



***Citizenship and collective goods.***

***University and international cooperation for safety, environment and sustainable development  
Trento 19-21<sup>th</sup> September 2019***

**TITLE of the ABSTRACT:  
UNIVERSITY ON THE FRONT LINE:  
HOW NGOs AND ACADEMIES CAN WORK TOGETHER  
FOR A BETTER EDUCATION ON GLOBAL HEALTH**

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**Requested presentation form**

oral

poster

**Max 800 words in Calibri 11**

**Context**

International health cooperation is seldom included in the official curricula of the faculty of Medicine, although it can represent a concrete opportunity for professional and human empowerment, in addition to a job possibility for future clinicians.

Students often report the lack of practical experience during the academic path; on the other side NGOs can be interested in engaging young students in international and global health issues and make them become interested in health cooperation.

For the above-mentioned reasons the meeting point between medicine students and health cooperation NGOs could be fertile.

**Cuamm as “university on the front line”**

Doctors with Africa Cuamm, based in Padova and working in 8 sub-Saharan countries, since 2006 has been implementing different educational offers addressed to young people: students, residents, young researchers.

Currently there are three main on-going projects:

- **WOLISSO PROJECT:** an educational proposal addressed to Medical Students (enrolled in the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year of Medicine curriculum) that gives them a first professional experience in Tanzania or Ethiopia: the student, led by a Cuamm coordinator, will spend 1 month in Africa observing the work in rural hospitals. Wolisso Project has been implemented since 2006: 323 students have been involved from all over Italy (until August 2019). A recent monitoring research (Parise, 2008) states that 95% of them are satisfied and would repeat the experience with Cuamm. Furthermore, the 75% of them declare that the experience in Africa made him/her more motivated and resolute in carrying on his/her studies, once back. Eventually, the 20% of the students have already had other experiences in Low and Middle Income Countries after participating in the project (working with Cuamm and other international health organizations).



- **JUNIOR PROJECT OFFICER - JPO:** an educational proposal addressed to medical residents (branches: infectious diseases, maternal and child health, public health, surgery). Residents can spend 6/12 months of their academic curriculum in Africa, working with Cuamm and supervised by a specialist of the same branch. The African period is fully recognized by the Italian University. The project was born in 2002 and 203 residents have left with Cuamm (until August 2019)
- **OPERATIONAL RESEARCH:** as NGO, Cuamm carries out implementation research projects in Africa, aimed at implementing evidence-based results and improving the medical work. Residents who take part in the JPO program and young researchers are involved in Cuamm's research. It is a unique opportunity to improve skills in that area, very useful but infrequent for clinicians. Results of operational research are published in international peer-review journals and often students are among the authors. In 2018, 10 out of the 23 main authors of the research are residents in medicine or under 35.

Thanks to the multiple ways of collaboration, the relationship between Cuamm and Italian universities is very fruitful and we can consider Cuamm as a “university on the front line” that often contributes to that lack of an institutional path.

Lessons learned:

- **University and NGOs can be collaborative partners** in a common educational path aimed at the human and professional empowerment of youngsters
- **Former exposure to cooperation** reveals an impact on students' approach to health as professionals
- **Experiences in the field can bring to students some skills that are not part of the traditional curriculum** (i.e. data analysis, operational research) but that can become an ability for their future job.

**Is this abstract submitted for one of the proposed sessions (see list on website)? Yes  
If so which one?**

Practices for engaging students in international development cooperation activities

**Please identify one or more frames for your contribution**

**Conference Dimensions**

1. Common goods
2. Citizenship
3. Security
4. Environment
5. Sustainability

**Academic Perspective**

- a) **Education and Trainings**
- b) **Research and Innovation**
- c) **Partnership and Projects**

**Other Keywords:**

**Study programs, internship, global challenges, international development cooperation.**