Health services quality improvement in Guaymate, Dominican Republic, as the framework for US global health education: a case study

Minesh Shah, Andrew Dykens, Amy Huang, Shannon Galvin, Juliet Sorensen

Abstract
Background We explored the feasibility of a partnership approach between the community, the US Peace Corps, and the University of Illinois to improve the quality of local primary health-care services in Guaymate, Dominican Republic. The aim was to do community-based participatory research (CBPR) as a framework for responsible global health education for US trainees.

Methods We used mixed methods to characterise the partnership, assess the health service effect of a quality improvement process, and qualitatively examine the value of the global health education experience. Outcome variables include partner contributions and benefits to assess the partnership; client perceptions of access, safety, and continuity to assess service quality; and US trainee perceptions of personal and community effect to assess global health education. We used CBPR to identify local priorities for health service quality improvement.

Findings Within the partnership, the local health institution leadership guides the project in consideration of local priorities; the Peace Corps provides coordination support, community expertise, and local trust; and the academic institution offers technical, public health, and research support. The local community benefits through improved access to quality primary health care services. US trainees learn principles of primary health care, community participation, social determinants of health, and health services strengthening. Local priorities identified for health service quality improvement were at the local municipal hospital and community health education.

Interpretation This partnership approach has been successfully implemented in Guaymate, Dominican Republic, and has shown promise as a generalisable model. The anticipated partnership outcome is local primary health-care quality improvement that sustainably addresses locally prioritised public health issues within a responsible approach to global health education.

Funding Northwestern University School of Law.

Copyright © Shah et al. Open Access article distributed under the terms of CC BY.

Contributors AD and MS wrote the Abstract with input from SG, AH, and JS. AD is the developer of partnership approach. AH, JS, and AD formed original partnership with Guaymate. AD is the primary investigator on the research. MS is the project lead at the University of Illinois and overall. SG and JS lead project collaboration at Northwestern University. All authors have seen and approved the final version of the Abstract for publication.

Declaration of interests We declare that we have no competing interests.

Acknowledgments We thank UIC College of Medicine (Family Medicine, Med-Peds, and Medicine Departments) and Center for Global Health supporting Global Health Education component. Project supported by Peace Care (501(c)(3) US non-profit, Access to Health Program, Center for International Human Rights to SG.