



# The First Step Toward Empowerment: UTSA Global Brigades Medical Chapter Daniel Orta, Biology, Medical Humanities, 2021

Service

## SUMMARY

The UTSA Global Brigades (GB) Medical Chapter is a local chapter of a international 501(c)3 non-profit organization that aims to empower communities in the field of medicine and public health. Our brigade traveled to the Ekumfi district in Ghana to provide medical and public health services with the goal to further progress community healthcare. Volunteers rotated from different stations such as patient intake, triage, consultation, optometry, pharmacy, public health education, data informatics and community outreach. My responsibility as the Campus Chairperson and chapter executive was to assist in the facilitation and planning of various stations at the clinic. Our chapter was able to treat 709 patients and educate over a 1,000 individuals from multiple communities. From this experience I have grown more confident when making decisions in a fast work intensive environment. I have also improved my collaborating and communication skills in order to advance a large scale task.



## SPICES

Global Brigades is a health and sustainable development organization that reduces inequalities in abroad communities using a holistic approach. Our goal in the medical chapter is to reduce illness and promote community health through patient treatment and public health sessions.

## HERBS

During the brigade, educating and treating members of the community is a huge component of the experience. Through these actions of serving others, we are able to support the community residents in reaching the goal of becoming medically empowered.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The brigade to Ghana relies heavily on team work as our days serving the community are split in multiple stations. Being able to have effective communication is key to operating the clinic and serve the community as a whole. In the future I want to work as a physician treating those in the San Antonio area. The brigade has taught me that communication, teamwork and compassion are essential elements when interacting with coworkers and patients. This experience also taught me the importance of cultural awareness and its impact on what it means to heal others.

## IMPACT

In total we were able to see 700+ patients and engage with the population of five different local communities. Due to the lack of healthcare in remote regions of Ghana, many preventive illnesses such as malaria effect local populations. Through the use of treatment we aim to relive symptoms or discomfort in patients so that they can have the knowledge and energy needed to implement various public health techniques to prevent future illnesses. The goal of the brigade is not just to administer healthcare. More importantly, our goal is to provide the community with knowledge, resources and support to become medically self-sustainable.

## ADVICE

When there is a will there's a way! Do not be nervous in situations that you are newly exposed to. You will find others who share the same strong feelings in working toward a common goal. Through these experiences you will find new people who will help support you and those you impact.

