The Next Generation of Global Leaders

SALOME MASWIME, PhD, MBCHB, has her sights set on becoming a global leader in health care. And through the support of the Discovery Foundation MGH Fellowship Award, the obstetrician/gynecologist at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in South Africa is well on her way to achieving that goal.

The fellowship – aimed at boosting South Africa as a leading hub for internationally recognized clinical research and science – brought Maswime to the MGH Center for Global Health for one year to research the causes of stillbirths in HIV-positive women. Maswime has found the centers extensive resources and connections vital to the progress of her research. “Jessica Haberer is my mentor and as we have been trying to formulate more research questions, looking at research ideas for next year she always has the right person to talk to,” Maswime said. Adrian Gore, Discovery Limited Founder and CEO, is a Mass General Center for Global Health Advisory Board Member.

South Africa has a maternal mortality rate almost seven times higher than that of the U.S. “In South Africa, we are trying to give the best care we can give in a setting that doesn't always allow us to,” says Maswime. An early experience of having two pregnant women die during her time in a rural South African hospital shaped her passion to reduce maternal mortality. “What stood out to me most is none of us had access to the resources needed to save them.”

Maswime’s maternal and women’s health efforts have been recognized globally. She recently received the Young Achiever Award from Africa Business News in partnership with Forbes Africa and CNBC Africa, and was honored with the Young Achiever and Trailblazer Award from the president of South Africa in 2017.

Maswime’s passion for research grew in 2014 while she was earning her PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand. “I developed not only love for research and science, but of having a global perspective for what I am doing,” she says.

Out of that dual passion for clinical work and research, in 2018 Maswime also launched the South African Clinician Scientists Society. What started as roundtable meetings with a few like-minded people has grown to a group of more than 100 clinician-scientists hoping to discover and develop the next South African and global leaders. “We hope to be the next generation of clinician-scientists and drive health forward in South Africa,” says Maswime. “What affects South Africa affects all of Africa.”

Global Nursing Fellow Works with Ugandan Counterparts on Neonatal Intensive Care

JENNIFER DURAN, RN, knew she wanted to care for sick children from a young age after witnessing compassionate nurses caring for her sick brother. Now a registered nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at MGH, Duran gets to carry out her childhood dream on a daily basis and recently had an opportunity to do so halfway around the globe.

As a recipient of an MGH Global Nursing Fellowship through the Center for Global Health, Duran recently spent 18 days teaching and training with nurses, students, midwives and residents in the Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH) NICU in Uganda. “This was a dynamic group of learners eager for professional development, so the energy was powerful,” she said.

Each morning Duran would teach a classroom course on topics she and the students thought would be helpful. They would then join medical rounds in the NICU for a more hands-on experience. “This quickly morphed into a wonderful learning opportunity for all,” she said. “The rounding process became a lively discussion at each bedside.”

(Continued on the back page)
First Mile Program Promotes Health in Rural Uganda

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL** has helped launch a new program that aims to bring disease prevention and early treatment to the rural communities outside one of Uganda’s largest cities, Mbarara.

The program, The First Mile, is the latest initiative of a ten-year partnership that includes Mass General, the Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the 400-bed Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH). Initially focused on the HIV/AIDS crisis, the partnership has grown to include broader biomedical research, think tanks focused on local healthcare challenges, clinical quality improvement initiatives, educational training and community-based programs.

Supported by the philanthropy of the Wyss Medical Foundation, The First Mile is equipping specially trained doctors, nurses and village health workers to go into the communities and schools. There, they work on prevention and treatment of a number of common diseases.

“The idea of the program is to continue in partnership with Ugandan leaders to build up the capacity of the university and hospital to take care of people in that first mile between people’s homes in the villages and the regional hospital,” says Louise Ivers, MD, MPH, DTM&H, executive director of the Mass General Center for Global Health. Most of Uganda’s 44.3 million citizens are rural subsistence farmers without access to routine health care. The program is innovative in providing a bridge between the rural communities and the large district hospital.

