PRICELESS-SA

ANDREW LI '19
SUMMER 2017 IIP INTERN
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA
WHAT IS PRICELESS?

Priority Cost Effective Lessons for Systems Strengthening

- Founded in 2009, under the Wits University School of Public Health
- Goal: Healthcare resources in South Africa are extremely limited. PRICELESS uses the tools of health economics to set priorities in health care, ensuring that government funds are being spent in the most efficient and cost-effective ways
- 17 staff members as of 2017
MY MAIN PROJECT

MODELING OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

1

**Context:** The SA government commissioned PRICELESS to prepare a framework for funding Maternal and Child Health (MNCH) interventions into 2030.

2

**My role:** Use modeling software to project the most cost-effective MNCH interventions for each SA province. Incorporate this analysis into the overall MNCH funding framework described in (1).
OTHER PROJECTS I HAD A HAND IN

- **Diabetes Cost Analysis**: conducted an analysis on the economic burden of diabetes in South Africa, as part of our advocacy work on a sugar tax
- **WHO Cost and CE Tools Report**: assisted the team in piloting a vaccine costing tool developed by the WHO, assessing its applicability to the South African context
- **Essential Medicines Electronic Access (EMelA)**: pilot-tested an electronic platform for medicine review that is being jointly developed with the SA government
- **Misc**: Attended Health Economics education modules, presenting on timely topics in health policy, reading and revising reports, data entry

Stress-testing the EMelA platform
Our office setup (feat. rare moment of me slacking off)

Meeting on the WHO Costing Tool
LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Apartheid Museum

King’s Station Jazz Club

Don’t really have a caption for this one

Friends and colleagues
SOWETO
(SOUTH-WESTERN TOWNSHIPS)

One of Johannesburg’s most well-known suburbs. A vibrant cultural and historical area, and a symbol of the struggle against apartheid.
WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Drakensberg Mountain Ranges
MORE WEEKEND SHENANIGANS

Cape Town
Lion’s Head (right)
Cape of Good Hope (top)
HIGHLIGHTS

- **Impact:** PRICELESS works very closely with the South African government, namely the National Department of Health. This presents a unique opportunity to work on projects that have a broad, systemic impact on actual population health outcomes.

- **Variety:** PRICELESS has grown immensely in the past few years. The organization maintains many concurrent projects, from maternal and child health, to sugar tax advocacy, to supply chain analysis. There was always something to work on.

- **Politics:** Politics and bureaucracy is indivisible from, and often counterproductive to, the policymaking process. I gained firsthand experience on how evidence-based policies can be warped and shaped by external political forces, often to immense frustration.

- **Coworkers:** Everyone in the office was welcoming, friendly, and fiercely inquisitive. Some were around our age, which helps with finding things to do on the weekdays/weekends.

- **Karen:** Director of the program, dispenses excellent life and career advice.
SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- This was a tremendously eye-opening cultural and political experience. South Africa is one of the most distinctive developing countries to work in, while still being very accessible to students from the U.S. It is a country of contradictions, mired in a variety of social and political issues, yet brimming with energy, opportunity, and multiculturalism.

- Considering law school (health law) and other opportunities to work at the intersection of health and policymaking in the future.

- Highly recommend this internship for anyone even remotely interested in health, economics, global development, or general policymaking.