

# COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 2 (COHSE2)

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**Partners:** Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Finland; University of Swaziland, Swaziland; University of Botswana, Botswana

**Study areas:** Environmental health, Mental health, Community health

## What are the main aims of your network?

The overall aim of the COHSE 2 project is to empower local people in South to promote community and environmental health as well as to increase mutual understanding between the participants. COHSE 2 continues with the same objectives as the Community and Environmental Health Project which took place in 2007–2009.



The COHSE 2 project is divided into three subprojects: environmental health, mental health and community health. The main aims of the subprojects are:

#### Environmental health

To get more information about the problems of environmental health and to strengthen the links between the international and local level in order to create healthier living environments.

#### Mental health

To increase the human resources available for the prevention and treatment of mental illness, to improve clinical care for all patients, and to teach the professionals how to help patients discharged from psychiatric in-patient care in adjusting into community living.

#### Community health

To strengthen the interaction of the partner universities and the societies dependent on the primary health services, to develop a collaboration network between the universities and the community health sector for the purpose of providing education to reduce HIV infection rates, respond to poverty and to offer accessible community health care.

#### What kind of activities are there in your network?

The network activities include student and teacher exchanges as well as expert collaboration. An intensive course titled: Developing the training of community health nurses; Human rights based approach in the care of elderly is organized in Swaziland during the spring 2010. In addition to these, one networking and two administrative meetings are organized during the project. The aim of these meetings is to assess the activities of the project and to agree on future activities.

#### What sort of successes and challenges have you encountered during your project?

The successes of the COHSE project include the student and teacher exchanges, which have taken place during the two rounds of the project. The feedback from the persons participating in the exchanges from both south and north has been entirely positive.

Also the intensive course organized during the first round of the project was a success as it gathered together participants from all partner institutions and provided a forum for a multi-cultural and multiprofessional dialogue.

The major challenges that the project has faced have been finding the right contact persons in the southern partner institutions as well as different interpretations of the concept of student exchange.

#### Your advice to forthcoming networks

Developing sustainable projects takes time, so don't expect everything to work smoothly straight away. One should also make sure that all the project participants understand the key concepts in the same way.

