Public Health & The Peace Corps

These resources are suggested for use with courses such as:

- International Health 101
- Health Economics
- Introduction to Public Health
- Public Health Systems, Global Health

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Notes to the Instructor

Overview

The United States Peace Corps and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from various countries collaborate with local health providers and communities to address global health challenges and healthcare needs. Factors such as nutrition, healthcare access, governmental policy, and community resources influence a nation's health. Increasing global migration and the transmissibility of communicable diseases, from the HIV pandemic of the 1980s to COVID-19 today, necessitate a dynamic approach to public health. Public health professionals strive to improve personal, communal, national, and global health through *health financing, health systems strengthening,* or *disease prevention* and efforts to increase *health equity*. Exploration of these topics is primed for rigorous scholarship and intellectual rigor. These materials may foster important research projects and the development of new case studies regarding the work of the Peace Corps.

Curriculum Guide Content Topics

This curriculum guide contains four modules designed for courses such as International Health 101, Health Economics, Introduction to Public Health, Public Health Systems, and Global Health.

Module Topics:

1. **Health Financing:** Examines the core function of health financing in enabling progress towards universal health coverage by improving effective service coverage and financial protection.
2. **Health Systems:** Investigates the role of health systems in promoting, restoring, and maintaining health, and explores strategies for strengthening health system performance.
3. **Disease Prevention:** Delves into actions aimed at reducing or eliminating exposure to risks that increase the likelihood of disease, disability, or premature death.
4. **Health Equity:** Examines the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health and explores strategies for achieving health equity.

Each module can be used independently or in conjunction with others, depending on course objectives and available time. The modules are designed to engage students in critical discussions about complex public health challenges and the role of international

partnerships. Students will engage with case studies, participate in discussions, and develop essays or presentations based on suggested activities.

Instructor Preparation: Details of the Modules

The **readings** at the beginning of each module provide important background for students. Additional readings and resources are provided in the suggested activities and cases for exploration sections.

Each module includes **instructional materials**, including class discussion questions, case studies, and investigative themes, which allow students to apply concepts to specific contexts. Suggested activities, designed to promote critical thinking and engagement with real-world scenarios, can be completed individually or in groups. This resource can also be used to **assess** student learning.

Student Preparation

To effectively engage with the curriculum, students should:

- Read the provided resources for each module on the major international contributors to today's public health context before class to prepare for discussions and activities.
- Familiarize themselves with the context and glossary sections to understand key terms and concepts.
- Explore the additional resources provided in the suggested activities and cases for exploration sections as needed.

Course Outcomes

By engaging with the modules, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of global public health challenges. They will critically analyze the role of international partnerships, including the Peace Corps, in addressing health financing, health systems strengthening, disease prevention, and health equity. Students will learn to propose solutions to public health issues while considering resource constraints and health disparities worldwide.

The modules are designed to foster an appreciation for the importance of collaboration in achieving health for all. Students will recognize that tackling global health challenges requires the concerted efforts of diverse stakeholders. By exploring the work of the Peace Corps and other global health initiatives, students will gain a holistic perspective on the global health landscape and the critical role of partnerships in advancing public health goals.

Key Background Information

Context:

The United States Peace Corps and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from a variety of countries work with local health providers and communities to address health challenges and healthcare needs around the globe. Many factors influence the health of a nation, including nutrition, healthcare access, governmental policy, and community resources. Given the global model of citizenship we see in the world today as well as increasing patterns of migration around the world, communicable diseases are becoming ever more transmissible. From the HIV pandemic of the 1980s to COVID today, world health is changing and so must the way we approach public health. Public health professionals everywhere strive to improve personal, communal, national, and global health — whether in terms of *health financing* and *health systems strengthening*, or *disease prevention* and efforts to increase *health equity*.

