



CASC Global Experience in Chennai, India

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Chennai, India

Chennai is one of the largest cities in India, located off the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Tamil Nadu. Tamil, Hindi, Arabic and English were all spoken regularly. Although Hinduism is considered the largest religion in India, Tamil Nadu has a relatively large Muslim and Christian population compared to the Northern states of India.

During our stay, Chennai was experiencing a severe water crisis.

Field Sites

MCC has several field partners in various social institutions. These partners focus on a variety of social issues including but not limited to: economic development, gender development, LGBTQ empowerment, support for indigenous and environmental advocacy. relevant information about your experience. However, transportation was not always safe, timely or accessible and caused a major barrier in accessing these sites.



Placement/Project Information

Field placement: Madras Christian College in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Special Studies: During our field placement, we were also given the opportunity to engage with course material in the classroom by attending courses taught by MCC faculty.

Madras Community College of MCC

Field Placement: Madras Community College is sponsored by the main MCC campus. This is a community college for students with disadvantaged backgrounds, either economically, socially or culturally. The intent is to give the students occupational training in either computer services or nursing programs to enhance their economic outlook.

Special Populations: We engaged with adolescent students from the community college on a variety of topics relating to life skills such as: confidence, communication and intercultural exchange.

Outcomes

Field Placement: We exchanged with students our age, and learned important skills for the future.

Special Studies: We were able to have a dialogue on social and political issues in both India and the United States.

Skills Utilized

- Perseverance in extreme temperatures and long distances traveled with few opportunities to eat
- Flexibility, schedules are very loosely planned in Chennai and often times people are late due to transportation or various other reasons, so it is important to avoid strict schedules because plans often fall through
- Cross cultural communication, in each new setting there are different customs that we had to adapt to such as the gender differences and language barriers

Classroom Connections

- During our time, we were able to connect both content from within CASC and then within our individual studies to the material we were engaging in while abroad.
- We considered the sustainability of our specific projects, and how to enter and exit vulnerable communities with respect.

Lessons Learned

- We learned a lot about the reality of impact in working with more vulnerable communities, as well as the sustainability of programs that exist so far removed from our individual contexts.
- We learned a lot about not only the water crisis in our location, but the importance of having access to clean, drinkable water all over.
- We learned about the differences in higher education systems in our community and others.



Career Connections

- Within the field of social work, we were able to identify macro and micro areas of international work.
- Within our individual programs, we identified other areas of international work, such as global health and ethnographic research.

Advice

- It's extremely hot, it is important to pack lots of water and snacks
- Indian culture is quite different so acknowledge your challenges and when you can reflect or decompress do so
- Be aware of the role you play in the organizations and site visits you attend as an outsider

Acknowledgments

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