

# Researching Your Elective Destination Worksheet

(Addressing Cross Cultural & Local Issues Affecting Health Care Delivery)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The following questions are designed to help you explore basic information about the people, places and things you might visit on your international elective. The questions are guides to help your search – every question may not be applicable to your particular situation or destination country. Answers can be found in guidebooks e.g.: Lonely Planet, internet-based sources, preceptors, and international students at the U of A and expatriates who have lived and worked there.*

## **General Country Information**

*Describe the following aspects of your country/region of interest:*

1. Geographic location of your elective within the country.
2. Main languages spoken in the area of your elective.
3. Main currency (name, exchange rate)
4. Basic climate features throughout the year and during the time of your elective.  
*(seasons, average temperatures, average rainfall)*
5. Population demographics *(rural vs. urban, age distribution, ethnic mix, religions, other particular demographic information specifically about the region being visited)*
6. Economy *(per capita income, staple crops, industries, unemployment)*
7. What can locals buy with their income? *(cost of staple foods, cost of food in general, affordability of clothing and housing)*
8. How safe is it to travel around in the country and how do you get around?
9. What is the import/export balance? How much foreign investment exists? What is the country's World Bank or IMF debt burden?
10. What are some of the popular tourist sites?
11. Where is the nearest Canadian High Commission office? *(you can dial 1-800-O-Canada (622-6232) for this information)*

**Specific Cultural Information**

Describe the following aspects of the culture of your destination country/region.

*(Note: it might be valuable to get information from someone who is actually from the country you are going to visit or by speaking with students who have traveled or completed electives there before. )*

12. What are cultural customs when greeting/interacting with other people?
13. What are the national holidays that may be celebrate during your trip?
14. What are the cultural expectations of men, women, children?
15. What are the features of predominant bathroom facilities in the region? (e.g. running water, flush toilets, accessible, all gender, gender specific.)
16. How are foreigners viewed in the destination country/region?
17. What are some of the cultural taboos (drinking alcohol, fraternizing with native men/women, showing the soles of your feet to another, exposing your shoulders, knees in a sacred place, etc.)?
18. What are the customs for eating/drinking?
19. What are some unique cultural beliefs/practices that seem at odds to western beliefs? Can you understand them? Can you get comfortable with these practices? If not how will you deal with them when you are there?

**Healthcare delivery in the destination country/region**

20. Who are the different types of healthcare providers in the region? (eg: physicians, nurses, traditional healers etc.)
21. What is the standard of health care in the region to which you will be going? e.g. if someone has pneumonia what antibiotics are available? If someone has appendicitis is there a surgeon & anesthetist available to remove it? What percentage of children receive a basic vaccination series? Who provides maternal health care? What is the incidence of Caesarian section & who performs them?
22. How is western medicine viewed in light of religious/cultural doctrine?
23. What health resources are available (e.g. drugs, nurses, doctors, lab & DI, surgical equipment)?
24. What are some of the major diseases/complaints you are likely to see?
25. What are patient expectations of physicians?
26. What are some customs of the patient-doctor relationship?