

Learning infectious diseases is in large part learning about the world in Thailand

In 2017, the Centre for International Child Health supported six talented clinical trainees who chose to pursue child-focused global health electives in Laos, Thailand, South Africa and Uganda. This support is a key part of CICH's vision of partnering to advance children's health globally.

Dr. Raidan Alyazidi, a second year pediatric infectious diseases fellow at BC Children's Hospital/UBC, embarked on a 1-month elective at [Siriraj Hospital](#) in Bangkok, Thailand. The 300-bed hospital is one of the largest in Thailand and receives referrals from all over the country.

Thailand is an international hub not only for westerners but for multiple Asian countries, which allows for diversity in the exposure to different cultures and diseases. There is still vertical HIV transmission despite decreased incidence of the disease. Other diseases linked to poverty, such as tuberculosis, malaria and malnutrition are still common, as well as some vaccine-preventable diseases and sub-tropical infectious diseases. Raidan's learning objectives were to expand her knowledge and experience related to management of these diseases in resource limited settings. What she returned with was a wealth of experience that widened her horizon on global infectious diseases:

"Learning infectious diseases is in large part learning about the world. Infections that are considered rare in some parts of the world could be the most common cause of admission in another. With globalization, urbanization, global warming and advances in transportation; viruses, multidrug resistant bacteria and even some environmentally-found bacteria are no longer confined to political and geographic borders. [...]"



Thailand is one of the richest countries in culture and traditions. They host multiple world travelers, many foreign laborers as well as refugees from neighboring countries. Their country environment allows for the breeding of multiple vector borne pathogens. They have a great experience in dealing with HIV infected children and they have successfully reduced the rate of vertical transmission and established a system for comprehensive follow up and counselling for infected children and teens. In Siriraj Hospital, I was fortunate to experience the Thai hospitality and kindness as well the wealth of knowledge and experience they gained from dealing those kind of infections. Despite their resource limitations, they managed using smart policies to establish some good programs specifically designed for their patients. [...]"

While learning tons about infectious diseases and managing critical cases with diagnostic and management limitations, I got to enjoy the amazing cultural atmosphere characteristic of Bangkok and Thailand and build bridges for future collaborations as well as valuable friendships."