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The purpose of my internship with the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) was primarily to gain an in-depth learning experience concerning the developing palliative care system in Uganda. I spent my first four days just outside the capital city of Kampala to ease myself into the novel experience of being alone in a foreign country. Then, I traveled to Tororo, a small town on the Kenyan border, where I spent four weeks. After that, I went to Mbarara, a city in southwestern Uganda, staying there for three weeks. I finished up my final days outside of Kampala before I returned home to the United States.

I began my trip full of bravado, proud of myself that I could travel to a foreign country alone. When I finally arrived to Entebbe airport, I was excited and fearful. The feeling of vulnerability quickly hit me as I nervously scanned the crowd of people outside the airport for my name. Ultimately, I found my driver, who then took me to the guesthouse. The next morning, after meeting my in-country supervisor Rose at the PCAU headquarters, I returned to the house and did not know what to do with myself. Thankfully, Bri Wanlass, a graduate student from Notre Dame, was coming later that day to stay in the house as well. When she arrived, I quickly realized how fearful I had been. I had been concerned about simply walking to the supermarket to buy food—I was not sure how to handle myself as one who would stick out so easily in a crowd of people. Bri was able to put me at ease and helped me realize that people turning to stare was not threatening; rather, they are simply interested in the presence of white foreigners.

That next Monday, I arrived in Tororo. Having seen the outskirts of Kampala, which was a crowded, hectic area, this was a pleasant change. Tororo was much smaller and had no traffic jams. My biggest concern was having a meaningful experience while staying in a guesthouse

alone—would I find friends willing to occupy all the free time after work and on the weekends? My worries quickly disappeared as I met the staff at Hospice Tororo. There were a total of eight people (three volunteers), and five of them were under thirty years old. This made for an exciting, energetic work environment. Everyone there was friendly and hospitable, helping me settle into my new routine.

A typical day at Hospice Tororo started with a morning meeting detailing the patients seen on the previous workday. Any particularly difficult problems were addressed and debated until a solution was reached—I really enjoyed being a part of this. After the morning meeting, I would go on home visits via the organization's car along with the nurses, social workers, or a combination of both. Visiting patient's homes, most of which were in the village, was one of the best ways I was able to learn about the culture. For one, I saw the importance of hospitality for Ugandans—whenever we arrived to a home, there was always someone, typically a woman or child, who would rush to get chairs for every one of us. A few times, I in particular would be offered a bigger or more padded chair than my coworkers. This was an uncomfortable experience for me. The first time this happened, I laughed and asked someone else to sit in the chair. Immediately, my coworkers told me it was polite to simply accept the chair. I quickly became more uncomfortable with the possibility of offending the man at his house, and graciously accepted the chair. After this, I began thinking about why exactly people would offer me a special chair, and I talked to one of my coworkers about it. He told me that a westerner like myself is not a common sight in the villages, and because I am clearly a guest to Uganda, people want to make me feel especially welcome. I realized that the fundamental reason I felt uncomfortable accepting a special chair is the underlying racial tension in my own American culture. Receiving special privileges over a group of people who have been struggling for racial

equality in my country reminds me of what some would describe as my white privilege. Being faced with these situations in Uganda allowed me to see past my own discomfort and more greatly appreciate the intentions behind one's actions, rather than the actions themselves.

After Tororo, I traveled to Mbarara to work with Mobile Hospice Mbarara. The work itself was not as enjoyable as Tororo—the workplace was larger and the workers were older. However, I really enjoyed the place where I stayed, which was a community of priests and brothers called the Montfort Missionaries. Having spent over a month in a guesthouse by myself, I was happy to live in a tight-knit community like this. Amongst the priests and brothers were six “aspirants,” young men my age who were seriously considering vocations to the priesthood. I quickly made friends with them and spent my evenings after work playing in their daily volleyball games.

At Mobile Hospice Mbarara, I found it initially challenging to spend my time meaningfully. With so many employees, it was easy to get lost in the bustle of the workplace without anything to do myself. However, I learned to assert myself and express that I wanted to be busy. As a result, I was able to spend time working outside of the clinic and home visits. For one, I worked with the children's daycare, something that occurs once a month. This was definitely my most fun day of work in Mbarara. I also spent time working in the pharmacy— with one pharmacist to about twelve health care workers, things could become very hectic. While I did enjoy the excitement of trying to keep up with the requests for medications, I also gained an appreciation of the difficulties the pharmacist endured when he was working by himself.

Overall, spending two months by myself in Uganda was a challenging but rewarding experience. I was forced to go outside of my comfort zone and develop relationships with people of a culture much different than my own.