

Daniel Olivieri

**Graduation Year:** Senior

**College:** Science

**Major(s):** Science-Business

**Minors(s):** International Development Studies

**Scholar Group Membership:** Sorin Scholars, Kellogg International Scholars

**Did you received other funding for this project?:** ISLA

**Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding?** No

**More details on CUSE funding assistance?** CUSE has been an essential part of my undergraduate research experience by providing the funds, support, and advising necessary to carry out high-level proposals.

**Project Title:** Evaluating CHW Integration into Health Networks

**Project Location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**ND Faculty Mentor:** Prof. Ann Mische

**Project Type:** Research

**Why did you undertake this project/experience?** Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for professional school (MD, MBA, JD), Career discernment and/or preparation, Internationalize your Notre Dame experience

**Did your funded experience help you:**

**[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]:** Very Much

**[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]:** Very Much

**[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]:** Very Much

**[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]:** Very Much

**[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]:**Very Much

**Tell us about your experience.**

My experience in Rio de Janeiro was a formative, defining one. Since this was a follow-up grant to my first research grant to Rio de Janeiro, I was able to see the stark comparisons between when i first visited Brasil and now. That first time I visited Rio, I worked and lived in Rocinha, the largest favela in the southern hemisphere. This time, however, I was with Saúde Criança, a NGO that aids people living in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro by working with them to develop personalized "Family Action Plans" to provide them access and steps to find all the resources they need in their community. I learned quite a few different things this time around. First, I couldn't help but to compare my initial research grant, in 2015, to this research grant, in 2018. While the initial Community Health Worker Program that I researched in Rocinha the first time was funded by pre-Olympic infrastructure developments, the developments I saw now (post-Olympics), were largely targeted at improving the tourist's experience and had little benefit for a middle or lower-class Brazilian. Secondly, I saw a public health system that was struggling in light of increased violence in favelas, needing more focus on water, sanitation, and economic

opportunities. ASC works in spite, not because of, these public health inequalities. Finally, I witnessed the difficulties and challenges that result from working with public health and primary healthcare. They are very frustrating and thankless, but, in the end, they can save healthcare systems (and governments) money and help reduce economic inequality.

**Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.**

This project greatly impacted the way that I approach NGOs and individuals working in situations of high inequality. Unlike my previous research grants, for this grant, I spent almost my entire time in with a NGO called Saúde Criança (ASC). In doing so, I gained a really in-depth experience of the challenges and work required to make a difference in public and primary healthcare. For ASC, they are able to impact their public health system by intensive case-based intervention. They work with each referred family for a length of two years, often times more. During their time with ASC, they will be aided in the five years of ASC: housing, citizenship, healthcare, food, and education. I was thoroughly impressed with their methodology and implementation, which is now even implemented into the public policy in several other states of Brazil. I met and discussed how to bring a program like this to the U.S. with several higher-level administrators at ASC and I volunteered for the Aconchego Family Program and Communications Department during my time there.

**Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.**

This experience was formative and will play a crucial role in my practice in the future. After graduating from medical school, I hope to work towards implementing public health solutions on the ground in areas of high inequality. Time and time again, Saúde Criança has proved that primary health care focus on increasing access to care and reducing re-hospitalizations can be an important step towards reducing healthcare disparities. On top of that, systems that utilize community healthcare workers effectively can also work towards mobilizing community members who would have otherwise not have been involved. I am really grateful for this opportunity to travel to Rio de Janeiro and become immersed in Saúde Criança and the public health system of Rio de Janeiro. I hope one day to be able to work towards integrating parts of this innovative system to the U.S.

**What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?**

My experience in Rio de Janeiro was a formative, defining one. As I've felt with many international research grants, the most important attribute is one's ability to deal with change and conflict. Most research projects are incredibly well-thought out and are poised to make an impact in community, but, to no fault of their own, they struggle to make it work on the ground. I would just recommend students to be as resilient as possible and understand that they often have to make the best project out of what they are given on the ground.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.

Daniel Olivieri

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