



HONG KONG: TSIM SHA TSUI

I was placed in Hong Kong for 10 weeks. I worked in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST), which is part of the Kowloon District. Hong Kong has a population of about 7 million and its one of the most densely populated locations in the world¹.

Hong Kong was a British colony, it was not until July 1, 1997 that England handed Hong Kong back to China. Hong Kong now runs on what is called one country two systems. Although Hong Kong is part of China, they have their independent legal systems².

REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS IN HONG KONG

As a refugee you are not allowed to volunteer or work. The government gives each person money for rent and food but because the cost of living is so high, many times the government assistance is not enough.



Hong Kong Summer Abroad

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CHRISTIAN ACTION CENTRE FOR REFUGEES

I was placed in Christian Action-Centre for Refugees. It is the only drop-in center for refugees and asylum seekers living in Hong Kong. The Centre for Refugee offers a holistic set of services to its clients. Services such as case management, mental health services, donations, workshops, classes and so much more.



They aim to have their organization feel like a second home for the refugees.

Another big component of Centre for Refugees is to engage with the community and talk to locals and attempt to demystify stereotypes about refugees in Hong Kong.

PROJECTS & ASSIGNMENTS

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT GROUP

The goal of the group was to help the participants build a stronger bond with each other and teach the women tools and strategies they can use when they are experiencing stress and anxiety.

CASE MANAGEMENT

I was assigned to three cases during my time in Hong Kong. The special thing about Christian Action is that they take time to form relationships with their clients and go above and beyond to assist them in any way that they can. I wanted to embody those principals with my caseload.

SUMMER CAMP

Refugee children are not allowed to leave the country and during their summer break Christian Action hosts and subsidizes a summer camp for them. I was in charge of assisting a staff member coordinate the summer camp program for the youth.

SKILLS UTILIZED & DEVELOPED

COMMUNICATION

I had to learn to communicate in a way that people would understand me and sometimes that meant communicating without using language.

ADAPTABILITY

The organization I worked for was very dynamic in nature and every day was different. There were moments where because of external factors events were cancelled and staff members had to leave unexpectedly, so it was important to be flexible and adapt to those kinds of situations.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

In SW 560 we learned about how to enter and leave communities, and it was reiterated in my SW 648 class. I used the skills taught in those classes as I worked with the members in the organization.

Although cultural humility was taught throughout most of my classes, 648 really explored how countries and cultures differ from my western perspective.

In SW 683 we learned different techniques to help evaluate programs, I used those techniques when evaluating the women's group.

LESSONS LEARNED

THINGS HAPPEN THAT ARE OUT OF YOUR CONTROL

Sometimes you plan things and try to stick to a schedule and external factors prevent them from happening. This was a big lesson for me this summer. The political unrest and protests happening in Hong Kong forced the organization to cancel and postpone various events. It was disappointing having to cancel events that we we worked so hard for but I learned to let those feelings go.

SAYING NO

This lesson took me a long time to implement. By the end of the placement, I was getting very overwhelmed with my tasks and responsibilities. Because I had so much on my plate I had to refuse to do some tasks and that was hard for me to do.



Career Connections

My professional goal is to work in Mexico with families that have lived through deportation. This experience has shown me how an organization can be run in a way that makes the clients feel like its their second home. I hope that I get to work with an organization that embodies the passion and commitment that Christian Action has.

Advice

Working abroad has been an unforgettable experience. My advice would be to soak in everything you can, listen to other people's stories, thoughts and experiences. This was my first time interning abroad and I was scared but it was worth it.

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Sources: 1. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/hong-kong-population/>

2. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/topics/reference/hong-kong-history-explain-relationship-china/>