

Unit: CRISIS**Lesson: Public Health in the Sprawl****Time:**

4-5 hours

Objectives & Skills:

By simulating a panel of health workers and by attempting to prioritize the most efficient use of health-care funds, students will illustrate for themselves the overwhelming task of addressing public health education issues in Africa.

Materials:

Butcher paper and pens

Handouts:

[Health Related Statistics by Country](#)

[Health Clinic Scenario](#)

[Health Clinic Budget Proposal Worksheet and Questions](#)

[Health Clinic Expenses](#)

[Answer Key: Health Issues](#)

Preparations:

Print and copy the Handouts to distribute to students.

Internet Links:

www.unfpa.org

www.reprohealth.org

www.unaids.org

www.unicef.org/programme/health/index.htm

www.who.int

medlineplus.adam.com

Students:

Be on the lookout for articles in the press about health care issues and health conditions in Africa.

Throughout East Africa, population growth in cities has occurred at a faster pace than the existing infrastructure could accommodate. Roads, housing, and services such as schools and health clinics simply have not been able to keep pace with the number of people moving to urban areas and being born there in increasing numbers. The result are large ghettos and makeshift neighborhoods that share many similar qualities to refugee camps: limited access to potable water, unstable dwellings, minimal sanitation,

no electricity, dense populations, pollution, and the increased likelihood of the spread of disease.

When Dan and his fellow STA travelers arrived at Chifunga camp in Mozambique, they spent several days talking to workers in the camp, especially healthcare workers, trying to decide the best way to donate the money they had had raised. They knew they wanted to improve the quality of people's lives and, hopefully, their health. Finally, they decided to give most of the money to the creation of two new wells. The clean drinking water provided by the wells would help curb a treacherous health conditions: dysentery. It was a difficult decision because the people in the camp had so many important needs.

With limited finances, how do governments and health organizations prioritize the diseases they fight and the lives they save? Is it more important to spend money to help people who are already ill or to prevent people from becoming ill in the future? These are the kinds of questions you'll face in this lesson.

Premeditation:

1. As a class, discuss what you know about the condition of medical care and treatment in the United States. Some questions to consider include:
 - How do you learn about diseases and how to avoid them? (e.g., public service announcements on television; school programs; regular checkups, etc.)
 - How do you access health care?
 - What skills and resources do you need to find quality healthcare and/or reliable information about health issues?
2. You might also ask students to describe a "typical" sequence of events that would get them to a doctor's office and/or treatment for an ailment. They should think about the skills and resources necessary for obtaining this kind of treatment (e.g., insurance, money, transportation, etc). Discuss whether finding good healthcare seems to be generally difficult or easy. Throw in factors that might make it seem more difficult, such as poverty, English as a second language, or old age, as you discuss the situation.

Activity I: Health Clinic Planning Board

Step 1:

Distribute the [Health Related Statistics handout](#). Ask students to read through it and then discuss what information particularly attracts their interest. What surprises them most? Least? You may want to pass this out at the end of a class period and assign students to spend some time online reading recent articles regarding health issues in Africa.

Step 2:

Divide students into small groups. Provide them with the following list of Health Issues. Tell them to divide the issues up between group members and then to research their assigned issue(s). Each member should report back to the group with the following information about his/her issue(s):

Definition: What is this issue?

Causes: What causes this issue?

Effects & Symptoms: Does it kill people? does it cause other health problems?

Prevention and Treatment: How can this problem be prevented and treated?

HEALTH ISSUES:

Malaria

Malnutrition (especially of children and mothers)

HIV/AIDS

Overpopulation

Dysentery

Cholera

Yellow fever

Measles

Tuberculosis

Hepatitis B

Step 3:

1. Write each health concern in the center of a piece of a piece of butcher paper in red ink and post the sheets around the classroom.
2. Have students write down the prevention and treatments they found in blue ink on the corresponding issue papers.
3. Working with members from other groups who researched the same issue, have students brainstorm the kinds of resources that would be needed to implement these solutions (e.g., immunization would need money for medicine and syringes, as well as a public education campaign that would rely on some form of media). Write these in green on the issue papers.
4. Review the sheets as a class and keep them posted for reference on the next activity.

Step 4:

Have students return to their original small groups and tell each group that they are responsible for a small public health clinic. Distribute the following handouts to the groups: [Health Clinic Scenario](#), [Health Clinic Budget Proposal](#), and [Health Clinic Expenses](#). They have a modest budget which they must decide how to spend so that it will help the most people. In doing so, they will need to address some of the health issues that have been discussed and which are posted around the room. They probably will not have enough resources to address every issue, however.

NOTE: Make clear that the numbers they are working with were invented for the purpose of this activity. The ultimate goal is not to know how much things cost but to understand the very complex and delicate issues that must be prioritized by healthcare workers in many African countries.

Step 5:

As an entire class, discuss the differences and similarities among the various proposals. Have the groups copy their proposals to share with classmates. Provide them with a few minutes per group to present their proposal and some of the thinking behind it. As a class, talk about the pros and cons of various strategies.

Extending the Lesson:

Invite public speakers to class including a public health worker who can talk about how priorities are established in his or her organization, and someone from a developing nation, preferably Africa, who can talk about healthcare differences between his/her homeland and the United States.

Follow a Public Health Campaign in the U.S., such as an anti-drug campaign. Record the various methods of information delivery and investigate the amount and source of funding for that campaign.