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Arusha, Tanzania

- Arusha is a city in Northern Tanzania.
- The United Republic of Tanzania has approximately 47.6 million people living in the country
- Tanzania is located in East Africa, bordering the Indian ocean.
- The major languages are English and Swahili and the Major religions are Christianity and Islam.
- Tanzania achieved independence from Britain in 1960. Shortly after gaining their freedom, Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged and became the United Republic of Tanzania.

HIV Rates in Tanzania

In 2016, 1.4 million people were living with HIV and AIDS. In the same year, 55,000 were newly infected by HIV, and 33,000 people died from HIV related illness. The highest HIV prevalence is 3.6% and is significantly higher amongst females than males. Gender inequality and stigma against those living with HIV still remain a barrier to HIV prevention to Tanzania.

Classroom Connections

Course that were helpful during my time abroad were:

- SW 648: Issues in Global Social Work Practice
- SW 530: Introduction to Social Welfare Policy and Services
- SW 613: Behavioral, Psychosocial and Ecological Aspects of Health and Disease
- SW 634: Health care Policy
- SW 521: IP Individual Families and Groups

Project Information

My Global Independent Study focused on learning more about HIV and AIDS and the policies, procedures and health systems that provide treatment and prevention services to residents in Tanzania, East Africa. My time in Arusha was spent partaking in clinical rotations at 3 different locations to compare and contrast the highest level of healthcare to the lowest. The first week was spent at Mount Meru District Hospital in the social welfare office. The second week was spent at Mount Meru Regional referral hospital and the third week was spent at a dispensary. The program coordinator introduced me to doctors, health professionals and social workers where I worked alongside them, interviewing and asking questions and about the policies and procedures that in are in place at each hospital.

Child Family Health International

- CFHI is a non-profit organization located in San Francisco, California.
- Program provider that provides community-based Global Health Education Programs for undergraduate, graduate professional and post-graduate students and institutions.
- CFHI offers a 4 week program in Arusha Tanzania studying Healthcare systems and community-based development where they connected me to Child Growth and Development, a non-profit organization in Arusha Tanzania.

Children Growth and Development

- Part of my time in Arusha was working alongside CDG on projects and connecting with the Osiligi Women's group, helping them to raise money for their community.
- CGD is a non-profit organization located in Arusha Tanzania
- The goal of this organization is to support women's reach into the community, giving them the tools and resources necessary to implement programs/initiatives that provide comprehensive care and opportunity to underserved and orphaned children suffering from poverty, lack of education, limited health access, and food insecurity.
- The Women's group congregate each week to discuss the challenges and disadvantages that impact families and undermine their ability to meet the needs of the children.

Outcomes

- Collected notes and data while interviewing doctors, social workers and other health professionals and discovered similarities between Tanzania's health system and the the U.S.
- The higher the socioeconomic status of an individual the better quality of care a person receives.
- Learned Tanzania's 3 forms of insurance.

Community Health Insurance Fund

- Restricted by district.
- 6 members covered under primary head of household.
- 10,000 shillings (\$5.00 U.S.) each year.
- Must renew each year to obtain coverage.
- Exemptions for older adults, pregnant women and children 5 years and younger.
- Must obtain letter from local leader indicating member cannot pay to be exempted.
- Only used for medical.

National Health Insurance Fund

- For people employed by the government.
- Up to 4 people covered under head of household.
- Used for medical and Dental.
- 76,000 shillings (\$34.00 U.S.) each year.
- 6 members covered under primary insurance holder under the age of 17 years.

Private Insurance

- Individuals covered under private insurance and able to see any provider.

Skills Developed

- Practiced Cultural humility and sensitivity when working alongside Tanzanians during clinical rotations.
- Practiced organizational skills when taking notes during interviews and shadowing health professionals.
- Practiced language development in Swahili in order to communicate with townspeople.
- Practiced assertiveness.

Career Connections

- This experience has given me a clear understanding of how social workers engage in health care.
- Learning about the health systems in Tanzania has strengthened my interest in global health.
- I hope to one day work abroad in Africa as a global social worker.

Lessons Learned

While participating in my independent study I learned to step outside of my comfort zone and practice cultural humility when faced with an unfamiliar environment, culture and language. Another important lesson was to always ask questions and take initiative in seeking out answers.

Advice

- Practice cultural sensitivity and always keep in mind that each culture is different than another.
- Research the city and country before going abroad in order to know what to prepare for before arriving.
- If you're going to a country that speaks a language you are not familiar with, make an effort to learn the language and practice repeatedly.

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