

FIN Interns of 2019



1. Internships

a. *Training and Mobilizing Students for Clean India through Internships:*

We are trying to generate internships with motivated students of good universities and through these contacts initiate collaboration with academic institutions for larger change. In 2019, FIN received many talented students as a part of offsite and onsite internship programmes. These included interns from Madras School of Social Work (MSSW, Tamil Nadu), MES College, Thrissur, TKM College of Engineering, Kollam, IIT Indore, MIT School of Engineering, Pune, Shree L R Tiwari College of Engineering, Mumbai, Rizvi College of Engineering, Mumbai, BMS Institute of Technology, Bangalore and United Nations University Maastricht, The Netherlands. It was a very successful year.

b. *Two Types of FIN Internship:*

At FIN we have two types of internships: *On-site at Kameswaram village* and *off-site i.e. work from lieu of student*.

i. *FIN On-Site or Village Internships and Training:*

These provide a unique chance to embark on a self-exploration journey. Interns are given many opportunities and options to discover their interests, strengths and abilities, which will help them better understand what they want to do in life and why. That said, since we are a small charity, we do not have the means to pay our interns. However, we do our best to improve their employability skills. This is the commitment we make to each and every intern who works sincerely with us. Interns who opt to come to the village are provided boarding and lodging during their period of stay at the FIN guesthouse in the village.

ii. *FIN Offsite Interns:*

For those who cannot opt for a village internship we offer a Contextual Action & Research project. In contrast to a typical desk job, where students are required to work on pre-determined tasks, in FIN we co-design off-site project with the students according to their interests and professional goals while meeting our needs. They are mentored regularly by Prof. Shyama Ramani and the FIN team and given plenty of room to think on their own, unlike in other internships where they have to report to a hierarchical chain of command. Indeed, students will be given opportunities to create impact and will be evaluated accordingly.

Both types of internships offer students a chance to discover their interests, strengths, weaknesses and skills. We aim to improve the employability of our interns. See figure below.



Figure 1: FIN Diamond Internship Model

c. *Methodology of Selection of Interns*

Using Internshala Platform for Selection of Interns

FIN started using the outreach platform of Internshala to reach a wider audience and this helped us in working with students from different parts of India. The Off-site internship call for June-July 2019 received more than 200 applications out of which 15 students were interviewed for the off-site internships. 8 out of these were selected to join the internship programme. 5 out of these 8 students successfully completed the internship whereas 3 discontinued at different stages of the programme.

Similar to the off-site internships, call for on-site interns was also posted on Internshala in response to which there were about 40 applications. After the first set of the students completed their internships, another call was posted on Internshala and received about 45 applications. The on-site interns were encouraged to develop understanding for application of their on-field. They suggested solutions for improving FIN's low cost innovations, recorded socio-economic profiles of villagers, and developed instruction manuals for construction of sanitation and waste management systems.

d. *Details of On-Site Interns of 2019*

The On-site interns who visit FIN Kameswaram Guest house and work with the FIN beneficiaries in the fishermen colony directly. This year four students visited the village as On-site interns. Some of them worked on engagement of villagers in activities to bring behavioural change in villagers while others worked on documentation of community intervention strategies.

Table 2: On-site Interns in FIN India during 2019

S. No.	Name	Institution	Disciplinary Background
1	Ayswarya	MES College, Thrissur	Civil Engineering
2	Esther	MSSW, Chennai	Social Work
3	Sowmiya	MSSW, Chennai	Social Work
4	Sreeram	TKM College of Engineering, Kollam	Civil Engineering

e. *Details of Off-Site Interns of 2019*

Under the off-site internship we offer a Contextual Action & Research project. In 2019, the off-site interns worked in groups and individually with the FIN team to design questions related to the different toilet models.

Table 1: Off-site Interns in FIN India during 2019 (All civil engineering)

S. No.	Name	Institution
1	Arvind Mehta	Indian Institute of Technology, Indore
2	Nishi S	BMS Institute of Technology, Bangalore
3	Parag Samant	Shree L R Tiwari College of Engineering, Mumbai
4	Prathmesh Vinod Alhat	MIT School of Engineering, Pune
5	Zainab Bohra	Rizvi College of Engineering, Mumbai

f. *Details International Off-Site Interns*

Table 3: Off-site international Interns in FIN India during 2019

S. No.	Name	Institution	Disciplinary Background
1	Sofiya Popivanova	UNU-Merit, Maastricht	Economics
2	Parul Rana	UNU-Merit, Maastricht	Economics

Sofiya and Parul worked in close association with Prof. Shyama V Ramani. Sofiya designed games to educate kids about WASH (Waste management, Sanitation, and Hygiene), Water and Community Engagement. She feels that her internship at Friend In Need will contribute to her professional goals by improving her creativity.

