



# Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals in Baccalaureate Nursing Education



Dana R. Martin, DNP, MSN, RN, CNE

Pfeiffer University Department of Nursing, Misenheimer, NC

## Statement of the Problem and Background

In 2015, a group of world leaders at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a guide to address global health factors (UN, n. d.). The SDG target the following population and environmental factors that affect health: poverty, hunger, gender equality, health promotion, education, healthcare disparities, peace, clean water, pollution, energy, and climate action. (UN, n. d.). These goals are compatible with the work of nurses who are the largest group of healthcare providers globally (Mamede, 2018; Benton & Ferguson, 2016; Preto, Batista, Ventura, & Mendes, 2015).

It has been recommended that nursing education curriculum emphasize the importance of population health components, such as those addressed in the SDG, both locally and globally (Beck, Dossey, & Rosa, 2018; Preto, Batista, Ventura, & Mendes, 2015). Due to the importance of teaching future nurses about global health implications, a small, rural university developed curriculum changes that integrated the UN Sustainable Development Goals that provided students with a better understanding of global health issues. Nursing students should be taught about the essential role they will play in informing the impact of social determinants of health (Hughes, 2017; Benton & Ferguson, 2016; Thompson, 2016). Usually most learning in undergraduate community health education takes place in the local community; however, it is essential for nursing education to include classroom theory related to global health including political, economic, social, and cultural factors that influence health (Preto, Batista, Ventura, & Mendes, 2015).

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this presentation is to describe an innovative teaching strategy that introduces undergraduate nursing students to global health issues and provides them with a foundation to critically analyze global health concerns in order to determine interventions to decrease the impact of these health issues.

## Method to Increase Student Engagement

Within an undergraduate community health nursing course, a nurse educator lectured on the impact of global health. Time was allotted to introduce the SDG with the students including discussion of health care disparities among some populations; the students were also given time to explore the SDG web page. They were then divided into groups and instructed to research two of the SDG and determine three nursing or collaborative interventions to decrease the impact of these global health issues. Students were also asked to decide how they, personally, can impact these specific global health issues. The students then presented their research findings and recommended interventions to the class followed by a class discussion of the results. This innovative teaching strategy allowed students to evaluate ways in which nurses, both individually and as a whole, can influence global health.

## UN Sustainable Development Goals

### THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



## Results

Students were fully engaged with the learning activity. They worked together to determine the ways in which the nursing profession as a whole, as well as individual nurses can influence global health disparities. Student feedback was obtained after this classroom experience. All students reported a better understanding of the responsibility that nurses have to impact global health. The students also determined how they, individually, can and will influence global health issues.

## Implications for Nursing Education

The implications for nursing education are extensive. It is essential that baccalaureate-prepared nurses be equipped with knowledge of population health, including global health concerns. This classroom intervention allows students to apply knowledge from both a local and global perspective that will impact their professional and individual practice. Indications for RN to BSN and graduate level population health nursing courses can also be made using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

## References

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