

**BigHelp Education Post-Internship Report**  
**By Ruvanthika Tlg**  
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This summer, I went to India. I stayed there for one month. In that one month, I spent two days doing an internship program representing the organization, Big Help. I was given the opportunity to do this internship program at Ganesapuram Government High School, Musiri, Tamil Nadu

The first day, I started with an interactive speech about myself. I told them about the US, my daily life, my family, and much more. I showed them a picture of everything I talked about. I asked them lots of questions like, how do you get to school, or what do you guys have for lunch. They answered very enthusiastically every time. They also asked me lots of questions like where do you live, or how does snow feel. In the first 10-15 minutes, it was really awkward for not only me but also the students. I was using my notecards a lot at first and I was very nervous. I saw some kids whispering to each other and I felt deep down that this was not going to be good. I could feel the butterflies in my stomach. Later though, with the help of the English teacher, we all became really close. Soon, I realized I didn't need my notes anymore. We were all talking and laughing. At the end of my Intro speech, I quizzed them about my family and the things I told them about. Surprisingly, they answered correctly every time.

After my Intro speech, we started talking about composting. I explained the process of composting. I also explained the pros and cons. They all listened very attentively. After I finished explaining composting, we had a small quiz about it. They did pretty well except for one thing. They couldn't understand English. The English teacher and I had to explain what everything meant. In the process, we just ended up telling them the answers. When we finished the quiz, I let them pick out a prize for trying. I brought a prize box along with me. In the prize box, there were candies, pencils, markers, and other stationery items.

We went outside after they all chose from the prize box. I noticed lots of older and younger kids peeking out of the classroom windows and doors. Some were waving and smiling while others were just whispering. We collected dirt and plants for the composting bin we were building. Slowly we began building the composting bin. We finished just in time for lunch.

At lunch, I tried some school food. I noticed they got lunch for free. I sat with other kids and ate. They would eat with their hands. I couldn't find a spoon nearby so I gave it a try. For me, it was very messy. Since they were used to it, they didn't really spill. There were some tenth-grade boys and lots of seventh-grade girls that I was eating with. They all gave me to lunch to share. When the saw me hesitate, they were confused and asked me what happened. I explained that we weren't allowed to share lunch in the US. They all had a good laugh about that. They eventually replied saying that in India everyone shared food. I ate a bit of

each person's lunch. One person bought me coconut rice. Another one brought me idli with sambar, someone else brought yogurt rice. It was so interesting!

After lunch, everybody from all of the different grades was asking me to go to their class and sing some songs, as they figured out from my Intro speech, I sing. I went to all the different classes and they were all very impressed with my singing. When we finished that, I showed them pictures of my dog, my house, my family and so on. I heard one kid said that it was unfair how my dog was sitting on a couch while they didn't have any couches for themselves. That's when it fully hit me. I live in so much more luxury than them, but still, I am not as grateful as they are.

Some of the girls then took me on a tour of the school. They were all treating me like a princess. Even the 10th graders were calling me Akka (sister in Tamil). When they showed me the bathroom, I was stunned. There was such little privacy! There was a wall around this certain area, but then they would just have to use the bathroom on the ground! There were no stalls or anything. I felt so much more grateful. When I came out, my mom told me it was time to leave. I said goodbye and I went home, while they had math class sitting underneath a tree in the school grounds.

The next day, when I came back, they all ran out of the school grounds to come and greet me. That day, after their pledge, someone from north India came to show them some crafts to do. It was very impressive and I had so much fun sitting with them. When we finished, we all went back to our classrooms and started the day. My uncle had bought a five-star chocolate bar for every kid in the school. We gave some to each classroom and told the teachers to pass them out. Their faces lit up immediately! They were very excited. After my small treat for them, I started my class with the seventh graders again.

This day, I focused on art. First I taught them about origami. I had a step by step tutorial for them. I showed them how to make paper airplanes, birds, and ninja stars. Once we made the airplanes, we had a small contest to see who could fly it the farthest. After we finished the origami, I took them on a small break to check out the composting bin. We mixed it up and went back into the class.

Next, I had a tiny drawing contest. The topic was nature. They didn't understand it very well, as some of them ended up drawing buildings. We voted on who's was the best one. I participated with them. We all were very quiet. I brought markers, colored pencils, and crayons with me for them to use. In the end, there were so many ties, that I just gave them all a prize. I let them choose from the prize box again. Some kids were fighting for it but luckily, the teacher was there to calm them down.

When the contest was over, they had a surprise for me. First, just the boys from seventh grade did a dance for me, and then they brought lots of older boys to also dance for me. When the dance was finished, it was time to leave.

I handed all the seventh graders a BigHelp backpack. Then we all said our goodbyes. It was so sad. They were all asking me to stay for another day and I didn't know what to say.

A couple of days ago, I got a video from the teacher. The kids were thanking me for everything and they were asking me to come back next year. They even showed me a plant they grew from the compost! I had so much fun in this internship, and I would love to do it again!

I would like to extend my Thanks to Akhila Akka, Padma aunty, Rekha aunty, and the Big Help organization as well.