



HIV/AIDS Twinning Center

Field Notes

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Twinning Center Conducts Second Session of the Mozambican Nursing Leadership Institute

Twinning Center partners at the National Nurses Association of Mozambique (ANEMO) and St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing at Moravian College in Pennsylvania conducted the second Mozambican Nursing Leadership Institute Jan. 6-10 in Maputo.

With technical support from the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) and the Twinning Center, partners launched this program in August 2010 to strengthen and expand the role of nurses through access to evidence-based education, ongoing learning opportunities, and skills-based training in targeted clinical fields. It is supported by PEPFAR through CDC/Mozambique.

A group of 40 senior-level nursing heads from provincial and regional hospitals in Mozambique were selected to participate in the 16-month Nursing Leadership Institute. Nursing experts and leaders from Tanzania, WHO/Ghana, and the Southern African Network of Nurses and Midwives also attended and have expressed interest in the model program.

Dr. Jorge Tomo, Permanent Secretary at the Mozambican Ministry of Health, welcomed participants on the opening day of the workshop.

US partner Dr. Lori Hoffman noted that the Mozambican nurses seemed to value hands-on experiences much in the same way American

nurses do. "They were engaged, positive, and asked many excellent questions," she wrote in a blog about the event.

"When they broke into groups to discuss, analyze, and evaluate cases that involved conflict, they readily rose to the task. Other educational sessions that targeted how to plan a meeting and how to develop an organizational program budget were similarly well received and assimilated," she recounted.

The third session of this 16-month program is slated to take place in Maputo in August.

Read more about this event at anemoleadership.blogspot.com.

US Ambassador Tours Emergency Medicine Training Center at Black Lion Hospital



US Ambassador Donald E. Booth (center) greets Dr. Aklilu Azaj (left) and Dr. Miliard Derbew as he tours the Emergency Medicine Training Center.

US Ambassador to Ethiopia Donald E. Booth visited the Addis Ababa University Emergency Medicine Training Center at Black Lion Hospital on March 15, 2011.

Twinning Center partners at Addis Ababa University's Black Lion Hospital and the University of Wisconsin at Madison officially opened the Emergency Medicine Training Center — the first of its kind in Ethiopia — on Feb. 15,

2010. Since then, partners provided pre-service and in-service training to a total of 751 medical students and healthcare professionals as of February 28, 2011.

Courses taught at the Center are highly interactive, focusing on the acquisition of clinical skills in both pediatric and adult urgent care. These include Basic Life Support and CPR, Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Retroviral

Emergency Department Support (REDS), Advanced Life Support Obstetrics (ALSO), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Pre-hospital Service and Ambulatory Care, and Advanced Life Support and Infectious Diseases (ALSID).

The Twinning Center's partnerships for pediatric and adult emergency medicine are supported by PEPFAR through CDC/Ethiopia.

VHC Volunteer Helps Ministry of Health Share Critical Information with the People of Ethiopia

With her winning smile and laid back yet energetic demeanor, it's not difficult to see the Zenawit Melesse is a great communicator. She left Ethiopia more than 15 years ago to pursue a master's degree in information architecture in the UK then worked for the British Foreign Service for six years before moving to New York to work at the United Nations Public Information Department.

"I learned about the VHC in 2008 and met with the Director of the Network of Ethiopian Professionals in the Diaspora (NEPID) and the Minister of Health, who asked me to come to Addis as his communications advisor," Melesse recalls. She accepted the 12-month assignment, but wound up staying for more than two years.

"The Ministry is doing such great work, but I was completely shocked by the lack of information provided to the public," Melesse says. "There have been so many positive changes in healthcare as a result of both national and international efforts, but people didn't know about them because they were never shared," she continues, explaining that much of her first year was spent establishing the underlying systems, structures, and processes that now serve as the foundation of the Ministry's Public Relations and Health Communications Directorate.

Once that was accomplished, Melesse focused on training Ministry staff, as well as

public health workers, health sciences students, journalists, and other key constituencies. She also contributed to national guidelines, manuals, and a broad range of internal and external communications materials and coordinated high-level visits from international policymakers.

