

Hi Honors Blog Readers!

I hope this summer has been treating you all well and you are enjoying the weather!

I returned from Zambia about two weeks ago and am processing all I learned while there. While in Zambia, I couldn't help but notice the differences between Zambia and the United States. One of the most startling differences was in resources. In home-based care we would go from patient to patient and hand out a few days' worth vitamins and basic painkillers like ibuprofen and Tylenol. I would bet money that each of you reading this has a full bottle of ibuprofen (or a similar drug) waiting in their cabinets. When we took vitals in the clinics, there was often only one thermometer and blood-pressure cuff.

Although I didn't work in education, on afternoon project I walked into a classroom--there were at least 60 students packed together on seats that might comfortably hold forty kids. A little above this gigantic class, there was another large class on a platform. Afternoon projects mostly consisted of educational programs. For example, we did math and reading club. It is very hard to teach kids how to read if you don't have books. It's also hard to do math problems and homework if you don't have a pen.

I don't want to paint this picture as hopeless. African Impact (the organization I worked with) is doing amazing things. They provide ibuprofen and books and pens as best they can. Kids are happy. Zambians and volunteers work together to push each other forward and up towards better lives.

In addition to working, I also got to visit the beautiful Victoria Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world. It's beautiful there. It's called Mosi-oa-Tunya, which means "The Smoke That Thunders". You literally cannot see where the water hits the ground for all the mist. Plus, there are rainbows everywhere!!! Words cannot do it justice, but I highly recommend you google it--you won't be disappointed.

My time in Zambia was very difficult, I won't lie. However, I made fantastic friends. My time with African Impact showed me I can help others in a meaningful way. It also taught me to be a more grateful and absolutely a more aware person. I will keep the lessons I learned close to me throughout my life.

Thanks for reading!

Happy Summer!

Rachel

P.S. On the way back to the US, we had a layover in London and were able to go into town. Little did we know, it was the Queen's Official 90th birthday!!!



The Adventure Ends!

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We've been home for a week and it has been oddly hard to adjust back to the first world and all of its luxuries. It feels abnormal to be able to drive down a paved road with music blaring, to have clothes that smell nice, and not having to talk to people loudly and with hand gestures to overcome the language barrier. I feel as though I have experienced more of a culture shock coming home than going to Zambia. I find that one of the biggest challenges is getting people at home to understand what it is like down there—they don't understand the poverty, the layout of the city, the beauty of the people. I've shown people maps and pictures, told stories, acted out people's mannerisms but it seems impossible for them to understand the experiences we had. This has been my greatest heartache: I want people to be able to comprehend the intermixing of beauty and pain and how this tornado of emotions made the trip so rich. In the past week when I am riding my bike or running and letting my mind drift, I keep thinking about three of the people that left the largest impact on me and how it hurts to leave them behind and most likely never see them again. The first being Audrey, leader of the Girl Impact group that teaches fourth grade girls how to love themselves, farm, and sew. It was so obvious to me after I first introduced myself how driven she was and after seeing her interact with the girls how she is dramatically changing their lives and how they look up to her. The second, who I only met once, was Francis, high school basketball coach—he reminded me exponentially of my high school cross country coach and it was once again obvious how he was taking the poor situation that the high school students were in and teaching them how to use basketball as a metaphor for their lives and how to use it to change their lives. And, lastly, the third being seventeen-year-old Beatrice at the Maramba Old People's home; Beatrice was such a light to those elderly people and loving this life that she is given. Beatrice was a sophomore in high school—so close to completing school and told me of her dreams of university. My heart feels empty that I can no longer be in contact with these people (although I am now Facebook friends with Francis) and that we can no longer work together and pour into each other and as a result pour into the

Zambian kids. But, something tells me that they don't need my help and that they will radically change lives beyond the help of muzungus (Nyanja for white person).

Affectionately,  
Bri