Following are the self-introduction essays written by the Interns for our Facebook page.

2. FIN On-Site Interns

FIN village internships and training provide a unique chance to embark on a self-exploration journey. Interns are given many opportunities and options to discover their interests, strengths and abilities, which will help them better understand what they want to do in life and why. That said, since we are a small charity, we do not have the means to pay our interns. However, we

will do our best to improve their employability skills. This is the commitment we make to each and every intern who works sincerely with us. Interns who opt to come to the village will be provided boarding and lodging during their period of stay.

Esther, MSSW Chennai
June 12, 2019

It's time to meet our summer interns who have done a commendable job in Kameswaram - Sowmiya and Esther!



Figure 2: Esther

These young girls are pursuing Masters in Social Work from Madras School of Social Work, Chennai. They worked on some interesting projects this summer, focussing on the fishermen community women in the village. We met them in Chennai, to get to know them better. Shanmugarajan interviewed them and this is how the conversation with Esther went.

Shanmugarajan (S): Hi Esther! Please tell us about your background.
Esther (E): I was born in Bangalore, but grew up in Chennai. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Soka Ikeda College, Chennai. I'm currently pursuing a Masters in Social Work from Madras School of Social Work, Chennai.

S: That's interesting. What drew you towards social work?

E: When I was around 5 years old, I left my house as I couldn't withstand my step-father's abuse. One of the childline officials noticed me on a train and handed me over to the Child



Figure 3: Esther in her NSS uniform

Welfare Committee in Chennai. There I was kept in a shelter home for 2 years. I expressed my interest to study. So, they put me in Seva Samajam children's home, which has an on-campus school. I completed my entire schooling there with the help of caretakers. I understand the problems and needs of the students there. I'm now a part-time caretaker myself in that school. People have played an important part in my life and I consider lucky to here with their help. I would like to help other people to come up in life.

S: That's really inspiring, Esther! Hats-off. I really appreciate your braveness and sense of gratitude. What are your interests and hobbies?

E: I love reading books, especially the ones based on history. A book on Captain Prabhakaran was the latest one I read. Sujatha's Pesum Bommaigal is one of my all-time favourites. Stitching clothes and embroidery also interests me. I specialize in stitching skirts. I also enjoy listening to music and singing. I used to play the drums when I was in school and played football when I was in college.



Figure 4: Esther speaking at a public gathering

S: You have quite a diverse set of interests. Great! So, how did you get to know about Friend In Need and why did you choose to intern with us this summer?

E: One of our professors, Dr. Damen Queen introduced us to this opportunity at FIN and briefed us the work involved. I've worked with people from different communities, but not from the women of the fishermen community. I was really excited to learn about this. My initial one-day visit to the village really gave us an insight into the kind of work that needs to be done. There was a huge scope for personal learning and social impact. I was also very impressed by Prof. Ramani's work in the village. Choosing FIN was a no-brainer.

S: How do you think this internship will help you?

E: I strongly believe that this internship will help me assess where I stand in terms of skills and project execution. As there

is a great scope for learning, it would be a wonderful place to hone my planning and execution skills, also developing my leadership qualities.

S: I'm sure you're gonna achieve everything you want in this internship, Esther. What are your future plans?

E: After completing the course in MSSW, I would like to work for some NGO to get to understand the ground realities more. I would also like to explore different cultures. It would be great if I can find a place that can help me do both. My dream in life is to open an NGO for transgenders. I know the difficulties that they face in our society and they go through a very hard time. I would like to make this world a better place for them.

S: That's really amazing, Esther! We wish you all the best for achieving your dreams. It's great to have such a wonderful personality working with us. Thank you for your time! We'll get to know about Sowmiya in the next post. Stay tuned!

Soumiya, MSSW Chennai

June 16, 2019



Figure 5: Soumiya

We hope you enjoyed reading Esther's interview in our previous post. It's time to introduce our next intern, Sowmiya. Read this interview to get to know her better.

