Global Health in Local Contexts: A Transnational Experiential Course on the Social Determinants, Health Equity, and Leading Change

September 6th to December 15th, 2021

This *experiential course on the social determinants, health equity, and leading change* will immerse students in the study of health equity, the social and structural determination of health, the principles and practice of global health in a local setting, and community-based healthcare. The course merges unique pedagogical approaches including community engagement; synchronous web-based presentations and discussions; group reflection; theatre, film, and other art forms; and where possible, patient interaction through narrative medicine. These approaches create an innovative and interactive learning environment in which students participate as both learners and teachers to advance the entire class’s understanding of the interactions between the biology of disease and the myriad social, cultural, economic, political, and historical factors that influence illness presentation and social experience of disease. The discipline of social medicine provides a theoretical and practical framework to explore these topics. Social medicine is an approach to health that recognizes the centrality of the social and structural determination of health, integrates social theory to understand social forces that marginalize and harm communities, and builds collective power to challenge oppression and support the struggle for social justice.

The course integrates critical reflection upon personal experiences with power, privilege, race, class, ability, and gender; incorporates assignments that are action-oriented and focused on learning skills to lead change; and seeks to expand social cohesion in the communities of participants. These aspects of the course provide rich opportunities to develop the leadership, advocacy, and communication skills that are important for advancing health equity in partnership with communities.

This year’s course will offer a unique opportunity to health worker students in Uganda to co-learn with peers at the University of Minnesota, learners from the Minnesota community, and Haiti health worker students who will also be engaged in parallel, geographically based sub-courses. Global, collaborative participation will promote understanding of the ways in which globally connected social forces impact experience in local settings in similar and different ways. This model also aims to build transnational solidarity and cultivate the exchange of innovative solutions forged at local levels in response to health problems.

**Model of Delivery**

For students from Uganda, this year’s course will be delivered hybridly, blending online learning with occasional in person learning experiences. The online sessions will embrace both asynchronous and synchronous sessions. The expected time commitment from the course participant is expected not to exceed 10 hours per week. Please note that this time commitment may be more on the week when participants are expected to complete a field trip to Northern Uganda, Gulu.
Course Goals and Objectives

Following this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and analyze the social determinants of health that influence health outcomes amongst different communities and population age groups in Uganda; and globally.
2. Apply global health social theories and frameworks to evaluate various models of health intervention that respond to health inequities in the global south with specific and Uganda in particular.
3. Engage in critical self-reflection on one’s personal story and how that relates to one’s future role leading efforts to advance health equity.
4. Demonstrate the ability to engage in deep listening, perform a root-cause analysis, effectively work as a member of a diverse team, describe one’s own story, and build social cohesion.
5. Describe policies that affect the health of Ugandans and use that knowledge to identify a strategy to advocate for social change with emphasis on current health issues.
6. Apply communication strategies with a diverse network of peers, faculty, and community members on health challenges and solutions.

Course Curriculum

The course is divided into the following interwoven parts:

- Part 1 – Social Determinants of Health: Accounting for Local and Global Contexts
- Part 2 – Health Interventions: Paradigms of Charity, Development, and Social Justice
- Part 3 – Core Issues in Social Medicine: Primary Health Care, Community Health Workers, Health and Human Rights, and Health Financing
- Part 4 – Making Social Medicine Visible: Writing, Narrative Medicine, Deep Listening, Photography, and Community Organizing and Leadership

Health equity requires community-building, social cohesion, leadership, and action. To create a learning environment that fosters these dynamics, course faculty and facilitators maintain a rigorous commitment to:

- Praxis – inspired by Paulo Freire, we believe that constant interplay between reflection and action generates critical analysis of the world and deepens our ability to effectively respond.
- Personal – who we are and where we come from matter deeply in health delivery. Critical self-awareness enhances our ability to undo harmful structural and societal factors of which we are all part.
- Partnership – community-building amongst individuals with varied demographic backgrounds offers the most innovative and just means of moving towards health equity.
Course Leadership

The cohort of course facilitators is a collective of learners composed of health professional students and facilitators from around the world. The Multi-site course leadership includes but not limited to:

- **Owilli Alex Olirus** – Course Director, Uganda; Collective Member of EqualHealth Leadership; PhD Student, Community Health and Epidemiology, University of Saskatchewan
- **Michael Westerhaus** – Course Director, Minnesota; Collective Member of EqualHealth Leadership; Primary care physician at the Center for International Health in St. Paul, MN; and a member of University of Minnesota Global Health Faculty
- **Ainembabazi Provia** – Co-course Director, Uganda; Infectious Diseases Institute; Secretary, Board of Directors EqualHealth; MPH student, Manchester University
- **Amy Finnegan** - Co-course Director, Minnesota; Collective Member of EqualHealth Leadership; Associate Professor of Peace and Justice, University of St. Thomas
- **Ornella Sainterant** - Course Director, Haiti; Family Medicine Physician; Senior Fellow, Marshall-Wolf Equalth Medical Education Fellowship
- **Johana Josema** - Co-course Director, Haiti; SMAH leadership; Medical Student; Junior Fellow, Marshall-Wolf EqualHealth Fellowship in Medical Education
- **Marisa Nadas** - Co-Course Director, Haiti; Collective Member of EqualHealth Leadership; Obs/Gyn Physician, Albert Einstein Hospital, New York

Cost

The cost for a student from a low-income country (Uganda) is:

| Full Room/Board During Field Visits and Course Fee: | $150.00 |

This is an extremely subsidized course fee, and it covers food and lodging for the entire 4 days immersion learning during community visits, transportation to immersion learning sites, and costs of running the course.

Please note that for students from Uganda, the course fee does not include transportation costs to Kampala where students will be expected to gather to board a dedicated bus to Northern Uganda for a field visit. Accepted course participants will be expected to transport themselves to and from Kampala.

Regardless of your academic institution, limited scholarship opportunities may be available for students with significant financial barriers. If you feel you have sufficient need for a scholarship and would be unable to participate without financial support, please complete the required information on the ‘Scholarship’ section of the application.
More Information and Application Process

If you would like more information about EqualHealth and the kind of work we do, please take time to visit our website www.equalhealth.org. Please view short videos describing the course, publications related to the course, and advocacy videos created by previous students during the course by visiting the “Resources” tab on the website.

If you would like to apply for the Global Health in Local Contexts 2021 course, find the application portal here. Note that applications are submitted online. Applications will close by May 31st, 2021.

About EqualHealth – the Organization

Our mission as EqualHealth is to build critical consciousness and collective action globally in pursuit of health equity for all.

We are a global community of health professionals, educators, and activists dedicated to the fight for health equity which transcends borders. We prepare health professionals to recognize the structural and social determinants of health and to engage in thoughtful, coordinated activism that addresses the root causes of poor health. Collectively, we are building a global movement of social medicine educators and practitioners who tackle health inequity in their institutions and in broader society.

By engaging students through careful examination of the social and economic contexts of health and immersing them in partnership with a diverse group of students from around the world, we aim to foster innovative leaders who are ready to tackle challenging health problems in communities around the world.