Peer-to-peer international collaborative projects as a platform to promote global-health experiences

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Project

Pilot programs were conducted with institutional partners in Rwanda and Oman that examined feasibility and design potential of peer-to-peer international collaborative project as a platform to promote global-health experiences.

The Rwanda project involved creation and production of e-learning modules about mutually relevant health topics while in a rural location near Ruhongo.

The Oman project was the planning and implementation of a health focused education and screening fair at a shopping mall in Muscat.

Students

An inter-professional mix of US and international health professions students worked in trios (12). Preparation was several weeks:

- Learned education principles & methodology
- Wrote objectives & outcomes
- Researched health topic
- Planned project
- US students learned about the host country

"I was constantly confronted with challenges that I had never encountered before: how do you step back from the very textbook-based approach...to try to consider the perspective of someone who doesn't necessarily care about the physical processes, and boards-testable concepts of an illness but who may be much more intimately acquainted with their actual consequences?"

- Year 1 – 2016
  - Yellow Fever Virus (29 views)
  - The Clinical Approach to Malaria (35 views)
  - New Zika (104 views)
  - Prevention of Communicable Diseases (38 views)
  - Introduction to Vital Signs (40 views)
  - BLS & emergency svcs

"It...was an opportunity to step outside of my comfort zone and make a difference in someone else's life."

- Year 2 – 2017
  - Malaria in 1-5 y/o
  - Malaria: An Overview in School Age Children
  - Nematodes
  - Wound care
  - Cleft palate
  - Hyperthyroidism

Working within an intercultural and international context, the inter-professional planning team learned about each other’s educational landscape.

E-Modules - Rwanda

https://www.unmc.edu/elearning/gallery/?s=rwanda

Student Learning

Students contributed equally and eagerly their combined strengths, knowledge, and creativity, which amplified collaboration-related benefits:

- Intercultural awareness
- Professionalism navigating cultural differences
- Use of a variety of technologies (cloud sharing, 3-D printing, video conferencing)
- International community outreach
- Develop educator role as future health professional
- Reinforce health education learning
- Develop project management skills within an intercultural context

For some international students, partnering with US students was their first international or culturally diverse experience.

Health Fair - Oman

- Took 100+ blood pressures
- Cleft palate
- Explained diabetes to 200 Omani’s

"Being exposed to other cultures helps me as a nurse keep an open mind and increase my cultural humility." – Anne (student)

- "The trip has affected me and I look at American medicine and even my life a little bit differently."
- Janna (student)

- "I pushed myself out of my comfort zone, and it made me a stronger, more culturally aware person." – Katherine (student)

Conclusion

Program pilots proved to be a feasible and novel experiential learning approach to global health education for interested health professions students.

Student developed trusting, respectful personal relationships that allowed for critical discussions examining each country’s health delivery system, health professions education structure, and socio-cultural issues and considerations through strategically designed activities (language classes) and travel agendas (museums, drives).

Future Directions

Pre & post student assessment for 2018 experiences as part of program assessment.

Integrate with 2018 interprofessional e-module project planned research with international the partner at their local level.

Include community-based decision-making to guide project formation of e-module or health fair, and as a foundation to increase community outreach efforts by institutions.

References
