

INDIA RESEARCH INTERNSHIP 2010

Undergraduate Action Research in India

University of Notre Dame

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Academic Year 2009 - 2010

COURSE SUMMARY

**ESS XXXX (To be listed) Summer 2010
Education Action Research Seminar in India**

Tamo Chattopadhyay

The proposed internship: “**Education Action Research in India**” is envisioned to provide a unique experiential learning and action research opportunity for undergraduate students of Notre Dame in partnership with one of India’s leading educators, Sister Cyril Mooney, Principal of Loreto Sealdah in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). The hallmark of Sister Cyril’s vision of social justice is the “Rainbow School”- an innovative education program whereby Loreto School’s students from fifth grade onwards are required to act as student-teachers for the underprivileged children (mostly street children, child laborers and children of families in extreme poverty) who participate in non-formal education activities within the same premises – on the rooftop of the school building. The Rainbow model of school within a school has fundamentally challenged the class, religion and caste divisions of the Indian society and has engaged young people across the social divide into empowering and mutually enriching teaching-learning experiences. Notre Dame students participating in this seminar will conduct Instructor-guided qualitative research studies of child poverty, adolescents’ social exclusion and innovative educational interventions targeted at the root causes of poverty and marginalization in India’s increasingly prosperous and unequal society.

1. Background

The proposed internship: “**Undergraduate Action Research in India**” is envisioned to provide a unique experiential learning and action research opportunity for undergraduate students of Notre Dame in partnership with one of India’s leading educators, Sister Cyril Mooney, Principal of Loreto Sealdah in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). The Faculty Advisor for the internship, Dr. Tamo Chattopadhyay, is a native of Kolkata and has an on-going nine-year strong professional relationship with Sister Cyril Mooney, and the educators / staff at Loreto Sealdah.

The hallmark of Sister Cyril’s approach to social justice is the “Rainbow School”- an innovative education program whereby Loreto School’s students from fifth grade onwards are required to act as student-teachers for the underprivileged children (mostly street children, child laborers, and children of families in extreme poverty) who participate in non-formal education activities within the same premises – on the rooftop of the school building. The Rainbow model of school within a school has fundamentally challenged the class, religion and caste divisions of the Indian society and has engaged young people across the social divide into empowering and mutually enriching teaching-learning experiences. By participating in the proposed action research internship, Notre Dame students will gain direct and meaningful exposure to innovative educational and social justice interventions that are targeted at the root causes of poverty and marginalization in India’s increasingly prosperous and unequal society.

2. Enrollment and Registration

The internship is offered as a **zero credit summer 2010 ESS course**, with a pass/fail [S/U] grading option. While the primary listing for the internship will be with the Interdisciplinary Minor Education, Schooling and Society (ESS), within the College of Arts and Letters; the internship is envisioned to provide relevant learning opportunities to students from Poverty Studies Minor, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Hesburgh Program for Public Service, Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, as well as to students from Mendoza College of Business studying social entrepreneurship in international contexts.

While the internship does not require applicants to be ESS Minors, selected students are required to have completed at least one of the two following ESS Courses prior to their travel to India in summer:

ESS Course: Introduction to Education, Schooling and Society

ESS Course: Education Innovations in Poverty (offered only in Spring)

The internship will enroll four (4) undergraduate students from across Notre Dame Colleges and Programs. Students will be required to submit a course application indicating their rationale for choosing the course, and emphasizing relevant skills (language, cultural, subject area, etc.). At the time of the course application, students will be also informed about potential funding sources they could apply for to participate in the course.

Accepted students will be required to register for the internship as a summer 2010 ESS course in due time. Students, who could not be admitted because of capacity constraints, will receive special consideration for admission if they reapply in subsequent years.

3. Learning Goals

- Participating Notre Dame students will learn about relevant research literature in the area of child poverty and educational development with a focus on the South Asian context
- Students will gain a first-hand exposure to the multi-faceted social programs and policies addressing needs of vulnerable children and adolescents that are conceptualized and implemented by a broad range of local stakeholders in the contemporary Indian society
- Students will conduct Instructor-guided research on child poverty, adolescents’ social exclusion and innovative educational interventions in a vibrant urban context of India

4. Structure and Timeline

Although the proposed internship is conceptualized as a Summer 2010 offering; the actual teaching-learning activities will be spread over the 2010 calendar year as follows:

Component	Time Line	Activity	Remarks
Component 1	Spring 2010	Four sessions at Notre Dame devoted to pre-readings, funding proposal development, and pre-departure preparation.	<u>Primary outputs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding application • Detailed research plan
Component 2	Summer 2010	Four weeks of action research and experiential learning in Kolkata, India	<u>Primary outputs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empirical data (qualitative and quantitative) collected and organized digitally • A research brief
Component 3	Fall 2010	Optional (but strongly recommended) independent research (guided reading) course for 1 credit with Professor Chattopadhyay to analyze and synthesize empirical data	<u>Preferred outputs:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed research report and campus presentation • Article authorship with Professor Chattopadhyay

5. Core Components and Learning Activities

The components outlined in schematic above are briefly discussed below.

