

Jacqueline Hill

Summer 2011
Health Care & Social Policies
Sweden



Pictured (L-R) Juli Gardner, Vicky Martin, Program Director Dr. Mary Zimmerman, Jacqueline Hill & Debbie Swinehart.

Upon arrival at the Kansas City airport on June 11, 2011, we were full of anticipation about our upcoming trip to study the administration, organization, and financing of health care for two weeks in Sweden. The 11-hour flight seemed endless, although it was full of last minute studying! Upon arrival at Arlanda Airport in Sweden, we encountered our first taste of Swedish culture - every taxi was a Mercedes! We soon learned, however, that this was only the beginning to a new perspective on life, culture, and most importantly, health care.

The subsequent two weeks were a whirlwind. Our class of ten students and two professors spent time in numerous local, regional, and national organizations. We visited various health care facilities, including public and private primary care centers and national/university, regional, and specialty hospitals. Additionally, we spent significant time at social service agencies, such as a domestic violence shelter, mental health outreach group, and several organizations offering workforce training or refugee integration services. During these visits, we had the opportunity to speak with various field experts, such as primary care physicians, a cardiothoracic surgeon, nurse midwives (who are the primary providers of maternity care), psychologists, and social workers.

In addition to meeting with governmental officials at regional and local levels, we also visited several national government agencies, such as the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (*Försäkringskassan*), which is responsible for providing social benefits, as well as the National Board of Health and Welfare (*Socialstyrelsen*), which is responsible for oversight of health care. We learned that Swedish culture places a high value on children, families, and gender equality, which was evident in the apparent role that fathers play in childrearing, as it was common to see them pushing baby carriages in the absence

of mothers. Moreover, Swedish parents are collectively allotted an additional 480 paid days off work to care for their children.

Our class also went beyond site visits at health care organizations and provided numerous opportunities to engage in Swedish culture. One notable difference about life in Sweden was the abundance of public transportation. Except for the taxi we took to and from the airport, we walked, hopped on subways, and rode trains and boats to navigate throughout the city. One of our favorite cultural activities, known as *fika*, was twice a day, near-obligatory coffee break at work. Finally, we participated in the summer solstice celebration at Skansen, where we picnicked and danced around the maypole, singing traditional Swedish folk songs.

Lastly, the most unique aspect of our trip to Sweden was the new perspectives we gained. Not only were we able to share the experience among fellow KU and KUMC students (of varying degrees) and backgrounds, but we also met new students and faculty from Kenyon College in Ohio. This unique course structure made the trip even more exceptional, as we had the benefit of gaining insights from these students, as well as leaving Sweden with new perspectives on future possibilities in health and social care in our own country.

Kelsey Murrell

Winter Break 2011
Honors
Costa Rica
Spring Break 2011
Honors
London, England
Summer 2011
Field Biology
Amazonian Peru

In six months, I studied abroad three times. Each experience changed the way I understand the world and my life at KU. They changed the way I envision my future, to what graduate schools I will apply, where I will live, and more importantly, how I will live.

In January 2011, I went to Costa Rica. I never felt such a commitment to the environment before visiting the cloud forest of Monteverde or the rain forest, La Fortuna waterfall or the Arenal volcano. Seeing some of nature's most majestic places created in me a strong sense of responsibility to preserve our environment. I couldn't imagine these forests one day disappearing.

The Costa Rican people have a saying: *Pura Vida*. It translates literally as "Pure Life." To me, it meant "Life is good." In Costa Rica I let go of my stress and anxiety. I focused on learning, enjoying the beauty of the country and the company of the people, and appreciating the good. *Pura Vida* has so many meanings. When I am struggling with stress or a difficult decision I just remember *Pura Vida* and suddenly life doesn't seem so hard.

In March, I went on the London Review program. This program allows students to do research on the city and design their own itineraries for much of the trip. I was always



terrified of traveling alone in cities until I visited London. I took a map and explored on my own, spent an afternoon writing by the Thames River overlooking Parliament, and visiting the theatre district. Our group spent a day in Oxford where I met some KU alumni and other Oxford students. This trip gave me the confidence to apply to graduate schools in other regions of the U.S. and even graduate schools in England. Exploring London and Oxford gave me the confidence and drive I needed to compete for the Rhodes and Marshall Scholarships. I don't think I would have even considered these scholarships to be within my realm of possibility if I had not studied abroad.

In June, I went to Peru on an interdisciplinary field biology program. We stayed in the capitol city, Lima, and spent a week in Amazonia at a field station. For me, the most valuable experience on this trip was seeing the poverty, lack of education, and pollution via gold mining in the region. This experience forced me to confront some of the issues I hope to address through education and literature.

