

Development of Undergraduate STEM Students through Global Service-Learning in a Medical Context

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Global service-learning and study abroad programs have the potential to affect students' personal, social, and professional development. The exact ways in which this development is influenced by international medical service-learning has not been thoroughly explored in the literature. This study analyzes the motivations, experiences, and outcomes of undergraduate STEM students participating in a weeklong international medical service-learning and study abroad trip to Las Canas, Dominican Republic. Participants had various backgrounds, STEM majors, and career goals.

Utilizing a mixed-methods research approach consisting of observations, interviews, participant reflections, and pre- and post-trip surveys, several of the meaningful motivations, experiences, and outcomes for the participants were identified. Additionally, two case studies were produced by qualitatively collecting data from multiple sources and reporting the description and themes of the cases. The specific aims of this study were understanding: 1) the individual experiences during a health science-based study abroad trip that are instrumental in refining and solidifying STEM interest; and 2) the personal, social, and professional student-level outcomes produced by an international medical service-learning experience.

Through the case studies, the combined impact of past and trip experiences was explored as it relates to experiential learning and identity development. For case study participants

Brianna and Hannah, the trip combined multiple experiences that were relevant to their career goals, such as working with underserved populations and involvement with global health.