Glossary:

- Health Equity: Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. (CDC)
- Health Financing: Health financing is a core function of health systems that can enable progress towards universal health coverage by improving effective service coverage and financial protection. (WHO)
- Health Systems: A health system consists of all people, institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore, and maintain health (WHO).
- Health System Strengthening: The strategies, responses, and activities that are designed to sustainably improve country health system performance. (USAID)

- Disease Prevention: Disease prevention involves actions to reduce or eliminate exposure to risks that might increase the chances that an individual or group will incur disease, disability, or premature death. (NIH)

Module One: Health Financing

Health financing is a core function of health systems that can enable progress towards universal health coverage by improving effective service coverage and financial protection. (WHO)

Readings: Health Financing

Gottret, Pablo and George Schieber, "Overview." In *Health Financing Revisited: A Practitioner's Guide*, 1–7. Washington (DC): The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2016.

Lepcha, Nimkit and Savlin Paul, "Peace Corps and Its Contribution Towards the Sustainable Development Goals". In W. Leal Filho et al. (eds.), *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*, Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2021.

The Netherlands and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. The Global Fund, September 2023,

Global Burden of Disease Health Financing Collaborator Network, "Past, present, and future of global health financing: a review of development assistance, government, out-of-pocket, and other private spending on health for 195 countries, 1995–2050." *The Lancet* 2019; 393: 2233–60.

Committee on Public Health Strategies to Improve Health; Institute of Medicine. "For the Public's Health: Investing in a Healthier Future." Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US), 2012 Apr 10. 2, Reforming Public Health and Its Financing.

Class Discussion:

1. **Country-level Health Financing:**

    a. What persons, organizations, and government agencies provide the funding that supports a nation's health? Include in your consideration

national, state, or local agencies, public partnerships, donations, volunteers, families, individuals, and others. Explore innovative approaches to health financing within the framework of Peace Corps projects, such as community-based health insurance schemes or microfinance initiatives to support healthcare access.

b. How does the Peace Corps navigate the challenge of integrating health initiatives within communities with varying levels of access to healthcare financing and infrastructure?

c. At the local level, how are investments in health determined and distributed?

d. How are health investments and health improvements monitored?

e. What effects does public policy have on health financing at the national level?

- **i.** Reflect on who is able to receive funds and who provides them, as it pertains to your own areas of interest. Can a local organization receive funds from the local government? Can a government receive funds from another government directly?

f. Who determines priorities and associated funding for national health budgets?

Recommended Reading: Kenya Community Health Strategy 2020–2025. Ministry of Health (Kenya). Accessed February 17, 2024.

g. How do countries maintain sustainable health financing in a changing political environment?

Recommended Reading: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Accessed February 17, 2024.

h. Discuss the role of volunteerism in addressing gaps in health financing in underserved communities and how Peace Corps projects contribute to building sustainable healthcare systems. Explore the ethical considerations of volunteer-led healthcare initiatives in contexts where access to healthcare financing is limited, including questions of dependency, cultural sensitivity, and long-term sustainability.

i. What impacts do specific diseases have on changes to health financing at national and sub-national levels?

Recommended Reading: Brown, G.W., et al. "Commentary: Global health financing after COVID-19 and the new Pandemic Fund." Brookings Institute, December 7, 2022. Accessed February 17, 2024.

2. Global Health Partnerships:

a. What are development donors/partners doing to support health globally?

Recommended Readings:

- McCoy, David, Sudeep Chand, and Devi Sridhar. "Global health funding: how much, where it comes from and where it goes," *Health Policy and Planning* 24, no. 6 (November 2009): 407–417. Accessed February 20, 2024.
- U.S. Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development, "Foreign Assistance Dashboard." Accessed February 17, 2024.

b. At the global donor level, who determines investments and how are they distributed?

Recommended Reading: "Official Development Assistance Trend Information." Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Accessed February 17, 2024.

c. How are investments and health improvements monitored?

d. How do donors and countries work together to enhance a nation's health from the community level to the national level?

