

Roadmap to a Bottom-Up Approach Creating Meaningful Contributions to Surgery in Low-Income Settings

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Abstract : Background: Worldwide, five billion people lack access to safe and affordable surgical care. An added 1.27 million surgeons, anesthesiologists, and obstetricians (SAO) are needed by 2030 to meet the target of 20 per 100,000 population and to reach the goal of the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery. A well-informed future generation exposed early on to the current challenges in global surgery (GS) is necessary to ensure a sustainable future. Methods: InciSioN, the International Student Surgical Network, is a non-profit organization by and for students, residents, and fellows in over 80 countries. InciSioN Belgium, one of the prominent national working groups, has made a vast progression and collaborated with other networks to fill the educational gap, stimulate advocacy efforts and increase interactions with the international network. This report describes a roadmap to achieve sustainable development and education within GS, with the example of InciSioN Belgium. Results: Since the establishment of the organization's branch in 2019, it has hosted an educational workshop for first-year residents in surgery, engaging over 2500 participants, and established a recurring directing board of 15 members. In the year 2020-2021, InciSioN Ghent has organized three workshops combining educational and interactive sessions for future prime advocates and surgical candidates. InciSioN Belgium has set up a strong formal coalition with the Belgian Medical Students' Association (BeMSA), with its own standing committee, reaching over 3000+ medical students annually. In 2021-2022, InciSioN Belgium broadened to a multidisciplinary approach, including dentistry and nursing students and graduates within workshops and research projects, leading to a member and exposure increase of 450%. This roadmap sets strategic goals and mechanisms for the GS community to achieve nationwide sustained improvements in the research and education of GS focused on future SAOs, in order to achieve the GS sustainable development goals. In the coming year, expansion is directed to a formal integration of GS into the medical curriculum and increased international advocacy whilst inspiring SAOs to integrate into GS in Belgium. Conclusion: The development and implementation of durable change for GS are necessary. The student organization InciSioN Belgium is growing and hopes to close the colossal gap in GS and inspire the growth of other branches while sharing the know-how of a student organization.

Keywords : advocacy, education, global surgery, InciSioN, student network

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