USAID One Health Workforce Project
Rwanda Student
One Health Innovation Club
Evaluation Report









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Introduction

Student One Health Innovation Clubs (SOHICs) represent a student-led strategy to promote experiential learning and break down disciplinary silos among health students expected to make up Africa's future One Health workforce. With guidance from faculty and alumni mentors, multidisciplinary students engage in a variety of activities designed to promote One Health learning, including expert lectures, One Health awareness-building, Global Health Case Competitions, and community outreach activities. Local leaders and experts provide additional guidance and supervision of community outreach activities.

These clubs receive support from the One Health Workforce (OHW) project and the One Health Central and Eastern Africa (OHCEA) university network. Currently, there are 13 SOHICs in OHCEA member universities across 8 African countries. OHCEA-Rwanda identified SOHICs as its flagship program and the University of Rwanda became OHCEA's first Student One Health Innovation Club in May 2013. This club has since expanded to 4 out of 8 University of Rwanda (UR) campuses. The Rwanda SOHICs serve as a model to student clubs in other OHCEA member institutions. For example, see the WhatsApp information exchange between representatives of the Kenya and Rwanda student clubs located in Appendix B.

The purpose of this evaluation is to understand how students, faculty members, and community members in Rwanda have benefited from SOHIC activities and how participation in SOHIC activities has shaped their perspectives and work.

Evaluation Design

With support from local faculty and students fluent in Kinyarwanda, 2 evaluators conducted individual and group interviews with 56 participants in the districts of Kigali and Nyagatare in August 2019. A semi-structured qualitative interview protocol (Appendix A) guided the interviews. All interviews except one were digitally audio-recorded. Comprehensive notes were taken during all interviews. Interviews conducted in Kinyarwanda were audio-recorded and translated into English in writing by the interviewer.

Study Participants

The evaluation team interviewed three types of participants (student club members, faculty mentors, and community stakeholders) in two Rwandan districts: Kigali and Nyagatare. Table 2 provides a break down of interview participants. Sampling within these three participant groups was largely a convenience sample since the data collection occurred over a university holiday and in the same week as two national holidays.

Data Analysis

Following each day of interviews, the evaluators translated audio-recordings into English (as applicable) and wrote analytical memos summarizing emerging themes, preliminary findings, and general impressions of each interview. At the end of the week, the evaluation team met to review interview notes, memos, and audio-recordings and discuss and compare dominant themes and significant findings.

Background

Club Leadership

Each campus club has an executive committee of 5 student members that includes the SOHIC Coordinator (campus level), Vice coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, and project coordinator. From that committee one person is voted to represent the club at the university level. The campus coordinator works closely with faculty mentors who guide the students in organizing activities such as debates, global health case competitions and community outreach campaigns.

Students interested in being elected on the executive committee express their interests through an application process. Applicants are vetted by a team comprising of faculty and SOHIC Executive Committee members. The committee is elected by SOHIC members from the respective campus using a secret ballot. The executive committee members are responsible for the day to day running of the club at each campus. The committee organizes a general assembly for members at campus level. To ensure that there is fairness in participation in activities across the various disciplines, some campus chapters like that Remera campus have formed an assisting committee that has a representative from each of the departments at the campus. When an activity is planned, this committee ensures that there is participation by members from all the departments.

Club Membership

Membership to the club is open to all students regardless of academic discipline. However, students are required to complete an online application before joining. SOHIC having multidisciplinary students who work together is regarded as a big success by faculty. Once SOHIC members graduate from university, they continue being members as alumni. The alumni continue supporting the club through provision of advice and participating in some activities when called upon. The club membership stands at approximately 350 members in Remera, 500 in Huye, and 100 in Nyagatare.

Club Activities

UR SOHICs organize various activities aimed at building members' One Health skills and competencies. Key activities include meetings, debates, expert lectures, community outreach, and student trainings. SOHIC members also regularly participate in a monthly 'Umuganda' - a national tradition where residents gather to do community work aimed at contributing to overall national development. After community work during 'Umuganda' students are given an opportunity to give health education to the community members. At the very minimum, one club activity is implemented each month and at least one community outreach activity conducted every trimester.

