Arts for Public Health

A pedagogical method to promote global public health and active learning

“Soap Sculptures” by Lilian Nabulime, 2003-2004 (read more on page 8)

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Report from a one-day event held at Karolinska Institutet

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Conclusion

Students, teachers, researchers and artists worked together to create an exciting and inspiring day and to learn about the use of progressive, interactive and student-centred pedagogy in areas of major importance for global public health.

Participants expressed satisfaction and several stated they were going to use some of the presented pedagogical methods. In fact, the two kinds of intelligence as presented by Dr Gaufberg relate to the third type of knowledge, “phronesis” (practical wisdom) as expressed by Aristoteles.

An important link is also to the Nobel Forum conference “Education health professionals for a new century”. Especially to the three dimensions of learning: informative, formative, transformative. Hence, our meeting could be seen as part of a process for educational reform.

Aim

The aim of the event was to inspire students, teachers, researchers and others involved in the study programmes at Karolinska Institutet to discover the possibilities of using art in promoting public health on a global level and as a means to stimulate active learning.

The event

The participants in the workshop explored diverse perspectives of how art can be used to create dialogue and provide a deeper understanding of global public health challenges. Although the two keynote speakers came from different contexts, they had much in common:
Dr Lilian Nabulime is an artist who uses sculptures in public health work to prevent HIV in rural areas. She is also researcher and lecturer at the School of Fine Arts at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. The sculptures help to raise awareness of disease transmission with a preventive purpose.

Dr Elizabeth Gaufberg applies art – visual as well as literature and music – in her teaching of medical students at Harvard Medical School. Art is linked to active learning and becomes a connection between the articulated and inarticulated, promoting discussion among participants.

The day included lectures mixed with “Master Classes” and ended with a vernissage in the evening. Place: Lecture Hall Samuelsson, Karolinska Institutet, Solna, Tomtebodavägen 6.

Participants
The group was multi-faceted and consisted of around 30 individuals with different backgrounds. The participants came from different faculties at KI including the dean of education (1st part) as well as researchers, teachers and students.

Structure
The event was divided into three parts. The first part was to get an idea of how arts can be used to promote global public health through different educational approaches. This part involved an introduction by Tanja Tomson and Jonas Nordquist, as well as keynote speeches by Lilian Nabulime, Elizabeth Gaufberg and Anna Mia Ekström. This session was rounded off with a plenary discussion where participants reflected on the stories and ideas raised by the speakers.

The second part of the event was designed as a workshop including “Master Classes” to encourage participants to explore the interface between global public health and arts. Inspired by Elizabeth Gaufberg, participants were asked to explore a public health topic as well as each other by connecting arts, e.g. paintings, photographs to it.

A vernissage of the exhibition "Arts in public health for global benefit" by Lilian Nabulime was held at the gallery Candyland, Gotlandsgatan 76 which is an artist-run gallery (http://www.candyland.se).
Lilian Nabulime presented some of her artworks. This gave participants the opportunity to mingle and interact with the artist directly. The art works were furthermore displayed at the Aula Medica on the 16th of May.

**Part I: Keynotes and presentations**

**Keynote I: Sculptures that fight taboos to communicate HIV/AIDS awareness to women with low levels of literacy including Q & A.**

Dr Lilian Nabulime, researcher and lecturer at the School of Fine Arts at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, provided us with an idea of the impact of HIV/AIDS in Uganda. She shared many personal experiences.

Lilian did her PhD on “The Role of Sculptural Forms as a Communication Tool in relation to the lives and experiences of Women with HIV/AIDS in Uganda” at the University of Newcastle, 2001-2007. Conclusions from her research:

- Including those living with HIV/AIDS in awareness projects is essential for these to work effectively
- Art can be transformative in the context of HIV/AIDS:
  - useful in non-literate and multi-lingual societies
  - challenging taboos on discussion of sex and body parts
  - raising awareness
  - changing attitudes
  - reducing stigma
- Art as social sculpture: *Transparent Soap* moves beyond the aesthetic into the field of social transformation
  
  *But*: awareness and prevention are not the same…

- Prevention requires:
  - Behavioural change among men
  - Economic and cultural empowerment of women

- Potential of soap sculptures as craft production?
  - Raise awareness while providing employment and income for women
  - Successful models elsewhere (namely: beading crafts – South Africa, memory cloths – South Africa, USA).
Keynote II: Third Things – The Power of the Arts in Health Professions Education including Q & A

Elizabeth Gaufberg, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Boston in the United States, gave a presentation on “Third Things – The power of the Arts in Health Professions Education”.

