

**Evidence Based Aid module piloted for postgraduate students at
Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin**

***“Very motivated and interested students.
A variety of carefully selected subjects related to evidence based work
in disaster and emergency settings;
also for me as a lecturer super interesting to attend.”
Axel Vande Veegaete, Head of Scientific Research, Belgian Red Cross***

The end of February saw the successful piloting of a new module on Evidence Based Aid for postgraduate students in Public Health and Global Health at Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin, respectively. The three-day programme, coordinated by Evidence Aid founder Mike Clarke, drew together an international team of experts to cover a range of issues related to the use of evidence in the public health and humanitarian response to disasters.

The new module is one of three that have been developed by Queen's as part of a proposed Masters level course in Global Health. All three will be fully evaluated before being offered to students in the next academic year. Initial feedback received was very positive and constructive with students enthusiastic to build on the course content offered.

The use of Skype during some of the taught sessions allowed presenters to be 'beamed in' to engage simultaneously with the students whilst delivering their slides remotely and, although there were the usual few obligatory technical glitches over the three days, these were more than made up for by the stimulating discussions and opportunity to question presenters while they remained in the comfort of their offices overseas.

Highlights from the course included a thought-provoking seminar from Niall Roche (lecturer at Trinity College Dublin and independent consultant on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) on developing the evidence-base for environmental health interventions, and an inspiring talk from Axel Vande Veegaete (Head of Scientific Research at the Belgian Red Cross - Flanders) on the challenges of taking an evidence-based approach to humanitarian response and the implementation of research findings in disasters.

The Evidence Aid team highlighted their work to date and the priority questions (1) for systematic reviews to synthesise evidence for effective interventions in disaster relief. It is hoped that postgraduate students in public and global health at academic institutions internationally will play a key role in forming and sustaining review teams needed to answer some of these essential questions in the near future.

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1. Evidence Aid Priority Setting Group EAPSG. Prioritization of Themes and Research Questions for Health Outcomes in Natural Disasters, Humanitarian Crises or Other Major Healthcare Emergencies. PLoS Curr [Internet]. 2013 [cited 2013 Oct 28];1–9. Available from: <http://currents.plos.org/disasters/?p=9491>