Findings

Student and Faculty Preparation for SOHIC Activities

Formal soft skills training could enhance student preparation

Students felt well prepared by their courses and faculty in terms of content knowledge and skills and the community members we spoke with concurred with their level of expertise. Students also talked about preparation for "soft skills" such as verbal and non-verbal communication, but there seems to be no systematic program or list of objectives for transmitting these. Some comes from mentoring by faculty, some from other students with more field experience, but it appears to be ad hoc and to be dependent on the persons involved in a given activity at a given time.

"Although the UR students were very well prepared in terms of content, they lacked some of the small-group facilitating and time management skills that a primary teacher possesses."

- Teacher at a Primary School intervention site

Faculty supervisors would benefit from mentorship training

One faculty interviewee raised the wish to have formal training on mentorship in order to be more efficient in her mentoring of students.

Again, it seems that preparation is ad hoc and

dependent on the person that you yourself have been mentored by.

"One aspect for improvement is to provide training on mentorship: a course on mentorship (what it is, best practices) and suggestions for activities that mentors can engage in with their mentees"

- Faculty Member

Students also expressed the desire to have more time to interact with peers from other disciplines before engaging in a joint outreach activity in order for the students to have time to get to know each other and fully understand and appreciate each other's' respective areas of expertise.

Student Benefits to SOHIC Engagement

Students gained valuable soft skills through SOHIC activities

Students engage in various activities that build their skills in communication. The activities include debates, global health case competition, community sensitizations, and presentations. Both faculty and students alike concur that students' communication skills were greatly improved through SOHIC activities. Students also mention that they gained skills in community engagement, leadership, networking, multidisciplinary collaboration, team work, research and making presentations. Students have skills gained to work collaboratively on some personal projects outside SOHIC.

"We participated in a competition to develop an app for online patient registration system where one can register from home before going to hospital. We worked with students from various disciplines like computer engineering, medicine, biomedical laboratory, and accounts. We developed a prototype and presented into to Incision Rwanda."

- Environmental Health Student.

Students appreciated the multidisciplinary approach to addressing health issues

SOHIC enables students from various academic disciplines to work together collaboratively. Students unanimously agreed that working in multidisciplinary teams of students was very beneficial as it enables them to network and share knowledge from different disciplines. It was also acknowledged that the multidisciplinary nature of SOHIC has been beneficial in making the club more visible.

"Multidisciplinary collaboration increases visibility of the club. When the journalism students who are members of SOHIC do internships at the radios they promote the club."

- Environmental Health Student.

"Some 2 years ago, I was around Akagera National park where animals were invading people. I was in a team of vets, environmental health. As a medical student most times I was focusing on clinical issues in humans and not animals that were causing zoonotic diseases. By interacting with the different disciplines I now know the origin of the diseases and I am able to control them."

- Medical Student.

Through participating in SOHIC activities, students have changed the way they view health issues and now appreciate that to effectively address health issues a multidisciplinary approach is required.

"These zoonotic diseases – vets and human medicine cannot fight them alone. We need other disciplines like business and journalism. As we Vets may know how to treat diseases but may not know how to communicate, or we may not know how to use social media to relay information."

- Veterinary Student.

SOHIC activities gave students valuable realworld experiences

Community outreach activities help students put into practice the theoretical One Health knowledge that they learn in class. Through such activities students appreciate the real conditions in which they will be working when they graduate from university.

"Before I joined SOHIC I would get things by memorizing what I was taught in class. But now I go out and talk to people, especially in our village. I tell them that when people live with animals in the same house they can get infected with zoonotic diseases. I used to have this information but was not confident that I could tell my neighbors and community members. I have now gained confidence and can talk to people"

- Animal Production student

All students interviewed appreciated that One Health was important to their studies and future career. Participating in OHCEA activities enabled them to witness One Health in action and appreciate the benefits of the approach.

Students reported sharing what they have learned with others

Some students have reported using the knowledge and skills gained to sensitize their neighbors and family members on health issues.

Students have appreciated that even before they graduate and get employed, they can contribute towards promoting the health of community members

Faculty Perspectives on SOHIC Benefits

Faculty saw clear benefits to student club members

All interviewees acknowledged that students benefited from participating in SOHIC activities. Faculty noted that students have been able to network with their counterparts and faculty from different academic disciplines and campuses across the country. Moreover, students have been able to appreciate the complementary roles played by the different disciplines in addressing health problems.