Two kinds of intelligence
She started out with a poem about two kinds of intelligence – one acquired, one already completed and preserved inside you (for details see appendix 1.1). The developmental process of becoming a health professional requires the development of wisdom of both kinds. The dominant culture in medical education is the first kind of intelligence, which does not allow you to become a butterfly – it would be just one wing of the work. The other kind of intelligence is that which takes us into a space where our heads and our hearts work together to learn and to understand. Were we can achieve intentionality in a circle of trust by focusing on an important topic. We achieve indirection by exploring that topic metaphorically, via a poem, a story, a piece of music.

Third things
“A third thing is something that allow us to approach truth ‘on the slant’” (Palmer, PJ. p.93). Third things can for example be metaphors, narratives and visual arts.

For Palmer, effective third things often come from the world of the arts. Using a poem or story or work of art allows us to begin to explore an issue indirectly – which then gives an opening to move on to personal experiences. A third thing is something that represents neither the voice of the facilitator, nor the voice of the participant, but having a voice of its own.

Many of us who use creative triggers marvel at the way this works – you start analysing a poem, and within a very short period of time a very rich discussion ensues, which you probably would not have gotten to without the initial trigger. And because you can always come back to talking about the third thing – you can modulate the pace and depth of the reflective conversation (see appendix 1.2).

Readings
Naghshineh et al. (2008): Formal art observation training improves medical students’ visual diagnostic skills
Miller et al. (2014): Sounding narrative medicine: studying students’ professional identity development at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
Ousager et al. (2010): Humanities in undergraduate medical education: a literature review
Perry et al. (2011): The effectiveness of arts-based interventions in medical education: a literature review
Tapajos R (2003): HIV/AIDS in the visual arts: applying discipline-based art education (DBAE) to medical humanities

Presentation: Getting back to life – The beauty of HIV treatment
Anna Mia Ekström, MD, MPH, Professor of global infectious disease epidemiology with a focus on HIV, Karolinska Institutet and Karolinska University Hospital, presented about “The beauty of HIV treatment” and the impact that it has had on the lives of people living with HIV. She gave many examples of how arts are being used in HIV/AIDS campaigns, as well as to express personal feelings about the pandemic.

Panel discussion
Following the three presentations with Anna-Mia Ekström, Elizabeth Gaufberg and Lilian Nabulime there was a discussion. Main points included:

- The importance of arts as a means of conveying health messages
- The significance of expressing oneself and one’s health through arts
- The opportunities of using arts as triggers in medical education and learning
- Moves beyond the aesthetic into the field of social transformation through arts
Part II: Interactive sessions – Workshop
Explore uses of Third Things to improve health and healthcare

This interactive session was led by Elizabeth Gaufberg who provided insights into how she is using arts in teaching and interacting with her medical students at Harvard University.

She introduced the methodology of using "Visual Explorer Cards". These cards with photographs, famous paintings and sculptures had been put up everywhere in the room. "Choose a picture that you relate to how a person living with HIV feels about antiretroviral treatment", Elizabeth said. According to this question, the participants selected one or two of the wide variety of pictures, which they would associate to her example. This methodology is used to break open patterns, bring in new ideas and facilitating better understanding of yourself as well as others.

Part III: Vernissage and exhibition

The exhibition "Arts in public health for global benefit" took place at Candyland. The artworks were furthermore displayed at the Aula Medica on the 16th of May from 11-15 o’clock.

Dr Lilian Nabulime presented some of the sculptures produced during her PhD research. The aim of the research was to study the lives and experiences of women living with HIV/AIDS that informed ideas for sculptural works to communicate HIV/AIDS awareness among Ugandan women. The study transcends the literate/illiterate divide and was meant to reach the numerous ethnic groups in Uganda, break down taboos, and facilitate discussion of HIV/AIDS and its prevention among both women and men. Sculptures in the exhibition are noted below:

1. Portraits – Kissing, 2001-2002:
Two heads facing each other kissing is about care and love, and echoes the slogan: “You cannot get HIV/AIDS through kissing”. Sculptures are made from bark cloth is a non-woven fabric derived from the ficus tree for drapery and beddings, and it symbolises the protection and warmth that people living with HIV/AIDS need. Love and care are part of the fight against stigma and discrimination.

