

Name: Andrea Kokorovic

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Specialty: Public Health

Country: Kenya

Location: Matangwe, Bondo District

Rural/Urban: Rural

Hospital or non-hospital placement: Both

Type of placement: Pre-clerkship

Date: June 26 – July 31, 2011

Project title: Matangwe Clinic

Organization: Caring Partners Global

Website: <http://meds.queensu.ca/queenscpi/>

Main language spoken: Luo

Other language(s): English & Swahili

Project description: Shadow clinical officers working at the Matangwe Health Clinic, in the rural community of Matangwe, Kenya. The Matangwe Health Clinic is available for a catchment area of approximately 14,000 people. Medical care is provided to the people of the Matangwe community, as well as 45 other villages in Bondo District. The people in this area are from the Luo tribe. They live in very impoverished conditions, predominantly in mud huts without access to clean water. This is an agricultural area of Kenya and most of the people who live in the villages are farmers. The community has been hit particularly hard with HIV/AIDS, with an infection rate estimated as high as 29 percent.

Student experience description: I learned that global health is very convoluted, and the reasons for the vast differences we see between “here” and “there” cannot be figured out from one trip, in one low resource setting. As I previously mentioned, Sofie and I questioned everything around us and at the end of it all we could not come up with any solid answers. The lesson I learned here is that if I really want to help or make an impact, I have to find out the answers to these questions I have. I have been to developing countries before, but living in rural Africa was an extreme form of a developing world. We were considered to live in luxury because we had a roof, running water, and a bed. We had food on a daily basis, and could bathe. When I got sick, I had medications at my disposal to get better, and if I didn't get better I could afford to fly to Europe or home to get the help I need. In contrast, we saw women walking miles to get to a water source, that was basically a large puddle of mud. We saw people living in mud huts without running water, and sleeping on hard floors. It was very strange coming home to Toronto, because I was confused about how such different worlds could exist on the same Earth. Although the awe has worn off, I find myself thinking about it every now and then, and it is an experience I will remember for my entire life, and tell my grandchildren about!

Placement safety: I felt safe at all times throughout my placement.

Educational experience (out of 10): 3

Social/cultural experience (out of 10): 10

Does the organization have any religious affiliations? Yes

At any point did you feel expected to participate in religious activity? Yes

Program fee: \$100

Dress code: Modest

Accommodation: Accommodation was 4* for African standards, which is about a 2* . We felt safe at all times in the hotel. Good food, a bed and running water (usually) were provided.

Accommodation cost: \$250/month (included food and accommodation)

Helpful hints: If you would like to benefit from an education experience and to learn a lot of medicine, I would suggest not going with this organization. The cultural and social experience, however, was exceptional.

Questions you are glad to have asked before leaving on placement: How much money to bring, what kind of clothing to bring, which vaccinations to get before departure.

Questions you WISHED you asked before leaving on placement: What to bring for entertainment purposes.

Overall, would you recommend this placement for future students? No