“It supports the priorities of the university and hospital to prepare the next generation of health workers to meet the needs of the community,” according to Stephen Asimwe, MD, MPH, DrPH, Mass General’s program director in Uganda, who adds, “This program will have a lasting impact on health practice in Uganda for years to come.”

Nursing leaders from Mass General, MRRH and MUST have worked together to develop nursing education curricula and resources. Through the Mass General Global Nursing Fellowship, Mass General nurses with expertise in areas of local clinical need — such as cancer care or wound care — go to Uganda for up to three months at a time to train and mentor nurses.

“The nursing faculty has been completely transformed, clinical care has improved, and research and scientific collaboration has been tremendous,” Dr. Ivers says of philanthropic investments in the MGH-MUST partnership. “Our Mbarara colleagues tell us that our work together has helped them become a leading institution in Sub-Saharan Africa for the sciences.”

The Wyss Medical Foundation’s support means a great deal to the future of such initiatives. “It’s a transformative investment in our partnership,” Dr. Ivers says.

The First Mile program was launched in June 2018 in Mbarara. The celebration was attended by Dr. Ivers and other Mass General education and nursing leaders. Also attending was Stephen Schwartz, a Wyss Medical Foundation board member and a member of the Mass General Center for Global Health Advisory Board, as well as Dr. Charles Olweny, the chancellor of MUST, and many Ugandan physicians, nurses and academic leaders. A new van that had been purchased for the program was on display.

Mr. Schwartz first visited Mbarara in 2016 to see the scope of what the hospital was doing in patient care and research. “As soon as I set foot in the ward, I saw one of the MGH nursing fellows we had funded who was instructing others on how to change a dressing,” he recalls. “The Ugandan doctors and nurses are genuinely committed to delivering the best care to their patients.”

**Pediatric Global Summit**

**THE MASSGENERAL HOSPITAL for CHILDREN** and the MGH Center for Global Health hosted the 2018 Pediatric Global Health Summit on October 15. The event drew health care providers, advocates and scientists from the New England area and was highlighted by presentations from pediatricians across the globe.

The meeting kicked off with an address from Agnes Binagwaho, MD, PhD, Vice Chancellor of Rwanda’s University of Global Health Equity, titled “Rwanda’s Journey to Reduce Child Mortality.” Dr. Binagwaho, described by MGHIC’s Pediatric Global Health Division Chief Jason Harris, MD, MPH, FAAP, FIDSA, as “a hero of global pediatric medicine,” recounted the uphill battle she faced as Rwanda’s Minister of Health.

“Twenty-five years ago we were so broken, no one was betting a penny on Rwanda,” she said, describing the post-genocide state of her nation. Dr. Binagwaho then recounted Rwanda’s strategies for improving pediatric health that have led to a 75% reduction in infant mortality in the last decade. She emphasized the importance of an approach based on both evidence and equity, and how policy decisions were driven both by data, and the need to ensure that no families and children were left behind. She ended with a call to action for all in the pediatric global health community, saying “We have to always say ‘how can I do better.’ We will make it. We will get there.”

The afternoon featured panel discussions on the topics of Borders, Families & Child Health, Nursing & Global Health, International Partnerships & Global Health, and Technology and Global Health. This was followed by a presentation by Md. Jobayer Chisti, MBBS, MMed, PhD, director of clinical research at the icddr,b in Bangladesh who described his journey from pediatric intern watching his patients die of pneumonia, to his pioneering work on bubble-CPAP which reduced the mortality of severe pneumonia in his patients by over two thirds. Yap Boum II, MPH, PhD, the regional director of Epicentre Africa presented on the need for equitable international partnerships to advance pediatric global health. Throughout the day attendees had a chance to review poster presentations, and Caitlin Dugdale, MD, from the ID Division and HMS student Ruchit Nagar received travel awards for their outstanding posters.

The summit concluded with grand rounds given by Marsha Griffin, MD, Professor and Director of Child and Family Health at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine. Dr. Griffin, who spoke about the trauma that is being inflicted on the children living on and passing through the border, emphasized the importance of understanding our patient’s lives outside the confines of our interactions within the hospital walls.
Women in Global Health

LEAD Fellowship

IN AN EFFORT to bolster the global progress being made to support female rising stars from low and middle-income countries, the Harvard Global Health Institute and the Women and Health Initiative at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health together have developed a new fellowship program for women in Global Health.

