Hindi. In hindsight, I believe that attributing more of my spare time, both prior to and during my trip to learning Hindi would have assisted me in playing a more intimate role in conversing with the local beneficiaries of HEEALS work. Beyond conversing with the locals, knowing Hindi would have helped to strengthen inter-organizational communication during field work in villages, as conversations with the locals had a direct impact on how our



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work as an organization unfolded.

## Emotionally detaching from the harsh reality of human rights conditions in India.

Being a student in conflict and human rights, I was drawn to the potential to create positive change in Indian communities by working with HEEALS. What I didn't prepare for, alongside the grateful smiles of the beneficiaries of our work, however, is having to face all of those that the scope of our project will not reach. Gaining experience in development work means witnessing just how much development is needed in affected communities; For me, witnessing poverty and inequality at this level of intimacy was a first. I found it difficult to detach from these sights, and to focus on who our work was impacting, as opposed to who our work was not. No amount of reading about these issues could have prepared me for this experience, and while I am unsure as to whether or not there is a remedy to this type of emotion, I do know that it motivated me to work harder and reach more communities. For anyone thinking of engaging in development work, this challenge should not discourage you; Rather, with proper mental preparation, it should mould you into an active community member.

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## MOVING FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW INTERN.

My internship with HEEALS has been incredibly rewarding, for both the project beneficiaries and the organization itself. While it would be naive to suggest that there were no challenges along the way, the challenges only forced those involved to be innovative and adaptable in their solution-making, creating a team of motivated, successful individuals. Anyone interested in this opportunity should consider it greatly, keeping several recommendations in mind:

- **Are you prepared to be pushed out of your comfort zone?** An internship with HEEALS will expose you to raw, unpolished, and real aspects of development work. It is important that in considering this opportunity, one prioritizes flexibility, especially if coming from the West. The experience is eye-opening, so long one lets it be.
- **Are your intentions in check?** While this is a wonderful opportunity for interns, this is a life-changing opportunity for the beneficiaries. One should ensure that the primary goal behind getting involved with HEEALS is to benefit the communities, as opposed to oneself. A good question of appropriation to ask oneself is as follows: If you were not allowed to bring a camera, would you still travel to India?
- **Are you ready to make mistakes?** I hope so! Ego has no place in development work, and the sooner I realized this, the better my work was for it. Remain humble, ask questions, and learn from each missed opportunity. The only true mistake one can make is refusing that they've ever made one.
- **Are you culturally aware?** Development work is an adjustment no matter what country you are working in. However, in a place like India, there are additional cultural differences that it helps to be aware of prior to arriving. Research is critical during the pre-departure phases, to minimize culture shock. For example, conservatism in dress was one thing I was thankful to have known prior to my arrival; However, the culture of hospitality was an entirely different and pleasant surprise to encounter!
- **Are you ready for a life-changing experience?** I don't use this phrase lightly. My summer internship with HEEALS taught me more about myself as an active community member, and the world around me that I steward, than any government office job ever could have. I learned lessons that I thought I

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already knew, and realized potential within myself that I didn't know existed. What more could I have asked for in an opportunity?

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an internship with HEEALS is an experience that I would recommend to anyone willing to fill the criteria listed above. I am so incredibly grateful for this summer, and for making it so extraordinary, I would like to extend specific thanks to the following:

- Every beneficiary, for being so open and receptive to the help we were offering. There would be no completed projects without the willingness of each community member to accept our work, and so I extend my sincerest thanks for meeting me as a foreign stranger, and leaving me as a fulfilled friend.
- The girls of my PG, for turning my temporary lodgings into a four-month long slumber party. You showed me a side of India that I will never forget, being one of unending kindness and moral support. Thank you for being more than roommates. Thank you for being a shoulder to lean on!
- Stefano and Natalie, my fellow interns, for bringing diversity and humour to the group dynamic! Who would have thought that such a mismatched collection of students would make such a great team? I am so proud of you both for your accomplishments, and so excited to see what lies in store for you both!
- Rachel, for being everything I needed this summer, and more. We both came into this experience as opposite individuals; That explains why we attracted such a strong friendship. Thank you for bringing me down when I needed it, and thank you for letting me pull you up when you needed it. You have become so much more than a colleague. You have become one of my dearest friends.
- Sonika and Gaurav, the passion behind every project. I strive to one day dedicate my life to service in the way that you both have. Thank you for tolerating me as I grew, and for being such wonderful teachers. I believe I came to India with the intention of creating positive change, and I leave here with the capacity to do so - And that is thanks to the leading example of you both.

While my internship has come to a close, my memories of my time with HEEALS never will. At the end of this adventure, yet always at the start of something new! Here's hoping I carry these lessons with me as I go. Cheers, and good luck.

**Jayde Lavoie**  
**August 2018**