Each program changed me in ways I could not have predicted. Each trip opened doors, created possibilities, and expanded my world view. As I apply to graduate programs for English this fall, I know that wherever I end up I will have the confidence, drive, and passion I need to be successful.

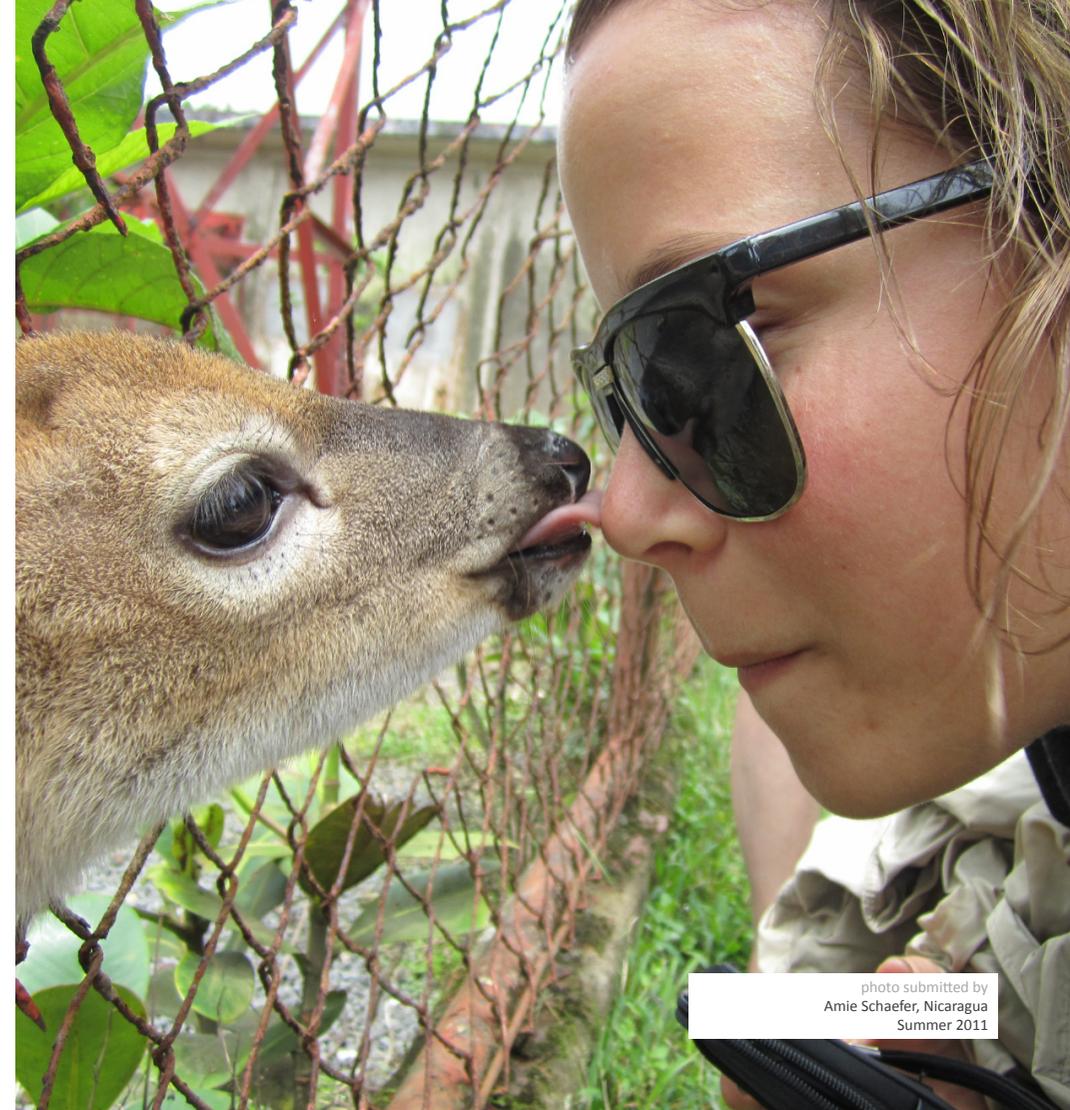


photo submitted by
Amie Schaefer, Nicaragua
Summer 2011

Jayhawks Abroad

/ a newsletter from the Office of Study Abroad

Fall 2011

Study Abroad Fair
Today, Wednesday, September 7
10:30-3:30
4th Floor, Kansas Union

KU
OFFICE OF
STUDY ABROAD
The University of Kansas

Melissa Hill

Summer 2011
Music Therapy in
Thailand



My study abroad experience in Thailand has forever impacted my life and my perspectives of the world and of music therapy. The list of lessons learned and of things I want to remember forever grew to be incredibly overwhelming.

