

Empower Through Health: University Community - How to Start Your Chapter

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About Empower Through Health

Empower Through Health (ETH) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that operates in Uganda and the United States. ETH operates a medical clinic, Mpunde Health Center, that provides basic primary health care and public health services to a catchment area in Busoga (Eastern Uganda) that consists of over 70,000 people living across 54 rural villages. ETH works in Buyende District, a predominantly subsistence farming district with 361,000 people (St. Louis City has 330,000) and one full-time practicing physician. There are no paved roads and no electricity infrastructure. ETH has treated around 12,000 patients over the last two years at Mpunde Health Center, where we implement clinical research studies, execute targeted public health interventions, and cultivate social enterprises to target social and cultural determinants of health.

ETH is committed to increasing access to healthcare services and public health resources for some of the world's most vulnerable communities. We are an interdisciplinary team of passionate and self-directed global citizens who strive to eliminate the health obstacles by using evidence-based, scientifically proven interventions.

Mission:

It is our mission to improve healthcare access to the world's most vulnerable by providing direct evidence based medical care, helping build local healthcare capacity, and addressing root causes of poor health outcomes with the full participation of communities.

To accomplish our mission, we have created a Global Health Institute where extraordinary challenges in global health can be addressed through interdisciplinary and intercultural collaboration. We seek to advance the frontiers of global health and development while providing educational opportunities rooted in equity for future generations of leaders with the aspiration that they will develop into advocates, practitioners, and leaders for global equity.

When our patients are ill, we will do whatever it takes to cure and heal them. When our patients do not have the resources required to live life with dignity, we will do everything that we can to empower them to achieve their full potential.

The world is our community, and our patients are our family.

Philosophy:

We believe all human lives are equally valuable, sickness frequently stems from poor living conditions, those conditions must be addressed to improve health outcomes, and long-term, sustainable improvements can only be realized through active, continuing collaborations with the targeted communities at all levels.

ETH University Community

About the University Community:

ETH university community consists of student-led chapters at different universities that enable students to participate longitudinally and sustainably in collaboratively tackling some of the most pressing global health issues. Students will have the opportunity to work with public health professionals and academics from a variety of intercultural backgrounds and experiences.

Students in each chapter will learn about a specific ETH project (malnutrition, maternal and child health, neglected tropical diseases, mental health, sexual health, etc) through ETH guest lectures from global health practitioners and researchers as well as through experiential and self-directed learning. Chapters work to increase global health awareness on campus, educate peers on global health issues, and raise funds for the chapter's specific project.

Over each summer, select members of each chapter have the opportunity to participate in the Global Health Experiential Fellowship, which provides a unique opportunity to work on an intercultural team for an immersive collaborative project in rural Uganda. Fellows will be placed on a team consisting of three to four American students and two Ugandan students, and teams will be responsible for conducting monitoring and evaluation of their chapter's global health project.

Purpose of the University Community:

The purpose of Empower Through Health (ETH) University Community is to foster a community of advocates, practitioners, and leaders for global equity. Students in the community will have opportunities to learn about issues in global health with guidance from relevant mentors and develop their skills in organizational management, leadership, and research.

Part 1: Defining your Project

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a brief, pithy description of who you are and what you hope to achieve. It should include both a summary of your practical project and the broader issue you hope to address. Think of this as a “Personal Statement” for your chapter. Use the following to clarify your mission:

- How has my experience and identity brought me to ETH in the first place?
- If I had all the resources and power I would ever need, what is one global health/public health issue I want to address?
- How does working on this issue fit into my academic or career interest?
- How might working on this issue benefit my local/college/cultural community?

Project Proposal

After clarifying the focus of your chapter, start delving deeper into the academic field related to your mission. Look for the following during the research process:

- What prior efforts had been done for purposes similar to yours?/What previous models have been proven effective?
- Compare contexts: how might your catchment area be similar to or different from previous projects?
- Are there any scholars who are particularly active/passionate/experienced in your field of interest?

Branding

With all the fundamental knowledge about what your challenge is and how you seek to address it, you are now ready to build and expand your chapter! But before that, there are other logistical issues with launching a new project. The issue you’ve decided to take on might be complex, the project proposal that you’ve formulated might be long and esoteric, and you would not be the first nor the last to address similar issues - which is why branding is important. Creating your unique brand - which entails building a set of consistent, memorable features and incorporating them into your chapter operation - will help people remember you, understand your purpose, and therefore be more inclined to support you. Therefore, before moving on, find a set of values or style of presentation and make them a long-standing feature of your chapter.

Part 2: Starting a Chapter

Recruitment

a. Social Media/Digital Content

Social media might be the most useful way to spread your message, wide and fast. Consider your target audience and use whichever platform is most popular with them. Make sure to use consistent content across multiple platforms, if you do have more than one. For the first few weeks (before recruitment starts), it is best to introduce your team and your mission through info posts and personal introductions, so that your audience feels connected with fellow students. During recruitment, emphasize what you aim to achieve, the impact one could make, the importance of your work, as well as what students stand to gain from joining the chapter. After recruitment, be sure to keep your audience engaged and updated with new developments - building legitimacy as a student organization will benefit future recruitments!

b. Email outreach

Again, consider your target audience - do they have anything in common? Are they primarily students from your college? If so, do they share academic interests or career directions? Professors and college career advisory centers are usually very willing to advertise opportunities for students to gain extracurricular exposure. Build a contact list, draft an outreach email and ask your contacts to simply forward your email to students who may be interested - utilizing the influence of existing platforms will broaden your audience base.

c. Appeal to your community

Draft short outreach texts and send them to all the group chats! It's simple but effective.

d. College Club Fair

Most institutions have some sort of club fair where all student organizations can showcase themselves and absorb new members. This could be held in different ways, both in-person and online. If the event is in-person, be sure to sign up for a table and prepare posters, decorations and sign-up sheet printouts beforehand. If the event is virtual, be sure to prepare links to interest forms for people to fill out and to gather contacts, and try your best to establish connections with people who show interest.

