

**Tampere University
Department of International Health**

September 20, 2009

Finnish Global Health Course

ALUMNI SURVEY REPORT

Background

First Finnish Diploma Course on Global Health (GH course) was organized in 2001. There after, there has been a course every year except in years 2003 and 2005. Thus, altogether there have been six courses with almost 200 students. In addition to that, there has been one course in Tanzania (in 2008) and one in the Philippines (2009).

Financing of the courses has consisted of voluntary work, self-financing by the organizing consortium and of a grant from Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The course has had two main aims: First one is to provide education in global health issues for Finnish students and health professionals. These kinds of themes have been almost non-existing in the regular curricula. The second aim has been to provide entry-points into international positions and projects.

The motivation for carrying out this survey was to find out if the above aims have been achieved to some extent. More specific aims of the survey include inquiring the alumni:

- Where they have been working and where they work currently,
- Global Health related further education, and
- Whether the course has been beneficial for their career development.

Conducting the survey

Survey was conducted electronically. In the end of January 2009 we sent an e-mail to all the students who have attended a GH course in Finland in 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008 (195 students) asking them to fill out a questionnaire (appendix 1). There was a possibility to return the questionnaire as an attachment of an e-mail or to fill it out as an e-form in the Internet. Obviously, it was before GH course 2009 and these students could not participate the survey.

Results

Respondents

We received 63 answers, 26 questionnaires were returned as an e-mail attachment and 37 were filled out in the Internet. Response rate was 32.3 %. Responses were sent between the beginning of February and mid-June after a reminder.

Out of the respondents, 37 are female and 26 male. Countries represented and number of responses are as follows: Finland 26, Tanzania 12, Philippines 10, Chile 6, Nigeria 4, China 3 and India 2. Distribution between professions is: 53 responses from medical field, 6 from veterinary field and 4 from dentistry. We did not ask the respondents to indicate whether they had degree or if they were still students. Years when respondents had conducted the course are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Year when course conducted

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of students</u>
2001	8
2002	6
2004	8
2006	18
2007	15
2008	8

Out of the respondents, 10 did not live in their country of origin any longer. Three Chileans and two Finns, Indians and Nigerians had their current residence abroad.

Employment

There was a question about current employer included in the questionnaire. Distribution is shown in table 2 below. About half of the respondents are working for national or local government. Out of those six who are in other category, four are having research related job outside university.

Type of work respondents are doing is shown in table 3. About one third of the respondents are in a clinical job, the rest mostly other type of responsibilities.

Table 2: Current employer

<u>Employer</u>	<u>Number of alumni</u>
National or local government	31
University	13
Non-governmental organization	7
United Nations organization	2
Studying	2
Consultant / self-employed	1
Private company	0
Other	6
No information	1

Table 3: Current type of work

<u>Work</u>	<u>Number of alumni</u>
Clinical	21
Policy, politics, advocacy	13
Teaching and research	13
Clinical, teaching, research	11
NGO activities	4
Student	1

Survey form included also specific questions about Global Health related work. 25 respondents had had a position related to Global Health themes in their own country. Duration of the employment varied from 2 months to 2 years. 12 respondents had worked abroad in Global Health related positions. Lengths of employment varied between 2 to 55 months. Positions included for example volunteer work, NGO paid positions, work with UN organizations and research.

NGOs

A possibility to engage to Global Health matters is through NGO activities. We inquired about involvements/affiliations/engagements in global health related organizations or activities any other than rank-and-file member. 17 respondents said that they have such positions. Mostly they were active as board members or coordinating one sector of NGO activities.

Global health education after GH course

Alumni students were asked what other Global Health related education besides GH course in Finland they had gained. Out of the respondents, 12 said that they had no further Global Health education and 32 did not answer the question. 19 alumni had attended some kind of global health related educations. This varied from short courses to a Master's degree. Examples include:

- Health in developing countries at Helsinki University,
- Red Cross Basic and Emergency Unit education,
- Development studies - basic studies,
- Philippine Global health course,
- Courses of different topics in international health at IMCI/Uppsala University as part of MPH studies.

Out of those respondents who had gained some additional Global Health education, 12 come from Finland and 3 from the Philippines. From the rest of collaborating countries there is either one or none who reports about further Global Health education.

Influence of Global Health course

We also inquired if respondents thought that Global Health course had an influence on their career. 35 respondents said that it had influenced their career greatly, 16 had chosen to tick slightly and one said that course did not influence his / her career at all. 10 respondents indicated that it is too early to say if there will be influence.

Most of the respondents who saw that there was an influence formulated it as course opening new perspectives and advanced networking (30 respondents). Some respondents stated that the course had an impact on their career plans in general and career plans in Global Health (9 respondents). Some respondents said that Global Health course had led them to seek related further education / specialization (8 respondents). A few respondents said that the course had helped them to find a Global Health related job (4 respondents).

Discussion

As expected, response rate for the survey was relatively low. One obvious reason for this is that peoples' e-mail addresses have changed and our request to participate the survey might not have reached everybody. One additional weakness of the study is that there might be a bias towards alumni who look at the course positively. This can be concluded based on the comments respondents provided in space reserved for additional comments. There was nothing negative said about the GH course.

Currently about half of the respondents are working for national or local governments. One third of the clients had a clinical job. However, 25 respondents said that they have worked in Global Health related positions in their home countries and 12 abroad.

Based on this survey, one can say that it has been mostly the Finns who have managed to gain further education in Global Health themes.

Respondents saw GH course advancing their career towards a position with global health aspect in several ways: The most important input was that GH course opened new perspectives in thinking and advanced networking. GH course had also guided respondents to international career.

In sum, the major conclusion from the survey is that respondents had a positive attitude towards GH course. It appears that the course has largely succeeded in achieving the main goals set for it.

Appendix:
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE TO GLOBAL HEALTH ALUMNI

Dear Global Health Course Alumni,

The organizers of the Finnish Diploma Course of Global Health wish to further develop the contents of the course. Contribution towards employment in global health related positions of the past participants could be considered as one indicator of the quality and impact of the course. Therefore, we would like to know about your career development after attending the course, and your thoughts on the possible impact the course has had on your professional life.

Please fill in and submit the brief survey below. We aim at repeating the survey in the future as well. The information you provide will be kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of future curricula planning.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Project Coordinator Hanna Peevo (hanna.peevo@uta.fi).

Thank you for your time and consideration!

First and last name

Sex Female Male

E-mail address

Country of origin

Current country of residence

Your educational background is in

medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>
dentistry	<input type="checkbox"/>
veterinary medicine	<input type="checkbox"/>
nursing	<input type="checkbox"/>
other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify

Year when you attended Global Health course?

What other Global Health related education have you gained, if any?

Who is your current employer?

(Indicate also if you are still a fulltime student or if you are self-employed.)

Which of the following categories best characterize your employer?

Health center / hospital	
National / local government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-governmental organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
United Nations organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
University	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private company	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultant / self-employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am studying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify

What type of work do you mainly do?

(e.g., clinical, policy making, teaching and research)

Have you after the course worked in Global Health related positions in your own country?

Yes
No

If yes, how many months?

Have you after the course worked abroad in Global Health related positions?

Yes
No

If yes, how many months?

What, if any, Global Health related position have you had?

Do you involvements/affiliations/engagements in global health related organizations or activities any (other than rank-and-file member)?

Do you think Global Health course has influenced your career?

Greatly
Slightly
Not at all
Too early to say

Can you please briefly comment how?

In case you think the course has not influenced your career, please tell why this might be so?

Any additional comments