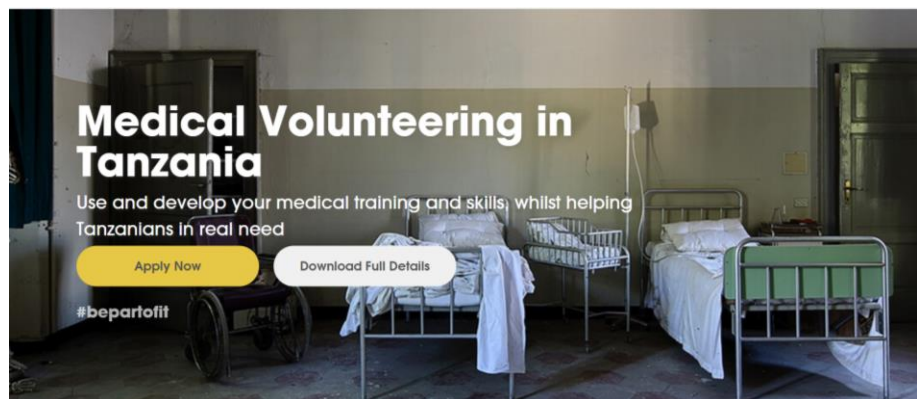




# DISMANTLING VOLUNTOURISM

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Evaluating the effects of a global health supplemental curriculum  
on undergraduate volunteers traveling to Haiti



## *U.N. Admits Role in Cholera Epidemic in Haiti*

“ ‘I got to assist with two circumcisions’ Projects Abroad Margaret Suanes Volunteer Story)” <sup>x</sup>

“I saw an 18-year-old British high school graduate wielding a saw, at a patient's side.” <sup>x</sup>

## Charities and voluntourism fuelling 'orphanage crisis' in Haiti, says NGO

Charitable donations and volunteers from abroad are supporting Haitian orphanages where children are vulnerable to abuse, a report finds

SPECIAL REPORT

## American With No Medical Training Ran Center For Malnourished Ugandan Kids. 105 Died

August 9, 2019 · 5:44 PM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



NURITH AIZENMAN



MALAKA GHARIB



# WHAT IS VOLUNTOURISM?

volunteer + tourism = voluntourism

a form of tourism in which travelers participate in voluntary work for an organization.

an *industry* worth millions of dollars

**VOLUNTOURISM → NEOCOLONIALISM**

# WHAT IS NEOCOLONIALISM?

“The use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies.”

global north → global south

“I wouldn’t get a chance to  
ever do this in the U.S.”

“they need any help they can get”

“if I don’t help them, who will?”

**VOLUNTOURISM** →

**Where I am from  
justifies my actions**

“they are not capable of  
helping themselves”

“I have good intentions”

“those poor things”

“I know more than them”

“I can do it better”

“Any help is good help”

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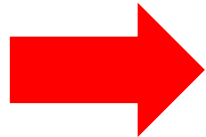


**VOLUNTOURISM → NEOCOLONIALISM**

# THE PROBLEM

the neocolonial cycle

I can do this!



A lack of volunteer education and awareness



(GLOBAL ISSUE)

A global imbalance & abuse of power



A dominant narrative justifying the abuse of power



(STRUCTURAL ISSUE)

# THE PROJECT

dismantling voluntourism

## Create

- Design a global health + ethics curriculum specific to the destination country and type of service
- Spring break trip to Jacmel, Haiti through AWI

## Implement

- Implement the supplemental curriculum with a team of undergraduate students (n=7) traveling to the global south for a medical volunteer trip

## Assess

- Assess student outcomes using ethnographic methods, qualitative methods, and quantitative measures
- COVID-19 adjustments

# THE QUESTIONS

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dismantling voluntourism

1. To what extent do students demonstrate competency in global health and medical ethics prior to and following the eight-week curriculum?
2. Is a supplemental student-led curriculum necessary and sufficient in preparing undergraduate students for global medical service?