This groundbreaking opportunity is open to women from all continents, regions, disciplines and sectors. The program will include a rigorous semester of mentorship, custom leadership training, speaking platforms, and protected time to focus on research. While in residence at Harvard University, fellows will have access to all the university has to offer, from its many schools (Public Health, Business, Government, Medical, Arts & Sciences, and others) to cross-university centers and peer fellowship programs.


The Role of Hair Salons in South African Sexual Health

LESS THAN HALF of individuals diagnosed with HIV in South Africa, the country with the largest HIV epidemic in the world, receive adequate treatment. Ever since her first research project related to HIV testing in South Africa in 2004, Ingrid Bassett, MD, MPH, has been focused on connecting vulnerable populations with available services. “Failing to link to care became a defining part of what my research was trying to grapple with over the next 10 years,” she said. “It was a defining study for me.”

It was this issue that came to mind one Monday morning several years back when one of her young research assistants in Durban, South Africa, came to work with a new set of hair extensions and braids. After finding out that the salon appointment had lasted upwards of three hours, Dr. Bassett and her team began to brainstorm. “We just started to think about all the ways in which a hair salon could be a supportive and conducive environment to offer health interventions,” she said.

These conversations led to a fascinating new pilot study that Dr. Bassett, an infectious disease physician at the Medical Practice Evaluation Center and a Weissman Family MGH Research Scholar, and her team hope to roll out this year. Stylists trained with talking points and literature at three Durban hair salons will initiate conversations with their clients about HIV testing, treatment and contraception and refer those interested to an on-site nurse.

“People feel good when they go to a salon, and hopefully we can capture that sense that this is part of being well as opposed to feeling like this is a burden,” Dr. Bassett said. “We’re trying to meet them where they are.”

Over 90% of salon owners, stylists and clients Dr. Bassett polled were willing to offer or receive health or contraception education, and only slightly fewer were willing to offer or receive HIV testing and education. Salon owners and stylists thought that this initiative would be good for business by encouraging repeat customers, while patrons were excited about the convenience as well as the appeal of discussing sensitive issues in a safe, exclusively female environment.

The introduction of pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP in South Africa could vastly increase the impact of Dr. Bassett’s initiative. PrEP, an antiretroviral medicine taken by at-risk HIV negative individuals, can reduce the risk of contracting HIV by up to 90% when taken regularly. Educating salon patrons about PrEP could significantly reduce the nearly 2,000 new HIV infections every week among women age 15-24 in South Africa.

NEWSLETTER

Center for Global Health Welcomes Faculty Network Members

Associates in Global Health

Ingrid Bassett, MD, MPH
Adeline Boatin, MD, MPH
Jason Harris, MD, MPH
Peggy Lai, MD

Katharine Morley, MD, MPH
Crystal North, MD, MPH
Apama Parikh, MD, MPH

Affiliates in Global Health

Fellows in Global Health

Brian Chan, MD
Lisa Bebeäl, MD
Suzanne McChesney, MD, MPH

Join the Global Health Faculty Associate Network

Building community is a core pillar of the MGH Center for Global Health. If you are an MGH-MGPO faculty or fellow in good standing and engaged in substantive global health activities, please visit globalhealth.massgeneral.org for more information.
Office of Global Disaster Response Provides Relief at Home and Abroad

THE MASS GENERAL CENTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH (CGH) Office of Global Disaster Response (GDR) was working overtime this fall, deploying four teams of medical professionals to respond to three natural disasters and an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Fourteen MGH employees provided hundreds of hours of medical care domestically and abroad while serving as volunteers with International Medical Corps (IMC),Americares and the U.S. Southern Command.

