

Name: Sofia Lopez

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Specialty: Family Medicine

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: * To support Caring Partners Global and their endeavors in Western Kenya.

* To improve health care at the Matangwe Health Clinic and in surrounding community.

*To be exposed to international health and culture, and further my medical training.

*To raise awareness about international health at Queen's University and within the Kingston medical community.

Student experience description: As an undergraduate medical student, we did a lot of observing at the Matangwe clinic. We were not with a medical doctor, but rather a clinical officer who had 3 years of very specific post-secondary education. The clinic nurse had us helping him with all of the procedures he did and let us assist. At Bondo hospital, the conditions were quite horrendous, and while it was an excellent educational (with a medical doctor who had different opinions compared to the clinical officer) and cultural experience, what we witnessed there was a lot to take in.

Placement safety: Yes for the most part. We were two young females travelling on our own so we were alert at all times. We were also told some stories about the area being unsafe, which was worrisome.

Educational experience (out of 10): 8

Social/cultural experience (out of 10): 8

Does the organization have any religious affiliations? Yes

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

Program fee: \$300

Dress code: Scrubs

Accommodation: Hotel with guard; no toilet cover on toilet seat. Hotel staff was nice.

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

Helpful hints: There is a lot of observing, and not a lot of hands on activity. The conditions at Bondo hospital are very gross. It seems as though everyone had TB or at least some exposure. HIV rates were 1 in 4. Malaria = endemic.

Questions you are glad to have asked before leaving on placement: Pre-departure training was useful.

Questions you WISHED you asked before leaving on placement: How much money to bring. Very religious organization. Planned weekend trips before getting there. Planned safari (leisure trip afterwards) trip at home (versus being conned by the travel agency in Lonely Planet).

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