

Global Innovation Challenge: 2017

Improving Refugee Health and Wellbeing in Buffalo, NY



Photograph: *Cupping Therapy*, Ciao Ho, 2015, Saigon, CC BY 2.0.

May 22-26 | 8a-5p M-F

“Field Guide”

END418/518

Refugees are generally resettled to nations with economic opportunities and health resources which are vast in comparison to that of refugee camps. Whether they are fully able to utilize the resources available to them upon resettlement is uncertain.

- Meghan Morris, et al., “Healthcare Barriers of Refugees Post-resettlement”



The Global Innovation Challenge is sponsored by the University at Buffalo Community of Excellence in Global Health Equity.

Background

The world is amidst the largest humanitarian refugee crisis since WWII. This affects not only refugee populations and the nations that border conflict areas but cities and countries around the world. For example, approximately 1,500 refugees arrive in Buffalo each year—making it one of the top resettlement sites in the United States.

Refugees face many challenges upon arrival to a new country. In addition to housing, education, and employment, obtaining quality health services is a major problem. Refugees may have undiagnosed diseases as well as experienced physical torture or psychological trauma. Moreover, refugees, including children, often experience long periods of time without preventative health care, in part due to extended stays in refugee camps prior to arriving in the U.S. (17 years on average), but also due to the gap between the American “culture of health care” and refugees’ home culture of care. While language is, perhaps, the greatest obstacle to healthcare for refugee populations, many other barriers exist.

Broadly speaking, a culture is defined by its buildings, food, language, communication style, religious practices, dress, age and gender norms, music, and other factors. All of these elements contribute to the culture of care, while sanitation and hygiene practices, as well as cultural definitions of health, well-being, disease, and disability, play added roles in health care.

The Challenge

Develop strategies that bridge the gap between Western and non-Western “cultures of care” in order to advance continuity of care, in turn, improving health and wellbeing among refugees in Buffalo.

Considerations

In this workshop, you will participate in team-building activities and work with local service providers and UB faculty to develop social, technological, business, educational, and policy innovations that improve access to health services for refugees in Buffalo. Moreover, while, resettlement agencies help establish an initial healthcare provider, ongoing care remains problematic. As you work, continue to explore what changes can be made to various aspects of the culture of care, including strategies for improving translation and culturally engaged communication, strategies for improving the physical and sensory environment, and strategies for improving healthcare administration, monitoring, and follow through.

Likewise, consider all types of services: general and specialized medicine, emergency care, nursing and in-patient care, pharmaceuticals, administrative tasks, such as check-in and payment, mental health services; and consider the diverse geographic, social, economic, gender, and age factors that might influence the culture of care.

Educational Goals

The Global Innovation Challenge has three major educational goals (and several embedded learning objectives).

Goal 1 is to explore the challenges of providing culturally engaged health care to refugees. You will get snapshots into the daily life of refugees in Buffalo, and we will help deepen your understanding of the social, technological, economic, environmental, and institutional challenges they face in obtaining health care.

Goal 2 is to learn how to identify, test, and develop ideas as part of an interdisciplinary team. We will discuss disciplinary differences as well as differences in problem-solving personalities, gaining a deeper understanding of your own preferences and tendencies and how to more effectively work as part of a team. You will also gain experience in collective decision making that leads to a cohesive proposal.

Goal 3 is to practice and develop skills of effectively presenting complex challenges and solutions. You will receive coaching on how to effectively deliver a “pitch” to a panel of experts. This will include feedback on both verbal and visual techniques.

Ultimately, the organizers hope you find the week challenging yet inspirational and fun, with lots of learning in a short time.

Contributors

Faculty and staff affiliated with the Community for Global Health Equity have organized the event and will provide stewardship throughout the week. UB faculty from medicine, social work, pharmacy, urban planning, engineering, management, architecture, public health, and other disciplines will join healthcare service providers, refugee resettlement organizations, advocacy agencies, and refugees themselves to provide comprehensive feedback throughout the week.

The course will be integrated both “horizontally” (across disciplines) and “vertically” (across year levels). Nevertheless, graduate students are expected to take on team leadership roles, stewarding equal participation of team members and managing the progress of team’s work. Graduate students are expected to seek leadership guidance directly from the organizers.

The Process

The week will begin with short presentations from guests, coupled with small- and whole-group discussions. As major themes emerge, teams will surface through a combined approach of self-organizing and facilitator organizing. As the teamwork progresses, each group will be encouraged to focus their proposed strategies toward a specific healthcare type or situation (e.g., emergency medicine), group (e.g., children, etc.), and strategy (e.g., pharmacist training). Teams will be coached on how to present their ideas, and will get practice and feedback prior to the “pitch.” Throughout the week, external partners and UB faculty and staff will serve as partners, mentors, provocateurs, and, ultimately, judges.

Judging Criteria

Judges will use the following criteria:

1. How well did the team communicate its understanding of the barriers to health and wellbeing for refugees in Buffalo?
2. How clear and impactful was the team’s verbal presentation?
3. How clear and impactful was the team’s visual presentation?
4. How well developed was the proposal, how likely is it to succeed, and to what degree are the elements of the proposal mutually reinforcing?
5. To what extent did the team align the proposal with a specific healthcare situation, population, and strategy?

