Bhubaneswar Urban Sanitation Project

Orissa, India
-Pujan Rai ‘15
The goal of the project, Project Sammaan, is to provide sanitation facilities to the people living in urban slums in Orissa.

However, the role of the organization I was working for is to conduct unbiased evaluation (RCT) of management models to run the facilities.

Due to government restrictions, my RM did not allow me to take pictures. So, the presentation does not have pictures from my project.
What is an RCT?

- Randomized Controlled Trials
- Gold Standard in research evaluating interventions
- Randomly pick a treatment and control group
- Conduct a baseline, midline, and endline assessments of both groups before and after the intervention to evaluate its effects
My Job

- Researched photo identification and fingerprint recognition systems to collect data in the facilities and negotiated price quotes with vendors
- Tested the digital baseline survey, attended weekly meetings with government officials and partners, and checked the allocated construction sites for encroachments
- Completed the facilities design and innovation section in the Detailed Project Report to be submitted to the Indian Government
My Position in the organization

Principal Investigator

Program Manager

Research Manager

Research Associates

Intern (Me)
Most Rewarding Aspect

- I visited a slum in Bhubaneswar. The slum dwellers had no facilities and had been abandoned by the people in power. However, they had constructed a crude water filtration system on their own to meet their needs. It was not a perfect arrangement, but it showed the will power and resourcefulness of the slum dwellers. This experience gave me further impetus to help them.
My Contribution to the Project

- I thoroughly researched digital payment systems for the facilities that could also record usage data.
- I eliminated digital cards as an option and replaced it with fingerprint recognition.
- I secured a working proposal with a vendor, Coresonant at the cost of INR 2 Million.
- Any new person can pick up from where I left.
Impact on my academics/career plans

- This experience firmly cemented my interest in development economics
- I chose to forgo the Finance certificate and instead write a thesis on the role of remittance in developing countries
- I have decided that I want to pursue development economics upon graduation
Conclusion

• This experience was very rewarding to me academically and personally

• Poor Economics by Abhijeet Banerjee and Esther Duflo is a good read for any one interested in development and RCTs

• However, any one considering the development field should understand that there won’t be air conditioners, laundry, metro trains, and the amenities of the developed world. And, that is the precise reason why our services are required in the first place!!
Thank You

• I would like to thank my supervisor, Anantika Singh and RAs Vibha Mehta and Pragya Dewan for being so helpful and available throughout my internship

• I would also like to sincerely thank Director Duarte-Silva and Mrs. Benson and the IIP for making this internship possible in the first place!!