Through community outreach activities, students are able to practice what they learn in class. And this is done under the same conditions that students will work in professionally. This helps them taste and appreciate the real field conditions they will work in when they complete their studies.

SOHIC activities have strengthened universitycommunity relations

SOHIC has promoted closer interaction between the university and community members. This has improved the relationship between the two and has cleared the hitherto held view that students were at a very high level and could not engage in community work. There is consensus that the relationship is of mutual benefit to the university and community.members.

The strong relationship between the university and community is exhibited in the high acceptance of the information that students provide to the community members. This trust is premised on the realization that students offer credible information with no hidden motive.

Faculty learn with and from student club members

Faculty unanimously agreed that they personally and professionally gained from supporting SOHIC activities. They acknowledged that students often have skills that faculty lack, which creates an environment where faculty mentors learn from their students. Some of the skills faculty reported to have learnt from students include IT, social media, and developing impactful PowerPoint slides.

SOHIC provided faculty with an opportunity to mentor multidisciplinary teams of students. Management and leadership skills that enabled faculty to mentor multidisciplinary groups of students were singled out as some of the skills that faculty have gained over time.

All faculty interviewed reported that their teaching and research work had been positively influenced by their participation in SOHIC activities. They reported including components of One Health in courses they teach (e.g., case studies developed by SOHIC students for case competitions) as well as in their research. In general, SOHIC is what prompted their interest in learning more about One Health and adopting it as a general approach to their professional practice.

SOHIC activities have increased the visibility and profile of UR and OHCEA

Students have engaged in various community activities that have made the club, university and OHCEA more visible. Visibility has also been enhanced following the club's success during an international competition where they emerged second after Brazil having showcased the community outreach work on Rift Valley Fever intervention.

Students and faculty have developed some publications arising directly or indirectly from their involvement in SOHIC activities. The publications include abstracts presented at various conferences, manuscripts, and published articles.

Faculty expressed the wish to see SOHIC activities continue beyond OHW funding. Being the only student-led platform that brings together multidisciplinary students, SOHIC was lauded as an intervention that needed to be sustained.

Community Perspectives on SOHIC Benefits

Outreach activities have influenced healthy changes in local communities

Community members consistently cited specific, practical lessons learned, and how they had changed their behavior as a consequence: from avoiding playing with stray dogs who may be carrying rabies to systematically cooking milk before consuming it and avoiding eating the flesh of animals they do not know the cause of death of.

Student Perspectives on SOHIC Challenges

Students were not initially prepared to effectively engage community members

Students discussed learning to effectively communicate with community members (especially with rural and less educated communities) through trial and error, and the fact that it took them time to realize the importance of listening to the community's point of view before trying to advance scientific knowledge

SOHIC activities cannot accommodate all students who wish to participate

Some activities implemented under SOHIC such as community outreaches, Global Health Case Competition, and training can only take a small number of participants. Selection of the club members to participate in such activities often presents a challenge, with those not included raising complaints.

Students from non-science disciplines need extra preparation

One student felt that training students from nonscience based disciplines on diseases before conducting community outreach activities was a challenge and wasted valuable time. However, other students saw this as an opportunity to learn how to train others who are not experts on diseases, which is an important component of community outreach activities.

Students noted that terms and concepts used by students from different academic disciplines vary from one discipline to another. In order to

properly work together, the multidisciplinary students have to spend some time to come to a common understanding of the different terms and concepts.

Faculty Perspectives on SOHIC Challenges

Inadequate documentation and promotion of SOHIC activities hinders visibility

SOHIC has conducted various activities within and outside the university. However, documentation of these activities is lacking and this is a missed opportunity for visibility. Working with the UR's publication and public relations department, efforts are underway for the SOHICs to produce a newsletter highlighting club activities.

Scheduling SOHIC activities is challenging

The time tables for faculty and students are sometimes so tight that it becomes challenging to find time when some SOHIC activities can be implemented. A number of SOHIC activities are therefore conducted on weekends when there are no classes. In addition, the academic calendar is not uniform across the campuses of the university. While some might be on vacation, others may be in session. This makes it difficult to organize activities more especially those that bring together various campuses. Some students proposed being allowed some Wednesday afternoons to work on SOHIC activities.