Grading

The Global Innovation Challenges is graded pass/fail. To receive a grade of “pass,” you must arrive prepared and on time to each session, and work continuously and thoughtfully throughout the day. You are expected to engage in critical dialogue with experts and peers, proactively seek and respond to criticism, and meet incremental deadlines. There is no option to work individually; everyone will be part of a team. If you are absent or late multiple times, or are unwilling to participate as a team member, it is recommended that you consider registering for a different course or a future session (or a grade of “F” will be assigned). The instructor reserves the right to de-register students who do not meet the aforementioned criteria. Due to the course format, requests for incompletes will not be considered.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you are absent due to illness, family emergency, etc., please contact the organizers via e-mail or phone as soon as possible. If you are absent from all or part of a session, you must gather all information, handouts, and discussion notes from your colleagues. Given the brevity of the course, if you are not able to attend multiple sessions, due to any circumstances, we recommend that you withdraw from this year’s challenge and rejoin us next year.

Resources

A set of initial resources for the course has been assembled. In addition, you are encouraged to add to these resources. Students with any documented needs or preferential requests are advised to speak with the professor as well as the appropriate campus agency, e.g., Office of Accessibility Resources (<http://www.buffalo.edu/accessibility/>), as soon as possible in order to provide appropriate accommodations or modifications to the learning and assessment techniques of the course.

Integrity

The Global Innovation Challenge provides a collaborative learning environment, including a large reliance on one another for idea generation and information sharing. Likewise, teams will utilize the ideas and feedback of other teams, invited guests, and other resources. It is important to keep track of the sources and evolution of the team’s work, and, for the final “pitch,” you are expected to cite all borrowed images and concepts. All other university integrity policies also apply:
<http://catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.html>.

Equally important, while you may think of yourself only as a student, I believe you are here both to learn and to teach; you are capable of teaching—of teaching yourself and of teaching others. Reciprocally, I am here not only to teach but also to learn. Please aim for openness and humility in the personal, cultural, and scholarly expertise that your colleagues and invited guests bring. Some course content may be offensive, personal, and/or emotionally disturbing to some individuals, while the same content may seem innocuous or humorous to others. Please be sensitive to this. For the week to operate effectively, it is essential that each student, the instructor, and invited guests feel comfortable in discussing any issue that arises. Please listen intently to opinions divergent from your own; and contribute to the dialogue by exploring the views of others in a constructive manner. If you feel you are unable to participate in this way, please consider taking another course.

Lastly, strive toward clarity in speaking and listening, while you strive toward integrity—honesty with your instructors, honesty with your colleagues, and honesty with yourself. Please be generous in sharing your concerns, satisfactions, and recommendations as we move through the semester.

APPENDIX 1: SUPPLIES LIST

Throughout the week, plan on the following:

- **Drawing and notetaking supplies:** While some supplies will be on hand, we recommend that you bring pens, pencils, markers, and other media you prefer to use while finding and developing ideas, along with paper, sketchbooks, and/or notebooks.
- **Computing:** A laptop with internet access is recommended for all sessions. While not every student is required to have it, software for writing and graphic design is needed for each team (e.g., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.).
- **Food:** Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

APPENDIX 2: TEAMWORK SURVIVAL GUIDE

The Global Innovation Challenge is an intense, engaged, collaborative, *thinking-learning-doing* environment. It simulates the intense, interdisciplinary setting of many modern work environments that tackle complex, ill-defined problems. Problem definition and solution finding are often cyclical and iterative, not linear. Likewise, the methods used are often diverse, and the process is often not fully planned at the outset, but becomes clearer over time (what some call “emergent design”). Flexibility, in both working and thinking, is essential, particularly as problems and solutions come from multiple domains and multiple scales. Often times, individual success depends on team success and vice versa.

Good teamwork comes from an awareness of oneself, as well as an awareness of the dynamics of the group. Differences in gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, personality type, life experiences, and a host of other factors influence discussions and, therefore, the progress of the team. Please be mindful and respectful of these differences. Enrollment in the course implies consent with the guidelines below, which are adaptations from and additions to Susskind and Cruikshank’s “Suggested Ground Rules” in *Breaking Robert’s Rules* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

1. Each person agrees to fully participate, through active listening and speaking, in all studio discussions.
2. Only one person shall speak at a time. Everyone else shall listen keenly, not “wait to talk.”
3. Each person is responsible for making sure she/he understands what has been said. Each person shall ask questions of clarification when necessary.
4. Each person shall be as succinct and direct as possible, giving time for others to speak.
5. Each person shall express her/his own views, not speak for others. (E.g., do not preface your comments with “we think”; instead consider saying: “I think.”)
6. Each person shall make her/his best effort to stay on topic and follow the trajectory of the conversation.
7. Each person is responsible for stating when she/he disagrees and, then, provide an alternative.
8. Each person shall make every effort to be open-minded and to evaluate others’ comments based on the merits of what is being said, not based on personality or biases.
9. Each person shall make clear, when speaking and when listening, the difference between factual statements and statements of opinion.
10. Each person shall seek to identify and clarify multiple sides of a debate (issue), and, simultaneously, seek to provide a common ground (resolution).
11. No one shall ask individuals in the Global Innovation Challenge about their religion, sexuality, ethnicity, other personal information, etc., and at no time will anyone make derogatory or inflammatory comments about individuals or groups based on religion, sexuality, and ethnicity.
12. No one shall make personal attacks. The instructor reserves the right to dismiss anyone from the Global Innovation Challenge and pull anyone aside who does not abide by this or other policies.

APPENDIX 3: SCHEDULE

Day One: Introduction and Clarification

- Learning about the challenge
- Organizing our questions
- Framing the problem

Day Two: Selection and Ideation

- Learning about the challenge part II
- Framing the problem part II
- Team development
- Ideation
- Framing the problem part III

Day Three: Development and Coaching

- Idea development
- Articulating your ideas

Day Four: Coaching and Refinement

- Articulating your strategies
- Refining your ideas
- Pitch development

Day Five: Pitch and Jury

- Pitch refinement
- Pitches
- Jury and Deliberation