

# Health Science Curriculum



"I have many testimonies from teachers and parents who have noted changes in their children's way of doing things."

— Father Monique Jean Bruno  
Bethlehem Ministry, Haiti

## Global Health Challenge

Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, has the hemisphere's highest rates of infant, under-five and maternal mortality. Following years of political and economic strife in Haiti, basic public services have deteriorated due to a lack of infrastructure, funding and educated professionals. Even in times of peace only 40% of people in the rural communities have access to any form of healthcare. Illnesses, including water-borne diseases, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, have an especially high prevalence in Haiti. Hygiene and health education can help control the diseases that are preventable.

## Appropriate Solution

The design team of BIOE 260: Introduction to Global Health, created a health science curriculum that focuses on the needs of a primary school in Terrier Rouge, Haiti. The activities are designed to be relevant to local health issues, use locally available resources, maintain cultural sensitivity, and foster participation and comprehension. The activities cover a range of lessons including water purification, the importance of hand washing, and general anatomy of the human body. The program will culminate in a showcase where the students can present what they have learned to their families. Although these activities were designed for a specific group of students, the lessons could easily be adapted for a different community. Guidance and support were provided by Dr. Rebecca Richards-Kortum, Monica Dyer, Janet Wheeler, Soizic Bonnet, Dan Erchick, Rose Thelus, Allison Lipper, and Yvette Mirabal.

## Current Status

The health science curriculum was taught to 450 students at St. Barthelemy Primary School in Haiti. The interns used many hands-on activities that allowed the students to have a more tangible grasp of unfamiliar topics. To teach anatomy, the interns created "organ shirts", tee-shirts with Velcro-attached felt cutouts of the main internal organs. The interns also used an inexpensive microscope to demonstrate the difference between contaminated water and clean water. Students were able to see living microbes in the 'dirty' water, facilitating a better understanding of how untreated water can spread disease. At the end of the course, the interns reviewed the syllabus with the teachers to discuss how it could be improved. In addition, the interns left their lesson plans with the school so that other teachers could implement the health science curriculum.

## BEYOND TRADITIONAL BORDERS



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