

Ever since I realize the calling from God to me of becoming a part of Doctor Without Borders, I knew that it was my responsibility to take action. I knew I have to confirm this calling by opening myself up to any opportunities that I can have which would allow me to learn more about myself. Fortunately, through the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership, God lead me to a road of opportunity, the Semester Around the World trip. This was truly the once in a life time event that I truly treasured and will continue to treasure for the rest of my life. It is this trip that I have truly learned about myself and what I am capable of doing.

Throughout Asia, I have seen many people that are in need of care and respect. When we were in China, there were so many people selling to us their products. No matter how low we make the prices, they would try their best to sell us their products. China is a place with a very large population and unfortunately, it has too many mouths to feed. Therefore, many of its people try to make a living everyday, no matter the cost and pain. In addition to seeing many people trying very hard to make a living, I also heard about the government that is not doing its job very well. Our tour guide told us that during SARS, people were not allowed to be out of the house for a certain period of time. She also said that the government claims that they have not killed anyone for having SARS. As a citizen who lives in China, our tour guide said that everyone could tell that the government was keeping something and lying to their citizens about the truth. From being in China, seeing the many hungry mouths on the street, and hearing about their government, I have come to a realization that perhaps China is also a place that I can offer my help to when I become a doctor.

Upon all the places that I have visited, India is by far the one that has made the most impact on my life. According to all my friends, I have always been known as the "germaphobic

girl”. This is actually a word that they have all made up for me because I have a phobia for germs. Many times, when I tell people that I want to help people by being a doctor in third world countries, I get surprising looks from people. Everyone is surprise to hear from their germaphobic friend who wants to go and work at dirty places for the rest of her life. This is indeed true. Going to India has helped me confirmed my doubts about providing my service in the third world. Throughout India, I have seen the many different aspects and greatness of its culture, but I have also seen much poverty that it possesses.

Fortunately, Mother’s Theresa’s Sister of Charity allowed me to confirm that my dream of being a third world doctor could actually come true. When I was in school at Kerala, I had the opportunity to bond more with the Indian people in school and around the hotel. This was a rewarding experience as I get to learn about their culture and at the same time teach them my culture. The friendliness continues as I had the opportunity to go and visit the *Missionary of Charity for Handicapped Children and Children with Disabilities* and *Missionary of Charity for Newborn Babies*. Visiting the handicapped children was an eye opening experience; because most of the children there have mental disabilities, sitting on the hot burning floor and playing with themselves is what they do all day. Being able to spend time with them, holding them, and playing clapping games with them was a very rewarding experience. When I first arrived, I was a little nervous, I was afraid that I wouldn’t know how to handle them or play with them. After the visits, I was complimented by many of my friends who went with me to the orphanage. They all were very proud of my behavior with the kids, “You did a really good job with the children today!” The many compliments that I have received from them encourage and suggest to me that with love, I can conquer the fear of doing things that I thought I would never be able to do.

My visit to Missionary of Charity for Newborns confirms my calling to be a doctor in the third world. When I first entered the nursery, I could not help but cry. Joyful tears came rushing down my face as I was very excited to see all the babies. I could truly feel that all the babies there greatly appreciate my presence. One little smile is all I need to give them and I get a big smile and a giggle back from them in return. Holding them, feeding them, changing them, made time goes by quickly. Since the babies there use cloth diapers, two of the babies have urinated on me and I was soaked. I was not upset at all, in fact, it did not bother me at all! I just know that I was there to take care of them and give them my love. That was all I care about; indeed I have again proven to myself that my love is the greatest power that helps me to suppress my fear of getting dirty.

Leaving India and its entire wonderful people was hard. Chills goes through my body as I now recollect the day I had to say goodbye to the Missionary of Charity for Newborn and their wonderful sisters. I can still remember myself standing at the iron gate and the look on Sister's A's face as she asks me to pray for them and all the babies. Again, tears came rushing down my face. These tears were tears that I rather not cry. It was hard to say goodbye to this wonderful place. Upon leaving, I promised myself that I will indeed one day go back and visit these dear friends. This trip was truly a blessing to me. I could not thank CWIL enough for supporting me on going to this trip. Without CWIL and without Semester Around the World, I would still doubt my ability to be a doctor today and would not be able to learn about all the different kind of people in this world. Now I am a changed person. Not only do I want to be a doctor for the third world, I am certain that I will become a doctor for the third world. I look forward to any other opportunities that will come to me in the future that will allow me to learn even more about

myself. As for now, I am truly content to learn that I have the ability to take care of others without worrying about getting dirty.