"I love a challenge and recognize that what I did was just a drop in the ocean, but I also know that every contribution brings us one step closer to change," Melesse says. "I didn't come here to change the whole country, just to change the mindset of a handful of people and put in place systems that, in time, will grow and expand on their own."

When her assignment with the Ministry concluded on March 1, 2011, Melesse joined UNAIDS as the Regional Communications Advisor for Eastern and Southern Africa.

"My new position will allow me to continue supporting the Federal HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office and work closely with the Ministry," Melesse says, noting, "I hope the VHC's Ethiopia Diaspora Volunteer Program (EDVP) continues to engage more professionals to assist the Ethiopian Health Sector. In my opinion, this is absolutely essential to enabling the country meet its targets, including the Millennium Development Goals."

The Twinning Center launched the EDVP in September 2006, working with NEPID, which is

managed by the US-based nonprofit group Visions for Development, Inc.

Thanks to support from the American people through CDC/Ethiopia, this program identifies, recruits, and places Ethiopians in the Diaspora in volunteer assignments designed to build health system capacity in Ethiopia.

The VHC taps into the Diaspora's shared culture, language, and motivation to meaningfully contribute to development efforts in their country of origin.

With 47 volunteers placed as of March 2011, the EDVP clearly demonstrates that skilled members of a Diaspora community can make substantial contributions to development efforts in their countries of origin. To date, volunteers have been placed at 30 sites throughout the country. The average duration of a volunteer assignment in Ethiopia is 14 months. Collectively, these dedicated professionals have contributed more than 602 months of service in Ethiopia.

"Throughout my assignment, I have received various compliments about the Twinning Center's Volunteer Program from various high-level individuals in the public and private sector," Melesse concludes. "I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge you to continue this program to further build the local capacity required to ensure sustainable development in Ethiopia's healthcare system."



Speaking about her motivation for volunteering more than two years with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, Melesse says, "I didn't want to come here to change the whole country, just to change the mindset of a handful of people and put in place systems that, in time, will grow and expand on their own."

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Para-Social Worker Training Helps Nigerian NGO Improve Services for Vulnerable Children in Abuja

"I come from a humble background, so whatever I have achieved in my life has been aided by the benevolence of well-meaning individuals," says Rhoda Bassey, 52.

"When I opened Vantaged Teen Centre four years ago, it was because I wanted to help people in similar situations — that is my passion," she says, explaining how she noticed growing numbers of orphans and vulnerable children living in and around the Nigerian capital of Abuja.

"Our mission is to be a passage to hope for the less fortunate ones. We work with young people made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, empowering them by giving them the opportunity to acquire life skills and vocational training," Bassey says.

With three paid staff members and seven volunteers, the Centre also provides educational support so orphans and vulnerable children can remain in school, counseling and home visits, and income-generating activities for caregivers and widows. Currently, 10 teens are enrolled in the Centre's nine-month vocational training course and 72 children receive educational and psycho-social support.

Bassey attended a Para-Social Worker Training conducted by Twinning Center partners in Abuja in June 2010. This program is supported by PEPFAR through CDC/Nigeria. What Bassey learned has changed the way she and her staff work with vulnerable children and families, she admits.

"During the training, I learned that social work is, above all, about problem solving within

human relationships. The best interests of the children must be at the heart of every action we take," she says.

"I must say, though, that the guidelines on professional conduct were the most important things I took away from the training. These have become our standard," she stresses.

"The training has also helped me realize the importance of networking and case management," Bassey says. "Many of our clients require other services and this course has taught us how to refer cases to the appropriate organizations to help children access the care and support they need."

The knowledge and skills she gained through the training have helped her to better support children in the community like 17-year-old Joy Clement.

"My worst nightmare began when mummy took ill," Clement says. "She left home and never returned. To this day, we do not know if she is dead or alive," the girl continues, explaining that her mother was plagued with psychological problems.