Some faculty members also expressed regret that there are not more faculty mentors and that many faculty are still ignorant of the One Health approach

Conclusions & Recommendations

In addition to the suggestions for improvement that have already been discussed in the section above devoted to stakeholder perspectives on challenges, such as systematic preparation for faculty to mentor students and for students to interact with community members of different social and educational backgrounds, in this section we highlight five additional recommendations for the future development and enhancement of SOHIC.

Expand membership to include different disciplines

Students and faculty unanimously stressed the benefit of working with multidisciplinary teams and expressed regret when administrative and geographical constraints (e.g., nursing being the only health science on its campus) limit the participation of multiple disciplines. Some interviewees expressed the need for a truly multidisciplinary team to include experts from fields beyond the health sciences.

Extend the SOHIC concept to primary and secondary schools

Members of the Nyagatare SOHIC as well as the administration, teachers and students at Groupe Scolaire Kagugu Catholique agreed that the impact of One Health outreach activities would be substantially strengthened by creating "sister clubs" at the primary and secondary school levels. University students would be trained to serve as mentors to younger students, who would form their own SOHIC and design and implement educational campaigns in their schools. Primary and secondary school students are more likely than older students to bring the

lessons learned home to their families and to have an impact on siblings and parents, as was noted about changing habits regarding playing with dogs or consuming raw milk.

Improve the visibility of the SOHIC

Faculty and students observed that the club needed to be more visible to create confidence among potential donors and for them to appreciate that SOHIC was worth investing in. Visibility should be enhanced through documentation and publication as well as the use of mass media. The proposed extension of SOHIC activities to primary and secondary schools is also expected to improve the club's visibility.

Mobilize additional resources to support SOHIC activities

Limited resources has been noted as a major impediment to implementation of some activities and inclusion of many SOHIC members in certain activities. The club should plan to raise additional resources from within the country by targeting partners such as government, local authorities, private companies, and development partners.

Procure learning aids to support community outreach

During community outreach activities, students often use role plays as one of the tools for conducting health education. Depending on the focus of the health education, some materials (such as gloves and gumboots) are required to make the role play more effective. Students recommended that the club should procure such materials to be used for both student learning and during health education in the communities.

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Appendices: Interview Protocols

University Student Interview Protocol

- 1. What year did you join the Students One Health Interventions Club (SOHIC)?
- 2. Was there a sensitization or orientation before you joined SOHIC?
- 3. How do you feel this sensitization / orientation prepared you for SOHIC?
- 4. What issues did your orientation / sensitization a cover?
- 5. Please explain to us how the club is organized and run
- 6. Probe on how composition of executive committees members (number, academic discipline, gender etc)
 - 1. How they are elected / identified/Availability of a framework / guidelines / constitution that guides the running of the club
- 7. Who qualifies to join the club? Process of joining? And when does one cease being a member? What is the current number size of the club?
- 8. How often does the club hold meetings for the executive committee members? And for the other members?
- 9. What is the club's role in identifying the activities to be implemented by the club?
- 10. What activities does the club implement?
- 11. Probe for the activity types (e.g. meetings, debates, lectures, community outreach, etc); how and who is involved in planning (selection of participants, setting dates, liaising with other partners / stakeholders etc), implementation, reporting / feedback.
- 12. How often are these activities organized?
- 13. Have you participated in any community outreach activities? If yes, what community outreach outreach activities have you participated in?
- 14. What, if anything, did you learn about the community prior to your participation in community outreach activities?
- 15. Were you given any pre-departure assignments or homework to complete before going to the community? If so, please describe.
- 16. How prepared were you for the community outreach activity?
- 17. How can students be better prepared for community outreach under SOHIC?
- 18. Do you have any recommendations for things future students can do to prepare community outreach activities?
- 19. Did you work with students from other disciplines?
- 20. If so, what did you gain from working with other disciplines?
- 21. What was challenging about working with other disciplines?
- 22. What type of follow-up activities did you participate in, if any?
- 23. What did you gain from participating in SOHIC activities?
 - 1. Probe for gain in skills and knowledge; other benefits other than skills / knowledge
- 24. Which aspects of SOHIC were most valuable and why?
 - 1. Probe for activities / experiences / scenarios etc

