

# Internship at Peitou Culture Foundation

Ngan Jane

This summer internship is probably the most valuable gift in 2017.

I have applied for an internship program to work for Peitou Culture Foundation in Tapei. It is a non-governmental organization(NGO) that acts as a platform to empower the community in Peitou. There are four reasons that why I would apply for this internship. I have always had an avid interest in working with a NGO to see how it actually work. At the same, I was also interested in knowing the difference between the NGO in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Thirdly, I believed that NGO would provide numerous opportunities for me to communicate with the local people who have a different cultural background with me. Lastly, Taiwan is famous for its preservation of the culture that I would like to see why Hong Kong could not do the same.

I am grateful that at the end of the internship, I got my questions answered. The NGO in Taiwan is not bounded by a specific target group like those in Hong Kong yet it focused on the community itself. In another word, Peitou Culture Foundation provides a wide range of services to empower the Peitou community. As regards to the characteristic of NGO in Taiwan, I have also participated in providing various kinds of services in the two-month internship. My internship responsibility is mainly the scheduled work and the individual project. I would like to explain it one by one.

## Scheduled work

It meant that it was the job that planned by the NGO. If I have to divide my two months' experience into five perspectives which are medical related, cultural related, agricultural related, sharing of authorized people from different field and special experience.

For the medical part, population ageing is probably a world trend that different places in the world are facing, ironically, it is also a phenomenon that most people would ignore without having any responsive act or solution or most of the time, people actually did not have any idea of what can they do. Regarding this issue, Peitou Culture Foundation did a good example for others in the world by cooperating with some community colleges, or some elderly school in the hoped to provide different kinds of classes for the adult and elderly which allow them to enhance their social circle so as to act as leisure activities, so as to encourage them to step out from

their home and do more exercise. I was lucky that I was able to chat with the elderly while I was helping them to do some basic body check. During the conversation, I understood that it is a kind of services that could truly provide a healthy lifestyle to the elderly by considering their desires, which is beneficially for their life.

Also, I was also responsible for attending the discussion session similar to the world cafe with the other postgraduate medical students that organized once per week for a better understanding of the issue of dementia. We had discussed the obstacles of the current medical system that the doctors usually would just focus on the sickness itself instead of the patient themselves, which would neglect the reasons behind the sickness. Also, by suggesting "Doing more exercises is good for the health" is actually quite abstract as the proper amount of exercise would vary among different age group made me recall what I have learnt from anthropology --- to understand the issue from the native's point of view, which is similar to the idea of patient-oriented that we always strongly reinforce during the discussion session.

Apart from that, I was also given a chance to provide some basic services for the disadvantaged group in the community. This experience also gives me a strong feeling on how the structure of the society could affect the individuals and the idea of "neoliberalism" that the government tended not to face and shift the responsibility to the individuals.

I was responsible for attending the recruitment talk of the development of a centre of a cooperative place of dementia care.

For the culturally related part, I acted as a bridge between the foreign visitors and the local tour guide for the translation part of the indigo dyeing workshop and got the chance to experience this special and beautiful traditional culture of Peitou.



For the agricultural part, I got the chance to do some simple interviews with the farmers for the publication of the booklet about his farmland. The farmland was on the steep slope and I have to be careful not to fall down or step on his crops. The farmer aged around 70 but he was so strong that he could nonstop talk while he was climbing on the slope. It was probably the most difficult interviews for me in my life. Since the weather was very hot, my informants were walking so fast that I have to use up all my energy to speed up my steps in order to follow his step so long as to ask relevant questions at the same time. Through this experience, I have also improved my interview skills and I would the interviews with the farmers also inspire how I should plan my future.



I have also participated in the “small farmer's market” to chat with the local small farmers and notice that the market itself provide a platform for the buyers and the sellers to have a direct communication and avoid many transportation cost or extra fees. The customers could also have a clear picture on how the crops were grown.

Last but not the least, there is also numerous interesting experience like some sharing of people from different field and some discussion on the political development of Hong Kong in the future, having a chance to go to the filming of the TV programme, joining the conference organized by the Taiwan medical association in the Legislative Yuan.

### Individual project

Aside from the schedule work, the individual project is also one of my responsible work in these two months. I have to do the background research and make a proposal for our individual project by the end of the June then discuss with our supervisors for any amendment. There are quite a lot of difficulties for doing this project such as the lack of time and cost and human resources.

Also, I wish to this project could satisfy my personal goal which is creating a

product instead ideas. After some much consideration, I have decided to develop my projects on the cultural aspect that I was interested in the promotion of Peitou culture. As you can see from the above, I have only experienced the indigo dye in my schedule work that I believed there should be a lot of interesting cultures that deserves more attention from the public. Then I have decided to challenge myself by making a picture book about things that visitors should know about Peitou apart from hot spring. This is, in fact, a challenging task for me because I have none drawing experience that I just knew how to use photoshop but I never draw by hand. Luckily, nothing is impossible that after doing some practices on drawing and spending extra time on going to the coffee shop every day, I finally finished my work.

As my booklet is targeted at the visitors that encourage them to look beyond stereotypes that Peitou also has different kinds of interesting culture that it is worth recommending to more and more people. Therefore, I have to continue my translation work from Chinese to English after I went back to Hong Kong. Hopefully, the booklet would be printed on December 2017.

## 如何藍染



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I was really lucky for having the unlimited support and encouragement from my colleagues and supervisor on my individual project. It really encourages me to challenge something that I thought would be impossible.

It is a golden chance for me to participate in this internship program that by staying in a different cultural area for a two-month time and providing social services for the Peitou community, I would say I have really gained a lot no matter on broadening my horizons or affecting life's values.