To understand my Practicum, you have to understand that I spent 10 years involved in ministry in Turkey, but left feeling burned out and wondering about my purpose and calling. The last two years in Seattle have been a journey of re-discovery and an adventuresome pursuit of passion.

I began with a Practicum that made sense. It seemed doable for a Mom of three and practical, tying together Turkey and a developing interest in Fair Trade and issues of poverty. But it didn’t take long to realize pragmatic doesn’t often equate passion. I was well underway with the project and even had tickets to Turkey when my Practicum took a turn toward journey.

Part of the story that originally led me to the ICCD program at Northwest was photography and specifically, the film Born into Brothels. I had already been dreaming of ways to unite my two passions of photography and social justice, when an opportunity in Turkey surfaced: a Photography Clinic for disabled youth! I couldn’t think of a scarier, more overwhelming or uniquely-crafted-for-me project!

Photography is a powerful tool for social change. Images often disrupt people to action. They tell a story and compel you to respond. But what would happen if you gave the subjects the camera? If they became the storytellers? And how much more compelling, if the subjects were marginalized, underserved, oft forgotten, developmentally disabled children in a developing country?

The excitement that has been generated around the project is amazing! I easily raised all the money necessary to cover my expenses. Ten people quickly donated their used digital cameras. In Turkey, a 5 star hotel donated meeting space, a graphic design company made t-shirts for the kids, and a local store owner gave each of the kids a gift.

For me, it has become more than just my Practicum. It is a culmination of the first half of my life experiences and the beginning of a new journey, marked by passion and therefore full of joy.