

Rachel Geyer: Learning experiences at LVCT Health

Rachel Geyer is a Post graduate student undertaking a Masters in Global Health at the University of Washington, she spent the last 2 months in LVCT Health doing her internship. She shared her experience about her internship at LVCT Health



Rachel with the DREAMS team staff at the LVCT Health Kibera site

How did you learn about LVCT Health?

I knew about LVCT Health through one of my faculty professor, who had come into contact with one of the LVCT Health staff at an international conference.

For the last 2 years I have been doing a lot of theory work for my post graduate and I wanted to engage in some practical work, which is also a requirement for course work, after visiting LVCT Health's website and reading about their integration of research-policy and practice, I knew this was the right place for my internship.

Have you had any experience working/visiting Africa before this?

Some years back I was a peacecorp volunteer in Zambia where I worked with communities on Malaria and HIV prevention programmes, which had given me an understanding of how programs operate.

What has been your experience at LVCT Health?

At LVCT Health I was able to interact with most of the staff attached to different programs, including research projects like Violence against children (VAC) and working with the young people on HIV prevention and advocacy through the youth advisory councils.

My best time was interacting with the DREAMS project which works within the informal settlements to help the adolescent girls and young women from HIV infection. It was amazing interacting with some of the mentors, who have faced different challenges in their lives and were determined to support their fellow girls from vices which exposed them to HIV infection. The mentors passion in working with the community seemed to me more of a responsibility rather than a job and this was encouraging.

I also had an opportunity of visiting the Youth hotline, where counsellors offered free counselling and referral to young people who called on the toll free line 1190, the confidential use of the hotline and other social media platforms makes it easy for the youth to ask the rather difficult questions and get the right responses.

Would you recommend LVCT Health to you school mates?

I would recommend LVCT Health for anyone abroad who is looking for a learning experience, the mix in programs makes the organisation a credible place to learn.

The team is also welcoming, despite the busy schedules, I had an opportunity to interact and engage with all staff from the headquarters to the community based offices. It was such a fulfilling experience especially being in foreign country and a first timer in Kenya. The transition and support provided helped me learn a lot in a short period.

I have gathered more skills that make me confident in applying for development roles in the job market after my graduation in June 2019.