- Recommended Readings:
  "PEPFAR 2023 Country and Regional Operation Plan (COP/ROP)Guidance for all PEPFAR-Supported Countries for 2023." PEPFAR 20 Years of Impact. Accessed February 17, 2024.
- "Global Initiatives." Peace Corps. Accessed February 17, 2024.

e. What specific effects do international investments have on the policy environment in a given country? Share examples of successful collaborations between the Peace Corps, local governments, and international organizations to improve health financing mechanisms and expand access to healthcare services in underserved areas.

f. What can be done to maintain sustainable growth in health financing amid the flux of global politics?

Recommended Readings:

- "An Oral History of PEPFAR: How a 'Dream Big' Partnership is Saving the Lives of Millions." George W. Bush Presidential Center. Accessed February 17, 2024.
- "Sustainability and Transition Guidance for HIV and TB." The Global Fund. February 2021. Accessed February 17, 2024.

g. What influence have recent pandemics had on health financing from global investors? Use the resources linked below to evaluate how HIV prevention-related health investments and treatments in 2013 differed from those of 2023.

Recommended Readings:

"World AIDS Day 2023 Fact Sheet." UNAIDS. Accessed February 17, 2024.

"UNAIDS 2013: AIDS by the numbers." UNAIDS. Accessed February 17, 2024.

Case for Exploration: Kenya

Kenya Community Health Strategy 2020–2025. Ministry of Health (Kenya). Accessed February 17, 2024.

Suggested Activities:

Group or Individual Essays on the Readings and Questions Below

1. What health priorities does Kenya appear to have, according to this strategy?
2. How much money is allocated for these priorities? (See table on page 37.)
3. *Budget execution* refers to the amount spent in actuality compared to what had been planned. What portion of the budget for health was "executed" in the previous National Health Strategy?
    1. See section 1.4, page 7: "Financing for community health has experienced challenges during the implementation of the 2014 -2019 strategy. For instance, in the financial year 2016/17, only about 3.5% of MoH's budget for health was allocated to community health and primary health care (PHC) [10a]."
4. How does local budget execution influence a health system and global partnerships?
5. Who are the major international health investors in Kenya, and what disease do they consider to be of primary concern?
    1. See Foreign Assistance Dashboard
3. What are the funding trends in Kenya for major diseases such as HIV and malaria?
    a. HIV: https://copsdata.amfar.org/s/Kenya
    b. Malaria: https://www.pmi.gov/where-we-work/kenya/

Module Two: Health Systems

A *health system* consists of all people, institutions, resources, and activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore, and maintain health (WHO). *Health system strengthening* comprises the strategies, responses, and activities that are designed to sustainably improve country health system performance (USAID).

Readings: Health Systems

Bloland, P. et al. "The role of public health institutions in global health system strengthening efforts: the US CDC's perspective." *PLoS Med.* 2012;9(4):e1001199. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1001199. Epub 2012 Apr 3. PMID: 22509137; PMCID: PMC3317896.

Dykens A, Hedrick C, Ndiaye Y, Linn A. Peace Corps Partnered Health Services Implementation Research in Global Health: Opportunity for Impact. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*. 2014;3(5):8-15.

Gabani, J. et al. "The effect of health financing systems on health system outcomes: A cross-country panel analysis." *Health Econ.* 2023 Mar;32(3):574-619. doi: 10.1002/hec.4635. Epub 2022 Dec 8. PMID: 36480236; PMCID: PMC10107855;

Kruk, Margaret E., et al. "High-quality health systems in the Sustainable Development Goals era: time for a revolution." *The Lancet Global Health Commission* 2018; 6: e1196–252.

Commission on a Global Health Risk Framework for the Future; National Academy of Medicine, Secretariat. "The Neglected Dimension of Global Security: A Framework to Counter Infectious Disease Crises." Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2016 May 16. 3, Strengthening Public Health as the Foundation of the Health System and First Line of Defense.

Class Discussion: Health Systems

1. What makes understanding health systems so crucial to effective health intervention in a given country?

   Bloland, Peter, et al. "The Role of Public Health Institutions in Global Health System Strengthening Efforts: The US CDC"s Perspective." *PLoS Medicine* 9(4): e1001199.