Super Typhoon Yutu, the second strongest recorded storm to ever hit the United States or its territories, struck the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) on October 24 causing catastrophic damage. CGH GDR deployed a team of five to Saipan on November 5 to serve as volunteers with the nonprofitAmericares. Team leader Lynn Black, MD, MPH (CGH GDR, Medical Walk-In), Camela Berlin, RPh (Pharmacy), Elise Perkins, RN (Emergency Department), Jean Bernhardt, NP (Charlestown Healthcare Center) and Jennifer Samiotes, RN (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) carried out the mission of providing a professional response to those affected by Typhoon Yutu. The team, labeled “Americares Team Alpha”, worked out of one of the two centers operated by the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation on Saipan.

On October 10, MGH GDR deployed a team of four to serve aboard the United States Naval Ship (USNS) Comfort to assist military personnel and other partners in U.S. Southern Command’s Enduring Promise initiative. Kim Waugh, RN (Emergency Department), Jean Bernhardt, NP (Charlestown Healthcare Center) and Jennifer Samiotes, RN (Pediatric Intensive Care Unit) carried out the mission of providing a professional response to those affected by Typhoon Yutu. The team, labeled “Americares Team Alpha”, worked out of one of the two centers operated by the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation on Saipan.

The tent city on the GDR ship was made up of deployment veterans Lindsey Martin, NP (CGH, Blake 12 Intensive Care Unit), assisted with the team mission to provide a professional response to those affected by the ongoing political crisis of Venezuelan migrants seeking basic food, medical care, and shelter in the neighboring countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Brazil. During their 32-day mission the Mercy-class hospital ship was docked off of Peru and Ecuador and served over 10,000 patients.

Hurricane Michael made landfall on Wednesday, October 10 as the third largest storm ever recorded in the US. An MGH team was recruited to work with partner organization International Medical Corps (IMC) to help those affected in Florida. Named the “IMC Alpha Team”, the MGH squad was comprised of team leader Maya Girns, NP (Internal Medicine Associates), Susan Goguen, RN (Special Care Nursery Ellison 13), Karla Haney, RN (Medicine/Oncology Ellison 16), Philip Manners, MD (Hospital Medicine Unit) and Amy Cameron, PA (Emergency Medicine).

In September Hurricane Florence caused catastrophic damage to the Carolina region. A GDR Strike Team departed for Raleigh, North Carolina on September 16 for a six-day deployment with IMC, and was made up of deployment veterans Lindsey Martin, NP (CGH, Blake 12 Intensive Care Unit) and Lynn Black, MD, MPH (CGH, Medical Walk-In).

Global Nursing Fellow (Continued from front page)

Duran credits Pat Daoust, RN, MSN, FAAN, Director of Nursing for Global Health and Mary Sebert, RN, MPH, International Nurse Program Manager with providing thorough preparation for a successful trip. The team had Duran read required books, take a safety and security course and engage in multiple meetings. “Mary had a comprehensive one on one presentation to review cultural awareness, expectations of the fellowship as well as information on how to prepare myself not only professionally but emotionally,” she said.

Originating in 2016, the Global Nursing Fellowship offers short-term opportunities for MGH nurses to provide didactic instruction and clinical mentorship based on requests for specific clinical expertise from long-term partners. Supported by the Sullivan Family Foundation and the Wyss Medical Foundation, the Fellowship has sent 23 nurses specializing in oncology, pediatrics, substance use disorder and other disciplines to multiple locations in resource-limited settings to work towards shared goals of improving patient care.

One highlight of the trip for Duran was witnessing the successful care of a baby born after just 26 weeks’ gestation. Typically, being born before 28 weeks is associated with high mortality, especially in Uganda where there are limited options to support premature babies. Despite all, this particular infant defied the odds. “This little 26-week warrior was born a fighter for sure,” she said.

“This gave me a lot of hope to see what is possible.”

Despite returning to Boston, Duran is still engaging with her new colleagues in Mbarara. She is planning monthly video conferences with one of the NICU nurses, Bashira Haith, to discuss the progress of the projects they implemented, ongoing educational needs and any challenges that may arise. Duran is also preparing monthly educational lectures that the nurses can present to each other.

“I hope this is just the start of a long collaboration with myself and MRRH,” Duran said. “I loved every minute of it.”

Share Your Work with the MGH Global Health Community

If you have an idea for a future newsletter or would like your global health related work featured please email globalhealth@partners.org.