

*When I was in search of study abroad programs, the subject was just as important to me as the location, if not more so.*

Coming out of a pretty recent change of academic direction from pursuing medical practice to public health, I felt like I had a lot of years worth of exploring in the public health field to catch up on--with all of the time I had dedicated medical school preparations. I was hungry for all of the books, lectures, articles, and conversations about global health that I could get my hands on, and I figured a study abroad program could be my source for that condensed, specialized curriculum. That's how I ended up here in Arusha, Tanzania studying Global Health and Human Rights with the IPSL Institute for Global Learning!



Not only is my program providing me a chance to delve into various topics in global health, but it also, rather fortunately, will help me to clarify my understanding of global health as a

concept itself... Because, if we're honest, for many people it can be a little ambiguous... ("Is it like public health... but, you know... global?") ...or even worse, misconceived. I may not be an expert at this point, but I can lend some help in busting such misconceptions around global health.

First, global health isn't a type of non-profit work. It's a professional field. While it does lend itself to a lot of involvement in underserved populations, you wouldn't consider construction a type of non-profit work just because you know about *Habitat for Humanity*.

Second, global health isn't the M.D. Lite™. Where medical practice can diagnose and treat disease using the span of everything from the cell to the human body systems to the patient, public health picks up at this point on the scale with environmental determinants, sociological patterns, and cultural behaviors to attempt to answer the question of why the disease showed up in the first place.

And, third, just to be perfectly clear, global health isn't the industry of doctors traveling to perform a handful of procedures once a year before breaking for their tropical vacation. While these tidbits may be a helpful place to start understanding global health, I didn't come all the way to Tanzania to internationalize my cynicism.



I came *here* to learn that about global health which couldn't be found within the confines of our Sewanee bubble. To do this, not only do I have IPSL as a resource, but I have also come equipped with a tool imparted on me by the Office of Civic Engagement when I last traveled to the region this summer. We call this tool the “Global Learning Values”.

These 10 values— cultural humility, global citizenship, critical reflection, cultural adaptability, global civic values, human rights beliefs, political voice, conscious consumption, openness to diversity, and civic efficacy— are a collection of skills and attitudes that equip an individual to benefit the most out of a learning experience abroad.

Just being aware of them when going into an international experience can help on its own, but becoming familiar with them, exercising them, developing your understanding of them, and growing your propensity for them is a powerful way to reap the most valuable and fruitful global learning experience. In fact, each one directly enriches my personal global learning experience during my semester-long inquiry into global health.

Take cultural humility for example. I could relay example after example of cases where Western clinicians struggle with what should be some of the easiest cases with patients from another culture, because they fail to see the forest through the peer-reviewed-medical-textbook-trees. It might take a lot more than understanding microbiology to address the multi-generational tradition of close-contact burial practices in the midst of an Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, or the spiritual beliefs surrounding the origin of a health condition.

Or consider the “Global Learning Value” of human rights beliefs. Where do the inalienable human rights to health stop and the simply unattainable quality of health care start? How deeply into an individual’s life does their health reach? Does it *include* the right to clean and safe shelter, and to a health facility in accessible distance? Does it include a job that offers a livable wage that covers health costs, or to an environment free of war or violence that would compromise one’s mental health? Who the heck knows? Not me! But that is something to think about.

These are just a couple of those ten concepts that I am seeking to explore in my semester abroad, both in my studies on global health and in the day-to-day life in Arusha. If it sounds of interest to you, by all means, feel free to join me in the coming weeks as I continue to chronicle my discoveries of Tanzania, my explorations into global health, and my interactions with these ten global learning values. If it doesn’t sound of interest, go right on

ahead and skip it...but tell me that you thought the blog was great. Unless you are my mom or dad, in which case your readership is not optional.



Asante sana!