2. What do health systems contribute to the project of health security?
   a. See: "Health systems for health security: a framework for developing capacities for international health regulations, and components in health systems and other sectors that work in synergy to meet the demands imposed by health emergencies" (WHO).

3. What impact does specific health financing have on health systems investments overall?
   a. See: World Bank country report.

Investigative Theme: Health Systems (Malawi)

Relevant resources and readings related to Health Systems in Malawi are provided below within the suggested activity section.

Suggested Activity #1:

Class Role Play as Different International Donors

- Assign a group of students to one of the following donor groups: Peace Corps, USAID, Global Fund, WHO, and UNICEF.
- Ask students to research and report on what these groups are doing to strengthen health systems in Malawi. Students will need to make specific suggestions regarding how donors can cooperate to increase their country's health capacity and reduce systemic barriers to health.
- Additional resources may be consulted to increase a group's understanding of their assigned organization's specific contributions.

Suggested Activity #2:

Group Presentation or Essay — Pick a specific health system barrier in Malawi and design a health intervention to address it.

- Frame your own interventions in relation to existing programs and their results.
- Include a list of the partners and investors you imagine working with.
- Describe your program, its key objectives and outcomes, as well as the results expected by the time your program ends — in, say, three or five years from now. How long will it take to prepare your program? When will it be implemented? How long will it run? How will you decide when it should end?
- Why is it important to understand local health systems when introducing a new health program or intervention? How might these impact your own group's efforts?
- What is the role of international donors in health system strengthening in Malawi? (Answer this question with reference to the appropriate resources listed below.)

a. Peace Corps in Malawi: "Projects in Malawi," and Peace Corps. 2018 Annual Report Peace Corps Malawi. Accessed February 17, 2024.

b. USAID

USAID, "Strengthening Community Health Systems." Accessed February 17, 2024.

USAID, "Malawi: Strengthening data for greater equity and impact in primary health care." Accessed February 17, 2024.

c. Global Fund

The Global Fund, "Overview." Datasets: Malawi. Accessed February 17, 2024.

d. WHO and UNICEF:

World Health Organization, "Malawi: Strengthening data for greater equity and impact in primary health care." Accessed February 17, 2024.

- What are some of the strengths and barriers of the health system in Malawi? (Answer this question with reference to the appropriate resources listed below.)

    a. DevelopmentAid, "Malawi healthcare system faces multiple frustrations." News stream. Accessed February 17, 2024.
    b. U.S. Department of State, "2021 Malawi Sustainability Index and Dashboard Summary." Accessed February 17, 2024.
    c. Kaupa, Feston and Micheline J Naude. "Barriers in the Supply Chain Management of Essential Medicines in the Public Healthcare System in Malawi, 2021." African Journal of Governance and Development 10, no. 1 (July 2021).

Module Three: Disease Prevention

Disease prevention involves courses of action intended to reduce or eliminate exposure to risks that increase the chance an individual or group will incur disease, disability, or premature death (NIH).

Readings: Disease Prevention

Baker, R.E. et al. "Infectious disease in an era of global change." *Nat Rev Microbiol.* 2022 Apr;20(4):193-205. doi: 10.1038/s41579-021-00639-z. Epub 2021 Oct 13. PMID: 34646006; PMCID: PMC8513385.

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, "Global Burden of Disease (GBD)." Research and Analysis.

Institute of Medicine (US) Committee for the Study of the Future of Public Health. "The Future of Public Health." Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1988.

Madhav, N. et al. "Pandemics: Risks, Impacts, and Mitigation." In: Jamison DT, Gelband H, Horton S, et al., eds. Disease Control Priorities: Improving Health and Reducing Poverty. 3rd edition. Washington (DC): The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank; 2017 Nov 27. Chapter 17. doi: 10.1596/978-1-4648-0527-1_ch17.

Mullan F. Responding to the Global HIV/AIDS Crisis: A Peace Corps for Health. *JAMA.* 2007;297(7):744–746.

"Peace Corps Announces Expanded Polio Eradication Efforts," Peacecorps.gov, (press release), September 27, 2000.

