

Daniel Ng ('15)

A typical day working at a non-profit is anything but typical. At Cultural Survival, I am a part of a team of about ten interns. Because Cultural Survival is such a small organization, it relies on its interns to do a lot of their work. This summer I worked on the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent Initiative. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent is the principle that communities have the right to give their consent to proposed projects that may affect their land, livelihoods, and resources.

My tasks ranged from drafting grant proposals in English and Spanish to developing a series of Public Service Announcements on indigenous rights. One of my main tasks was to help create and update a database of about 600 indigenous radio stations. Cultural Survival has partnered with several community radio stations in Guatemala to help preserve indigenous languages. Over the past couple of months Cultural Survival has been working to expand this program to reach indigenous peoples worldwide. I have contacted over 200 radio stations, giving them more information about Cultural Survival and asking them to participate in the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent Initiative. Over 100 radio stations have broadcast the first series of PSA's that were produced in May, and over 300 have expressed interest in broadcasting. Along with spreading awareness, Cultural Survival serves as a liaison between indigenous groups and national and international officials. One of my other main tasks this summer was to draft letters to UN ambassadors and other officials with whom Cultural Survival met at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Interests. Many of these officials are well known advocates for indigenous rights, and they have appealed to their respective countries' governments on Cultural Survival's behalf.

Through my internship at Cultural Survival I have developed important skills such as grant proposal writing and speaking to government officials, and I have also expanded my Spanish vocabulary, especially my knowledge of governmental and political jargon. These are invaluable skills that I will have for my whole life, and hopefully I will be able to use them in my professional career after college. Working at Cultural Survival has showed me that taking the initiative can bring about social change, and I leave this internship with great hope for the future.