Shanmugarajan (Shan): Hi Sowmiya! It's great to have you here. We would love to know about you. Please introduce yourself.

Sowmiya (Sowmy): I'm from Gummudipoondi, located near Chennai. I earned a bachelor's degree in commerce and I'm currently pursuing Master of Social Work from Madras School of Social Work, Chennai. My father is a retired police officer and my mother is a homemaker. I have one elder sister.

Shan: It's wonderful to know your background and about your lovely family, Sowmiya. Tell us something about your interests.

Sowmy: I really love indulging myself in music. Music feeds my soul and I enjoy listening to sad and inspiring melodies. 'Endhan kan munne' from the tamil movie Nanban is one of my all-time favorites. Though I'm not a professional, singing interests me. I sing and enjoy myself.

Shan: A singer is a singer, no matter how they sing. It's great to have a singer with us! Why did you choose social work as your field of study?

Sowmy: I was always interested in serving people. My uncle who works at Amazon suggested me to take up social work based on my skills and interest. I look up to him and value his advice a lot. I took it up and now I feel that it is a good fit for me.

Shan: It's great to have someone guide you with your career choices. I'm glad you have your uncle. How did you get to know about FIN? And what made you choose us?

Sowmy: My professor at MSSW, briefed us about this internship opportunity. I already had the experience of working with rural people and was excited to work with the fishermen. Then, I discussed the organization with my seniors who have already interned here. They gave me very positive feedback. When Esther told me that she was also coming here, I was convinced that this was a great opportunity for me.

Shan: That's good. We are happy that you chose to work with us. How do you think FIN will help you?

Sowmy: I strongly believe that working on the field close to the women of the fishermen community is going to help me gain insights into the lives of people and the problems they face. Also, it is going to be a great opportunity for me to work on projects end-to-end and work in small teams. This will develop my overall skills and employability.

Shan: I'm sure you've wonderful opportunities to grow as you work with the community there. What are your future plans, Sowmiya?

Sowmy: My short term goal is to work for an NGO after completing my master's. My dream is to become an IAS officer to serve people. I would love to establish my NGO someday, but I'm still in the pursuit of finding the cause for it. I'm sure I'll find it soon!

Shan: I'm also very sure that you'll find it soon, Sowmiya. It's great to have young people having such aspirations to serve our society. We wish you all success. Thank you for your time! Looking forward to working with you!

**Ayswarya, MES College Thrissur
September 3, 2019**



Figure 6: Ayswarya

We've got one more intern from Kerala! It's time to meet Ayswarya.

Hi! This is Ayswarya Sajeev. I was born and brought up in Kerala, God's own country. Right from my childhood, designing was always my passion and I've designed many fashion apparel, lifestyle accessories, and other things. I'm a civil engineering graduate, currently working as a civil engineer and exterior designer. Apart from my job, I'm also preparing for the NID (National Institute of Design) entrance exam. This will assist me in getting into core designing field to launch my own signature designs. I would also love to exhibit my artwork in the future, communicating my thoughts through designs.

One can say that I'm a very colourful person. I love colours and art so much that I always paint my emotions and art gives me a sense of joy and freedom. I would want to try sand art and ebru paintings someday. I also like listening to music and love bharathanatyam dance which I tried and discontinued at a young age. Now I've picked it up from where I left and taking it further.



I really love lush green fields and whenever I see them, it refreshes my mind and soul. This is why I love Kerala and I'm truly blessed to be born here. This is something which I really miss when I go outside my state. But I love to travel and it's my dream to travel the whole world. I

would like to make new acquaintances by travelling, exploring different traditions, art, and cultures. Sadhana forest in Pondicherry interested me a lot as I really enjoyed the spiritual ambiance there. The highlight of this is that it is a zero-waste forest and I recommend everyone to visit it at least once.

I'm passionate about conducting public awareness classes which help others to improve themselves. This way I can serve the society, leading a meaningful life. This is also the reason I chose to join FIN.

It's great to work with such a creative and talented person. We wish you good luck, Ayswarya!!



Figure 7: An illustration by drawn Ayswarya

Sreeram, TKM College of Engineering Kollam

August 17, 2019



Figure 8: Sreeram

My name is Sreeram and I'm from a remote village called Kariselvilai in Kanyakumari, the tip of peninsular India. I grew up in Kottayam in God's Own Country – Kerala, where I completed my primary and secondary level school education. I am the one and only child of my parents and I love them a lot.