When her mother left, Joy — along with her sister Mercy, 15, and brother Lucky, 13 — were forced to seek shelter with their maternal uncle.

"We moved to Dutse Bokuma Bwari, where our uncle lives with his wife and three boys. It is an 8-room compound and we share it with three other families," Joy explains.

"Our grandmother lives in a village in Kaduna State. She sells firewood and sends money when she can, but sometimes we go without

food for two or three days," she says.

The children's unstable living conditions make them particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse, and health risks — especially since the Bwari area has the highest HIV prevalence rate in all of Nigeria.

One of Joy's neighbors works at Vantaged Teen Centre. She shared Clement's story with Bassey, the NGO's founder and CEO, who has been working with Rhoda more than a year ago. Since then, things have been getting better the girl and her siblings.

"I think maybe I would be dead by now if it weren't for mummy Rhoda. For sure, my brother and sister would have dropped out of school," Clement says, noting that the family receives counseling, as well as food, clothing, and educational support from the Centre.

"Since I am not in school, I participate in training for cooking and sewing. This will help me earn a living and maybe even go back to school," Joy says, thoughtfully adding, "I would like to become a nurse or even a social worker, so I can help people feel happy and secure the way mummy Rhoda does for me."



Joy Clement (second from the right) is one of the vulnerable children supported by Vantaged Teen Centre in Abuja. Joy and the other girls pictured above participate in vocational training to learn skills like sewing and cooking that will help them earn a living and become self-sufficient.



Rhoda Bassey celebrates the efforts of a group of young adults who completed vocational training at Vantaged Teen Centre.

American Physician Serves as Clinical Preceptor at Beira Clinic and Training Center



Dr. Kevyn Comstock (center) spent three months as a Clinical Preceptor at St. Luke's Health Center in Beira, Mozambique. "Continuity of care should be a fundamental basis in dealing with patients who have a chronic condition such as HIV," she explains. "What I have seen here reinforces the need for integrated management of care for people living with HIV."

Thanks to the efforts of Twinning Center partners at Universidade Católica de Moçambique and the University of Pittsburgh, along with funding from the American people through PEPFAR and the CDC in Mozambique, residents in the country's Sofala Province now have access to high quality primary care and HIV/AIDS services at St. Luke's Health Center, which opened its doors in Beira on June 17, 2009.

St. Luke's also serves as a clinical training site for medical students and other healthcare providers.

VHC volunteer Dr. Kevyn Comstock was the first of three physicians who each spent three months in Beira

supervising the provision of patient care and conducting both lectures and hands-on training with upper-level medical students.

"It was wonderful to work with the third and fourth year students in a clinical setting ... helping them work through the clinical thinking process to come up with a differential diagnosis and treatment plan," Comstock says. "The patients, too, were wonderful and very understanding of the fact that St. Luke's is a learning environment and things take a bit longer. They seemed to recognize that they were involved in training future doctors for Mozambique," she explains.

"While St. Luke's is a primary care clinic, about 25 percent

of the patients I saw were HIV-positive. It is so important to humanize HIV and to treat it as a chronic disease rather than to continue with the stigmatization that has existed for so long," Comstock points out, noting that that is just what St. Luke's is doing.

"The Mozambican curriculum is problem-based, so medical students are supposed to be responsible for their own learning. My role was to guide them and make sure they did not have incorrect information, rather than to interject too much," she concludes.

"The responsibilities were great, but the experience was definitely worth it."

Twinning Center Conducts Ethiopia Partnership Meeting in Addis Ababa



Dr. Medhin Zewdu of the Ministry of Health of Ethiopia.

Twinning Center partners and volunteers working in Ethiopia gathered for a two-day meeting in Addis Ababa Feb. 18-19 to share information on the activities of individual partnerships, encourage cross-partnership collaboration, and identify best practices in building institutional and human resource capacity to support the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

This meeting, and others like it, was an important component of the Twinning Center's supportive programs that are designed to foster partnership sharing, collaboration, expansion, and sustainability by disseminating best practices.

