

## **Bighelp For Education Post Internship Report**

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I had just graduated from 8 years of telugu schooling from Shishu Bharati and I was thrilled to go see my grandparents and cousins in India and I was ecstatic for my Big Help Youth Internship Project at Zilla Parishad Secondary School (ZPSS), an all girls high school, in Kalluru, Khammam. It is a small village located one hour outside of Khammam where my grandparents live. Most people in this village work as farmers and construction workers, which provided children with little to no educational guidance at home. The literacy rate of this village is 41%.

On the morning of July 25, my dad, grandparents, little cousin and I, packed up our things and got ready for the internship. We jumped in the car and started our journey to Kalluru. On the way, we stopped to pick up some extra goodies for the girls. By the time we reached Kalluru it was 10am and 84 degrees fahrenheit. It had rained the previous day, something that was long awaited for the farmers. Their staple living was farming so they needed rain almost every day to flourish their crops, throughout the farming season.

When we arrived at the school we were warmly welcomed into the staff office by the school headmaster and staff. After a few minutes, the rest of the teachers which were made up of 10 women, joined us in the office. We had a brief conversation on what Bighelp was and what I was going to talk to the students about. I went to this school in specific because my aunt, Rajeshwari,

works there as a math teacher. This school has 10 classrooms with around 220 girls and 10 teachers, with grades 6-10.

My class was made up of 28, 8th grade English medium girls. In 8th grade they were learning Telugu as the first language, Hindi as the second and English as the third language. They also learn Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Social and Math. In the two-day workshop that I conducted I gave two presentations and taught two hands-on activities. On Day 1, I gave my introduction speech. My speech covered topics about American sports, sports that I play in my town, education in America, including class structure, subjects learnt, special classes like physical education, music, art etc. I talked about culture such as, Western clothing, relationships, music and community. Then, I talked about the various time zones, weather and currency while showing them pictures of everything. The girls were shy in the beginning but as I progressed through my presentation they became interactive. They asked me many questions about my life in America and taught me a lot about their lives in India as well, which took about a half hour. While teaching there I learned that the school provides them with lunch daily, curries and rice, from a predefined menu. Also, I have learnt that the majority of the girls bike or walk more than 5km to get to school every day, despite the weather. This took about an hour.

After we exchanged facts about both countries, I started my presentation about pollution, how it affects us and what we need to do to reduce the spread, which lasted around 40 minutes. The speech covered air, water, and solid-waste pollution. We talked about how factory are releasing fossil fuels into the air and rivers, how the vehicles in the traffic causes air pollution, how rivers are getting polluted due to the chemicals leaked into the water thru fertilizers and pesticides,

and how solid-waste pollution was caused by ignorance of the people and how landfills are piling up. The girls had been learning about pollution as part of their science curriculum, so whenever I asked them a question they were very responsive. Since they knew about pollution already, they came out of their shell and engaged in the presentation with more enthusiasm. Both of these presentations were shown on a projector that was gifted by somebody to the school around a year ago. They use the projector to screen some of the educational videos in school. This was the end of day one. This day's experience really excited me because the kids were very enthusiastic and it made me want to be more outgoing the next day.

The second day we worked on hands-on activities, making friendship bracelets and tie dye t-shirts. The point of these activities was to teach the girls that you can get creative with any material and make something beautiful out of it. Teaching the girls how to make friendship bracelets was very rewarding because they looked genuinely interested and they seemed to be having fun. With these bracelets, they could make handmade rakhis for the rakhi festival. Teaching the bracelets took about half-an-hour. But the kids worked on them by themselves for about another half hour.

I then moved on to teaching them how to tie-dye a bulls eye design onto shirts. I taught them to spread the t-shirt flat and pick up the t-shirt from the center, section it off tightly with rubber bands and then dye the shirts with a different color in each section. The girls had a blast spraying different colors onto the t-shirts using the dye bottles, it took around 50 minutes to prepare the t-shirts with rubber bands and pour the colors. After they finished dyeing the shirts, I gave them plastic bags to wrap their t-shirts in tightly, to make sure none of the colors leaked out. They took these bags home at the end of the day and washed and dried them at home.

After finishing the activities, the school gathered for an assembly so that I could handout the gifts that I brought for them. We bought geometry boxes for all the students in the school, I distributed the school bags provided by Bighelp to all the students in my class and to all the class toppers from the previous year of all the other grades. In addition to the school bags and geometry boxes, I gave the students in my class, pens, candy, pennies, bubblegum, cookies, along with tie-dye t-shirts and friendship bracelets they made. Seeing the delight in their eyes as they sprayed dye onto the shirts really filled my heart and made me really realize how little they had at home.

This experience has taught me how much we take for granted, growing up in America. The opportunity Bighelp gave me opened my mind to culture and gave me a chance to impact kids that desire education but need external support. This workshop helped me understand that not everyone is as fortunate as us to grow in a community with free education and an easy life. Seeing all the kids eager to learn new topics and hear about the culture in different countries portrays the desire for education.

One of the biggest differences that I noticed while at this school is the level of respect that the students give to their teachers. Whenever they answer a question they do it very formally and without any hesitation. Also the student teacher ratio was very small it was around 17 per teacher while the American ratio is usually 25 per teacher.

I would like to thank the headmaster, Mrs. Laxmi Prasanna, teachers, Mrs. Rajeshwari, Mrs. Sirisha, Mrs. Aruna, Mrs. Indupriya, Mrs. Jakira Begum, Mrs.

Anuradha, Mrs. Saraswathi, from the ZPSS high school for taking two days out of their schedule to let me come and present in the school. Also, special thanks to my aunt, Rajeshwari to prepare before and during my time at the school, during my internship. Thank you to the kids for being so cooperative throughout my two days and making me feel welcome. A big thank you to my mentor Mythili Aunty for taking time out of her busy schedule to guide me throughout the process, putting up with me through long hours, revising my presentations and speeches multiple times and letting this presentation become a reality. I would also like to thank Bighelp for this incredible opportunity to not only educate other girls of my age about my life here in America, but also to learn more about their lives in India.









