

**Medical Student Enrichment Program**

University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine

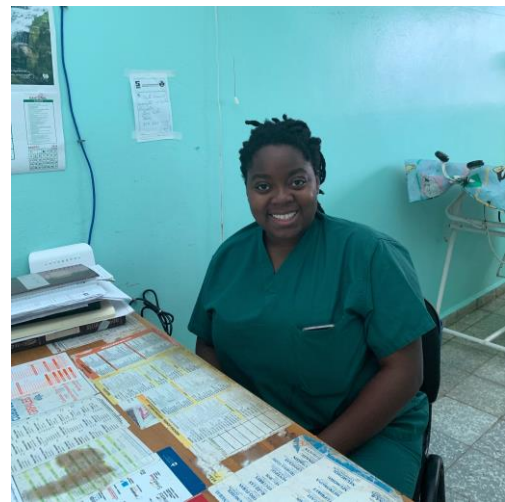
**Clinical Elective:** Baní, Dominican Republic – INTEC: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo

**Dates of Training:** June 10, 2019 – July 7, 2019

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**Date of Reflection:** August 6, 2019

Our town Matanzas was an hour and a half away from Santo Domingo. Walking to clinic every day I noticed two different realities. There were homes, especially on our block that had large courtyards, security cameras, and working generators for blackouts. Other homes, mostly across town, were merely cement blocks. The community was small and everyone knew each other. In clinic, it was



not uncommon to see the same people every day. They would hold each other's babies, share snacks, and some would bring their dogs. We triaged for the physicians taking blood pressures, height, and weight. Most of our patients were disadvantaged; the clinic was free yet some still couldn't afford their medications. One of my most memorable interactions was with a young man. He didn't speak a lot of Spanish, only Creole, but it was evident that he was

International Medical Education  
concerned about something. He was there to buy  
medications for his wife, yet he left upset and empty  
handed. A week later his wife was rushed to the clinic;  
her body was rejecting the baby. As a social advocate I  
pride myself on searching for ways to learn more on the  
social determinates of health, but no article can teach me  
more than that experience. I am unsure if the  
medications would have saved the baby. However I do  
know if they could have purchased the medication they  
would have.



After traveling and meeting some of the families, I realized most of the Dominican medical students came from middle class households; while young people in Matanzas are often teen parents who were not able to be educated and don't work. It was evident that social class had a strong correlation to opportunities and success. Overall, the most important lesson I will take



away from this experience is that rural issues in rural D.R. are not unique to the country, but are very similar to the issues that exist in rural areas around the world. They suffer from a lack opportunities and education which ultimately negatively affect their longevity and quality of life.

*Kalah Ozimba*