

I. Introduction

Over the course of the Fall 2022 semester, I completed an internship with Clemson Engineers for Developing Communities, a student-led organization devoted to creating sustainable infrastructure and healthcare systems in vulnerable areas. Serving on the Community Health Surveillance team, our project's goal was to improve the efficacy and data collection system of the Community Health Worker Model implemented by Zamni Lasante, the Haiti branch of the global health non-profit Partner's in Health.

II. Description of the Project

Located in the rural village of Cange in the Central Plateau of Haiti, Zamni Lasante is the primary source of healthcare not only for the surrounding region, but for most of Haiti. Out of all the healthcare related issues, hypertension is the leading cause of death among Haitian adults. Working to lessen the prevalence of hypertension in the Central Plateau, Zamni Lasante implemented a Community Health Worker Model, a system consisting of locals trained to monitor and distribute blood pressure medication to patients within the program. After a few years of the program's existence, its effectiveness was largely unknown. The Community Health Surveillance team aimed to measure the program's success through analyzing data collection, as well as standardize and digitize the current data storage methods. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this project was temporarily put on hold, in turn making the semester I joined the team the first time the project was once again active in over a year.

III. Description of my specific responsibilities, skills learned, and skills applied

Each Friday, CEDC met as a group where we would discuss various topics concerning the global health sector, toxic charity, and enhance professional presentation skills. The Community Health Surveillance team met separately on Monday afternoons, where we would discuss the tasks needed to be completed or meet virtually with partners in Haiti. A large portion of my role consisted of communicating with our connections in Haiti, as many could only speak French. Due to the project's hiatus, many of our efforts as a team consisted of reaching out to previous stakeholders, physicians, or former project members to better gauge where the project was left prior to the pandemic. In our efforts, we were able to contact two Haitian medical students not only native to Cange, but deeply involved with the Community Health Worker Program. With them, we reached out to Zamni Lasante officials, current and former community health workers, and American physicians formerly serving on the project.

Over the semester, my ability to communicate not only with my team members, but cross-culturally in a different language improved tremendously. Unaware of what had occurred prior on the project, I developed problem-solving skills as well as learned the importance of flexibility and patience with projects of this nature.

IV. Conclusion

Working with CEDC on the Community Health Surveillance team well beyond exceeded my expectations. While the project was challenging in a number of ways, it was equally as rewarding knowing that its outcome would be serving others. While I had initially thought I would be completing an internship abroad, CEDC was a pleasant surprise, as it quickly

became one of the best experiences I had at Clemson. My only regret is that I was only able to be a part of such an incredible organization for one semester.