## Qualitative methods

- Pre/post- interview
- Recorded discussions
- Post- lesson written reflections

## Quantitative methods

- Pre/post- written evaluation
- Pre- lesson surveys

## The curriculum:

1. Haitian Creole & triage (medical skills)
2. History of Haiti, structural violence + geopolitics in Haiti
3. Voluntourism, neocolonialism, emergency rhetoric, complicity
4. Close - out session\*

\*Pre-pandemic plan:

5. Ethical photography
6. Pre-trip reflection

pre-  
evaluations

curriculum

post-  
evaluations

**STUDY TIMELINE**

# PRE/POST EVALUATION

Strongly Disagree

Somewhat Disagree

No opinion

Somewhat Agree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

I feel very familiar with  
global health:

3.0 → 3.8

I know about the Haitian  
patient – US provider power  
dynamic:

3.1 → 4.0

I feel very comfortable  
performing the necessary  
tasks on the trip well and  
accurately:

2.4 → 3.8

I am confident that my  
presence will make a  
significant impact on the trip:

3.9 → 4.0

I know the medical ethics &  
global health issues  
necessary for this service trip:

2.1 → 4.3

I am confident that this trip  
will make a significant impact  
on Haiti:

4.0 → 3.5

# QUALITATIVE DATA

## Pre-curriculum interviews

- **Interest** in learning about Haiti
- Generally very **little knowledge** of Haiti
- Some familiarity with scope of practice
- **Hesitancy** to answer some questions

Overall: open-minded, good intentions, ready to learn

## Discussions

- **Questioning** their own involvement and impact
- **Team bonding**
- Learning from each other
- **Earnest participation**
- Concepts grasped (often not immediately, but through discussion)

Overall: extremely collaborative, solid participation for supplemental curriculum

## Post-curriculum interviews

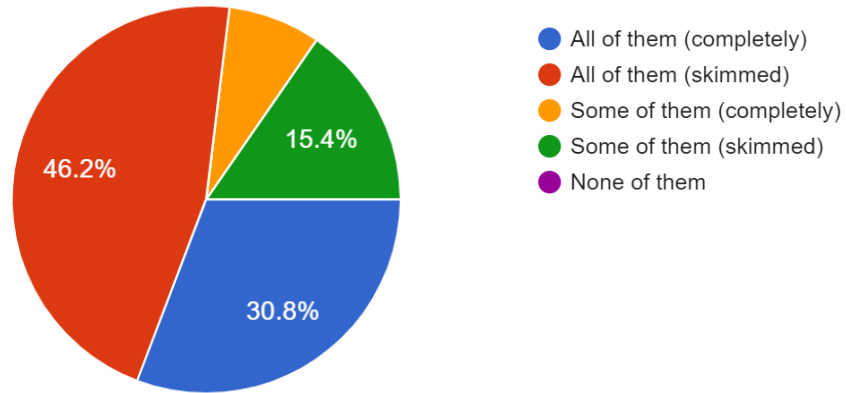
- Many moments of surprise
- **Sparked passion** for global health and Haiti specifically
- Adopted **critical lens** of medical service trips
- Placed **heavy value on curriculum**

Overall: closer bond with Haiti, more critical of global health efforts, really liked curriculum



# PARTICIPANT BURDENS + BARRIERS

To what extent did you complete the readings for this week?



Self-reported barriers:

“midterms” “papers due” “family matters” “just work” “didn’t have time to read in detail” “rough week”

COVID-19 effects:

“frustration” “strange” “difficult” “adjusting” “stuck” “stressful”

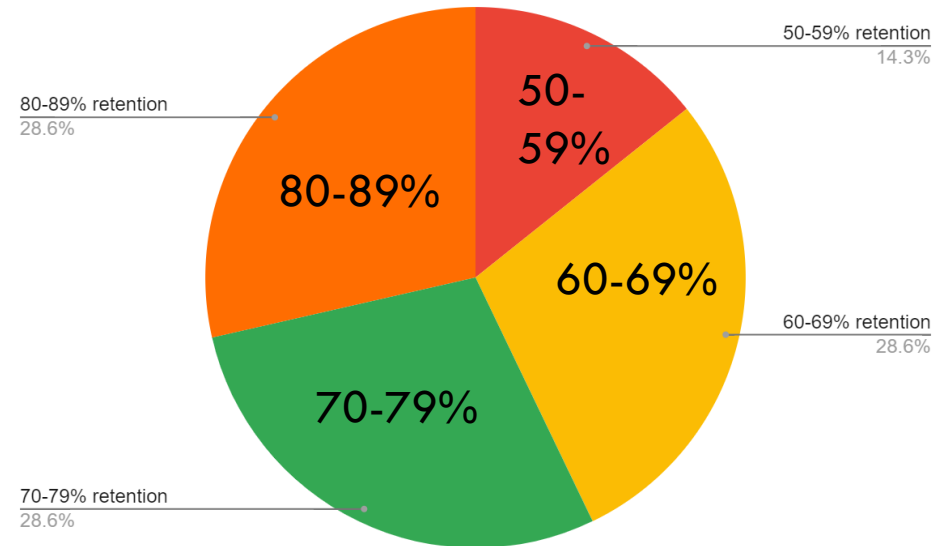
★ If a class was required for a trip?