- 25. How could SOHIC be improved (club organization, activities, etc, activities, etc?
- 26. Is a One Health approach relevant to your current or future career? How so?
- 27. Have you applied (or do you expect to apply) the knowledge and skills you gained from SOHIC to your current educational and academic activities? If so, please give examples.
- 28. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

University Faculty Interview Protocol

Background Information

Name:

Email:

Country: Rwanda

Discipline:

Professional designation:

Junior faculty member

Mid-level faculty member

Senior faculty member

of years of teaching experience:

of years worked at current university:

Faculty Reflections

- 1. How have you supported Students One Health Innovations Club (SOHIC) activities?
- 2. What was the most recent SOHIC activity that you supported?
 - 1. Probe for activity name, location, when, and what role he/she played.
- 3. Which aspects of SOHIC are most successful? Why?
- 4. Which aspects of SOHIC would you improve if you could?
- 5. What do you hope that students will learn/take away from their SOHIC experience?
- 6. What do you hope that community members will learn/take away from this experience?

Personal/Faculty Engagement

- 7. What have you personally and professionally gained as a result of your participation in SOHIC activities?
- 8. Has your involvement with SOHIC influenced your teaching, research, or outreach work, if at all?
- 9. Would you recommend this experience to your colleagues who have not participated in SOHIC? Please explain why.
- 10. What challenges/limitations do you face in supporting SOHIC activities?
- 11. Have you written any publications or reports as a result of your participation in SOHIC activities? If not, would you like to? How can OHCEA support you?

University-Community Relationship

- 12. How would you describe your university's relationship with community members who live in the areas where SOHIC conducts community outreach? How has this relationship changed over time? Do you expect this relationship to continue over the long-term?
- 13. Apart from community outreach activities by SOHIC members, have you engaged these community members in other types of activities? If so, please describe.

Sustainability

- 14. Do you feel it is worthwhile for SOHIC activities to continue after the OHW project ends? Please explain why
- 15. What challenges do you anticipate your university will face in sustaining the SOHIC activities?
- 16. What steps can/should your university take to ensure that SOHIC activities continue?
- 17. What aspects of SOHIC would you rather improve, if you could?

Community Supervisor Interview Protocol

This simplified protocol is to be used with teachers in the schools where SOHIC University students intervene. These teachers help organize SOHIC students and are also critical in follow-up and ensuring that the pupils use the information gained from SOHIC activities. This can be used for individual interviews or small groups of teachers.

Background Information
Name(s):
Gender(s):
District:
School:
Occupation: _Teachers
Role in field attachment: _Teach the pupils in the schools where SOHIC intervenes

SOHIC activities

Tell us about the activities that University students are involved in when they visit your school. How many times have they visited? What activities take place when they visit?

Teacher role

What was your role when the University students visited?

Probe for help organizing visits, doing follow-up with pupils, suggesting topics for interventions

Community benefit

What, if anything, have you gained from participating in these activities?

What do you think your students have gained as a result of participating in these activities? Improvements

What, if anything, have been some challenges with these visits?

Probe to see if university students are well prepared, if there could be improvements, if there are suggestions for other topics or for follow-ups
Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Community Supervisor Interview Protocol

This is for community members supervising university students in their community work

Background Information	
Name:	
Gender:	
District:	
Village:	
Role in field attachment:	

First, I would like to learn about your Roles & Responsibilities in this role...

What are your responsibilities as a community supervisor? What types of support do you provide for the student One Health Innovation club?

E.g. Coordinating logistics, planning student activities, supervising students, etc.

What places in this community did students visit as a part of their community activities under your supervision?

How long have you been working in this capacity?

With whom do you work most closely in this role?

Now, I would like to ask some questions about the Student One Health Innovation Club Activities...

What community outreach activities have the students been involved in this community? (e.g. interviews, outreach, research, etc.)

With whom do faculty members and students interact in the community during outreach activities? Examples may include:

- District health, vet, environment officers
- Human health services (health centers)
- Local governance (LC 1,2,3 or equivalent)
- Traditional leaders (chiefs)
- Informal leaders (women's groups, teachers, pastors)
- Local residents (families/households, primary/secondary students, etc.)

How are community outreach activities identified?

Does the community provide input on this process?