Component 1: Pre-Departure

- Students will be assigned pre-readings focused on history, culture and social context of India and the big emerging issues confronting its contemporary society.
- Readings will provide students with sufficient background knowledge and cultural fluency to effectively engage in community-based organizations in Kolkata during their four-week experiential learning assignments in India
- Sessions will be devoted to issues of education and social policy in contemporary India, and the dynamics of globalization in the backdrop of the rich cultural heritage of the Indian society
- Students will finalize their funding research proposals and detail research plans with advisement from the Instructor
- Notre Dame students will be responsible for making their travel arrangements to and from Kolkata.
- Loreto Sealdah will suggest Notre Dame students' suitable accommodation. Suitable accommodation for students should imply – safety, and ease of transportation to and from Loreto Sealdah.

Component 2: Four-week Action Research and Experiential Learning in India

- **Academic partner** – Sister Cyril Mooney, Principal, Loreto Day School, Sealdah.
- Students will have a range of education and social service programs to choose from; all operating under the broad umbrella of Loreto Day School, Sealdah. Indeed, students will be placed in all five Loreto Schools in Calcutta which are implementing Sister Cyril's model of "Rainbow Program" (or School within a School for the Underprivileged¹).
- Besides taking active roles in Loreto Sealdah's programs, students will also be required to visit community based organization in / around the city of Calcutta. These "off-site" organizations will be identified through networks of Sister Cyril and Professor Tamo Chattopadhyay. The idea here is to give Notre Dame students an opportunity to experience a wide repertoire of social programs in diverse spatial contexts of a global city; and carry out research studies that have been identified by the local partner
- The exact schedule of each student, his/her research project and service assignment within Loreto will be determined by Professor Chattopadhyay through extensive consultation with all parties involved – matching organizational needs with students' skills and interests as much as possible.
- **Reflective Seminar:** Besides experiential learning through service assignments, the proposed internship also envisions providing supplemental learning opportunities for Notre Dame students in India. At the core of this supplemental learning is the weekly Reflective

¹ More on Rainbow Program in Appendix 2

Seminar. The seminars will take place at the focal venue of the course: the premises of Loreto Sealdah. The idea of these Reflective Seminars is to take a step out of the firing lines and reflect on the happenings as informed outsiders.

- **Stakeholder Workshops:** The weekly Reflective Seminars will be followed by interactive workshops with invited local experts: practitioners, policy makers, media and private sector representatives engaged in education and social policy arena in the Indian context.
- Such a forum will not only enable the students to interact with practitioners; but it will also be an important forum for stakeholders to share their experiences with each other and collaboratively identify areas of further action / research / capacity building where Notre Dame partnerships could be useful.
- Professor Chattopadhyay will moderate all Stakeholder Workshops, with the explicit goal of making their proceedings relevant to the focus of the proposed Action Research Seminar.
- **Implementation:** Loreto Sealdah will remain the primary partner and learning resource in this program and truly act as the laboratory where Notre Dame students get to experience cutting edge social programming directly from the people who are designing and implementing them with a keen understanding of human rights and social justice.
- Dr. Chattopadhyay, in consultation with Loreto Sealdah, will identify local practitioners, policy makers, media and private sector representatives to appear as panelists and presenters at the weekly seminars. Loreto Sealdah will provide local venue for weekly seminars, and support with communication infrastructure. It will also provide administrative / informational support to Notre Dame students Monday-Friday during business hours for resolving local living and related inquiries.
- Loreto Sealdah will be responsible for meeting the Notre Dame students at the Kolkata port of entry and seeing them off at departure. It will also make transportation arrangements for all local travels within the city (and to a rural site for its village school day).

Component 3: Fall Re-entry at Notre Dame Campus

- Students will consult with Professor Chattopadhyay during the first six to eight weeks of the Fall semester to complete the write-up of their final research paper.
- Students will be strongly encouraged to write their final paper collaboratively with Loreto educators in India. This partnership / collaboration is the crucial link for ensuring that Notre Dame students' research in India will be used back in India; and that there will be continuity to what they have started. The final paper is envisioned as a Research Report that is informed by the students own research and learning in India.

6. Faculty

The Faculty Advisor for the internship will be Dr. Tamo Chattopadhyay, Assistant Professor of Practice, at the Institute for Educational Initiatives. Dr. Chattopadhyay's teaching and research interests include educational interventions and policies toward socio-economically disadvantaged children and adolescents internationally. A native of Calcutta, India, Dr. Chattopadhyay has an on-going professional relationship with the course's host institution in India - Loreto Sealdah School; and with its visionary leader - Sister Cyril Mooney.