2. Drip, 2002-2004:
This sculpture warns of the consequences of bad choices, leading to confinement, hospitalisation and death. The sculpture communicates the fact that hospitalisation reinstates life, as an encouragement to seek help, counselling and treatment.

3. Winnowing, 2002-2004:
A woman with outstretched arms lifting a flat basket
containing shelled groundnuts. Surrounding the base of the sculpture are twelve baskets made out of rough hessian containing representative items reflecting on infection, protection and fertility. The winnowing might be less familiar to an urban post-industrial public, but it is clear that the process involved (of sieving to sort and discard) can be a metaphor to reflect behaviour change.

4. Vulnerability, 2003-2004:
Open vessels and bowls are used to refer to female physiology and the vagina is seen as a bowl retaining sperm for some time. The bowls in this installation are made as basketry from scrim, pigment, nails, latex, foil and food wrapping. Four of the baskets are covered with different materials to communicate different meanings namely: infection and prevention, while the ones turned upside down suggest abstinence.

5. Soap Sculptures, 2003-2004 (title page)
Transparent soap sculptures can be effective in addressing and communicating the frightening subject of HIV/AIDS. They help reduce stigmatisation and discrimination by challenging the viewer to reflect on infection/non-infection. They can educate, entertain and provoke interest. At the same time, they can give serious warnings about the dangers of the disease, which may lead to behavioural change, while also giving guidance and hope for people living with HIV/AIDS. This was evidenced through the soap sculptures depicting female and male genitalia, which communicated sensitive messages about sex, while also encouraging openness in discussing issues related to HIV/AIDS.

6. Childhood and adolescent dreams, 2009- to date
These are relief panels of boys and girls reflecting on fond childhood memories. The sculptures are adorned with metal plates, keys, nuts and bolts, that involve symbols reflecting on opening or closing the future for the children. The messages are love, care, protection, happiness, health, education, and a bright future. This is not so in many cases due to many issues that affect children namely poverty, wars, diseases, loss of parents especially due to the HIV/AIDS. Copies of the three statues in wood are for sale. If you are interested kindly contact Tanja.tomson@ki.se
CANDYLAND

Organisation of the event
Tanja Tomson, Programme Director, Public Health Sciences and Global Health, Karolinska Institutet (KI); Jonas Nordquist, Director Medical Case Centre, KI; Ingemar Ernberg, Council for culture, KI.

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Appendix 1: Exercise by Elizabeth Gaufberg
1. Poem: Two Kinds of Intelligence
There are two kinds of intelligence: one acquired, as a child in school memorizes facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says, collecting information from the traditional sciences as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world. You get ranked ahead or behind others in regard to your competence in retaining information. You stroll with this intelligence in and out of fields of knowledge, getting always more marks on your preserving tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one already completed and preserved inside you. A spring overflowing its springbox. A freshness in the centre of the chest. This other intelligence does not turn yellow or stagnate. It's fluid, and it doesn't move from outside to inside through conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead from within you, moving out.
-- Rumi
2. Personal Responses Tour: Sample Questions

Find a work of art that reminds you of something from your past. Think about the connections…
Find a work of art that you might choose to share with a depressed friend. Imagine their reactions.
Find the work of art that is most like you. What qualities do you have in common?
Find an image of a person with whom you find it challenging to empathize. What seems to be blocking your connection?
Find a work of art that has something to say about grief or loss.
Find an image of a person and imagine what they would have been like at another stage in their life.
Find a work of art that your grandmother might have chosen for her home. Think about the reasons for this choice.
Find an object that, for you, embodies pure JOY!
Find a work of art that has something to tell you about your life. Look closely, and listen for the message.
Find a work of art from a religious tradition that is not your own. Notice your thoughts and feelings as you look…. Find something attractive about the work.
Find a work of art that has something to say about some aspect of LOVE.
Find a work of art that has something to say about life in the modern world.
Find an image of a person you would like to meet…How might your conversation go?
Find a work of art that speaks to a transition you are experiencing.
Find a work of art that represents a professional value you hold dear.