

## My global clinical placement in Nepal

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For the last three years, I have been a part of the Global Understanding Through Nursing Initiatives (GUNI) club as I have always wanted to complete a global nursing clinical placement. In May 2019 I packed my luggage and prepared myself to spend three months in Nepal.

Located between India and China, Nepal is a country rich in its culture, people and biodiversity. I mainly stayed in Dhulikhel, where I attended the Dhulikhel Hospital and spent four weeks in the general paediatrics area and another six weeks in the NICU.



*Above: standing in front of the main hospital building*

I learned a lot by living in a developing country, including how to provide care in a limited-resource setting and cultural competency. Cultural competency is an essential asset to have as a Canadian nurse due to our diverse population. One of the major challenges I had was learning how to drive out any ethnocentric notions I had and become accepting of a resource-limited setting. The people of Nepal have a great sense of community and I felt an immediate connection with them! In particular, the Nepali nursing students included us in their curriculum, and we participated in many activities such as National Nursing Week and a community-clean up day.

I learned many skills including Nasogastric management/care, inserting catheters and giving baby baths. Above all, my critical thinking skills have improved significantly because of the challenges I faced with the language and communication barriers. When the patients needed critical medical intervention, the staff did not have time to explain what is happening in English. Thus, I was constantly asking myself, “what is happening, why is this happening, is this what happens in Canada, etc.” I also started to look outside of the primary nursing care model and consider topics such as water and sanitation, housing, income and other social determinants of health along with their impacts.

Nursing researchers have found that students with international experiences become better culturally competent practitioners than those who did not have international experience. I learned how to utilize population-based prevention strategies for the pediatrics ward and infection control protocols in a resource-limited setting.

I am truly so grateful to have had this experience and it has inspired me to passionately pursue global nursing as a career.