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Editor Comments: I think we should give the author a chance to deepen this essay. Both reviewers feel there is something important imbedded somewhere in this topic. And both ended up disappointed by the essay itself. I agree more could be done, as per comments below.

Author Comments: Dear, Your essay describes an uplifting experience in international health that is certainly deserving of attention. I particularly like the focus on learners, which fits very well with the medical educator audience that comprises the backbone of this journal. However, as you can see from the reviews, more work needs to be done. The last paragraph comes across as a bit self-congratulatory, although I understand that this is not at all your intention. I think what you are getting at is the parallel process between teachers and students; and doctors/students and patients. Perhaps this can be developed in a more nuanced way. It might deepen the impact of the essay if you told the story of a particular encounter - between student and patient, and supervised by physician. This might address reviewer 1's concern that the account is not as gripping as it might be. Reviewer 2 makes some excellent points, particularly the suggestion to elaborate more explicitly in the text about the small things vs. big things that the title of the essay hints at. Perhaps in contrast to this reviewer, I recommend keeping the focus on what the learners learned, as opposed to expanding the focus to community and patients. However, he raises a good question - what do you expect from your students in addition to compassionate attitudes? How can compassion be sustained away from the environment of third world medicine? And, as a teacher, what did you yourself learn? Could you challenge your students even more the next time around? Exploring such questions (while remaining within the word constraints) would make this a stronger piece.