



The Center for Human Development in Guatemala An Innovative Model for Global Population Health

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Keywords

- Population health • Maternal health • Child health • Global health
- Neonatal mortality • Education

Key points

- A private sector/university partnership model can successfully promote population health and sustainable development in impoverished regions of the world.
- This model can leverage the strengths of both the university and private sector.

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- This model can successfully integrate service delivery, community development, research, and education.
- This model can provide a community laboratory to evaluate innovative interventions that promote population health.

INTRODUCTION

Population health focuses on the health of a defined population as measured by the health outcomes of groups of individuals and an analysis of how and why these outcomes differ within the population. This approach seeks to understand how these differences are affected by social, economic, cultural, geographic, and genetic factors as well as access to health services. In order to optimize population health, traditional health care delivery systems should integrate and/or coordinate with other systems, such as public health, schools, transportation, water and sanitation, and social services. The population health approach, first implemented in Canada, is now being adapted in many countries, including the United States [1]. Measurement is a critical component of population health. Health care systems need accurate population denominators (population registries) and numerators (patient registries), as well as process and outcome measures that will document progress in improving population health. The project described in this article provides a model for operationalizing a population health approach using a university–private sector–community partnership and the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of this integrative approach to achieve significant reductions in morbidity and mortality and promote the sustainable development goals in this extremely poor Guatemalan population. This article describes the population in the region, the structure and governance model of the partnership, and the project's activities that seek to empower the community, transform health, and create opportunity.

THE POPULATION

Guatemala is Central America's most populous country, with 15.4 million people, of whom approximately 40% are of indigenous descent. It is a low-middle income country (LMIC) with a gross domestic product per capita of \$3,478 and a human development index of 0.58 in 2012 (an improvement of only 0.1 in the past 2 decades). Guatemala has a national poverty rate exceeding 50% and an extreme poverty rate of 15% [2]. Although 46% of the total population lives in rural areas, 72% of the extremely poor live in those rural areas [2]. Nationally, the child mortality (at 30 per 1000 live births) is the highest in Central America and the third highest in the region. Maternal mortality is also one of the highest in the region. In 2010 the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated a maternal mortality ratio of approximately 120 per 100,000 live births and the more recent World Bank estimates from 2011 to 2015 are around 100 per 100,000 [3,4]. The contraceptive prevalence (at 54%) is one of the lowest in

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