Welcoming remarks were provided by Dr. Medhin Zewdu, Chief of Staff and Director General of the Office of the Minister of Health of

Ethiopia, greeted participants, lauding the Twinning Center and its partners for their contributions to improving the country's health system capacity.

Saying that addressing HIV effectively requires an integrated approach to system strengthening, Dr. Zewdu indicated that the twinning partners embody this kind of multi-level collaboration and are closely aligned with the Ministry's strategies for improving quality of care and better coordinating activities among NGOs and public and private sector health service providers.

CDC/Ethiopia Director Dr. Tom Kenyon also welcomed the group, noting that he was astounded by the diversity of professional and technical expertise represented by the

partners and volunteers in attendance. He described the Global Health Initiative, explaining that Ethiopia has been selected as one of eight pilot countries, and shared some of the key objectives — many of which focus on training and retraining human resources for health.

During the two-day meeting, Twinning Center staff provided updates on activities, as well as priorities set forth by the Ministry of Health, PEPFAR, and CDC/Ethiopia, which funds Twinning Center partnerships in the country.

Partners then shared their latest activities and accomplishments, strategized on ways to improve cross-partnership collaboration, and developed plans to help ensure program sustainability into the future.



Dr. Tom Kenyon, CDC/Ethiopia Director.

Community-Oriented Primary Care Advisor Helps Build NGO Capacity in Rural South Africa

Situated in the Eastern part of the country where South Africa meets Mozambique and Swaziland, Mpumalanga Province is a largely rural mix of highlands and lowlands.

The Rural AIDS and Development Action Research Program (RADAR) in Acornhoek was established more than a decade ago and, in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand, has been conducting much-needed research projects in this underserved part of the country, where poorly funded NGOs often provide the bulk of care and support to children, the elderly, and people living with HIV, TB, or other ailments.

"The home-based caregivers working with local NGOs are dedicated, but there is a real lack of capacity. About 90 percent of them have not finished high school and since European Union funding for a local social development project ended in July 2009, they no longer receive stipends. Even so, they still provide care to children, the elderly, and other people in need, though, often bringing patients food at their own expense because without it, these individuals would go hungry," explains Shira Gitomer, who spent a year volunteering as a community-oriented primary care advisor at RADAR through the VHC.

"My main focus was to develop the Care in the Home Study, which examines the relationship between the community care worker, primary care giver, and clients, while at the same time investigating the quality of care provided in the Bushbuckridge Sub-district of Mpumalanga Province," Gitomer says, noting that the study also explores ways of improving care provided by

community care workers.

"Basically, it is designed to focus on the interactions of services, needs, and outcomes. The results will be used to inform decisions about capacity building and health system strengthening so as to better position home-based care for its anticipated role in relieving the overburdened formal healthcare system," she says.

Given the complexity of the topic, Gitomer and her colleagues at RADAR broke the study into phases, beginning with a situational analysis during which she completed 42 interviews with all home-based care NGOs in Bushbuckridge, as well as key policymakers at the local departments of health and social development. A database was designed to help manage the quantitative and qualitative information she collected.

"As the situational analysis became a longitudinal study, this database was continually updated to better track trends in home-based care and ensure the information initially collected was correct. We compiled this information and distributed it during a community meeting that I organized in June 2010," she says, noting that she provided ongoing training to empower RADAR staff throughout this process.

During the second phase, Gitomer worked with staff to develop criterion for selecting the nine home-based care organizations that would be the focus of the qualitative portion of the study.

Three teams were established, each responsible for three different NGOs. They were trained on qualitative research and interviewing techniques then commenced

field work to collect profiles on all the community care workers at each NGO, she explains, noting that follow up interviews were done with 24 of the 84 community care workers surveyed.

