HIV EDUCATION IN BANGKOK, THAILAND
Kelly Gjeldum
University of Michigan School of Social Work

1. Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country to never have been colonized by a European power.
2. Thailand is known as the land of smiles. The people of Thailand are very warm and welcoming.
3. English is widely spoken in Bangkok, making communication easier for westerners.
4. 96% of the country practices Buddhism.

Placement

- I traveled with Cross Cultural Solutions for a special study to their home base in Bangkok, Thailand.
- While in Bangkok, I worked at the Lam Luk Ka District Hospital assisting visiting nurses in rural area treating HIV-positive individuals and taught HIV education and prevention at a local high school.

Connections:

Classroom:
- SW624: taught me how to work more effectively to keep a large group engaged in the educational process.
- SW799: gave me additional information on prevention techniques in working with HIV.

Career:
- Working for an AIDS Service Organization, I was able to bring my expertise and love of collaboration to this volunteer experience. It allowed me to build international connections that I will continue to cultivate.

Lessons & Skills:

Lessons:
- Community are the experts on what they need and what they need from you.
- Being open to change will make for a much better experience.
- It was really important to learn some basic language before departure, it lets people know that you are interested in their culture.

Skills: I learned:
- How to encourage stakeholder buy-in.
- The importance of respecting culture.
- Cultivated a deeper appreciation for global partnerships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The office of Global Activities and the Alumni Association for their generous support.
2. Cross-Cultural Solution for the cultural immersion and an amazing volunteer experience.
3. All the people I had the honor to work with while in Thailand.

ADVICE:

- Be flexible. What you think you will be doing and what you will actually be doing will not be the same thing.
- You are NOT the expert. You will come away feeling like you gained more than you gave.
- Participate in as many different experiences as you can while you are in county. It will give you a greater understanding of the people and culture you are working with.

Bangkok, Thailand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS