Population Services International: Public Health in Cambodia

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Population Services International – Phnom Penh, Cambodia
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Introduction
Population Services International:
• Runs a portfolio of evidence-based interventions that include provider behavior change, training programs, quality assurance, etc.
• Engages in cutting-edge research on public health markets and behaviors

Objective of Internship
This internship provided the opportunity to approach public health issues through research on affordable, market-driven solutions. My objective was to learn more about public health and how private-sector research makes an impact in global development.

Reflection
• The PSI research team investigates public health issues in Cambodia with a focus on understanding the drivers and barriers of desired practices and finding market-driven solutions.
• Throughout my two-month internship, I worked closely with the team on a research project on rural households’ pit emptying and sludge reuse practices. The research project was commissioned by the World Bank and constantly received the attention and input of many other private-sector stakeholders in Cambodia. I was directly involved in report writing, data analysis, and regular consultative meetings.
• I gained a more comprehensive understanding of how a large-scale, private-sector research project related to global development and public health is carried out and brought to completion in a local setting.
• I got a first-hand view of the active social enterprise scene in Phnom Penh through my interactions with other NGO partners. I learned how to incorporate the interests of different stakeholders in my report writing and data interpretation, such as to provide specific geographical or socioeconomic analyses, and to give practical recommendations for different audiences.
• I am grateful to have interned at an organization such as PSI that has sustainable, measurable impact on the health of Cambodia’s most vulnerable populations. It was exciting to work on an under-researched public health area like fecal sludge management and to have a reason to believe that my work will have far-reaching implications for both public policy and private-sector efforts.

Work profile
• Independently completed a 50-page research report analysing rural households’ latrine use practices and related service markets
• Attended meetings at the World Bank to present key findings to sector stakeholders and government officials
• Analyzed survey data and conducted literature review on related public health policies and solutions

Looking ahead
I am still open-minded about my career, but this internship experience definitely piqued my interest in public health. I am eager to learn more about global development from this perspective.

Questions
• How can private-sector research on global development be transformed into sustainable solutions?
• What is the role of law and sanction in public health behavior change?

Conclusion
At PSI, I had the opportunity to explore public health in Cambodia through cutting-edge research and unique interactions with local NGOs.

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