The first lesson that I learned in Thailand is that time is important, but isn't everything—and that our “American way” is often incredibly minute-by-minute. One of the most fulfilling moments of my adventure was a seemingly-impossible mountain climb on a minute's notice with no time limit. I also learned the importance of a smile, which is the clearest form of communication and one which crosses international boundaries. One of the most important lessons that I will keep with me forever is the power of taking action. Before this trip, I may not have taken an opportunity to try and reach out to those that I cannot verbally communicate with in my community. Now I know that language does not have to be a barrier; simply being there and smiling can make a positive impact on the patients and, consequently, me. My biggest inspiration in Thailand might be the music therapy office in the school of music. The profession is not yet established in the country and yet their facilities exemplify their will to take action towards a national music therapy association.

While I am glad to be home and resting after a long vacation, my return to America has not been entirely smooth sailing. The most immediate difficulty was adjusting to the time difference. I have had severe jetlag since my return! I napped every hour for the first few days that I was home. The next difficulty about returning was adjusting to the prices in America. Not only is the cost of living higher, but there are extravagances everywhere. Finding a decent, cheap meal here is nearly impossible while being hard to miss in Thailand. The most recent difficulty I have experienced back in America is deciding how to apply my newfound knowledge. Finding a balance between helping my

loved ones understand my experience and overwhelming them requires a fine line. I look forward to any reunion Skype conversations that my classmates and I will have about what we learned, how we changed, and how we are each adjusting to home.

As time passes, these adjustments are becoming easier. One of the important things that I learned on my trip that has helped me adjust thus far is to remember to use certain “frames,” or lenses, when facing the world—which entails seeing through the eyes of others around me and also adjusting my “frame” as needed to fit each situation. For instance, I prefer keeping my Thai frame of what items are relatively expensive because this helps me be more frugal in America (which usually sounds like, “I could buy this for less than half of this price in Thailand!”).

I am incredibly glad to be home to see my family and give them fun souvenirs, but I feel that I will always have a longing to be back in Thailand. This opportunity has changed my life forever. I mentioned near departure from Thailand that I simply felt older and more mature at the end of the trip than when we stepped off the plane in Bangkok a month previously. Yes, I literally aged, but I felt more mature and confident. Not only do I have enough memories to fill many journals and scrapbooks, but I feel as though I have become a new level of student that is able to face a much greater number of obstacles that I might find on my path towards becoming a Music Therapist-Board Certified. I have been inspired to become a greater version of myself on my journey to Thailand and back.

Aime Schaefer

Summer 2011
Language and Culture in Nicaragua

In the summer of 2011, I traveled to Nicaragua with the University of Kansas Language and Culture Study Abroad Program. While I have been out of the country in the past I had never traveled alone. I had overwhelming feelings of nervousness and excitement, but once I met the group that I was traveling with I became comfortable and thrilled about this new adventure. It turned out that we all got along famously and Nicaragua provided a setting and an experience that none of us would ever forget.

Our travels began when we arrived at the airport in Managua and soon traveled to Granada, where we spent one week in a homestay environment. Casa Xalteva, a nonprofit organization that teaches underprivileged children arranged our accommodations and all of our activities in Granada. They even provided us with our insightful and entertaining guides Guapo and Comandante, who informed us about the sites and excursions that we experienced. Our host parents, guides, and the volunteers at Casa Xalteva offered us an amazing first impression of the country. We just knew that the rest of Nicaragua would be just as extraordinary.

The first week in Granada was one of my favorites, although it seemed demanding at first, for we had so much to accomplish; we swam at Las Isletas, hiked the Volcano Mombacho, and toured Los Pueblos Blancos, receiving a lesson in pottery making. Furthermore, we went to the market at Masaya, explored the Volcano Masaya and the caves surrounding the area. We floated in the gorgeous Laguna de Apoyo and traveled to Leon in addition to taking in the night life of the colonial city of Granada and spending time with our host parents. The first week was such an exhilarating start to our exploration of Nicaragua. These kinds of activities allowed us to later see the vast cultural differences between the Pacific and the Atlantic Coasts.

After our time in Granada, we went to Corn Island, a Caribbean island off of the Atlantic Coast of the country. The four days we spent there were purely relaxing and it was a nice break between the wonderful, yet rigorous