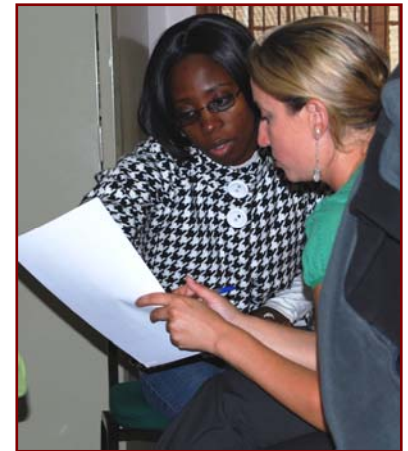
After assisting with the first two phases of this important study, Gitomer passed the baton to a Dutch volunteer who will help RADAR complete the third and final phase.

"As a result of my time at RADAR, I learned to adapt rapidly to different situations and work effectively within different cultures," Gitomer says.

"I was able to think creatively and come up with new ideas and solutions to problems typically not encountered in developed nations. I also developed my leadership skills, enabling me to take responsibility for a group of people and manage their actions, eventually enabling them to lead on their own," she says.

"Most importantly," she concludes, "I helped staff set obtainable goals for themselves along the way creating a positive environment for teamwork, self-discovery, and perseverance. I am so thankful for this opportunity, and for AIHA's support throughout the process."

As of March 2011, the VHC has placed a total of 15 highly skilled professionals at 16 different sites throughout South Africa thanks to the support of the American people through PEPFAR and CDC/South Africa. To date, the average duration of volunteer assignments in the country was 7.5 months.



In addition to leading the home-based care survey at RADAR, VHC volunteer Shira Gitomer (pictured at right above) also focused on training staff.

"Given my temporary position, I made sure I was training and mentoring staff on topics such as interview techniques, data collection, and database management," she explains. "I am confident that the staff at RADAR gained the skills they need to continue this project without me. I also provided bi-weekly lectures on community-oriented primary care and home-based care to 5th year medical students on rotation at the local hospital."

Conferences and Opportunities



HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Tanzania All Partnership Meeting
Jan. 18, 2011
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Ethiopia All Partnership Meeting
Feb. 18-19, 2011
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

HIV/AIDS Twinning Center Zambia All Partnership Meeting
March 17-18, 2011
Lusaka, Zambia

3rd Annual University of the Western Cape "HIV in Context" Research Symposium: New Research in Gender, Violence, and HIV
March 11-13, 2011
Cape Town, South Africa

Pan-African Obstetrics and Gynecology Conference
May 9, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

Pan-African Symposium on Infectious Diseases
May 10-11, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

5th INTEREST Workshop
May 10-13, 2011
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

African International Quality and Accreditation in Healthcare Conference
May 10-11, 2011
Johannesburg, South Africa

HIV/AIDS 2011: Best Practices in HIV/AIDS Social Work
May 26-29, 2011
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

IMPACT 2011: 39th Annual Conference of the American Association of Physician Assistants
May 30 - June 4, 2011
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

5th Conference of the South African Institute of Healthcare Managers
June 6-7, 2011
Durban, South Africa

1st International HIV Social Science and Humanities Conference
June 11-13, 2011
Durban, South Africa

2011 Global Health Council Conference
June 13-17, 2011
Washington, DC, USA

2011 World Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health
Oct. 17-21, 2011
Cape Town, South Africa

139th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association
Oct. 29 - Nov. 2, 2011
Washington, DC, USA

6th SAHARA Conference
Nov. 28 - Dec. 2, 2011
Port Elizabeth, South Africa

ICASA 2011: Own, Scale Up, and Sustain
Dec. 4-8, 2011
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Visit us on the Web at

www.TwinningAgainstAIDS.org

The HIV/AIDS Twinning Center mobilizes and coordinates the resources of healthcare and allied professionals in the United States and abroad to effectively build capacity to reduce HIV infection rates and provide care to those infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in support of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Funded by PEPFAR through a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, the Twinning Center is a project of the American International Health Alliance, a US-based nonprofit dedicated to helping limited-resource communities make positive, sustainable changes that improve accessibility to a broad range of high-quality healthcare services and preventive programs.

The contents of this newsletter are the responsibility of AIHA and the Twinning Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States government or other funding agencies.