"The Peace Corps' Contributions to the Global Smallpox Eradication Program," Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning. Accessed 6 May 2024.

Class Discussion: Disease Prevention

1. What is a *disease burden*?
2. What specific role do public health officials play in addressing a disease?
3. What specific steps can be taken to leverage health systems in preventing and allaying disease?
4. How have recent pandemics changed the landscape of public health globally — for instance, in terms of finances, partnerships, and programming?

Investigative Theme: Disease Prevention and Global Partnerships

Relevant resources and readings related to Disease Prevention and Global Partnerships are provided below within the suggested activity section.

Suggested Activity:

Using the resources below and others as needed, students should write or present on one of the diseases referenced below and how global partnerships contributed positively or negatively to the disease response. Here are suggested questions that student essays or presentations should address.

- What is the epidemiology of the disease in question? *(E.g.,. HIV, Malaria, Zoonotic Disease, COVID-19, etc.)*
- How has response to this disease shaped global public health partnerships?
- What role does generalized health education, such as infant and maternal health or hygiene education, play in the field for Peace Corps Volunteers? What is the role of these types of education for disease prevention in general?
- What have these partnerships contributed to efforts to prevent, treat, and eliminate the disease in question? How has this contribution been positive or negative in its net effects?
- How do you imagine partners could collaborate differently to better address this disease?
    a. HIV:

About PEPFAR. U.S. Department of State. Accessed February 20, 2024.

Fitzhugh, Mullan. "Responding to the Global HIV/AIDS Crisis: A Peace Corps for Health." *JAMA*. 297(7) (February 21, 2007): 744–746.

HIV and AIDS. The Global Fund. Accessed February 20, 2024.

Latest Global Program Results. PEPFAR. December 2022.

b. Malaria:

Henderson SJ, Belemvire A, Nelson R, et al. "Advancing Malaria Prevention and Control in Africa Through the Peace Corps-US President's Malaria Initiative Partnership. Global Advances in Health and Medicine." *Sage Journals.* November 27, 2020.

U.S. President's Malaria Initiative. PMI. Accessed February 20, 2024.

c. Zoonotic Disease (e.g. rabies, avian flu, Guinea worm):

i. Rabies:

Nel, Louis H., et al. "Global partnerships are critical to advance the control of Neglected Zoonotic Diseases: The case of the Global Alliance for Rabies Control." *Acta Tropica*, 165 (January 2017): 274-279.

United Against Rabies. Accessed February 20, 2024.

ii. Avian Flu:

Fact Sheet: USDA Continues Partner Engagement to Mitigate Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza for 2023 Season. U.S. Department of Agriculture. April 14, 2023.

USAID-FAO GHS: Strengthening Systems to Address Zoonotic Diseases. USAID. Accessed February 20, 2024.

Xue L and Zeng G. "Global Strategies and Response Measures to the Influenza A (H1N1) Pandemic. " *A Comprehensive*

Evaluation on Emergency Response in China. (November 24, 2018): 15-44.

iii. Non-Communicable Diseases:

Magnusson, Roger S. "Global Health Governance and the Challenge of Chronic, Non-Communicable Disease." *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, Cambridge University Press. (January 1, 2021).

Johnson, Michaela, et al. "Global partnerships to support noncommunicable disease care in low and middle-income countries: lessons from HIV/AIDS." *AIDS* 32 (July 1, 2018): S75-S82.

iv. Guinea Worm

Henderson, Susan. "A Guinea Worm Success Story: Togo Twenty Years Later." *WorldView Magazine.* Accessed 6 May 2024.

LaPin, Deirdre. "Final Evaluation of the Peace Corps Guinea Worm Eradication Program." Water and Sanitation for Health Project. USAID, August 1992.

Rotondo, Lisa. "The Guinea Worm, President Carter and Me." *American Diplomacy*, May 2023.

