

Brecken Beyer
PUP Study Abroad to Kenya
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This summer I traveled to Eldoret, Kenya. In case you haven't been there it's a beautiful city close to the equator over seven thousand feet above sea level. The people there are friendly, and the community is full of life. I traveled with the Purdue Utility Project Club (PUP for short) to work on utility vehicles previously built by the PUP club. I was grateful for an excuse to meet the people of Kenya and observe a different way of life.

A lot of people have asked me what I did while I was in Kenya, and most of our time was spent working at the Tumaini Innovation Center. Our goal was to add a functioning electrical system including a battery, alternator, and a full light system so they could be licensed as Agriculture Vehicles and be legally driven on the roads. We did a lot of maintenance on the vehicles and installed lights and an entire electrical system we had planned out beforehand. Having little hands-on wiring experience, this was an awesome learning experience for me, and I can honestly say I am now an experience crimper.

We didn't spend the whole time working though. While at the Innovation Center, there were too many hands working on the vehicles at the same time. So, we spent a lot of time talking and hanging out watching each other work. After our "workday" ended, I joined the students for soccer. This was one of my highlights and I had a great time breaking out the moves in my work jeans. Another fun thing we did was go on a Safari. This was a spectacular experience as we saw four of the big five including my favorites the Elephants and Cheetahs. The coolest thing I saw was the surprise and fear of a fox when it found out his plan for dinner, a Crowned Crane, was too great a match for him.

My experience in Kenya was awesome. And while most of this explanation is spent on what I did there the one thing that made the trip a joy was the people there. Some of the students showed me the Rege music they listen to and shared their hopes of visiting the US in the future. Many of the students taught me some electrical skills and hands-on skills I needed but didn't have. To give you a glimpse at their friendly and welcoming culture I'll close with an interaction I had the first day I arrived at the IU AMPATH House where we stayed.

We had just sat down to eat dinner and I saw two guards picking some fruit from a tree. When I got up to investigate one of them walked over and introduced himself. He had a big smile and told me his name was Lenard. He offered me guava (the fruit they had been

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picking) and proceeded to invite me to play soccer with a group that played nearby. I told him I didn't bring any cleats so he proceeded to explain there were cleats in town I could purchase and then offered to go to town for me to buy them. I was touched by his hospitality and welcomed the friendship he offered in those short minutes of conversation and later that week on the soccer field.

It was a special treat to see the people of Kenya appear to be full of joy to a level that was almost surprising. Compared with the average American, they had relatively small little compared to us. But without this extra wealth, they made up for it by enjoying the friendships and food that they did have. The contentment and friendliness that I observed in Kenya are two things I hope to make a part of my life and were two of the coolest things that I learned from my study abroad with Purdue.