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# Students Raise Funds to Help Communities Become Self-Sufficient

April 22, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Students at Illinois Wesleyan University raised more than \$1,000 in less than two weeks to support clean water and microfinance projects in Central America and Africa through Global Brigades' Sustainable Transition Fund.

Each year students in "Health 280: Perspectives in Global Health" develop an educational and fundraising campaign for a worthy health-related issue. This year students heard a presentation from Blake Beehler '16, campus chairperson for [Global Brigades](#) at IWU, who persuaded the class of the benefits of Global Brigades' mission for holistic development. The students then created a campaign with the theme "Global Brigades for Clean Water."

"The entire point of the Sustainable Transition Fund is to help communities become so self-sustainable that they no longer need aid from Global Brigades," said Beehler. "That's a truly empowering approach to global development. Building sustainable communities can have a much greater impact on health and wellness than just providing aid one time."



Students in "Perspectives in Global Health" and Professor Laurine Brown (third from right) pose at a fundraising event.



Michelle Choi '19 (left) and Jasmine Worrell '18 staff a table to raise money in the "Global Brigades for Clean Water" campaign.

Global Brigades is an international nonprofit that empowers communities to meet their health and economic goals through university volunteers and local teams. The Sustainable Transition Fund allocates funds to establish capital for local businesses and to build water projects in rural communities in Central America and Africa. Course professor Laurine Brown said 100 percent of funds raised by IWU students through donation tables, an online fundraising platform, and a bake sale will be specifically targeted to Central America and Africa. Beehler, who has visited Honduras as president of IWU's Medical/Dental and Public Health Global Brigade chapters, noted several communities in Honduras are very close to becoming self-sustainable.

As associate professor of [health](#) and [environmental studies](#), Brown provides students in the "Global Health" course with opportunities to examine critical health issues across different world regions, especially developing countries. In previous years, her students have raised money for clean water, insecticide-treated bed nets to fight malaria, flood relief in Pakistan, and a peanut butter project to feed malnourished children.