Volunteering in Zambia 2018

With help from the CSU honors program, I had the chance to study abroad in Livingstone, Zambia with 11 other students. During the spring semester, we read about Zambian culture and volunteer work in Africa, including several peace corps memoirs. Then, for three weeks that summer, we volunteered with an NGO named the African Impact Foundation. African Impact has several volunteer and internship programs in Zambia. Ours was focused on community health and education.

Bright and early, we would all go our separate ways for morning project, some going to schools to teach and others going to work in the community health clinics or to help with home-based care in the local villages. For the first two weeks, I volunteered with the girl impact program. This girl empowerment initiative is designed to teach girls, grades four to six, about human rights, health, safety, early pregnancy, making a living, self-confidence, and a myriad of other pertinent topics. I led lessons on nutrition, finances, menstrual hygiene, and HIV education.

Girl impact also has a sustainable agriculture project that exposes young girls to sustainable food production practices through hands-on experience at the communal farm. As a soil and crop sciences major, I loved sharing in this afternoon project. It was captivating listening to Audrey, the girl impact community liaison, tell us about the local agriculture in Livingstone. The other afternoon projects I was assigned to included: math club, adult learning club, and after school club to name a few.

My last week in Zambia, I decided to try out the medical project. After learning the basics, I set out with a caregiver and a couple other medical volunteers to one of the local
communities. I had intended to just observe the other volunteers and fill out the patient forms. Yet after seeing a few patients, I was helping take blood pressure and was able to really engage with the patients and their families. Each day we walked through a different village, stopping at patients’ houses along the way. Although we were limited on what we could provide, we could hand out basic medication and vitamins, clean and dress wounds, take blood pressure and blood sugar, and make referrals to the nearby clinic. Working with the medical group was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, yet the it was also inspirational and a highlight of my experience.

Overall, this trip was both challenging and rewarding in countless ways. I learned more than I could have ever anticipated. It reinforced my love of learning and teaching. I will always be grateful for this opportunity.
our classrooms for girl impact lessons