

RAJVEER BOTHRA

ESPM 50AC

FINAL PROJECT (O3)

### REFLECTION ON ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Interning at the Vallejo Project was honestly an amazing experience. Having the ability to interface with Adjoa McDonald first hand and provide my services as needed was just an incredible experience. I was very contented with my experience because not only did I learn how to job shadow under Adjoa, I was also able to learn a lot more about how a non-profit organization functions and how important it is for the organization to have hard working individuals with a passion for humanitarian services to be a part of it. Talking with Adjoa about how she is juggling 4 jobs in addition to holding an important position in the Vallejo Project made me appreciate and respect her even more and made me want to contribute to the Vallejo Project with a lot more dedication. While working with the grant acquisition team to help the Vallejo Project acquire grants and funds for their educational outreach, food aid and urban farming programs, taught me a lot about the importance and methods of fundraising and acquiring grants for a non profit organisation, it also gave me first hand experience about how to analyse grant documents and communicate with grant officers responsible for specific grants.

Being a social ambassador for the Indian Development Foundation (IDF) back in my hometown Mumbai and under the leadership of accomplished and humble individuals like Dr Narayan, I had the opportunity to work on wonderful projects like Meal2Heal and Mission 117. Be it working with a group of friends to raise \$6600 to fund a year's fee for 117 children and 2 undergraduates or independently raising \$3000 to develop meals and ration kits for migrant workers in India amid the global pandemic, IDF taught me a lot about the importance of giving back and the methods to do the same; thus interning at the Vallejo Project not only expanded my knowledge on that forefront, it really made me reminisce my moments of working with my team at the IDF. Moreover, my work at the Vallejo Project has also inspired me to work again with IDF on another project however here with the interest of spreading awareness about the importance of

menstrual hygiene in rural parts of India and also conducting a fundraiser to help garner funds for the development of affordable sanitary kits for women in the same rural areas!

In conclusion, I really appreciate the fact that I was able to meet and interact with so many Berkeley students in the midst of this project! I met people from so many walks of life, cultures and ethnicities that it truly gave me an insight into the ideal Berkeley experience that I was looking for!

### Summary of Activities

Attended weekly meetings with the Vallejo Project and communicated with project executives about how to spread more awareness about the activities, interests and impact of the Vallejo Project. Scheduled weekly one-on-one meetings with Adjoa McDonald to help her navigate with her tasks in Vallejo and to plan for her future tasks too. Drafted brief responses for Adjoa's emails to several individuals, including but not restricted to Kurt Spreyer, Sarah Cornwall, David Schultens and Micheal James amongst others. Was regarded as the second largest student contributor by Adjoa McDonald (out of all the student interns at the Vallejo Project from UC Berkeley.) Maintained and updated entries of grants in a spreadsheet that Adjoa assigned to me herself. Worked on weekly blogs and posted those on my social media platforms about my experience with the Vallejo Project and in general about the humanitarian impact that Vallejo has on the youth community in Vallejo, California. Drafted a letter and a detailed response to Professor Huff (contact: [virginia.huff@solano.edu](mailto:virginia.huff@solano.edu)) proposing a collaboration between the Vallejo Project and Solano County Community College. (task assigned by Adjoa McDonald). Discussed with Adjoa about her next steps regarding the partnership between the Vallejo Project and the students of Cal Maritime (California State University, Maritime Academy). Scheduled meetings with the managers of the satellite center for the CCC in Solano to discuss the next steps regarding the internship program for youths under the Vallejo Project. Lastly, Worked with the grant and acquisition team to attain funds, analyse and study several grant opportunities including opportunities like the 2022 Youth Garden Grant sponsored by KidGardening. Communicated with friends and family from back home (India) to spread the word about

the Vallejo Project and its usefulness. Encouraged my team at the Indian Development Foundation to look into working with the Vallejo Project (they seem interested). Posted weekly instagram stories to encourage my followers to check out Vallejo's website and contribute in any way they can.

Updated Task Inventory+ Time commitment (approximate):

Vallejo Project Weekly Meetings: 10 hours

Analysing Grant Data (Reading+editing+excel work): 10 hours

Email response (formatting+editing): 5 hours