# Geography Auckland

Innovative Field Trip Geography Competition 2013

Winning entry: St Cuthbert's College (Mary Robinson)

Judges' comments:

This fieldtrip is thoroughly geographical as it requires the students to travel around Auckland, and to connect Auckland/New Zealand to other parts of the world through the examination of a 'global' issue. Taking a topic such as the global spread of disease with an emphasis on HIV/Aids and seeking to introduce students to the worlds of the disease from Auckland/New Zealand is a huge challenge. This fieldtrip is a creative and imaginative way to enable students in Auckland to think about the global movement of HIV/Aids and to explore stories and experiences in particular locations around the world. Connecting these stories to sites in Auckland (shops, food outlets) was a clever way to travel the world locally. The spatial and temporal patterning provided by the fieldtrip set the stage for thoughtful inquiry leading to changing perceptions and changing understandings of disease dynamics and implications. The scavenger hunt design and use of QR codes/smartphones was an innovative way of facilitating student learning and engagement, which would appeal to technologically savvy young people. The fieldtrip also had opportunities for having fun and to take control of their learning - important elements in student learning.

Providing the students with a range of datasets was an important element of the fieldtrip. Students were asked to interpret data in various forms (narrative, charts, maps), representing a range of scales and to communicate their understanding in completing their assessment tasks. In this way, the tasks provided opportunities for students to demonstrate their (geography) skills and abilities to understand the spatial and temporal patterns associated with HIV/Aids.

Complementing the student-led experience with an opportunity to hear from researchers at the University of Auckland provided opportunities for students to learn more about the medical and research responses to HIV/Aids including understanding how the virus functions, drug trials, development of drug therapies, epidemiological studies of disease transmission, among others. This again is a way of connecting global/national(s)/local by exposing the network of global research/researchers, the University of Auckland's role in that network, and by highlighting the situatedness of the disease (including responses and effects) by noting the variability (and possible commonalities) in and across specific locations. Scope was given for the generation of questions from the class on highs and lows in the patterns, shifts and stabilities in patterns, sudden changes in level of incidence, possible changes in defining and describing the disease that complicate the portrayal of national level data and its interpretation and so on. Such challenges allow meaningful discussion of how patterns are constructed through the collection of data at particular geographical scales using particular definitions and how as medical and public health research has investigated

the disease many assumptions of origin, mobility, incidence, prevention strategies, palliative therapies etc. are revealed. Setting these vital monitoring and containment arrangements against the 'individual' experiences of sufferers becomes then another line of inquiry. A potentially productive added exercise during the fieldtrip would be to consider how the disease is represented in different atlases and officially in different countries.

The judges feel sure this fieldtrip would have enhanced student learning about the global scale of disease/spread of disease and provided opportunities for students to gain confidence in using geographic skills and knowledge to understand a complex global issue.