Community Engaged Approaches to Health Equity: A Binalational Interprofessional Service Learning Experience in Ambos Nogales (BISLE 2016)


Partner Faculty (Institutions): Tracy Carroll (College of Medicine); Janet Cooley, and Elizabeth Hall-Lipsy (College of Pharmacy); Sherry Daniels and Marylyn McEwen (College of Nursing); Jill Guernsey de Zapien, Violeta Dominguez and Anna Louise Steeves-Recce and Monica Muñoz (College of Public Health); Socorro Medécido, Aline Gomez Mauque Chew, Marlía Bustamante and Raul Medécido (la Universidad del Valle de México, Hermosillo); Miguel Angel Torres, Teodoro Hernandez and Elizabeth McPherson (Universidad Kino); Erin Sol and Gail Enrick (SEAHec).

Service Learning

Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

Activities

Students were given readings on border health, statistics and health systems in advance of the weekend. A panel presentation on the context of interprofessional work, community engagement and disabilities in rural and border contexts kicked off two days of service learning activities. The weekend culminated in a series of presentations by each inter-professional, binational team of students based on their reflections on the entire experience.

Arizona – August 12

- Partnering with SEAHec, Santa Fe Ranch, Santa Cruz Training Program and Mariposa Community Health Center, Santa Fe Ranch: Accessibility and signage
- Mariposa Community Health Center: Developmental screening at Farmer’s Market
- Santa Cruz Training Program
- Green House clean up/Planting/ Paint the workshop

Sonora – August 13

- Partnering with LVFR and Asociacion Down Nogales, Grupo de Ayuda Mutua Para Diabeticos, Nogales, and with UVM and ITAMA - Instituto Tratamiento Y Aplicacion De Medidas Para Adolescentes
- UVM: Olympics with Down children and families / Diabetic Foot Clinic
- ITAMA: Workshop on coping skills

Student Impact

Pre and Post surveys were administered to the students online via Qualtrics. Below are some comments highlighting the experience:

How did this experience impact your understanding of specific community issues?

- Discussing community issues with my team members, and all their different perspectives, helped widen my view of various issues and look at them from different points of view. (AZ)
- The experience helped open my eyes to the significant mental stressors on individuals who live in the border zone. (AZ)
- This course provided a first-hand look at how difficult communicating can be. (AZ)
- Basically, in both countries, we have the same health problems, different methodology in public health but the same goal. I believe that working together could solve the problems that arise in the community. For this we apply the ideals of health, every day, and go promoting health with peers. (SON)
- Todas las comunidades son diferentes, cada una de ellas tiene sus necesidades específicas y tratarlas lo ayuda a comprender mejor el porqué de muchas cosas. El trabajo comunitario no es exactamente igual entre México y Estados Unidos de América; si tomamos lo mejor de cada uno y lo combinamos podríamos trabajar mas y mejor. (SON)

What did you particularly like about this experience?

- I was able to work with people that I would never imagine working with, not only from both sides of the borders, but with different professions. Both Nogales have very similar communities and I loved working with people in both sides of the border. (SON)
- Fue una experiencia totalmente distinta. El simple hecho del idioma es algo que supone un reto y que a pesar de ello se puede lograr una buena comunicación, si bien al principio tuvimos al final con soltura y naturalidad. Me gustaron ambos trabajos entre los polies, pintar y explicar temas de salud, san experiencias que te dicen que la salud no se limita solo a un lugar o área en particular. El trabajo en equipo hace que todo sea al final algo más fácil y satisfactorio pues lograms ayudar a mas personas y con mayor calidad. (SON)
- I enjoyed working with the students from Mexico. It brought a fresh perspective on how they take on the same concept. For example, the health fairs, were very community-oriented with involvement from members of the community that were not health professionals. (AZ)
- I loved that it was interprofessional as well as binational. I think that the students from Mexico really brought a lot to the table that we hadn’t thought of before. (AZ)
- The connections made between individuals of different nations and different professions. Having one forum and one common goal of promoting health in the border region helped motivate me to continue to work with the network of people formed this weekend. (AZ)

Professions

This three-day inter professional, binational activity brought together fourteen students from the University of Arizona Health Sciences Centers in the Colleges of Public Health, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Nursing, with thirteen students from Sonora, Mexico representing la Universidad del Valle de Mexico (UVM) and the Universidad Kino (UniKino).

Arizona (Arizona Health Sciences, UA) 14 students
- Medicine (3)
- Public Health (2)
- Pharmacy (5)
- Nursing (1)

Sonora (UVM, UniKino) 13 students
- Psicología (7)
- Medicina (5)
- Nutrición (2)
- Fisioterapia (1)
- Veterinaria (1)
- Odontología (1)

Learning Objectives

By the end of the weekend we expected that students participating in the experience would understand and gain skills, within the context of disabilities and the border region, in:

a. interprofessional teamwork and communication;
b. binational collaboration;
c. collaborating within a framework of community engagement;
d. increase their awareness of border communities’ unique strengths and challenges in addressing health and wellness.

Academic & Community Partners

The 3-day experience relied on the collaboration of local partners in Nogales, Arizona – Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center (SEAHec), Mariposa Community Health Center, Santa Fe Ranch, Santa Cruz Training Center; and in Nogales, Sonora – Asociación Down Nogales, Grupos de Ayuda Mutua para Diabeticos, and ITAMA - Instituto Tratamiento y Aplicacion de Medidas Para Adolescentes.

This second Binalational, Inter-professional Service Learning Experience was made possible through the Arizona AHEC Rural Health Programs, the UA College of Medicine’s Global Health program, and the working group: Binalacional Collaboration for Healthy Communities in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region (pictured above).