

Innovative CCGHR Institute launched in Waterloo

The Ontario Coalition Institute (OCI), an innovative 3-day learning and networking global health event, was held at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Ontario from September 29 to October 2nd. This inaugural OCI represents a collaboration among four regional universities, all institutional members of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (CCGHR): Brock University, Guelph University, McMaster University, and University of Waterloo, this year's host. Adapting the Coalition's "Summer Institute" (SI) model, the OCI serves as a pilot for ongoing regional Coalition Institutes to address issues in global health research and to strengthen regional networks. The OCI involved 26 participants and 12 facilitators including Charles Larson (National Coordinator, CCGHR) and, Vic Neufeld (CCGHR Special Advisor).

Distinctive features of the OCI include:

The OCI follows the SI three-phase model: a preparation phase, the event, and an 8-month follow-up phase. Planning team members from the four universities are responsible for nearly all aspects (e.g. planning, funding, follow-up, evaluation).

The OCI focused on the recently published CCGHR "*Principles for Global Health Research*". Facilitated by Katrina Plamondon, the principles were assessed by groups and in relation to a set of 5 case studies.¹ During "Authors on Tap" sessions, each group connected with their case study PI for extended discussions via Skype or telephone.

Steven Hoffman, recently appointed Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Population and Public Health, gave a public talk, "*Global Health Research in Canada and Beyond*", and participated in a series of informal conversations including one on Facebook Live.

The program included ten 45-minute participant-driven "open spaces" wherein participants introduced a topic of interest and led a discussion with colleagues. Topics included: Students and Young Professionals (SYP) group, global mental health, visualizing global health, and publications processes and equity, among others.

The program included panel discussions and workshops on issues such as: *Transitions in global health research; Global health research and practice; Charting your path in global health; an Introduction to systematic reviews; and Getting a job in global health.*

Specific plans were developed for an 8-month follow-up "Phase 3" that includes the creation of a regional network for global health research in Southern Ontario, including an SYP component. In addition, each participating university presented specific plans for integrating features of the OCI into the life of the university, with the goal of strengthening institutional capacity for global health research, including on-going mentorship support for OCI participants.

The planning team will conduct a careful evaluation of the OCI, and will publish the results to be shared with universities across Canada, encouraging them to consider conducting similar Institutes with regional partner universities. The University of Guelph has announced its intention to host next year's OCI.

¹ Special issue of BMC International Health and Human Rights, *Global health research case studies: lessons from partnerships addressing health inequities* (<http://bmcinthealthumrights.biomedcentral.com/articles/supplements/volume-11-supplement-2>)