

What is global health?

### 1. International Health

The term “global health” grew out of the field of “international health,” but it is quite distinct in several ways, representing a maturation of the field. International health is largely characterized by health across national boundaries, relating to the health practices, policies and systems in other countries in comparison with our own, thereby stressing the differences rather than the commonalities between nations. This approach tends to re-enforce the unequal distribution of power throughout the world by focusing on bilateral foreign aid activities, missionary work and disease control in economically weaker countries.

### 2. Global Health

The field of global health has been growing in popularity and visibility over the past several years. In contrast with international health, the goals of global health are to foster social development to achieve optimal health by highlighting the socioeconomic, environmental and cultural factors of the causes of different diseases that transcend national borders, class, race, ethnicity and cultural divisions. An awareness of global health helps to increase sensitivity towards culturally diverse and ethnic populations in one’s own community, with the hope it will also inspire medical professionals to work in international settings for communities with inadequate healthcare infrastructures. Additionally, the mission of global health is to train medical personnel in resource management where medical aid is scarce and inaccessible, so that previous resources are optimally utilized.

### 3. Goals of Global Health

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### 4. Global Health Education

There is a significant need for global health education, since there is no widespread recognition that countries around the world would benefit from working together to share solutions for common healthcare problems. Global health care education helps to prepare students to work in cross-cultural settings and familiarize them with other health care systems and traditional healing systems which exist throughout the world, while facilitating the development of an international health career path. It also creates an

awareness of existing inequalities that affect the health of large populations of people in developing countries, and within marginalized communities in developed countries.

CFHI's Global Health Immersion programs offer participants the opportunity to learn more about the health issues that transcend national borders, class, race, ethnicity and cultural divisions. This requires a collective approach in which equitable partnerships between different professionals are essential. By personally observing, studying and examining the effects of poverty, debt, migration, cultural conflict and socio-economic determinants of health calamities, natural disasters, pandemics and wars, you can develop your understanding of local, national and international determinants of health and healthcare delivery.

Defining Global Health is still an evolving process. It is the subject of numerous conference presentations and papers . We invite you to search for the latest developments. Some places to start are the website of the Global Health Education Consortium ([www.globalhealthedu.org](http://www.globalhealthedu.org)), and [this article from The Lancet](#).