My father is a self-employed small-scale building contractor. Though he did not have any formal education, he has great will power and dedication. His journey from a construction laborer to a recognized contractor inspired me a lot. He is my only role model and hero. During our journeys, he used to show me the houses he had constructed with pride. I also accompany him to construction sites from a very young age. This created a passion for construction work in me. Once during my higher secondary years, I visited the Queen of Arabian Sea – Cochin with my family. There I saw monster structures of more than 20 stories rooted in water-bound areas and bridges spanning kilometers. I was really fascinated by these structures and asked my father, "Can you construct such structures, Appa?" "No, I can't", he replied and added that these were designed by brilliant civil engineers. And his reply made me choose civil engineering as my specialization. My mother is a homemaker who administers the family and constantly motivates everyone.

I graduated from one of the most prestigious institutions, TKM College of Engineering, Kollam. During my college life, I stayed in a hostel where I gained more knowledge and meaning for my life apart from my engineering skills. Many non-profit organizations are active in TKM. Among them, a noteworthy one is STEPS TKMCE, a pain, and palliative care unit. Every student in the college is a part of this organization. STEPS organizes many events to help needy people in the society with the active participation of students. Some of the events to mention are 'Aadra', a stem cell donation camp and 'Sukrutha' an initiative to help differently-abled people near our college. This changed my outlook on social issues and responsibilities.

I like to spend my early mornings on weightlifting and other outdoor activities for a better mind and body. During weekends I love to take my bike for long-distance rides. I'm a fitness enthusiast and I've won the 'Best Physique' competition twice that was conducted in my college.

One of the mission statements of my department is 'to install ethical, social and environmental perspectives in designing systems for sustainable development'. While I was searching for internship opportunities through the internet, I came across this position at FIN Trust. I did a little research on the organization and their mission statement impressed me. Then Mr. Anurag gave me this wonderful opportunity to be a part of FIN.

My long-term goals include serving society with my engineering skills that aids in the betterment of the society and development of our nation through continuous learning. I wish to execute home and infrastructure project at reasonable prices and distribute a part of my income to serve the needy people by constructing energy-effective homes with proper sanitation. I also wish to execute public projects with great quality and curb the culture of bribes in the system.

Result of Action Research by MSSW Interns

July 16, 2019

FIN Interns changed an age old social norm through their work. When they started their project for rejuvenating a public bus stop in Kameswaram village, it was hard to imagine the social change that it would bring about.

Video link: <https://www.facebook.com/finindia/videos/477422509709855/>

3. FIN Off-site Interns

For those who cannot opt for a village internship we offer a Contextual Action & Research project. In contrast to a typical desk job, where students are required to work on pre-determined tasks, in FIN we co-design off-site project with the students according to their interests and professional goals while meeting our needs. They are mentored regularly by Prof. Shyama Ramani and the FIN team and given plenty of room to think on their own, unlike in other internships where they have to report to a hierarchical chain of command. Indeed, students will be given opportunities to create impact and will be evaluated accordingly. Our internship is also a self-exploration journey, which will offer students a chance to discover their interests, strengths, weaknesses and skills. We aim to improve the employability of our interns.

Arvind Mehta, IIT Indore

August 13, 2019



Hi everyone! My name is Arvind Mehta and I am pursuing my Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology Indore. I'm from Rajasthan, 'The Land of the Kings'. The magic of Rajasthan lies in its sand dunes, lively folk songs and its history of forts and palaces. Everywhere you go, men with brightly-colored turbans greet you with folded hands – a traditional greeting signifying 'Namaste'.

I faced a lot of challenges right from the early stages of my life. I am from Bhatkheri, a socially, educationally and economically backward area where agriculture is the only means of survival. It was quite difficult for anyone from the village to get out of it. But my siblings and I were lucky enough that my parents sent us to a nearby town to get further education. I completed primary education in my village and in a nearby town Chhabra. Then I passed the entrance exam and got admitted to a government-funded residential school, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. This was the turning point of my life. I learned how to survive in an unknown atmosphere. The idea of going back home struck me several times. But I did not give up. I had problems socializing with my classmates and others who did not know or did not want to speak Hindi. The process of overcoming all sorts of problems was very futile initially. But, I learned the local language and started socializing. I would like to give credit to my parents who have always supported me whenever I called them. My schoolmates, teachers and the cordial environment of Navodaya also played an important role in my life. I have represented Navodaya in national level sports and educational platforms like Science Congress and NCC. Every moment I spent in Navodaya was unforgettable.



Figure 9: Arvind in his home institute

The next big challenge for me was to crack the JEE Advanced. I was selected to be a part of the Super-30 in Jodhpur and spent a year there. Super 30 is a residential coaching program, where only thirty students are selected from the entire state and coached to join the IITs. I cracked the exam with the immense support of the Super 30 family. I joined IIT Indore last year. I was initially interested in architecture, but I opted for Civil Engineering because of my interest in buildings and other construction works which I developed as a result of my love for designing and mathematics.

I love learning new things and that is what determines my interests. I enjoy reading Hindi literature. 'Chandrakanta' and its sequel 'Chandrakanta Santati' are my favourite novels. I am part of the Hindi Literature Club and Debating Society. I play basketball and am fond of Hollywood movies. I also like painting and doing craft-work. I often visit orphanage homes, especially during Holi and Diwali festivals. Taking part in mass cleaning drives in the campus and surrounding

villages and traffic awareness campaigns interest me. Participation in such social events makes me more aware of the threats and makes me more responsible towards society. I'm also good at organizing events and have organized a few till now.

I am doing this internship with FIN for the following reasons:

- To enhance creativity and to get back creativity I lost during the crucial JEE preparation.
- To improve speaking skills and to remove hesitation while communicating in English.
- To get exposure while attending interviews.
- To learn how things work actually in a systematic socially active group like FIN.



Oh! I forgot to tell you about my future ambitions and goals. I want to become an IES officer (Indian Engineering Services) and I am preparing for the same during my graduation. I'm also interested in getting an MBA degree later in my life.

Prathamesh Vinod Alhat, MIT School of Engineering Pune
September 28, 2019



Hello! I am Prathamesh Alhat from Pune, the cultural backbone of Maharashtra. I was lucky to be raised here, as I've learned so many good things from my surroundings, such as good habits, manners, and smart solutions for difficult problems. I am from a middle-class Marathi family that gives me the best support in each and every way possible and teaches me to be a good human being.

I completed my Diploma in Civil Engineering from Cusrow Wadia Institute of Technology, Pune and I am now pursuing B. Tech. in Civil Engineering from MIT School of Engineering. Each and every phase of my education has given me lots of knowledge and has added to my experience. This has improved my confidence to a significant level.



Figure 10: Footware made by Prathmesh's company

At the age of 21, I started my own company 'Karveera', a footwear brand that sells online. Our aim is to reach a good place in the fashion industry, establishing ourselves as one of the well-known brands. We are working hard towards this goal. Plz check this link https://www.instagram.com/karveera_nation/?hl=en

I love to meet new people and explore different cultures and history. Every phase of my life gives me the opportunity to interact with people with diverse backgrounds and I've developed close relationships with many of them. It also helps me to understand the problems of the community. I love politics and would love to be a part of Indian politics someday. I am grooming myself to reach up to that point, by being a part of campaigns and other social work drives.



I'm happy that I was selected to be a part of the FIN internship program. It's great to be part of an organization which works for the community, teaching people the importance of sanitation.

I am sure that this internship is going to give knowledge and confidence, which will surely help me to groom myself and also help society.

**Parag Samant, Shree L R Tiwari College of Engineering Mumbai
October 10, 2019**



Meet our next intern, Parag from Mumbai. He introduces himself in this post!

Hello! This is Parag Samant. I was born and brought up in Borivali, Mumbai. I am pursuing my Bachelor of Technology degree in Civil Engineering from Shree L R Tiwari College of Engineering. Till the 10th standard, I studied in a Marathi-medium vernacular school. After getting a distinction, I decided to choose the science stream for my Higher Secondary schooling. Tuitions were something I really wasn't fond of. I studied by myself and finished my schooling with first class in my Higher Secondary examinations. I enjoy painting and sketching and I am an excellent cook too. I really love monsoon treks and I look forward to those. Music is a major

part of my life. My morning doesn't actually start without a strong cup of tea and music. I also like visiting technical events and actively take part in clean-up drives.

This is my first experience as an intern. After completing my second year in college, we are mandated to complete an internship. While searching for an opportunity online, I stumbled upon Friend In Need's internship program. After going through the description I applied for the internship. I chose FIN because I could really connect with the motive and perspective of the organization. I believe that sanitation and environment issues are really a concern for our country right now.



