Philani Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition Trust:
Addressing Maternal and Child Health in the Informal Settlements outside of Cape Town, South Africa

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About the Organization
Philani works in the townships outside of Cape Town to promote healthy lifestyles among women and their children impacted by poverty through the following programs:
• Mentor Mother Programs
• Nutrition Clinics
• Income Generation Program
• Educare Centers
These programs equip mothers in these informal settlements with the skills, knowledge, guidance, support, and supplies they need to ensure that their kids grow up healthy, strong, and able to reach their full physical and mental potential.

Maternal and Child Health in South Africa
• Up to 45% of every 1000 children born in South Africa die before their first birthday.
• South Africa has one of the lowest exclusive breastfeeding rates in the world.
• 35% of pregnant mothers in Cape Town’s townships are HIV positive.

Reflection
• Philani works in the townships surrounding Cape Town that are greatly affected by poverty, leaving mothers and their children without adequate food and health care.
• The mentor mother program recruits mothers from the community who, despite struggling with poverty, raised healthy children, and are trained to teach other mothers to do the same thing.
• Mentor mothers go into the community and work directly with families, offering them advice, knowledge, support, and supplies to enable them to birth and raise healthy children.
• As an intern, not only did I get to meet these mentor mothers and see them in their trainings, I had the chance to go through data they offered about their clients and analyze it to see what areas of the program could be improved.

In nutrition clinics, I worked directly with clients referred by mentor mothers and was able to see first hand how Philani works to rehabilitate underweight children.

• Philani works tirelessly to support the families of these townships, and I was lucky to help them in the mission of promoting health and nutrition.
• This internship enabled me to learn so much about the culture of South Africa, the issues the country faces, and effective solutions and interventions to these issues.

• I feel lucky to have worked at an organization so dedicated to empowering women and children with knowledge, support, and health.

About the Internship
This internship allowed me to see the inner workings of an NGO while also learning about the problems that affect many mothers and children that benefit from Philani. My work responsibilities included:
• Analyzing outcomes of mentor mother interventions in areas such as rehabilitating malnourished children and promoting exclusive breastfeeding
• Assisting in nutrition clinics that seek to rehabilitate underweight children
• Developing a better system for the store responsible for the income generation program
• Organizing Philani’s administrative data and filing system
• Assisting with children in the Educare Daycare Center.

Acknowledgements
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