



## Global Health Education Student Experiences

### **Rhea Mathew**

Swaziland, Dornsife Global Health Scholars

Summer 2018



*Drexel medical student Rhea Mathew in the Kingdom of Eswatini with Dornsife Global Health.*

Spending six weeks in the Kingdom of Eswatini has been a unique experience, unlike any other global health activity I have been involved with. The people of Eswatini are warm and welcoming, and they shout sawubhona (hello) and Unjani (how are you), multiple times per day to everyone they encounter, even to strangers like myself.

I have been honored to work under World Vision's Health Technical Program, evaluating the impact of Timed and Targeted Counseling (TTC), an educational program designed to inform pregnant and lactating women about healthy practices during pregnancy and child care. I interviewed rural health motivators and female participants to identify the strengths of TTC and areas of potential improvement. It was particularly eye-opening to learn how many families enrolled in TTC do not have access to clean water or sanitation. While they are being counseled to engage in healthy practices to prevent maternal and child morbidity and mortality, they still fetch water from a river and suffer the consequences of using

untreated water. It shows the difficulty and necessity of integrating multiple health initiatives.



*Drexel medical student Rhea Mathew in the Kingdom of Eswatini with Dornsife Global Health. Drexel medical student Rhea Mathew in the Kingdom of Eswatini with Dornsife Global Health.*

Besides working on my specific project, I also assisted in growth monitoring of small children in one of the more remote communities, worked in a rural clinic pharmacy to prepare prescriptions and visited large health meetings that engaged individuals between 10 and 24 years of age in productive discussions about sexual and reproductive health. I have eaten rice, pap, beets, cabbage and village chicken; taken pictures with dozens of curious children; and played with more babies than I can count. I was sad to leave Eswatini, but grateful for the lessons I learned there and the people I met. I am sure that my experiences with World Vision will inform my global health and career ambitions from here on out, and I am excited to further reflect and build on this short but meaningful journey.



*Drexel medical student Rhea Mathew in the Kingdom of Eswatini with Dornsife Global Health.*