Evaluation of student nurses completing an international elective in Zambia

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Aims

• To evaluate the impact of a Faculty structured International Travel Scholarship to Zambia for undergraduate UK student nurses.

• Examine the impact of undertaking scholarship on personal and professional development.
International Travel Scholarships

• Birmingham City University’s Strategy 2020 includes an explicit aim to ‘become an internationalised University’. To achieve this the University aims to internationalise the institution in terms of the student body, overseas partnership and promoting global perspectives in curricula and research.

• BCU introduced International Travel Scholarships for undergraduate students in health and education in 2017.
Electives

• The benefits and impact of undertaking an international scholarship has been identified as being long lasting far beyond the period of actual stay overseas.

• It is widely acknowledged as having a positive impact on practice when individuals return to the UK. Including:
  • Leadership
  • Resilience
  • Resourcefulness
  • Cultural competence
Undergraduate Electives

• Placements overseas give students the opportunity to experience different cultures, which can facilitate the critical appraisal of different healthcare systems and the effects on the delivery of healthcare. Whilst many elements of this topic can be explored in a classroom, actually being in country bridges the theory practice divide.

• Student who undertaken an elective report that the experiences challenged their existing values and cultural issues an important issue when considering the increasing diversity of multicultural Britain, leaving them better prepared to deliver multi-cultural care on their return home.
Zambia

Diploma level
4 year programme (includes General Nursing & Midwifery)
Direct entrant programmes in Public Health
Zambia Experience

• The partnership between Birmingham City University and the Zambian Ministry of Health has developed since 2015.

• Activities predominately focusing on national critical care nursing capacity building an opportunity for an undergraduate elective became available.

• August 2017, 6 adult student nurses (2nd and 3rd years) undertook an elective to Zambia.
6 month pre-departure training programme

• Voluntourism versus elective
• Maternal emergencies
• Resuscitation Council (UK) Immediate Life Support Course
• Introduction to Tropical Medicine
• Fundamentals in assessment
• Cultural competence
• Briefs from Lusaka College of Nursing
University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka
On arrival

‘Our tour started in the paediatric block where we were shown the general wards, children’s and neonatal ICU, emergency department as well as the children’s malnutrition wards. Rows and rows of children and babies, already it was apparent the lack of resources and sanitation facilities available. It was surprising to see the smiles and positivity from parents with critically ill children showing the trust and hope they have in the nurses’
Nursing care

‘Some shifts consisted of only two nurses to care for over forty patients split across the ward in different bays and side rooms. Diagnoses ranged from leukaemia, TB, anaemia, heart failure, advanced retroviral disease, sepsis and we even saw a case of leprosy’.

‘problems still existed with most days we observed problems with ventilators and the portable oxygen bottles malfunctioning. Each day we were allocated a different patient to assist the nurses care for. For some of us this was our first experience of ICU and we were able to learn so much about nursing a critically ill patient’
Students, nurses and training
Evaluation

Blogs published in RCNi

‘It has made us not only appreciate our healthcare system in the UK but also how we cannot always rely on modern practices and equipment. We will never forget our time in Zambia and it has made us better prepared for our future as qualified nurses’.
Conclusion

• The value of a structured faculty led elective.
• Value of partnership working with colleagues in other countries
• Importance of pre-departure training.
• Preparing the future workforce for those with an interest in working internationally.
Thank you

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m34qaxpKG0w&feature=youtu.be