Hygiene and sanitation are those bed bugs that we initially ignore, but their effects make us regret later. I am from Mumbai, the city of dreams which ironically never sleeps. People living in cities other than Mumbai think that it is the city with big towers, apartments, pubs & nightclubs, a city full of rich people. But it is just the cover of the book. Isn't the world's 3rd

largest slum Dharavi in Mumbai? People from every part of India migrate to Mumbai in search of a job or for studies. And everyone cannot afford a flat in an apartment on rent. I have seen people surviving in this city in the small rooms. Will a person who has barely space to fit in his body in a room have a washroom? Of course not. And that is the biggest problem in Mumbai. Unhygienic restrooms, dirty public toilets, open drains, overflowing and choked gutters. And one of the biggest reasons behind it is the lack of awareness about the effects of these amongst the people. It even hurts my heart when I come across online bullies who always demean India when we are one of the most beautiful countries with a good climate and beautiful sceneries and diversity. But just because of the ignorance we are miles away from progress. I strongly believe that this internship can give me the ability to bring a small change in the society.

This off-site Internship is the nicest place to work for with the best team and mentors. I am happy that I chose FIN for my first Internship. Meeting new people around India with the same mindset and interests is a pleasure. I really hope that my contribution will be useful for the organization.

**Zainab Bohra, Rizvi College of Engineering Mumbai
September 10, 2019**

We are excited to introduce to you our next intern from Rajasthan, Zainab!



"Hey! This is Zainab Bohra. I am pursuing BE at Rizvi College of Engineering, Mumbai, specializing in civil engineering. I am a native of Bari Sadri, a town in Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan. Bari Sadri has a very rich heritage. It was ruled by the Rajputs and is situated in a region famously known as Mewar. Bari Sadri houses a big mahal (palace) of Raja Rana Sanga.

I love to study everything related to the environment and I'm very much interested in maths. I was very firm about choosing medicine as my career so while I was in 12th grade, I started preparing for MHT-CET (Maharashtra Common Entrance Exam) to get into a medical school. But unfortunately, in the middle of the year, the Supreme Court of India passed an order that only NEET will be considered as the nation-wide eligibility exam for students aiming to get an MBBS degree. So, I started preparing for NEET but was baffled by the short time at hand and the vast biology portion of NEET. At that point, I decided that I will take a shot at both engineering and medical entrance exams and landed here. But to be frank, I'm very happy with my decision.



Figure 11: An old Rajsthani palace

I like taking part in different activities apart from studies. I am a part of our college's NSS team and I also participate in various technical and sports fest. I am good at anchoring events. I always participate in group discussions and debates. This really helps me to understand the perspective of others. Though I do not enjoy reading books I always try my best. It increases my vocabulary and enhances my interaction style to a great extent. I also like to keep myself updated with the latest news. I also love painting, swimming, and cooking. I've learned French at a basic level during my school days and I wish to continue it in the future. I consider French as a very interesting and easy to learn language, but has a huge grammar.

I'm an environment enthusiast and I really wish to make a positive change. It affects me a lot that I'm not able to do anything about it in a big way. In India, not many people care about this, though they are well aware of the situation. The littering and lack of local hygiene among the people in our society upset me. Our festivals and celebrations lead to pollution and garbage, but there is no sign of responsibility or improvement though we realize it. I try to create awareness at least among the people around me to stop these unhealthy practices. Whenever I travel somewhere by train and if I see people littering around, I try and make them understand the consequences. Some do listen and feel sorry about it, while others still choose to be ignorant. I always participate in the drives held by our institute for initiatives such as Clean India and plantations to show my active interest. My interest in the environment makes me want to work on sustainability in the future. I dream to see India among the other developed countries, with good living standards.





Figure 12: Zainab at a student gathering appealing to not use plastic

FIN caught my interest because of their sanitation and waste management work in India. It really matches my fields of interest. I wanted to do an on-site internship, but my college schedule was not flexible. So I opted to work from home. I love interacting with people who think about the environment and take the utmost care to not harm it.

As a civil engineer, I would really love to work towards a green and sustainable construction. I'm planning to pursue Masters in Environmental or Design engineering. Over the years, I've grown to be a very responsible person and I hope every person in our society becomes one too"

We are with Zainab and wish our society becomes more responsible. We appreciate her efforts and will work with her to have a positive impact. Stay tuned for more updates from Zainab's work!

