

Overview of the Global Health Experience

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Overview

- About DOCare International
- Motivations
- Ethical Issues
- Participant Education and Assessment
- Cultural Awareness and Engagement
- Healthcare
- Professionalism abroad

DOCARE International

- [DOCARE International](#) is 501(3)C organization focused on international medical outreach to indigent and isolated people around the world.
- Membership is primarily osteopathic physicians and students, but also comprises health care professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds, disciplines and locations.
- Short term outreach trips to many countries across the globe
- Continuity clinics in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Kenya
- Source for student and resident clinical rotations

Participant Motivations



- See the world and experience other cultures
- Develop foreign language skills
- Enhance medical skills
- Help the needy
- Practice in a simpler and more gratifying setting
- medical conditions uncommon in the U.S.
- Get a new perspective on U.S. medical issues
- Find purpose and spiritual fulfillment

What Participants should expect

- Culture shock
- Communication difficulties
- Poor facilities for clinics and accommodations
- No modern testing equipment
- Limited or no follow up facilities for patients
- Inability to make a difference in some cases
- Hard work
- Need for flexibility
- A rewarding and life-changing experience

Ethical Issues in Partnerships



- Conflicts of Interest with local liaison
 - Mutual benefit and reciprocity
 - Define responsibilities for each party
 - Set expectations with participants and local officials about what can reasonably be delivered and who is the intended recipient of the services
 - Transparency of needs and costs for all parties
 - Transparency of participant skill level
- Sustainability
 - Define short term and long term goals
 - Depends on politics, economy, ecology and culture

Waiting room at a temporary clinic



Be prepared with sufficient staff and other support to handle the volume.

Ethical Issues in Medical Care



- Do no harm
- Respect different treatment paradigms
- Continuity of care
 - Referral to affordable and accessible local resources
 - Return visits vs. establishment of clinics
- Structured student supervision
 - Ratio of students per physician depending on experience and educational level; No more than 3:1
- Appropriate donation of medication and supplies
- IRB approval for any research prior to trip

Seek Out and Engage in Educational Opportunities

- Educational topic presentations
 - Cultural, medical, trip preparation
 - Before departure
 - Daily during experience
- Structured tasks and variation in assignments
 - Medical and nonmedical
- Daily debriefing sessions
 - Cases and impact
 - Logistics and problems



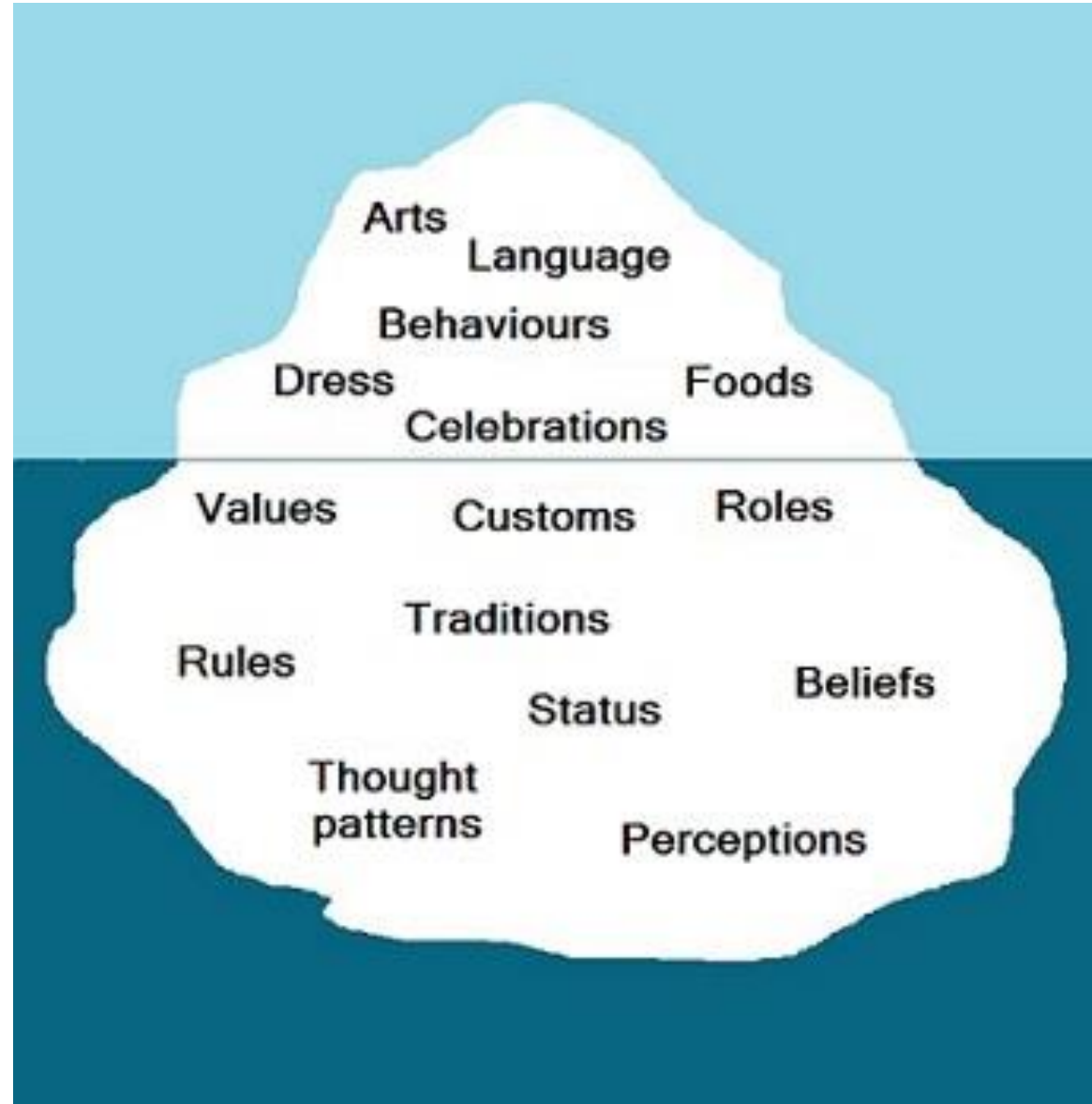
Cultural Awareness will Enhance Interactions