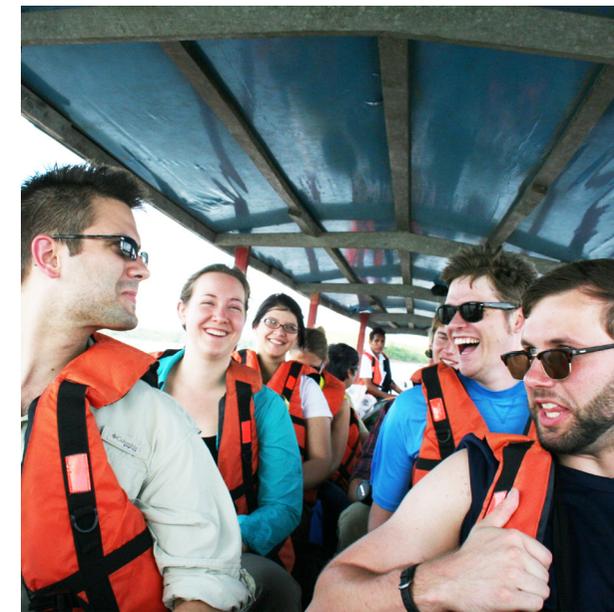
events in Granada and the beginning of our classes on the Atlantic side. We stayed in brightly colored bungalows with hammocks on the porch and a breathtaking view of the beach. The food was delicious and the atmosphere was even better. During our visit we often soaked up the sun, played volleyball, and went snorkeling where we spotted conch shells, sea urchins, starfish, and even a giant sting ray. Although this time of leisure eventually came to an end, we looked forward to our four week stay in Bilwi/ Puerto Cabezas where we would learn about the language and culture of the indigenous Miskitu.

Bilwi was like nothing I had ever seen before and it took some time to fully understand the indigenous culture that is so different from our own. With that being said, I grew to love the city, its people, and Casa Museo, our hotel for the duration of the stay. The infrastructure in Bilwi is not like that of the United States, so the power, water, and internet went out at times, but our group made the best of these outages. They turned out to be some of the most fun occasions; with no distractions, everyone had a great time getting to know each other.

In Bilwi, our classes almost didn't seem like school because we were so excited to learn the language and about the culture. Many of the locals were helpful and came to our class to help us with pronunciation; in addition, some of the missionaries who lived in the area joined us in learning Miskitu. The inhabitants of Bilwi and other villages we visited like Waspam and Kum were friendly and absolutely hysterical upon hearing our group speak their language. In addition to these encounters, we had cultural talks and observed cultural dances, basketball games, baseball games, used love/luck potions, and some were even healed by local shamans. These kinds of activities made living in this Miskitu culture such an unforgettable and interesting experience. By the end of the trip, we were well educated on this indigenous group and learned to appreciate many of the amenities that we have in the United States. I am unbelievably pleased with this Study Abroad Program and I hope that someday I can return. Nikarawa, lilia sna mai kakaira takaia. Pain sma! (Nicaragua, I am happy to know/meet you. You are beautiful.)

Thomas Hardy

Summer 2011
Field Biology
Amazonian Peru



We sat in a classroom that smelled of mothballs. Drawers upon drawers of dead bugs lined the room, their bodies pinned to foam boards. It seemed the farthest place that one could possibly be from a jungle. The giant insects taunted us as we looked at them, their mandibles frozen wide, and it seemed that we would never see them move. In that stuffy classroom, Dr. Chaboo (our teacher) talked about how insects fit into the tree of life, how they function, how they're different from spiders, crabs, and worms, and about the group of insects that she studies, Chrysomelid beetles.

This was our classroom preparation for a 2-week trip to the Amazonian rain forest in Peru. The course covered methods of field biology – how to trap and collect insects in the rain forest.

“We are descended, if you go back far enough, from the same ancestors that gave rise to insects. Your diaphragm is leftover segmentation,” she said, and I conjured an image of a human skeleton with its segment-like ribs and vertebrae. I certainly felt different from the shiny critters impaled on stainless steel spikes in front of me. But we're related.

Our journey had 3 legs: a flight to Puerto Maldonado, a van trip to the Madre de Dios river, and a 4-hour boat trip to the field station, where we stayed for 10 days. This photo shows our group during the boat trip.

Your first walk in the rain forest is unbelievable. The rain forest is a messy place, cluttered beyond belief. “It's life upon life upon life,” said Dr. Chaboo as we headed out.

Branches reached across the path, leaves obscured the way, and ant lines zigzagged across the trail. The rain forest is messy but beautiful.

On the trip, we learned about the rain forest as a haven of mini-environments. Critters evolve to make use of them, and biodiversity explodes. A sentence only makes sense if the reader understands the words used. So, too should the rain forest be perceived – it makes sense only when seen as an amalgamation of myriad mini-habitats, each with its own variety of species.

As I sit in my air-conditioned apartment, sipping a soda, it seems impossible that the rain forest still pulses with life. But it surely does; it is one of those places that has such a vivacity to it that the visitor cannot help but wonder what's going on at this or that previously visited spot. The intensity of life in the rain forest lends it gravity. It exerts itself over the mind long after the visitor has left. This, I think, is what traveling most often teaches us: that the scope of the world deserves not just your attention but also your presence, as nothing will quite wake you up to the world as much as holding a 6-inch long insect, or getting drenched by a torrent of rain that could only come from a rain forest.