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1. **How did you prepare for your trip abroad?**

The preparation for this trip started long before I flew out of Philadelphia on July 4th. I submitted for review a full research protocol to the University of Rwanda at the end of May. IRB approval was granted on June 30th and was truly a collaborative effort between myself and the Rwandan students. Translation services were vital and appreciated, as were the efforts of Mandela Elie, who presented the proposal to the University of Rwanda Ethical Review Board after full review was requested.

I work full time as a practice manager for an internal medicine doctor. We have a very small practice and so I needed to find a temporary replacement for my month off. I understand that everyone worked well together and went altogether smoothly. I also had to get a prescription for malaria prophylaxis and Ciprofloxacin in the event of traveler’s diarrhea. All of my immunizations are up to date, including yellow fever, and so I did not have to worry about that. Though I did make a last minute appointment with my dentist to be sure my discomfort was not the start of a cavity! I was given amoxicillin just in case.

2. **What information should be reviewed/studied prior to going to your intentional location?**

*We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* is by Philip Gourevitch about the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. While at times difficult to read, it gives a rich history of Rwanda, imperialism, and colonization. *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* is by Stephen Kinzer. Kinzer was allowed unprecedented access to President Paul Kagame and offers a compelling view of the man who would reshape Rwanda after the horrors of 1994.
Also, there are many Foederer journals from past Jeff HEALTH participants. They are helpful to read for preparation advice, information on where to stay, and for making plans for the weekends off!

3. **Describe some of the biggest accomplishments you made on this trip.**

   I completed all 30 interviews needed for my capstone project, including transcription of the voice recordings. It was necessary to be flexible; my community health worker (CHW) liaison caught malaria half way through (though started medicine right away and is back to her old self) and my schedule was dictated by the availability of my interpreter, Bonaventure. Most importantly, I strengthened the bonds between Jeff HEALTH and our RVCP colleagues.

4. **Please describe a typical day in your program at your clinical site.**

   My day would start with the transcription of the interviews from the night before. There was a little coffee shop, Nehemia, about a mile away and they had reasonable prices and wifi! So usually I would start my day with an African coffee and a lot of typing. After lunch my interpreter, Bonaventure, would arrive and we would take a 10-minute moto ride to the site village of Muyogoro. I was led by the CHW house by house to do the interviews. They would start by obtaining written consent, in accordance with IRB protocol, and then would typically last 20 minutes. Dinner was usually the biggest meal of the day and consisted of fruits and vegetables.
5. Describe the patient population & typical services provided.

The target population included 30 of the 60 families involved in the pig breeding program. They are mostly subsistence farmers with small scale animal husbandry projects. They are incredibly resource poor. Homes are made of packed earth bricks and lack running water. Pit latrines are common and very few have access to electricity.

6. What was the most rewarding part of your trip:

While it was very satisfying to complete the work needed for my capstone, I am most proud of the relationships I strengthened and forged with both my colleagues and the villagers. It is always good to collaborate with vested stakeholders (RVCP). Furthermore, every one of the people I interviewed was happy to have a visitor, someone to talk to and share their hopes and wishes with.

7. What was the most challenging part of your trip:

While I love Kigali, it was hard to be away from my family for so long. I missed my house and the little comforts I take for granted: running water, warm showers, abundant choices of food.

8. Did you participate in additional language study during this trip?

No. I knew a little from my prior trip to Rwanda and this was helpful.

9. If yes, how much did you improve?

I learned a lot more in regards to greetings and small talk. Kinyarwanda is a very beautiful, but difficult, language to learn.
10. Would you recommend this program? Why or why not?

Absolutely. One of the best aspects of this program is the network of colleagues that Jeff HEALTH has in Rwanda. It makes everything- transportation, travel arrangements- that much easier. Even RVCP students that I had never met were quick to reach out. It is an environment rich with like-minded people who want to improve the health of their nation.

11. Any suggestions on activities, food, sightseeing, etc. at this program location?

Mountain Gorillas! The day passes are expensive but it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The habituated gorillas are non-threatening and so fun to watch. They are located in the northwest of the country in Volcanoes National Park. There are many places to stay, from hostels to 5 star hotels, for the night. Added to that is a beautiful hike through the forest to reach them.

I would also try to make it to Kibuye on Lake Kivu. We stayed at the Home St. Jean which was reasonably priced and east to find from the bus station. The sunset was breathtaking and we were able to see it from the boat that we rented. We took a trip to, the aptly named, Bat Island and Peace Island. They had great views and short hikes.

12. What (if any) additional information would you like to have known prior to participating in your program?

It would have been helpful to have a detailed map, both of the country and of Kigali. The city is only getting bigger and the roads can be confusing. Also, it is a good idea to by a sim card for your smart phone on which you can put a data bundle. That makes internet access a non-issue and is relatively cheap. I got 5 GB for 15,000 RWF ($19 USD) and it was good for the whole month. Just
make sure that if you have an iPhone it is unlocked so that it will acknowledge the new sim.
Gorillas like to play with their feet! The hike to reach them was only 30 minutes and we were able to stay with them for one hour. Permits can be obtained through the Rwanda Development Board.

One of my interviewee’s pigs. Pigs are preferred because they are relatively inexpensive (~10,000 RWF per piglet) and will eat anything.
The view from our boat of Bat Island on Lake Kivu. Kivu is special in that it emits CO2 and methane, the latter of which is captured as an energy source.

A surprise birthday party for me thrown by RCVP colleagues. I love these friendships.
Bonaventure, my interpreter and liaison to the community.