Nishi S, BMS Institute of Technology Bangalore
December 10, 2019

Here's our last off-site intern of the year, Nishi! Check this post as this Coimbatore girl introduces herself.

My name is Nishi. I am from Coimbatore, the Manchester of South India. I earned my bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the BMS Institute of Technology and Management, Bangalore. I'd like to share a little bit about my background, interests and future goals through this post.



Figure 13: FIN Off-site intern Nishi

I was born in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. A major part of my education was in Chennai and Bangalore. I moved to Coimbatore this year, where my parents have settled down. While juggling between cities, the first thing I do when I move to a new city is search for a Bharatanatyam class. This art form has been a huge stress buster throughout my life. I have always loved to read books and non-fiction is my choice. It helps to improve myself and gives me the knowledge to understand the world better.



Figure 14: Young Nishi striking a pose from Indian Classical dance Bharatanatyam

I was always curious about entrepreneurship. When I came back to Coimbatore, I started an e-commerce business called String Factory. I bought clothes in bulk from a nearby town



and started retailing them through various e-commerce platforms. I started this with the only motive of understanding the dynamics of trading. It has been a rollercoaster ride filled with great experiences and mistakes, which is a huge learning curve for me.



Figure 15: A scarf marketed by Nishi on an online shopping platform

My final year project was on the presence of antibiotics in treated wastewater and an effective method of removal. This project highlighted the importance of waste collection and disposal. Working with FIN has been one of a kind of experience. The mission of FIN aligns with my core beliefs. Safe drinking water and good sanitation system are the basic requirements of every individual. Monitoring and developing new sustainable models to improve the present condition is our duty. I am glad to be part of an organization with great mentors and team members who believe the same.

We wish Nishi all the very best in her future endeavours!

Sofiya Popivanova, Maastricht University
May 7, 2019

FIN has a new intern from Bulgaria! Meet Sofiya!

Hi, my name is Sofiya Popivanova (23), and I was born and raised in Sofia, Bulgaria. I am currently pursuing a Masters in Economics and Strategy in Emerging Markets at the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University. I also have a background in International Business with majors in Marketing and Asia from Maastricht University. My mother tongue is Bulgarian. I speak English and Spanish (elementary level). I have also studied German, Dutch

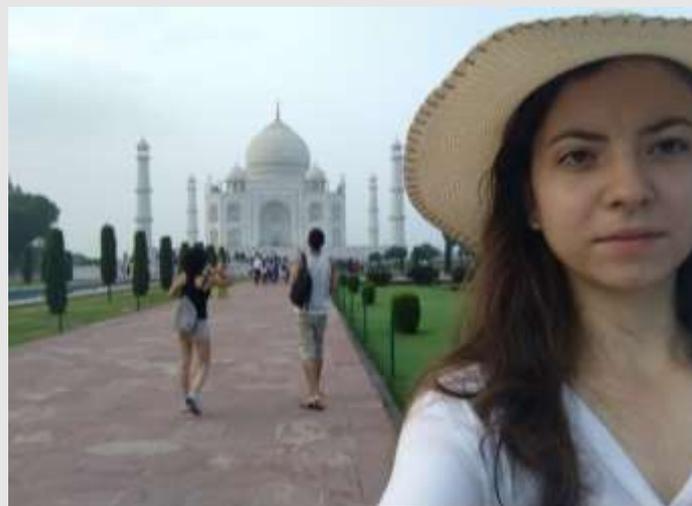
and Chinese in which I have basic knowledge and understanding. My ambition is to master Chinese and Russian in the upcoming years. One can say I have a passion for languages.



Figure 16: Sofiya Popivanova

There are two main things that have played an important role in my life. The first one is my family, mother, father and brother who have always supported me. The second is my curiosity to try new things. I am from a well-educated family with high values and morals. My father is an Orthodox priest, and mother a teacher. Throughout my childhood, I have always been active. I've tried many sports like tennis, swimming, Latin dancing and aikido. I was also a part of some kind of community, like

Sunday church school, volunteering at Red Cross where I discovered my passion for helping people and working with kids from time to time, theatre classes and music classes. I am a hard-worker – ever since the 10th grade, I have learned how to earn and save money which is helping me now in managing my finances. I would like to succeed in life - for me, this means creating value for a community, society or the whole nation. I wake every day with the idea I am going to make a positive impact/change in the world. This makes me passionate about the work I do. Also, the more I do, the more I do. The busier I am, the more productive I am. Lastly, the more I achieve, the bigger my next dreams are.



My prior experience in India and Vietnam at start-ups helped me realize how interested I am in exploring new cultures, career environments and ways-of-doing things. I also really enjoyed the flat organizational structure and working in small teams in those companies which gave me the room for creativity and innovation.

Currently, my professional goal is to work in a bigger organization that has a social goal such as solving a third world problem or one of the SDGs as mentioned by the UN. Finding solutions to problems related to poverty, climate change, and waste management interests me. I would like to make use of my business background as I strongly believe that business people will be

able to create practical solutions to problems. I'm good at decision-making, organization and people management. I would be happy to improve my skills like public speaking, working with people from different backgrounds, problem-solving, creativity and decisiveness.

My current internship at Friend In Need will contribute to my professional goals in several ways:

- ✓ Improve my creativity by giving me the freedom to come up with games to educate kids about WASHE. (Water, Waste management, Sanitation, Hygiene, Hygiene behaviour and Engagement)
- ✓ Work in a multicultural environment – I will be able to learn how to communicate with different cultures better, listen to people and appreciate the beauty of globalization.
- ✓ Problem-solving – even though I have studied in a Problem Based Learning (PBL) system, I still feel I'm not well prepared for a real-life PBL environment – FIN will help me to experience exactly this.
- ✓ Public-speaking – creating videos and presenting my findings in front of my colleagues will help me to improve this skill.

Parul Rana, United Nations University, Maastricht
May 15, 2019

Meet Parul, the new FIN intern from the United Nations University!



Figure 17: Parul Rana with an elderly lady weaving palm/coconut leaves into a handicraft

Hello, I'm Parul Rana from New Delhi. I'm currently pursuing a course in Public Policy and Human Development from United Nations University, Maastricht.

My hometown is located in the foothills of Dhauladhar valley (Himachal Pradesh) which has the world's second highest spot for paragliding. Another interesting thing that makes my place distinct is a 2000 years old Shiva temple. While growing up I have seen many devotees visiting the temple to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva. Seeing the devotion of people over the years has made me believe in the divine power, making me a religious person. I strongly believe in the power of "Karma" and the act of human wellbeing.



I have completed my master's degree in Sustainable Development Practices at TERI University, New Delhi. My degree helped me to explore and understand the notion of development and rural-urban disparity present in our country. I have worked on projects related to asset-based community development across 9 states of India. After completing my masters, I worked for 2 years on the field in Uttar Pradesh for one of the CSR projects of a corporate enterprise. I was working directly with the community in creating sustainable livelihood projects and implementing the same. Working in rural areas developed me as a person. It taught me the importance of human relationships, teamwork, decision making, risk taking and the true meaning of sustainability and community development.



After understanding how implementation works on the ground, I wanted to get involved in the process of policy framing to reach out to more people spread across different geographies each having its own challenges. This led me to pursue a course in Public Policy and Human Development from United Nations University, Maastricht where I am currently enrolled.

My hobbies include cooking, running and travelling. I have a keen interest in travelling to local regions of India and understanding its cultural diversity, which makes India stand out on the world map. I believe that tourist places do not represent the actual culture of the area and that is why I love exploring the unexplored places. My favourite travelling experience is visiting a Buddhist monastery in Ambikapur, a tribal district of Chhattisgarh. I was astonished to see the amalgamation of tribal culture with Buddhist culture in such a remote area.

I am looking forward to working as a volunteer for FIN India as it satisfies my interest in getting to know about new cultures. I never had the opportunity to work in projects related to South India which is known for its strong community institutions. Through this internship, I intend to further enhance my research and analytical skills as well as evolve my creative capacity. Thus, this internship will act as a bridge for me to be able to connect with my country and work in my field of interest while studying here in the Netherlands.

Work done by Off-Site Interns

The Off-site internship with students was a great experiment in education. We had recruited new interns from all over the country to work on India's great sanitation challenge!

They were provided with some reading material about basic and advanced sanitation challenges. They were asked to develop questions about sanitation practices and types of toilets. This led to development of a template questionnaire which was helpful in coming up with the idea of sanitation awareness campaign which was held on November 19, 2019.

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