Traditional health beliefs

- Government
- Economy
- Living conditions
- Education

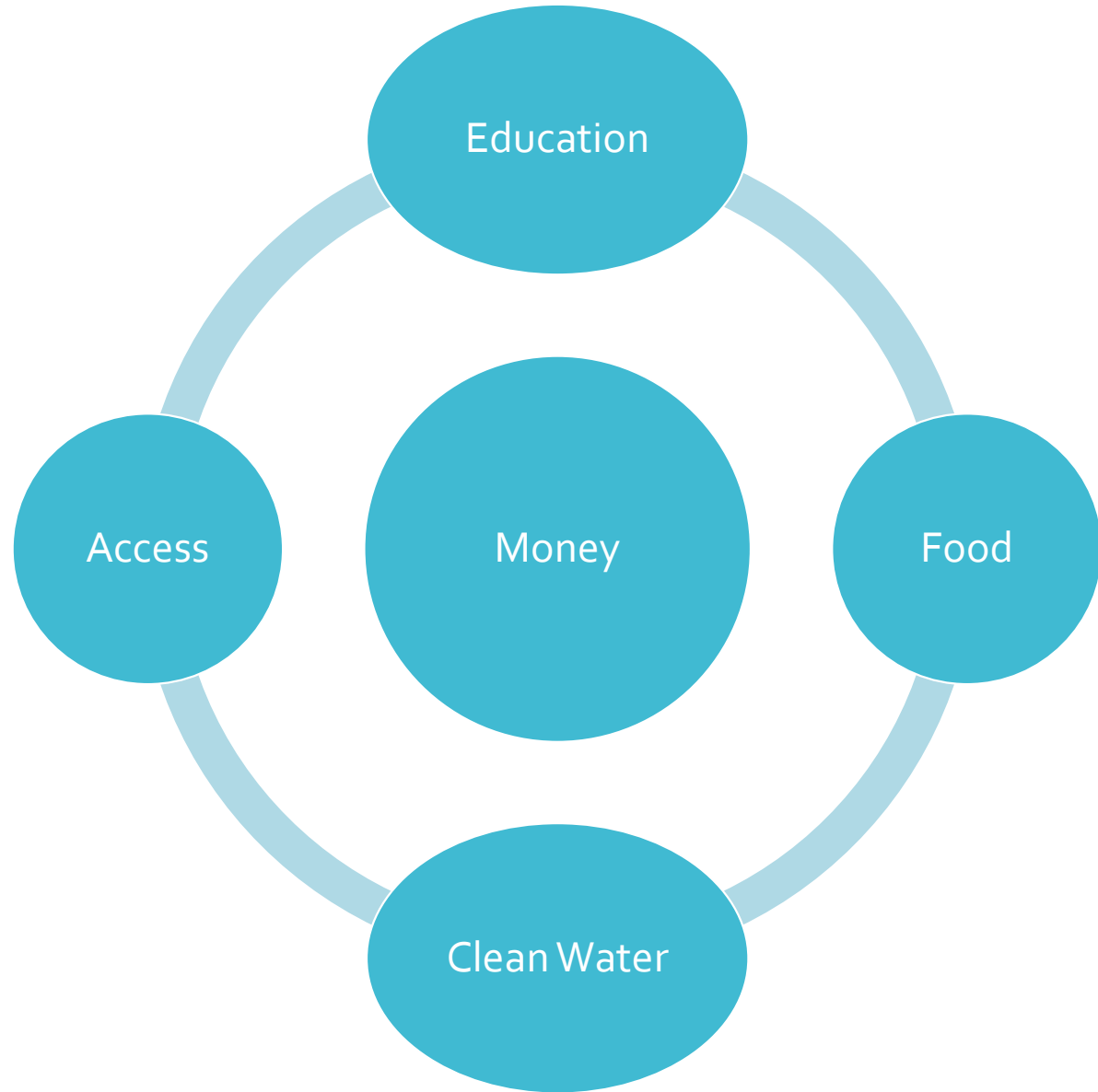
Cultural Iceberg



Visible

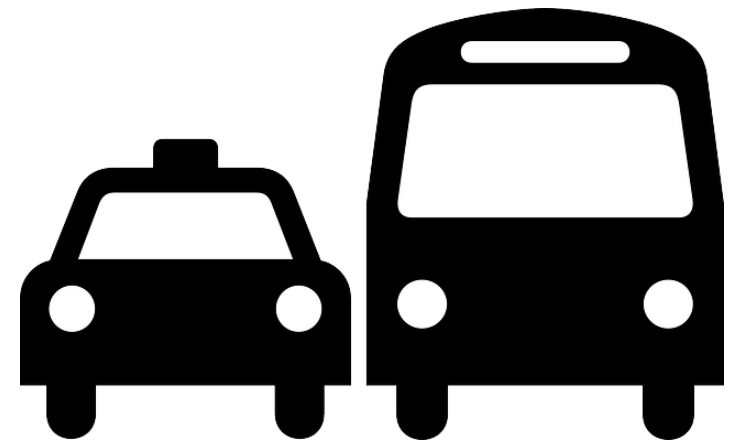
Less
Apparent

Factors Impacting Public Health



Other Resource Allocation Factors

- Population density
- Political instability, corruption, bureaucracy
- Adequate communication and transportation
- Health infrastructure, facilities, staffing, supplies
- Regulation and taxes
- Disease prevalence





Common Ailments

Arthritis

Dental Decay

Diabetes

Gastritis

CHF

Hypertension

COPD

Pregnancy

Cataracts

Other Medical Conditions



Infectious Diseases

HIV/AIDS
Parasites
Malaria

Infections

URI's
UTI's
Vaginal
Skin

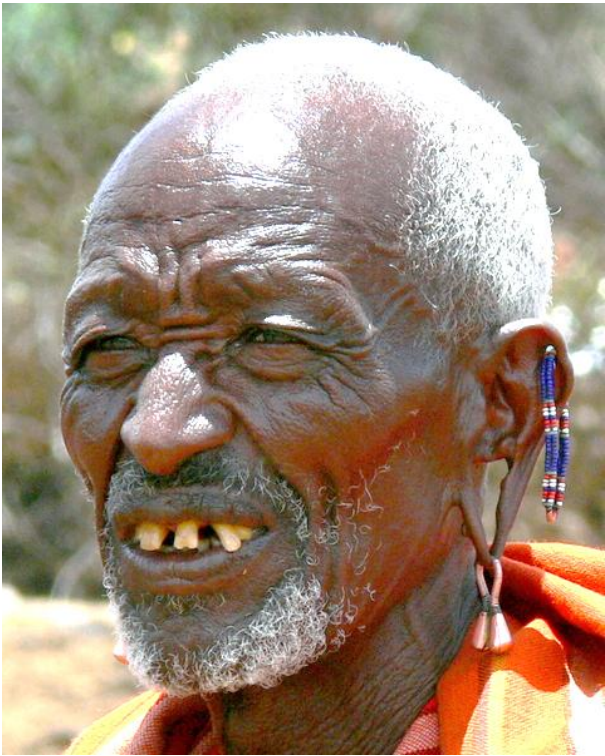
Traumatic and other
physical disabilities

Animal bites

Advanced tumors

Congenital Conditions

Heart murmurs
Cleft Lip
Downs syndrome
Dwarfism



Inter- professional teamwork

Don't forget about OMT,
a free tool that is with you
at all times!



Handy belt bag for expensive
diagnostic tools you don't
want to lose!

Cultural Professionalism



Be aware of standards of professional behavior for the region of your visit.

This includes:

- Appropriate dress and physical appearance
 - Many cultures cover shoulders and knees
 - Shorts are uncommon
 - Special requirements to enter religious centers
- Appropriate engagement with locals
 - Greeting customs and appropriate gestures
 - Accept their defined levels of power and who gets respect. Do not try to educate or “correct” their behavior, as you may put your own safety at risk.

Be an Ambassador



- Read and comply with all university standards of expected professional behavior. Including the items in the university waiver you signed to participate.
- Stay in continuous contact with your program leader while abroad.
- Refrain from excessive alcohol use.
- Remember you are a visitor and that it is your responsibility to uphold the local expectations of professional behavior.
- Your actions on and off duty while abroad may be interpreted by the local population as standard behavior to come of future representatives from your university, culture and country.
- Be a great ambassador!

Summary

- Examine your motivations
- Check your expectations
- Mutual benefit for all involved
- Respect for the local culture is essential
- Preparation is key
- Stay safe and healthy
- Be flexible to enjoy this life changing experience!



References and Resources

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