

The background image shows a dirt road in a rural or semi-urban area. On the left, there are several simple, single-story buildings with light-colored walls and some corrugated metal roofs. A utility pole with multiple power lines is visible. In the center, a woman in a patterned dress is walking towards the camera. On the right, there are more buildings, some with blue doors. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall scene suggests a field setting for research or education.

# Fostering Graduate Students' Educational Experiences: Notes from the Field

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**Public Health Sciences  
Loyola University Chicago**

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**International Collaborative  
Study of Hypertension in  
Blacks 1989-2009**

**(R. Cooper, PI)**

**Nigeria, Cameroon, Jamaica,  
Barbados, St. Lucia, US**



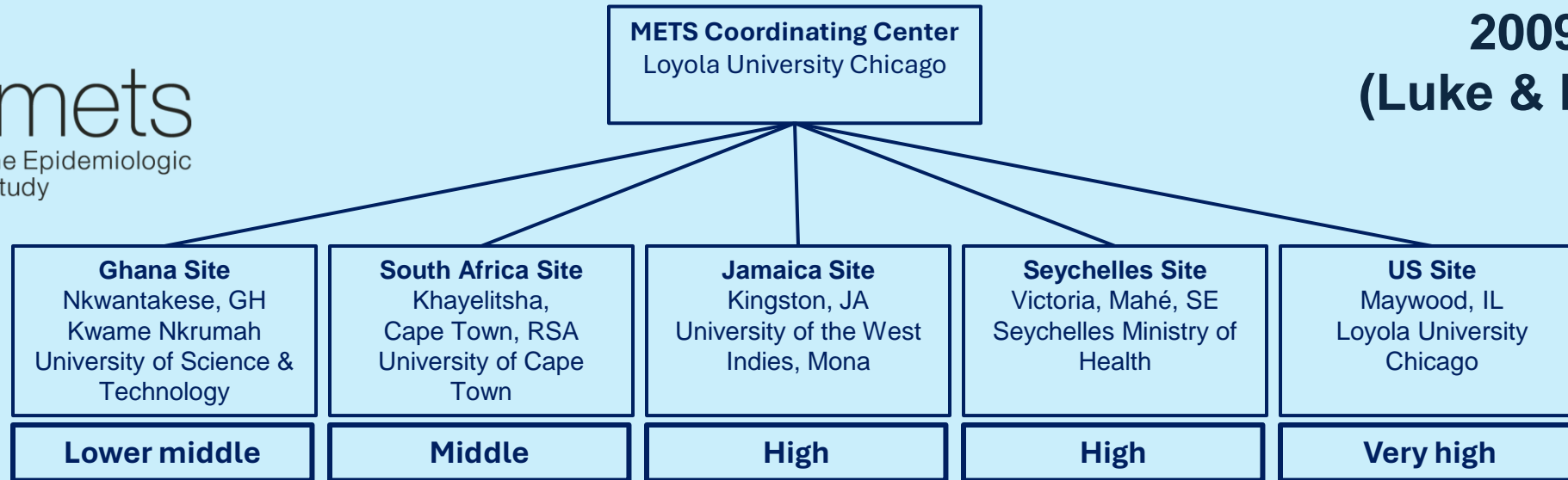
**Igbo-Ora - Maywood  
Women's Study  
2000-2005  
(A.Luke, PI)**



A busy outdoor market scene with various stalls, umbrellas, and people. The image is overlaid with text. The market is filled with fresh produce, including tomatoes, onions, and bananas, displayed on wooden tables and baskets. People are seen walking through the market, some carrying items. The scene is covered by large, colorful umbrellas in shades of red, green, and white. The overall atmosphere is vibrant and bustling.

**Never even thought about student opportunities with our research partners....**

**Public Health Sciences did not have an educational program until 2009**



**Country Human Development Index Status**



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

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**GLOBAL**

**study abroad**

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

# GLOBAL

study abroad

- Only high-income countries
- Largely humanities focus
- Only undergrads



## **Student exchange initiated by Prof Jacob Plange-Rhule in 2009**

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology,  
School of Medical Sciences  
Loyola University Chicago, Stritch School of Medicine

2 to 5 senior-level students from KNUST & 2 to 5 students from LUC  
each year; one-month long clinical rotation; largely self-funded with some  
support from Loyola's Center for Community & Global Health at Stritch

General Internal Medicine elective at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital  
Family Medicine elective at Loyola Univ Health System

Active from 2010 until 2020 (Feb), connections reestablished 2023



## **Research experiences for MPH & medical students – began in 2010**

KNUST & METS Ghana research team

First year – 2 MPH students (one, Dr. Mora, is now faculty in dept)

From 2011-2019, 2 to 5 students per year; 3 to 6 weeks; largely funded by departmental discretionary funds; one medical student did a 9-month research experience at KATH

Uni-directional, however, only 1 KNUST student to Loyola – METS project member

Reliant entirely on METS research projects – can be seen as “one-offs”

## Benefits to Students

- Medical students from Stritch can be exposed to cases they would not come across in the US; recognize the value in taking complete medical histories – an art that has largely been lost in US
- KATH students are exposed to techniques that are not routinely in use in Ghana; cons as well as pros of high-income health care; able to understand the disparities that exist in healthcare in US
- Research-focused students learn the methods of epidemiology field research by experts on the ground; get immersed in all aspects of data collection and sample preparation
- All students get exposed to significant cultural differences; make new acquaintances/friends
- Reflections written by students after their experiences are largely positive, with students indicating significant gains in their awareness of “others”

## Challenges

### Med student exchanges

- For Ghanaian students – visa procurement a nightmare
- Some US students not sufficiently mature/prepared for differences between health systems
- Most US students have been involved in enough community engagement work that they do not bring an elitist attitude with them – but not all

### US student research experiences

- Burden on research team in Kumasi
- Must have significant confidence in maturity of students – lots of vetting; prior international experience – preferably in LMICs - desired

A photograph of a weathered wall. On the left, there is a window with blue shutters. The wall is made of light-colored plaster that is peeling and cracked, especially at the bottom. To the right, there is a wooden door with vertical planks. The door has a metal handle and lock mechanism. In the top right corner, there is some faint, illegible handwriting on the wall.

**Thanks!**

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