

**Pallav Kumar, 2018, Spanish
El Salto; Madrid, Spain
Multicultural Alumni Network**

I spent this past summer working with El Salto, a monthly newspaper based in Madrid, Spain, which was founded just this year. El Salto is an experiment in journalism, created by the journalists and activists of the now-defunct Diagonal, a bi-monthly newspaper which existed for 12 years. The new project involved collaboration with other publications centered on everything from food to economics, and the publication of articles from all involved newspapers in a single, 64-page issue each month. In addition, regional offices exist in various corners of Spain; each office recruits local newspapers to fill an extra 16 pages with region-focused content, often written in the local language instead of Castilian Spanish.

During my time with El Salto, I worked primarily with digital media, making video content for their new YouTube channel and eventually creating publicity materials for the fourth issue. My first weeks involved, above all, wandering the city and collecting B-roll for future video reports. I was given a number of themes—work and strike, banks and money, tourism, police—and set out with my camera for hours at a time recording short clips of whatever I found that fit into these categories, as well as things that captured me eye. All of it went into an archive which, as far as I know, has not yet been used—hopefully this changes soon!

Aside from audiovisual work, I compiled a list of articles written about El Salto by mainstream media in countries around the world and did a little bit of translation. I was tasked with translating the about page in preparation for the launching of their new site, which would eventually have an English-language version. Unfortunately, I came at the wrong time in the site's development to be able to translate articles—while I was

working, it still hadn't been decided how to include English versions of articles in the site.

As the summer went on, I started to do more complex video assignments. I traveled to a neighborhood in Madrid called Carabanchel to create a video report accompanying an article that was to be written, concerning a family who had recently been evicted from their home. For the past 30 days, they had been camped out in front of the local government building in an attempt to raise awareness of the issues with the housing market in Spain. Later, I created a few short publicity videos for the new issue, as well as to show subscribers a number of deals they were eligible for.

When I traveled to Carabanchel for that one report—the only one I ended up being assigned—I was shocked. I had read about the political movements in Spain centered around fair housing and stopping evictions, but seeing the effects of unfair policies on a real family, with three children and unemployed, was entirely different. Understanding one case out of the thousands gave the problem a scale I'd never imagined. It reminded me of why I continue to write for Carleton's newspaper: to learn about and share stories of people who I never would have met otherwise. The breadth of the human experience is impossible to imagine—but telling stories like this lets me get a little bit closer to understanding.

My work with El Salto solidified my desire to work in journalism. Not only was the work meaningful, but the office environment made me feel at ease and comfortable. My co-workers were relaxed; they would joke with each other at various intervals throughout the day, eat popsicles at their desks (Spanish summers are no joke), and take breaks whenever they felt like it. No matter what, though, the work got done.

One of my favorite moments in the office was during the last week of July. I walked in the office expecting to continue with some editing I'd been doing, and was

promptly directed to the multipurpose studio/lunch room to record some video—of the photoshoot for the next issue’s cover. The design and photo people had organized a lot of trash on a white background, to fit with the cover story about consumption and waste. At first, I didn’t notice anything out of the ordinary. Only after some time did I realize that the products—cereal boxes, cream cheese, cans of tuna, even soda cans—were all the same brand: “extinction.” Byron, one of the graphic designers, had custom-ordered a huge variety of packaging and products—including extinction-branded cans of apple juice from Germany—for the sole purpose of creating a cover photo for the next issue. I’d noticed the cans around the office the past week—turns out that everybody had been drinking the apple juice he ordered so that he could crush some cans, without wasting the beverage inside.

Aside from the fun I had in the office, I am very grateful to have had this opportunity, and thankful for the support of MCAN. Having a hands-on experience in a real journalistic setting helped me clarify my career plans, and let me develop my video production skills, everything from shooting to editing, while creating videos that I knew would be seen by a huge audience. My only regret is having been too timid at the beginning; I only started to get close with some of my co-workers towards the end of my time at the office. I would welcome the chance to work with them, or a similar paper, in the future.