Organization - Onboarding/Member Retainment

Now, you have a full mailing list. Soon, however, the number of people who actively reads and responds to your email will dwindle, due to attrition, loss of interest, and mid-year stress. This is normal: it is more important to identify and retain individuals who are truly interested and willing to dedicate their time to your mission than it is to keep a large number of members around. Practices below could help with retaining members:

- Arrange "Office hours" where people who are interested in taking on leadership roles can come in and ask more questions about the chapter and its work
- Schedule one-on-one conversations (ideally in-person and casual) to communicate with new members

- Depending on the size of your club, it might be a good idea to break into small working groups of 3-5 with different focal points (e.g. social media marketing, outreach, or fundraising)

Engagement

Early on in the club forming process, it's important to determine how its operations will be run.

Send surveys to your members to determine the following:

- Logistics: When/how often/where should you meet? Are these times or places accessible for everyone? What accommodations can be made to increase accessibility of club activities?
- What are your members interested in? Bear in mind this may not necessarily align with the mission of the club. Discover their individual interests and seek to include them in the bigger framework of your chapter.

Part 3: Fundraising

While fundraising may not be the first thing that comes to mind while starting a public health club, it will end up being crucially important for the successful implementation of your project. There are many ways you could customize fundraising strategies based on your target audience and the community, but here are some useful techniques to start off with. We also have an incredibly comprehensive [Fundraising Guide](#), which provides concrete templates for many of the strategies mentioned below, thanks to the Wash U Chapter!

Letter Writing

Writing letters are proven to be more effective with older donors, who also tend to donate the most. Both physical letters and emails work. Draft an email - it should include your message and your pitch to the donor, explaining why your work requires their donations and how your work will use their donations.

Events

Events could also be held to bring public attention to your fundraiser. Choose events that either provide your community with service or are related to the unique cause of your chapter. Organize events that appeal to your audience - if, for instance, you are seeking to raise awareness for your fundraiser among your college town residents, seek to collaborate with local stores or organize giveaways for things they might need. Use Facebook events page to have people RSVP in order to gauge interest, or ask members to circulate sign up sheets among their friends, family and communities.

Peer-to-peer Donations

Peer-to-peer(P2P) donations are another important channel for fundraising - many social media platforms have options for birthday/independent fundraisers. P2P fundraisers involve you reaching out to your peers for donations and encouraging them to reach out to their peers, carrying on your ask. Here are some useful tactics in a P2P fundraising event:

- Set achievable goals for each individual: breaking down a total goal of \$2,000 to ten people will lower the amount to \$200 - which looks much more achievable!
- Create some kind of visual, tangible reward for donors: whether it be through completing a donation bingo card, or through giving out some kind of physical gift in return for the donation (e.g. thank you cards, coupons, handcrafted items, etc.), make sure that your donors feel appreciated and have reasons to donate again at your next fundraising event

Our Network

Starting something new is not easy, we know because we've been there! The ETH University Community wants to support you on your pursuit and development of your own ETH chapter in whatever way that we can. We encourage you to reach out to those who have started their own chapters with ETH. We hope hearing the unique experiences and challenges faced by others who have stood where you are standing now will help you get off to a smoother start. Below is a contact list of some of the founding members of our ETH university chapters along with links to their respective social media accounts.

Students Against Malnutrition (primarily from Notre Dame University):

Kanisha Bahierathan - President (kanisha@ethealth.org)

Colin Stoll (colin@ethealth.org)

Anoop Sunkara - National Board Representative (anoop@ethealth.org)

Project Topic: Malnutrition

University of Chicago:

Greg Asare (greg@ethealth.org)

Melanie Fong - National Board Representative (melanie@ethealth.org)

Junsung Kim (junsung@ethealth.org)

Biren Reddy - President (biren@ethealth.org)

Project Topic: Malaria

Social Media: https://www.instagram.com/eth_uchicago/?hl=en

University of Michigan:

Annella Benjamin (annella@ethealth.org)

Katherine Davis (katherine@ethealth.org)

Celia Goldberg - President (celia@ethealth.org)

Stephanie Johnson - National Board Representative (stepahniejohnson@ethealth.org)

Project Topic: Women's Health and Contraception

Social Media: https://www.instagram.com/eth_umich/

Washington University in St. Louis:

Ayush Halder - National Board Representative (ayush@ethealth.org),

Roshan Sivakumar - President (roshan@ethealth.org)

Nick Slimmon (nicholas@ethealth.org)

Uma Paithankar (uma@ethealth.org)

Project Topic: Worms and Parasitic Infections

Social Media: https://www.instagram.com/washu_eth/



Empower Through Health

www.ethealth.org

Williams College:

Grace Kim (grace@ethealth.org)

Emma Tapscott (emma@ethealth.org)

Chelsea Taylor (chelsea@ethealth.org),

Stephanie Teng - National Board Representative (stephanieteng@ethealth.org)

Project Topic: Global Mental Health

Social Media: https://www.instagram.com/williams__eth/