

UMSAEP UM-UWC Linkage Report
Visit to Missouri, USA from 8 July 2019 to 17 July 2019

Project Title:

Developing a Multi-site, Multi-Disciplinary Study Abroad Program: Psychological Expansion & Enhancement of a Current Study Abroad Offering

By: Matthew Taylor. Ph.D.
Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychological Sciences
University of Missouri-St. Louis

UWC Host: Nicky Roman, Ph.D., SARChI Chair
Development of Human Capabilities & Social Cohesion
Department of Social Work
University of the Western Cape

1. Overview

Since 2011, Dr. Arif Ahmed of the Department of Health Administration at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), has taught a successful study abroad course entitled Global Health and Social Issues. Open to both graduate and undergraduate students of any discipline, this course focuses on global health and an examination of the determinants of health. It involves three modules: 1) pre-trip sessions at UMKC; 2) a week in Cape Town in conjunction with colleagues from the University of the Western Cape (UWC); and 3) a post-trip capstone at UMKC. Historically, the majority of the participants in this course have been master's level and/or public health/health administration students.

The purpose of this project is to increase the campus range of Dr. Ahmed's course using an online framework to include students from UMSL. Thematically, this project will expand the domestic and international range and scope of this study abroad offering to include a structured mental health component. The proximal goal/outcome of this particular proposal is to collaborate with UWC partners to develop a formal mental health (psychology/social work) add-on to the current course whereby students will visit mental health providers while in South Africa. This project is part of a larger endeavor which will create an intercampus course sharing linkage between UMKC (Ahmed, Department of Health Administration) and UMSL (Taylor, Department of Psychological Sciences). UMSL graduate and undergraduate students will have better access and ability to take this UMKC course which will have additional course material related to global mental health.

2. Goals of Project

The intended goal of the project is to enhance the current Global Health and Social Issues course. *Objective 1:* Add a mental health focused component through

the UM intercampus course sharing framework (Ahmed at UMKC & Taylor at UMSL). Objective 2: Dr. Taylor will visit the healthcare sites that the class currently utilizes to examine their attention to and focus on mental health. Objective 3: In collaboration with Dr. Roman (UWC), work to identify and establish collaborative relationships with Cape Town mental health focused agencies that will serve as additional site visit locations for UM students participating in this intercampus shared course.

The outcome of this work will be the development of an expanded, multidisciplinary, internationally-focused, course with added mental health components, including sites in Cape Town. Additionally, with the reconstruction of this course via the intercampus course sharing framework, there will be an increased course enrollment of UMSL students (especially those from Psychological Sciences and Social Work).

An additional goal of this trip was related to previous projects. Dr. Roman and I have had a 10+ year collaboration with a number of projects which have examined conceptualizations of Coloured identity as well as the relationship between identity, experiences with racism/discrimination to substance use and mental health outcomes. The time in country will afford us another opportunity to conceptualize and develop plans for additional project outputs as well as next steps toward our next research endeavor.

3. Description of Linkage Activities

Dr. Gerard Filies of the Interprofessional Education Unit in the Faculty of Community & Health Sciences was our community liaison as we visited a number of potential collaborative (mental) health sites. In the community of Mitchell's Plain, where Dr. Roman and I have based the majority of our work together, we visited Lentegeur Mental Hospital. With staff there we discussed a variety of models for community based work (e.g., 4-day workshop development, implementation, and reflection process). We also discussed a variety of ways that students could interface with Dr. Roman's team which does work around childhood risk factors and family interventions.

We also visited Agape School, a special needs/education school (<https://www.facebook.com/Agape-School-Tafelsig-549645815154605/>), also located in Mitchell's Plain. The school has multiple classrooms, divided by age groups and by language of instruction: English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa. The interdisciplinary nature of the work at this site and the multicultural elements makes it an appealing one for a visit.

Another site that we visited was Fisantekraal, a small rural enclave outside of Cape Town (20 miles) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisantekraal>). UWC and international partners have long had a relationship with this location and history of providing a variety of services to the residents of this town, from dentistry and

environmental health to occupational therapy and health promotion. The City of Cape Town oversees services here and there are multiple city departments (e.g., sanitation, housing) involved. There are also a number of local organizations involved in various projects within the community. Of concern was sustainability of any work that our group would do.

One the last day of the trip I attended the all-day workshop of Dr. Roman's Human Capabilities & Social Cohesion workgroup. Feedback from community-based data collection and processing of the experience for the staff (students) were a part of the day. There were also a number of research pathways moving forward discussed. We discussed a seldom covered area in this work; feedback from the staff who go into these communities and focus groups and papers to tell their story of this experience.

4. Outcomes

- With these preliminary data in hand, Dr. Ahmed and I will continue to formulate plans with our South African colleagues for the May course and which sites make the most sense for us to consider.
- Dr. Roman and I have begun to consider ways that our students could collaborate more. One possible project is that my students would do Zoom focus groups with her staff about their experiences.
- During this visit we were able to sit and revisited a paper that was underway from previous work and upon my return submitted it.
- Related to this, in-person we sketched out 6-7 papers that we have in various stages of development that our teams will work on.
- Dr. Roman and I also did an assessment of the various data that we have from our work and began to plot more student-based usage of them.