

# Salina Kassam

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**Bachelor of Child Development (BCD) student Salina Kassam completed her co-op placement at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan. Below she details her experience and how it helped her determine her future career path.**

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My BCD WIL experience was something I had been looking forward to for a long time. I had known long before time had come, that no matter what I did – my experience would be abroad.

Initially, I received a great teaching opportunity at an International Baccalaureate school in Schweinfurt Germany. After some time, I underwent some self critical reflections and asked myself “what do I want to do in the future?”, “Do I want to be a teacher?” The answer was no; I did not want to be a teacher, nor did I necessarily want to work in a school, but I knew I loved working with children. I had always been interested in the areas of: Child Life, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy, thus I decided a hospital experience may aid me in making a decision for the future.

I searched far and wide for an internship at a hospital and did not find anything that particularly interested me. I felt working at a hospital in Canada would be great, although a majority of positions were reserved for medical/nursing students. Hence, I looked further away and beyond the Canadian borders when I remembered the Aga Khan Hospitals that are located around the world.

I had attended the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa for high school and being a Shia Imami - Ismaili Muslim, I thought this would be a great opportunity to learn more about what Prince Shah Karim Al-Hussaini, Aga Khan IV, does and how I can give back to the large institution that aims in providing many with an opportunity to an excellent education.

Once I arrived in Karachi Pakistan, I was extremely nervous and did not know what to expect. As the days went by, my opinions gradually changed with experience and by the third month I was in love with Karachi and felt at home. I loved my job, the people, the culture, and that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Furthermore, I felt valuable as my background education in ECE/BCD helped me largely when interacting with patients, their families, as well as other healthcare professionals.

I have built a rapport in my short time here, as well as family and a home. This experience has been extremely enriching and well rounded that, I am more than eager to finish off my last two semesters and return to continue the great work that has already begun. I am thankful to have had the WIL term, as I not only got to experience a period that has been exciting and life changing – but it has helped answer my question; “what comes next?”

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