Yohalem, David. "Programming Guide for Guinea Worm Eradication." USAID, December 1990.

d. COVID-19:

Gilmore B, et al. “Community engagement for COVID-19 prevention and control: a rapid evidence synthesis.” *BMJ Global Health*. 5, no. 10 (October 13, 2020).

Global Health Security Agenda, USAID Mali, September 2021.

Partnerships in Response to COVID-19. Partnership Accelerator Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

“Peace Corps Response to COVID.” Peace Corps. Short film.

Module Four: Health Equity

Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. (CDC)

Readings: Health Equity

August, Ella, et al. "What is Global Health Equity? A Proposed Definition." *Ann Glob Health.* 88(1), 50 (July 2022).

Close, K., Karel, M. and White, M. A pilot program of knowledge translation and implementation for newborn resuscitation using US Peace Corps Volunteers in rural Madagascar. *Global Health* 12, 73 (2016).

Edmond, Charlotte. "4 barriers to health equity - and how to overcome them." *World Economic Forum*, May 3, 2023.

"Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity." Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US), 2017.

Michel, Janet, et al. "Universal health coverage financing in South Africa: wishes vs reality." *Journal of Global Health Reports*, Vol. 4 (July 21, 2020).

Global Health Expenditure Database. World Health Organization.

Hoyer, Deborah MPH, et al. "How Do We Define and Measure Health Equity? The State of Current Practice and Tools to Advance Health Equity." *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* 28(5) (September/October 2022): 570-577.

Class Discussion: Health Equity

1. What value should society place on health and healthcare, specifically in relation to other priorities? Support your answer with reference to specific cases or events.

2. What are some structural inequities to healthcare access, both domestically and internationally?

   a. Geographic barriers
   b. Economic barriers
   c. Political barriers
   d. Cultural barriers

3. Who is responsible for creating and/or supporting equal access to healthcare for a country's citizens and non-citizens? Who else contributes, or might contribute?

4. How can public health partnerships with NGOs, donors, and foreign governments support health equity — particularly for marginalized populations and others who face disproportionately negative health outcomes?

5. What role do — or should — community partners serve in creating health equity? Are present expectations on them too great? Too small? To the extent that expectations on them are not rightly sized, what can be done to bridge this gap?

6. Does Universal Health Coverage contribute to health equity? Support your answer with specific reference to countries where Universal Health Coverage is present or lacking, correlating its presence or absence to specific health outcomes.

Investigative Theme: Health Equity in Uganda

Relevant resources and readings related to Health Equity in Uganda are provided below within the suggested activity section.

Suggested Activity:

Group or individual presentations

1. Pick a population to assess using resources provided by these articles and others you find. Consider the Peace Corps Advancing Health Professionals program in Uganda in relation to each of these populations and the benefits of such a program for these populations and for the challenges brought up in each question below.

a. *General Population:*

Dowhaniuk, Nicholas. "Exploring country-wide equitable government health care facility access in Uganda." *Int J Equity Health*. 2021 Jan 18;20(1):38.

b. *Youth:*

Bukenya, Justine, et al. "Health facilities' readiness to provide friendly reproductive health services to young people aged 10-24 years in Wakiso district, Uganda." *Glob J Reprod Med*. (September 25, 2017).

c. *HIV+ Men:*

Nakiganda, Lydia Jacinta, et al. "Understanding and managing HIV infection risk among men who have sex with men in rural Uganda: a qualitative study." *BMC Public Health*. 2021 Jul 4;21(1):1309.

d. Refugees:

King, Jessica, et al. "Assessing equity of access and affordability of care among South Sudanese refugees and host communities in two districts in Uganda: a cross-sectional survey." *BMC Health Serv Res*. 2022 Sep 16;22(1):1165.

2. What are the barriers to equitable healthcare faced by this population in Uganda?

3. What is one public health intervention you imagine implementing in Uganda, and what steps would it take to address one of the identified barriers for this population?

4. What kind of partnerships would help ensure the success of your intervention and its integration into existing healthcare systems in Uganda?

5. How would you go about advocating with the Ministry of Health in Uganda for this intervention?