

Development and progressive implementation of comprehensive interdisciplinary global health education in four health professional disciplines

Paul Grand'Maison, Carol Valois, Véronique Foley, Johanne Dumont; Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), Université de de Sherbrooke, Québec, Canada

Program/Project Purpose: With globalization, development of competencies in global health (GH) is a necessity for all health care professionals. Committed towards this social accountability issue, as confirmed in its strategic plan, Sherbrooke Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences developed in the last three years a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to offer GH education to all its students (1600) in medicine, nursing sciences, physical therapy and occupational therapy.

Structure/Method/Design: A conscious decision was made not to add new activities parallel to existing programs but instead enrich actual curricula with GH concepts. Disciplinary, GH and medical education experts as well as program leaders, teachers and students have contributed to the project. The objective is to ensure that all graduating health professionals will have acquired basic and core competencies in GH while still offering options for further development for those more interested.

Outcome and Evaluation: Many successes have already been achieved:

- Establishment a productive organisational structure that makes the necessary links in and among programs;
- Adoption a common comprehensive GH competency framework;
- Confirmation of content or concepts already covered and those which should be added;
- Each program is implementing a basic level of competencies in GH for all students and offers optional advanced educational opportunities (clinical rotations, research projects, etc.);
- Progressive implementation of an evaluation plan to assess process and product;
- An internal communication plan makes sure that progressively a larger proportion of teachers and student are committed to this project;
- Faculty development activities regarding GH are being implemented;
- Dissemination of the project through scientific presentations and publications.

Going Forward: Numerous challenges are still ongoing:

- Continuously ensure that education is interdisciplinary;
- Enrichment to programs that are already overcrowded and in revision;
- Faculty development activities adapted to evolving needs;
- Evaluation of the impact of the program on student competencies, attitude and commitment towards GH;
- Links with residency and graduate study programs.

This project has resulted in a strong interest for GH education in FMHS. It can be seen as an efficient approach to help the

Faculty meeting its social accountability obligation regarding GH education.

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Community mapping: understanding the needs and challenges of people living on the Rwenzori Mountain slopes in Kasese District, Uganda

W.M. Green¹, R. Mubindo², S. Jong³; ¹Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH, USA, ²Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, ³University of California at San Francisco, San Francisco, CA, USA

Background: While the pertinent role of mountains in global survival is clearly documented, mountain ecosystems are rapidly changing due to susceptibility to soil erosion, rapid loss of habitat, population pressure, and widespread poverty. This project gains insight into the contextual strengths and challenges, and identifies community needs among residents of Rwenzori Mountains in Uganda.

Methods: Forty households participated in a cross-sectional, structured-interview from two randomly selected communities in the Rwenzori Mountain region between August and September in 2015. The interview questionnaire employed the multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) and SF-12 quality of life with additional questions on education, economic development, and gender. In each village, a convenience sample of 20 households was selected. Descriptive statistics were generated using SPSS for the initial data analysis.

Findings: This initial sample of 40 households uncovered a number of poverty indicators per family, lower than the Ugandan national level (MPI=0.367). Only one household had electricity and 65% did not have access to clean drinking water. Income was viewed as inadequate and unemployment (95%) was a factor. Eighty-one percent had less than 7 years of primary education. The majority of children (98%) were in school but 55% reported the school was at least an hour walk away. Every household grows coffee as a cash crop, cassava and potato for house consumption. Women provided most of the labor the family.

The respondents reported low quality of life and their physical and mental health interfered with daily and social activities. Twenty-five out of 40 participants reported that gender-based violence was prevalent in the village (63%) and it was most commonly in the form of early marriages and physical violence toward women in the community.

Interpretation: This initial sample of respondents in the Kasese district highlights educational and training gaps that if filled, can improve quality of life. Current quality of life and health status appears to be low and women were more vulnerable to violence despite their contribution to households. The limitation of this initial phase of the project is the small sample size. However, it provides firsthand accounts into the challenges and opportunities facing mountain communities.

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