“I would not have time in my schedule to take another class...and that would just prevent me from going on [this] trip”

“I know it’s really important to take it seriously...and to take the ethical route, but I just know I wouldn’t have time in my schedule at all”

★ “I wouldn’t have tried to learn this information without the curriculum”

Retention after pandemic gap:





Students actually like it



Evident growth

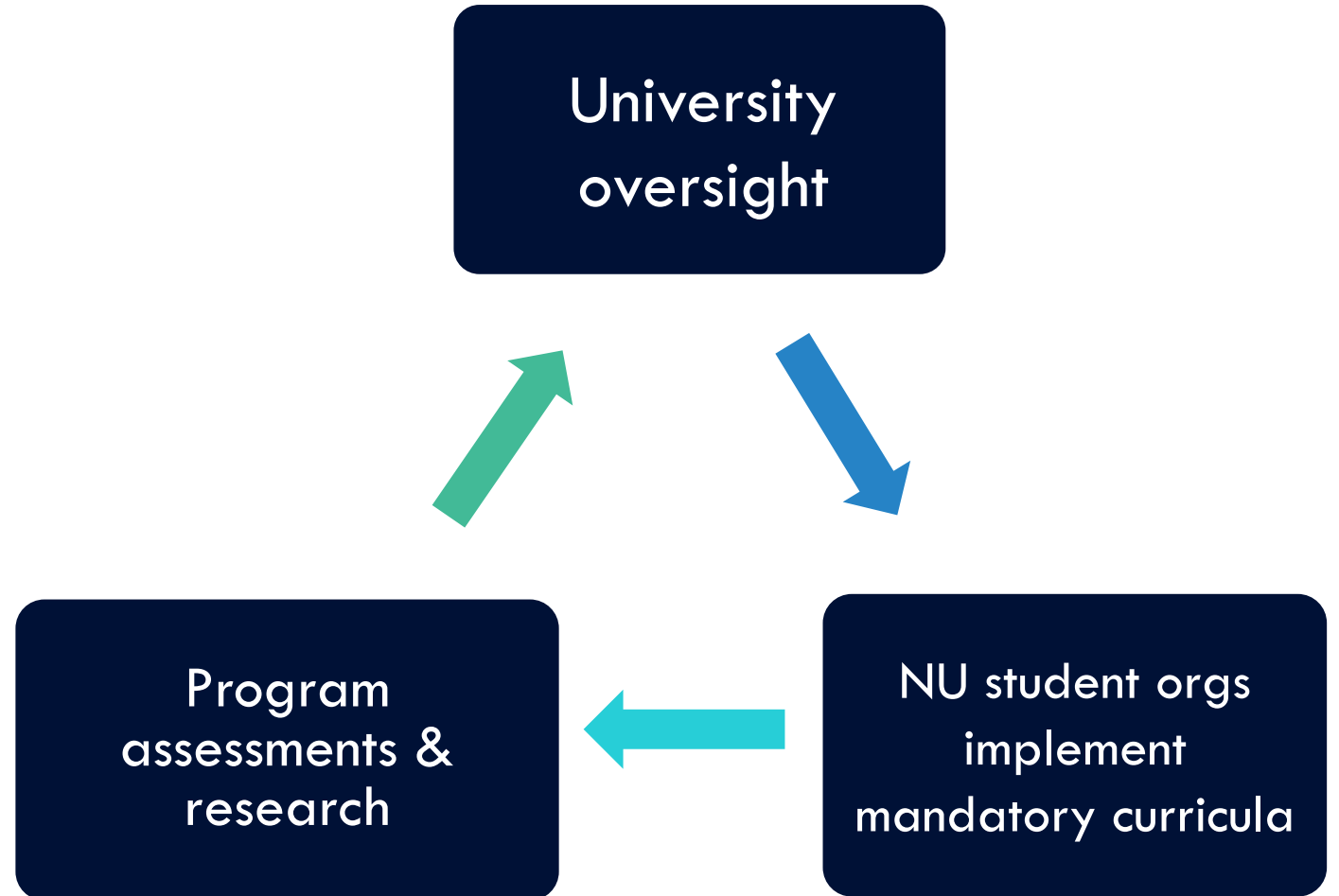


Works with schedule

**The curriculum works.**

# THE SOLUTION

dismantling voluntourism



# Acknowledgments

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