



## MANAGE Internship: Cultivating Experiences for Future Professionals



### My Internship Story: Journey at MANAGE-CIA

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## Pre-Internship Expectations

The major reason that excited me to apply for this internship was its alignment with my PhD research on '*Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Agri-Startups in Kerala.*' As a startup enthusiast, it had always been my wish to learn about the agri-startup ecosystem and gain hands-on experience in the field. So when MANAGE introduced a six-month internship program on '*Innovation, Incubation, and Agri-Startup Ecosystem*' for the first time, I knew it was exactly what I had been waiting for.

I was overjoyed when I received the selection mail from MANAGE. My expectations were high, knowing that I would be working with one of the finest institutions in the country dedicated to Agricultural Extension. I felt proud and honored to be a part of such a prestigious organization.

## Internship Experience



Initially, everything felt new and challenging. It was a complete shift for me, from the classroom to a dynamic work environment. Meeting deadlines, making multiple revisions, and continuously improving my work was a bit overwhelming at first.

Working with startups, handling documentation, and understanding submission protocols were unfamiliar tasks that came with a lot of doubts. However, coordinating various programs organized by MANAGE-CIA instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility and commitment.

One of the most memorable experiences I had was serving as the Program Coordinator for the *Cohort 12 Mentoring Program*. I was actively involved throughout the one-month training, from coordinating with participants to moderating sessions and even attending the selection committee meeting. I realized that I have a knack for coordinating programs and managing tasks efficiently. However, I also noticed that I tend to panic when unexpected challenges arise, and I now understand the importance of developing the presence of mind to handle such situations calmly.





My experience with MANAGE-CIA has been an incredible learning journey. Everyone was willing to guide and support us, helping us grow into more capable and responsible individuals. Initially, the strict environment created a fear of making mistakes, but I soon realized that it was part of a deliberate effort to mold us into professionals by exposing us to a real work culture. Over time, the atmosphere became friendly and supportive, and the appreciation and motivation I received from colleagues and supervisors encouraged me to push my limits further.

### Skills and Knowledge Gained

Completing each assigned task in parallel helped me develop and enhance a diverse set of skills. I had the opportunity to apply and test my abilities in organizing programs, coordinating with participants and experts, developing and editing content, moderating sessions, anchoring events, reviewing and reporting, conducting startup visits and verifications, and managing files.

Additionally, I successfully completed a training program from MANAGE on 'Video Production Skills for Agricultural Extension'. Working at MANAGE also provided opportunities to interact with experts during training sessions and field visits. I had the opportunity to visit AgHub, ICAR–National Research Centre on Meat, ICMR–National Institute of Nutrition, Indian Institute of Packaging, and Shilparamam Art & Craft Village, accompanied by international participants. Coordinating with participants from diverse backgrounds offered me a broader perspective and new cultural experiences. My interactions with agri-startups expanded my professional network significantly.



## Takeaways and Action Plans



Reflecting on the past three months, the aspect I appreciate most is how MANAGE continuously encourages interns to explore, learn, and improve. Each task was different, allowing me to wear multiple hats, as a coordinator, anchor, designer, content creator, and data entry operator. This variation helped me develop a wide range of skills.

One of the most inspiring takeaways from the internship were the words of our Director, who said: *"True enjoyment isn't just about shopping, entertainment, or screen time, it's about finding fulfillment in the work you do. If your work doesn't let you enjoy anything else, perhaps it's because you haven't yet learned to enjoy your work."* These words gave me a new perspective, and I will carry this mindset throughout my career.

As a researcher in the startup ecosystem, this internship offered me an up-close understanding of how things work. I got to work with RKVY-RAFTAAR funded startups and gained valuable insights that I can apply to my research. I also had the chance to experience a formal work culture and understand professional responsibilities. One of the challenges I faced early on was multitasking, especially when assignments were unrelated. I initially found it difficult to juggle multiple tasks, but with time and by practicing time management, I've improved significantly.





## MANAGE Internship Journey so far



I would describe the MANAGE internship as the foundation of my professional journey. The experience I've gained here is something I will always cherish, it has truly laid the building blocks of my career. As a student, it was a privilege to work at MANAGE-CIA, and I thoroughly enjoyed every moment. I would love to continue my journey here, should another opportunity arise. This experience exceeded my expectations. I never imagined that my first work experience would feel so real, almost like being a full-time employee. It holds a special place in my heart, and I am excited to explore new opportunities and grow even further.

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