

Bridging Cultures While Combining Roles: An Opportunity in Sudan

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Developing cultural sensitivity, awareness of discrepancies in global health care, and learning to be part of a global citizenship are some of the goals that students of occupational therapy need to achieve. As a professional occupational therapist, one needs to have a professional development plan. Demonstrating citizenship, in this instance, global citizenship is part of the plan of this therapist. The role of educator and volunteer were combined to meet a health care needs in Sudan.

The objective of this paper is to describe how educational objectives for students were met with their instructor's role of a volunteer on a medical mission in Sudan. Both roles created a unique experience for the students and a method to develop materials for in country workers from the Sudan. The volunteer was able to share occupational therapy skills with individuals seeking health care and was able to provide materials to the health care workers in country that could be utilized after the visit. This paper will describe the cultural scan, educational assignment and results.

Developing cultural sensitivity is an educational goal. Classroom assignments were developed to reach several goals around cultural sensitivity. The process of using a cultural scan to identify health care needs of Sudan informed the instructor, who was a volunteer on a medical mission to Sudan, to determine which areas of health might be targeted for intervention that would be most useful for the country. Both the instructor and the students had tasks to complete to develop materials to share with health care workers.

The process of this project provided a graded activity for students as well as concrete suggestions that could be utilized by the volunteer to share with health care workers and people with challenges to their occupations. Results from the experience provided a foundation to build on for the follow-up visit in the following year. Information from this project can contribute to the profession through demonstration of building cross-cultural communication though combining roles of an educator and volunteer.