

Sylvia C. Mupepi, RN, PhD
Associate Professor Kirkhof College of Nursing
Grand Valley State University
Fulbright Award Project Statement

Proposal Statement

In the 2007 Second Five Year Program of Work, report the Ghana Ministry of Health identified one of the ministry's priorities as that of increasing enrollment in the basic nursing programs to advance nursing practice in the country, Before the establishment of the masters of nursing science (MSN) program at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) which begins in August of 2012 Ghana had only one graduate nursing program to provide for over 24 million people in the country.

I believe that my diverse and extensive academic preparation and professional clinical experience especially in Maternal Child Nursing will benefit the University of Cape Coast where I plan to teach as well as conduct research. The University has a medical school whose staff provides advanced clinical skills; however, I am confident that my 38 years of clinical nursing experience, 17 years of teaching, 14 years of research experience will boost the much needed teaching resources in the newly established MSN program. My social background particularly having been born and raised in Africa and educated in the British system similar to that of Ghana, provides me the advantage of cultural understanding of the university's operational systems and the students' learning styles as well as the community's cultural practices. I am confident that the 14 years I worked in the Ministry of Health and the University in Zimbabwe using the WHO model of Health care delivery prepared me to work in Ghana as it uses the same model of health care delivery.

I have been to the University of Cape Coast twice, in 2009 and 2010 to establish a faculty exchange program. During those trips I visited the university's collaborative training departments, hospitals, and community/ public health care institutions. The greatest need articulated by faculty and the head of department was lack of trained professors at an advanced level in the area of Maternal Child Health, my area of expertise. Fulbright scholarship will benefit University of Cape Coast by providing an expert scholar in maternal child health. I propose to teach and to conduct research in fall 2013 and winter 2014. My host institution considers teaching as its priority. I plan on spending 70% of my time teaching and 30% percent of my time researching. My research will provide hands-on experience to graduate students.

The establishment of the GVSU and UCC Ghana faculty exchange program also paved the way for a study abroad program for GVSU nursing students. GVSU students will benefit from my Fulbright scholarship because I will be able to organize alternate experiences for students in the hospitals as well as community so they can compare health care delivery systems and learn a different culture.

Project Overview

This dichotomous project includes interdisciplinary research and teaching activities. The purpose is to facilitate understanding of how to apply research results to clinical nursing practice.

Two sample syllabi developed by the writer represent teaching/learning content from GVSU and the host institution. The GVSU syllabus has been used by the writer at the baccalaureate (BSN) level. The UCC MSN syllabus was developed by the writer based on the MSN curriculum provided by the host institution. Both syllabi reveal content covered in maternal child nursing. The writer plans to become involved in thesis advising and teaching Public lectures and Seminars on maternal child nursing.

The research aspect of the project will address problems related to cervical cancer which causes the highest female cancer mortality in Ghana and many developing countries. The research will focus on demographic knowledge and attitudes of rural women towards cervical cancer screening. Cervical cancer is a sexually transmitted disease cured if caught early through cervical screening. A vaccine Gardasil is now in use for girls 9-26 to help prevent infection in the USA. The availability and accessibility of this vaccine in Ghana is not known. Attitudes towards its utilization need to be investigated. The research project will explore the factors that influence cervical cancer screening in the rural community.

Why Ghana Was Chosen

Ghana is one of the longest politically stable democratic African countries with a viable economy. It provides a politically safe and free environment that is conducive for meaningful learning experiences. Ghana is a long standing partner of Grand Valley State University for foreign exchange learning programs. It has a different political, cultural and health care system from that of the USA which makes it ideal for comparative study.

A Fulbright scholarship will avail me the chance to expand my scope of understanding of both Ghana and the USA health care system through the comparative analysis. This experience will be transferred to the classroom and my scholarship as I integrate the information in my lectures and research. Public lectures and seminars will be used to share knowledge with the community.

Teaching Styles

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My extensive academic knowledge, skills and experience, as well as my personal social skills, values and beliefs, guide my professional practice in a liberal philosophical framework. In my teaching role I view myself as a facilitator for the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills along with the development of critical thinking, creativity, leadership, and autonomy inherent in the practice of the nursing profession. I believe that nursing education's foundation is based on content from various academic disciplines and as such demands intellectual curiosity across many disciplines on the part of the learner. I believe that students pursue learning that meets their life goals and are therefore self-directed in this lifelong process of intellectual curiosity, which ultimately is the result of informed choices. I believe that students are unique beings who possess varied knowledge and experiences based on cultural values and beliefs, and that I must treat them with respect and without bias. I believe that adult learners learn at different paces and through various modes according to personalities and prevailing circumstances in their environment and may need individualized learning strategies. In my faculty role, I believe that if I am to succeed as a teacher and facilitator within the teaching/learning dynamic process I must

continue to seek and negotiate the learner's desired goals through a variety of structured and unstructured learning experiences.

Over many years of my professional journey, I have taught maternal child health nursing and the principles of its practice as well as community health nursing to students of diverse cultures in the UK, Zimbabwe and the USA. I have taught students at different levels using diverse teaching styles with various class sizes. My professional training in adult education principles at the universities in London and Zimbabwe provide me the foundations of successful application of principles of andragogy (adult learning) verses pedagogy (child learning). I am confident and comfortable to succeed. In Zimbabwe I helped establish graduate nursing programs at the University of Zimbabwe which earned me the W. K Kellogg Foundation fellowship to study for a PhD in nursing at the University of Michigan. My international nursing education leadership also earned me induction into the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Society. My nursing curricula experience and leadership earned me the position to chair the constitution review committee of the East, Central, Southern African College of Nursing (ECSA CON) at its foundation in Malawi in 1990.

How Teaching Style Will Be Adapted

Ghana is an English speaking country and all students and faculty speak English. The university of Cape Coast admits students who speak English from all over the world. The students are similar to those I have taught in the USA. I feel comfortable relating to and collaborating with them. I will adapt my teaching materials to the culture of Ghana by including statistics about their health care system and their model of health care delivery.

Research Methodology

Proposed research questions to be addressed are:

1. Do women have knowledge of cervical screening?
2. Do women have skills to access screening?
3. What screening services are available?
4. What are the women's beliefs and attitudes towards cervical screening?
5. What demographic factors influence cervical screening?
6. What do women know about HPV vaccines?
7. Is HPV vaccine accessible and affordable?
8. What is the attitude of women towards Gardasil vaccine?

A cross sectional survey will be the methodology of choice. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires administered by trained research assistants will be analyzed using SPSS software; the questionnaire used by the researcher in a similar study (Mupepi, Sampelle, & Johnson, 2011) in Zimbabwe will be refined. Back translation from English to Ghanaian native language will be done with assistance of a linguistics professor at the university of Cape Coast. The questionnaire will be developed in collaboration with UCC faculty and submitted to the UCC Institutional Review Board in 2013 winter semester for approval. UCC students will be trained as research assistants in September 2013. Subjects will be recruited from, community organizations. The subjects will be women age 18 and above. Data collection will start in October and ends in December. Data entry and analysis will start in January 2014. Report

writing will end in April 2014. The Fulbright scholarship will be utilized to secure research resources.

How Research Will Be Utilized

This project will be important to the policy makers in the ministry of health in Ghana. The results will be used to frame and determine cervical screening program resource utilization. New knowledge will be published in peer reviewed journals and at international conferences. The community will be informed through public lectures and seminars. Students will benefit from the incorporation of this knowledge into their curricula.

Outcomes and Contributions

I am hopeful that my work in Ghana under the Fulbright scholarship will benefit me, my host institution, my current academic institution and society in general. The Fulbright award will provide me the opportunity to expand my base of international professional relationships and to learn new interactive skills while being productive during my sabbatical leave. My host institution will benefit from cutting- edge American learning and research technology. My academic institution will benefit from increased opportunities for research funding and the enhanced status due to the stature that comes with the .Fulbright award. Society, in particular sub Saharan communities will benefit from the new knowledge about cervical screening practices in rural Ghana.