

GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH INCUBATOR FOR DISRUPTIVE SOLUTIONS

GLOBAL MINDS @WESTERN

A. WHO WE ARE:

Global MINDS @ Western is an Interdisciplinary Development Initiative of Western University, Canada with the objective of using social innovation approaches to catalyze the development, implementation, mobilization and evaluation of disruptive solutions for the wicked problem of reducing the global burden of **mental disorders and related issues (e.g., suicide)**. **Global MINDS is focused on innovating for low resource settings in low and middle income countries (LMIC) (e.g., East Africa region) and for marginalized communities within Canada.** Through transdisciplinary collaboration and innovative pedagogy, we empower students and faculty to lead change and make a lasting impact starting *now*. These are our guiding principles:

1. ***Create a Culture of Innovation.*** The most important driver of innovation is culture. An innovative climate is one that cultivates engagement and enthusiasm, challenges people to take risks within a safe environment, fosters learning, and encourages independent thinking.
2. ***Foster Cultural Humility.*** Working in international and cross-cultural contexts requires our learners and faculty to consider both the goals and processes of traditional/local cultural constructs, paradigms and approaches to mental disorders and professional education. This requires a process-oriented approach to cultural safety, a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, and a desire to attend to and repair power imbalances.
3. ***Participate Authentically.*** Achieve competence through authentic participation in situations that are real, dynamic and emergent, distributed across networks (communities of authentic practice) and a constantly evolving set of multiple and interconnecting people, tools, teams and work.
4. ***Be Disruptive To Be Innovative.*** A disruptive innovation is one that displaces an existing approach to produce something new, more efficient and effective. To create the conditions that lead to the development of solutions that disrupt existing approaches and static notions of mental health care systems, we need to first be disruptive in the way we communicate, teach and learn.
5. ***Build Communities of Practice.*** By leveraging across and within disciplines such as medicine, health and social sciences, education, business, information and media studies and the humanities, we bring together people engaged and motivated to tackle complex challenges in new ways.

Through annual Summer Institutes, Global MINDS @ Western will bring together Western University students and students from LMIC to work collaboratively for a period of 2 weeks, under the coaching & mentorship of experienced faculty from both settings. Students will then be grouped to form solution-focused teams to identify a complex global mental health challenge and generate disruptive solutions/projects that will be rapidly tested, evaluated and disseminated over a period of up to 1 year. These projects will be eligible to receive seed funding and be implemented in their relevant settings with direct oversight of Western University and local faculty and in partnership with local stakeholders.

The first Summer Institute will take place in Machakos Town, Machakos County, Kenya (May 21-June 3, 2017) and will be focused on developing solutions for the East African context. **Applications are now being accepted from students interested in being a member of the first Summer Institute cohort.**

The second Summer Institute will take place in and around London, Ontario, Canada (2018) and will be focused on incubating innovative solutions for marginalized and disadvantaged populations within Canada (e.g. indigenous peoples, immigrants and refugees).

B. COSTS

There are no tuition costs attached to the 2017 Summer Institute program.

Costs that are covered: Accommodation, food and travel associated within the two weeks of the Summer Institute.

Costs that need to be covered by the student: students will be expected to cover round-trip travel costs to Kenya, and any other costs that fall outside the activities of the Summer Institute.

Various scholarship and funding opportunities at Western University exist for supporting students who travel abroad for learning experiences such as the Western International Global Opportunities Awards at \$1000-2000. The deadline for the Global Opportunities Award is March 15, 2017. Please see the Western International website for more information, including deadlines and application criteria: http://www.uwo.ca/international/learning/go_abroad/funding.html. Please feel free to contact the Global MINDS Western University program coordinator, Raksha Sule (rsule@uwo.ca) for more information about these and other potential sources for student travel support.

C. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Senior undergraduate students (3rd or 4th year), **Professional degree undergraduate students** and **Graduate students** are eligible to apply.

Eligible students are **required** to:

- a. Demonstrate academic excellence
- a. Demonstrate interest in mental health and positive social change
- b. Contribute towards the transdisciplinary approach to Global MINDS
- c. Commit to attend one Summer Institute and participate in follow-up activities (e.g. leading and participating in monthly webinars) for a total of one year (e.g. May 2017 – April 2018). The 2017 Summer Institute will be held in Kenya (dates May 21 – June 3, 2017).
- d. Commit to work & deliver on team projects during and following the Summer Institute

As space is limited, this is a competitive process. Preference will be given to students who have:

- a. Previous experience in participation of similar results-based initiatives in relevant disciplines.
- b. A background in Health Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Business, Medicine, Information and Media Studies, Sciences and Engineering are strongly encouraged to apply. Please note that this is not an exclusive list, and we welcome students from all academic backgrounds.

All eligible students may also consider the opportunity to stay beyond the Summer Institute's allotted two weeks, to further work alongside the community partner and local team members on implementing and evaluating the solution. If a student would like to stay for at least 90 days, they will have the benefit of a

applying for a \$5000 scholarship as part of the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship funds.

Course credit is also available for undergraduate students as Experiential Learning upon the approval of the appropriate Faculty Academic Dean. Please contact your Faculty Academic Counsellors for the process and requirements of obtaining study abroad-related course credit for the Summer Institute.

D. APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One: Required Documents

- a. A personal statement (limit to 750 words) that includes:
 - i. Why you are applying to the program
 - ii. How has your academic and/or professional background prepared you for this program
 - iii. What you would bring to the program and your fellow students
 - iv. Whether you would be interested in staying for 90 days
- b. A resume or CV.
- c. A copy of the official transcript(s) of academic work completed to date at all post-secondary institutions. A copy of certificates relevant to this opportunity may also be shared.
- d. Names and contact information of two referees most familiar with your academic work.

Your personal statement, CV/resume and copy of your official transcript(s) should be sent as one email package to Raksha Sule (rsule@uwo.ca). The letters of recommendation should be sent by your referees to Raksha Sule as well.

Every application will be considered on its own merit. The admissions process identifies best possible candidates by assessing each applicant's overall achievements, including those in academic and non-academic areas. Those who score the highest on the file review will be invited for an interview.

Step Two: Interview

The final step is the interview, which will occur over Skype or in person with 2 Global MINDS faculty members from Western University and the relevant site program coordinator.

During the interview, you will be asked two sets of questions. The first set will be in regards to your past experiences and what you hope to achieve from the program. The second set of questions will ask you to propose an innovative solution to a complex health challenge (not necessarily exclusive to mental health) affecting a marginalized community. These solutions should clearly define the target population, existing challenge/situation, proposed solution, implementation model and expected impact. Materials to help you prepare for this stage will be available on the website.

The interview will not take longer than 30 minutes.

Deadlines:

1. Submission deadline for Step One: Required Documents is February 10, 2017.
2. Interviews will take place at the end of February 2017.

For further information on Global MINDS @ Western, recruitment process and deadlines, please send an email to the Global MINDS Western Program Coordinator, Raksha Sule (rsule@uwo.ca).