

I spent eight weeks as a Communications and Programs Intern at PCI Media Impact in New York City. PCI Media Impact is an organization that works with partners around the world to inspire positive social and environmental change through various means of creative communications including TV shows, radio dramas, and other productions. The organization approaches issues with the Entertainment-Education (E-E) methodology, which is the process of purposely designing and implementing both entertaining and educational messages into its productions.

As an intern, I was involved in various projects related to programs, fundraising, and communications. One of my first activities included reading the scripts of a Rwandan radio show drama, which aims to incorporate educational messages about forest conservation issues in Rwanda. I was asked to write the discussion guide for each episode's interactive talk show session led by a local host. I recommended questions that motivate the audience to think critically about the main themes that emerge in each episode. I had to design questions and descriptions that encourage the locals to make their own realizations about the issues rather than providing factual information, which was challenging at first. The scarcity of resources in rural areas makes it hard for locals to prioritize the protection of the forest. Working on this project has helped me become more aware of the need to consider the characteristics of the area and the cultural differences between the designers and the target audience.

I also participated in fundraising activities which included strategic planning, searching for potential donors and grants, and updating the information of current donors. Learning about different approaches to fundraising and donors, I realized that finding the appropriate techniques to communicate messages and describe agendas is also a major part of development strategies. In order to be effective at determining a communication technique, one has to be familiar not only with the organization's activities but also its holistic

approaches to those activities. I also learned to use the Raiser's Edge fundraising and database software efficiently, which has improved my fundraising management skills and capabilities.

One of my major tasks included designing and editing the PCI Media Impact's Annual Report for 2012. The Report will be available on the organization's website for 12 months, summarizing all of its programs, mission, and methodologies. Through this project, I became more familiar with the general mission of the organization, most of the current programs, their objectives, and the Entertainment-Education (E-E) components. This has helped me to understand the structure and focus of each production and brought my attention to the various issues that emerge in different regions around the world and the importance of the cultural differences that staff members have to be mindful of when designing a program. Having to assume that the readers are necessarily not familiar with the E-E techniques or the programs, it was sometimes challenging to include not more than the most essential information into the descriptions. This task has also improved my abilities to incorporate long and complex information into shorter, more digestible messages and to present information in concise, creative, and compelling ways to multiple audiences.

My internship at PCI Media Impact has helped me observe the structure of the organization and understand how it works. I learned that a well-run organization that deals with Entertainment-Education functions based on many interconnected principles; for an idea to become an actual production, several criteria have to be met. The programs should be based on the needs of a particular population in a certain environment, partially designed and coordinated by locals. The available funding and possible fundraising options should also be considered in advance to be able to provide the audience with a whole season of dramas and additional learning and promoting material.

Besides these major projects I worked on, I attended and helped out at the My School – My Community program’s end-of-the-year film screening, where students’ productions were shown. The employees of PCI Media Impact trained high school students from underprivileged families to write, act, and shoot their own drama shows. The students used real life examples from their own lives to prevent and fight against bullying, violence, and unhealthy eating habits. I was asked to design educational posters for the event, which required comprehensive knowledge about the program and the dramas.

I also attended several presentations on E-E methods, specific programs, and reports from the field. One of my favorite sessions was a presentation on environmental psychology and behavior change given by a former PCI Media Impact team member. The presentation summarized one of the basic notions PCI Media Impact works with: it is crucial to understand that a person’s environmental behavior and the ability to change that behavior are dependent upon the resources a specific individual has.

While I learned factual information about social and environmental issues in Rwanda and other regions, fundraising methods, programs’ details, I also gained knowledge of the Entertainment-Education methodology that PCI Media Impact uses to achieve positive knowledge, behavior, and attitude change around the world. The importance of communications and media in social behavior and environmental practices became clearer to me. It is essential to apply critical and analytic thinking to communications, which requires awareness of the psychological aspects of entertainment when creating any type of medium such as a TV drama or a simple poster. The most valuable component of this internship was learning about the Entertainment-Education theory, the application of this theory, and the importance of applying efficient communications strategies.