



## **GOING GLOCAL – STAYING CONNECTED TO GLOBAL HEALTH AND YOUR INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE ONCE YOU ARE BACK “HOME”:**

Even though you may have a similar international experience, in terms of how you spent your time or the where you were as many other students, the reality is that each of us may process that very differently. One of the biggest challenges, even after a brief international experience, is re-adapting to the realities and demands of life in the USA. Learning about global health and experiencing another culture first hand may cause us to re-examine our priorities and values - what we do with our time, money and talents. It is a challenge to be whisked back and forth so quickly, so we need to be kind and patient with ourselves! When you are bothered by how little other folks might know about global health, find safe places where you can share what you learned and are continuing to feel supported and engaged.

“Reverse culture shock” may manifest in various ways – feeling critical of the evident wealth in the US (e.g. being overwhelmed at the choices in supermarkets!), not knowing how to talk about your experience, not being able to concentrate on new school work or keep up with a rapid paced schedule, and even choosing to isolate yourself or your experience from the rest of your life at home.

Here are some questions to think about, and talk about with a good friend or mentor/advisor, as you readjust:

1. What were the most important things I learned?
  - About myself?
  - About what I am good at, and what I need to work on?
  - About the global health issues and the people or country I visited?
  
2. Has this experience changed or re-enforced what I want to do with my career as a physician? How can I continue to learn about global health in medical school?
  
3. What avenues are there around me for contributing to the health of the world in my backyard? What steps should I think about taking to get involved or to learn more?

There are lots of faculty and staff at UNC available to support you if you would like to talk through this more. PLEASE feel free to contact any of us in the Office of International Activities, The Office of Student Affairs, or your college advisor. We can also give you contacts with other faculty involved in global health who might be a “good match” for

learning more about yourself and the world!

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**Ideas for learning more and staying involved – SEE the OIA website for lots of info! [www.med.unc.edu/oia](http://www.med.unc.edu/oia)**

At UNC:

- Think about being a leader or a part of one of the UNC global health student groups
  - Honduran Health Alliance (<http://www.med.unc.edu/hha>) , Proyecto Puentes de Salud <http://www.med.unc.edu/pps>) , International Health Forum (<http://www.med.unc.edu/ihf>)
- Get involved in an Interest Groups or Society with connections to global health
  - Infectious Disease Interest Group, Pedi-action, Physicians for Human Rights, Family Medicine Interest Group, MEDWorld (<http://www.med.unc.edu/medworld/>)
- Volunteer with the Student Health Action Coalition (SHAC) and Bloomer Hill Clinic OR the Spanish Speakers assisting Latinos Student Association (SALSA) <http://www.med.unc.edu/salsa>
- [Invest time in learning or practicing a language that might serve you well internationally- there are courses available in both Medical Spanish and Mandarin!](#)
- Find out about other events going on on campus
  - UNC OIA ([www.med.unc.edu/OIA](http://www.med.unc.edu/OIA)) Use the resources – books, movies, Spanish language materials for loan in the OIA library (1066 Bondurant)
  - UNC Global <http://www.global.unc.edu/>
  - Center for Global Initiatives <http://cgi.unc.edu/>
  - Institute for Global Health and Infectious Disease <http://globalhealth.unc.edu/>
  - UNC School of Public Health/Gillings Global Gateway <http://www.sph.unc.edu/globalhealth/> (sign up for “this week in global health” to keep abreast of what is going on)
- Plan to take “Foundations in Global Health” as an elective (GLBE 401) or another global health elective – electives are in the works for MS4s for migrant health, refugee health, comparative health systems, and we already have great opportunities in Malawi, Zambia, Nicaragua and China
- Read global health journals (Lancet, WHO, key articles in NEJM, BMJ), BOOKS! Form an informal discussion group, talk with key faculty.

In the Triangle:

- Triangle Global Health Consortium (monthly breakfast meetings at RTP – open to students) - <http://triangleglobalhealth.org/>
- Global health organizations headquartered in this area, including: IntraHealth, Family Health International, IPAS, RTI International

- Work with migrant farmworkers – CAMPOS, NC Farmworker Program, Student Action for Farmworkers
- Local Hispanic health initiatives – La Fiesta del Pueblo, El Centro Hispano
- Local Refugee health and resettlement agencies – World Vision, Orange County Refugee Health Committee, Church World Services
- Free clinics – Samaritan Health Center, CH Women’s Shelter Clinic, Miriam Clinic (Raleigh)

Some organizations with information for learning, conferences:

- AAMC Global Health Learning Opportunities: <https://www.aamc.org/services/ghlo/>
- Consortium of Universities for Global Health: <http://www.cugh.org/>
- Unite for Sight <http://www.uniteforsight.org/about-us>
- Global Medical Missions Health Conference <http://www.medicalmissions.com/>

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