Do field attachment programs focus on new topics and activities each time?

I am curious to know more about your perceptions as they relate to your own experience participating in this role...

What have you gained as a result of your participation?

Have you learned anything new as a result of your participation?

Has this experience changed the way you think about health issues? How so?

Can you describe one particular rewarding experience that you had as a site supervisor?

Can you describe your experience working with groups of inter-disciplinary students? What worked? What didn't?

What are the most challenging aspects you face in your role as the site supervisor?

Now, I have some questions that related directly to your perceptions of the impacts SOHIC activities have had on this community...

In what ways do you believe this community benefit from hosting SOHIC activities?

What types of health issues does this community face?

Do the SOHIC activities help address these issues? How so?

How could SOHIC activities be improved to be more helpful to the community?

What has been the most important contribution that students have made to this community?

Have any activities or initiatives been sustained after students and faculty have left the community? Please explain.

Any specific activities or projects?

If they are being sustained, what is being done to sustain them?

If not, what could be the reason they were not sustained?

How could these activities have been sustained?

What are some challenges or downsides to this community hosting SOHIC activities?

I'd like to now discuss the engagement between the university and this community...

Does the SOHIC program engage a wide variety of community stakeholders? Please explain/give examples.

Do faculty members and students interact with community members outside of the SOHIC activities? If so, can you give some specific examples? (e.g. faculty research, student innovations, outreach activities, etc.)

On a scale of 0-5 (0=not at all satisfied, 5=very satisfied), how satisfied are you with the relationship between the university(ies) and this community? Why do you feel this way?

How could the relationship between the universities and this community be improved or expanded? How could the SOHIC program benefit more members of the community or the community at-large?

Now I am going to ask you specific questions related to Student & Faculty Impact as a result of participating in this community outreach site...

In what ways do students benefit from participating in community outreach activities?

What new skills do you believe students gained as a result of their participation in the SOHIC activities? What lasting impact do you expect these attachments will have on students and faculty members? Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Community Stakeholder Focus Group Guide

This focus group guide includes a list of thematic topics and questions beneath each. There is no need to follow these in order, rather the themes are to be used to structure the focus group conversation. Please do your best to cover all topics, however it is only necessary to address the questions that are most relevant to the conversation.

Student One Health Innovations Club Activities & Engagement

What types of activities do students and faculty do when they visit the community?

Do the students under SOHIC focus on new topics and activities each time they visit?

Did members of your community have any input in determining the topics or activities that students focus on when they visit?

Can you give us some description of your participation?

Have the students' community outreach activities been helpful to your community?

Can you provide some examples of the ways in which the activities have been helpful to the community?

What has been the most important contribution that students have made to this community?

How have they not been helpful?

How could students' activities be improved to be more helpful?

Community Impact

What types of health issues does this community face?

Do any student and faculty activities help address these issues? Which ones? How so?

Has this experience changed the way your community deals with health issues? How so?

Have any activities or initiatives been sustained after students and faculty have left your community? Please explain.

Any specific activities or projects?

If they are being sustained, what is being done to sustain them?

If not, what could be the reason(s) they were not sustained?

How could these activities be sustained?

Student & University Impact

In your perspective, how do students benefit as a result of their participation in activities in the community?

How do you believe the community outreach activities support student learning?

University-Community Engagement

How could the Student's community outreaches benefit more/other members of your community? Probe examples

Wrap-up

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Children Community Stakeholder Focus Group Guide

This simplified focus group guide is for use with children (e.g., primary school students) from communities where SOHIC intervenes. The discussion should be facilitated by a SOHIC member who is used to working with the community in question.

Student One Health Innovations Club Activities & Engagement and Community Impact

Have any students from the University visited you? Do you remember when? How many times? What was the purpose of the visit? Can you tell us more about what happened?

If there were several visits / interventions ask children to describe what happened each time. Probe for knowledge gained through education on health topics, information about rabies, etc. Probe to see if this knowledge is used in some ways (e.g., asking parents to take them to the health clinic before administering medication, ask parents to not milk animals who are sick, giving a flyer they have received to their parents)

University-Community Engagement

What would you like the university students to talk to you about at their next visit? Can their visits be more useful / more beneficial for you?

Probe for examples

Wrap-up

Is there anything else you'd like to add?