

AIM For Africa: Medicine, Arts and Health Care in the Gambia

Since 2006, UF's innovative Center for Arts in Healthcare Research and Education (CAHRE) has launched a series of new initiatives intended to create cultural bridges between the arts and healthcare in the US and African nations. The "AIM for Africa" program is committed to cross-cultural collaborations that fill needs in African communities and provide meaningful learning opportunities for UF students.

In addition to initiatives in Kenya and Rwanda, CAHRE and the College of Medicine are working to establish a permanent research and training program in the Gambia. This program will include clinical work and reciprocal training, arts in medicine projects and programs and research projects focused on the delivery of health care to citizens of the Gambia. The program began in 2008 with several trips to the Gambia, including a March trip led by CAHRE's director, Jill Sonke-Henderson, accompanied by labor and delivery nurse Cindy Nelly. Sonke-Henderson is also a faculty member in UF's department of Theater and Dance, and artist-in-residence in the Shands Arts in Medicine program. The group of UF College of Fine Arts students and nurses spent a two-week residency



together in the Gambia. They brought 1,100 pounds of medical supplies and provided medical and arts in healthcare services at the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital, Brikama Hospital, Kubuneh Health Center, and in rural villages and schools in the Gambia.

In June of 2008, Nina Stoyan-Rosenzweig, director of medical humanities for UF's College of Medicine, led a group that included a 4th year UF medical student, Raj Mehta, Nghi Lam, an undergraduate interested in medicine and arts-in-medicine interventions, and a group of students who put together a project researching emergency medical care and triage systems in place in the Gambia.

These students researched and developed the project that was then funded through the Medical Sciences Research Program at the UF College of Medicine. This project began with a survey that provides the capacity to determine strengths and weaknesses of Gambian emergency healthcare

system. The students generated a survey tool and worked with the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital in Banjul, at the Brikama Clinic in Brikama, and a small clinic in Kubunehóa village in south east Gambia to gather data.

The data acquired through this first survey will be supplemented through continuing visits to the Gambia by UF medical students, in an effort to put together a report that can be used by the Gambian government and public health service to evaluate their emergency treatment system. The students who designed the study (Janeen Alidina, Archana Eniasivam, Komal Gandhi, Ryan Gerrity, Menna Haider, Mariana Khawand, and John Martino) will continue to work with incoming medical students and faculty to continue the project.

More information on the AIM for Africa Gambia initiative, including some slides shows of these trips, can be found at: <http://www.arts.ufl.edu/CAHRE/aimgambia.asp>.