

Updates from Ngong Road Children's Association!

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Hello from Kenya! I arrived on June 9th, about two weeks ago, and things have been going great since then.

Work has gotten off to a good start, and I have been splitting my attention between several projects with the ultimate goal of improving the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) program here at Ngong Road Children Association (NRCA). So far, my

focus has primarily been on the monitoring and evaluation research on the program. Under the mentorship of Dr. Kissinger we have been using multiple methods to evaluate the impact of the youth peer educator program. To get quantitative feedback, we had the students who participated in the SRH lesson take pre- and post-test surveys so that we can compare how their knowledge and attitudes have changed. The surveys are fairly long and entering the responses has been time consuming, but we will be able to begin analyzing the results soon. In the meantime, this has been a great introduction to data management.

To get a qualitative perspective, I decided to do focus groups with various groups of students in different age and gender cohorts who have received the education lesson, as well as with the peer educators. I spent much of my first week writing the question guides for the focus groups and last week, while the students were on their mid-term break, from school facilitated the focus groups. It was great to work with Dr. Kissinger, Maureen (Executive Director of NRCA), and Joy (Director of the Post-Secondary Department) to learn what questions would be useful, and how to best phrase them, to get good feedback on the SRH program—a more challenging task than expected! It was also helpful to have an opportunity to practice my interviewing skills.

In addition to research activities, I have been working to make connections with other organizations in the Nairobi area that provide sexual and reproductive health services and education. The ultimate goal is that after I leave the SRH program will be sustainable and continue to grow, but to do that it is important that the peer educators have resources to continue learning. We also want to make sure that any NRCA students that want to use contraceptives have access to them, and one way we might be able to accomplish this is by making more partnerships with youth-friendly service providers throughout the city.

Outside of work I have been enjoying Nairobi! I am living with a host family, which has been a great experience for cultural immersion and Swahili language practice. This past weekend, I went with my host sisters and their cousins to David Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage and the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife's Giraffe Center. We had the incredible experience of seeing about 18 baby elephants and feeding the giraffes! I have also found a ballet studio and a bikram yoga studio where I am going to classes in the evenings.

I continue to be so grateful to the NCI for funding this experience. I am looking forward to exploring more of the city over the coming weeks, and continuing to do

impactful work that improves the lives of these children.