Zeeshan's Major: Neurobiology, Certificate in Global Health

Program: UW Global Health, Summer

Academic Life: Before the program began each student in the group chose an individual project they were interested in. Once in the country we met many different health professionals who first gave us lectures on the work that they do and then allowed us to ask questions pertaining to our individual projects specifically. Since everyone’s project had to relate to health there was also ample opportunity for personal observations as we traveled through the country and participated in various activities. For example, we were able to visit/volunteer at orphanages, villages, farms and hospitals throughout our stay. The main capstone experience of our program was our village stay where we were able to stay with the locals and even participate in a Shramadana (work camp).

Housing: For the majority of the program we stayed at hostels provided by Sarvodaya (the country’s largest NGO). For four nights we split up into groups of two and stayed with families in a village called Jayathugama. The homestay was my most memorable experience because it was also the most challenging mentally and physically; however, by the end of the homestay the house that I was living at felt like home and I had made some long lasting friendships.

Advice for Someone Considering Sri Lanka: If you are truly interested in global health and seeing how it affects the community directly then this would be one of the best programs for you, because the program in a sense allows you to act as an investigator researching your topic of interest. In addition, it gives you access to some of the top public health practitioners in the country from a wide array of disciplines allowing you to get different perspectives on your topic.

“The program allowed us to see how our health topics directly affect the real lives of everyday Sri Lankans.”