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**Malaria bednet challenge**

The poorest country in the western hemisphere was recently hammered by four hurricanes in devastating succession. Catastrophic floods in the wake of the storms killed more than a thousand people and destroyed entire villages. Thousands of poor families who had little before are now left with nothing.

The floodwaters have receded, but countless pools of stagnant water still remain—the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes and an imminent public health disaster—a massive outbreak of malaria.

Support PIH’s efforts to save thousands of lives by helping us to buy and distribute insecticide-treated bednets to those most at risk for contracting malaria. These bednets have been proven to be a cheap and effective way to protect against malaria and save lives. Each net costs only $5!

**Film documents devastation and rebuilding after hurricanes**

A short film by BZ Films brings to light the issues in Haiti brought on by four storms that devastated the small, impoverished country. In the wake of the horrible floods, Partners In Health and the people of Haiti work to find hope and rebuild destroyed communities. [Watch film](#).

**A beast of foreign aid?**

PIH co-founder Paul Farmer critiqued the “new humanitarian order,” which raises troubling questions about foreign aid, humanitarian assistance, and respect for dignity and sovereignty. Read his blog post in the Daily Beast.

**Deciding to fight for the world’s poor**

Dr. Paul Farmer was featured in an interview in the October issue of the magazine New Scientist. The article offers up some of Dr. Farmer’s decisions to dedicate his life to fighting for good healthcare for the world’s poor.
At PIH, we have set a goal to raise the funds needed to buy 10,000 nets. This is an ambitious goal. But it can be achieved with your help. Please consider donating what you can to buy one, two, three, or more nets. Then tell your friends and family about this challenge. As one Haitian proverb says, men anpil chay pa lou, or “many hands make the load lighter.” Together we can save thousands of lives. Help spread the word!

Donate bednets.

Are you on Facebook? Join our cause!

From the Desk of Michael Herce, medical resident and PIH volunteer

Dear Friends,

For over 25 years, Zamni Lasante (ZL, PIH’s partner organization in Haiti), has served as an example to the world of pragmatic solidarity—responding to the call of the rural Haitian poor for health care, clean water, food, education and housing with concrete action. But in a disparate world where the gulf between the haves and have-nots continues to grow and the basic social and economic rights of the poor go ignored, many “experts” in development, policy and public health have referred to the work of ZL and PIH as “unsustainable,” citing a perceived lack of long-term funding and human resources. The dismissive questions raised by critics in the rich world are, unfortunately, all too familiar to our colleagues working for change in resource-poor Haiti: “Isn’t a program that provides health care without charging patients doomed to fail?” and “Won’t a project supported by an American NGO create dependency on foreign doctors and other providers to care for patients?”

On August 17th in Cange, in front of a community assembly filling the Chapel Bon Saveur, seven Haitian medical students lent their resolute voices to those of the hundreds of Haitian accompagnateurs, nurses and doctors who work everyday with ZL and the Ministry of Health throughout Haiti’s Central Plateau by answering, “No!” to the nihilists.

On that clear Sunday morning, parishioners and community members joined six newly named Howard & Doris Hiatt Residents in Internal Medicine and Global Health Equity and faculty members from the Division of Global Health Equity at Brigham & Women’s Hospital to cheer on these bright students for their academic achievements and their expressed commitment to return to the Central Plateau to serve the destitute sick after their training.

Ferle Jean-Sauvener, Guerrier Odilest, Adam Thélor, Dony Théoros-mé, Alexandre Wilda, Elounedie Nourissant and Jean Robert are each exceptional Haitian physicians-in-training pursuing their doctor of medicine degrees either in the Dominican Republic (DR) or Cuba—at
the Pontíficia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra in Santiago de los Caballeros or the Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina in Havana.

Traveling far from home and family to study, a near pre-requisite for Haitian medical students since the U.S.-backed coup in 2004 destroyed one of the country’s only surviving medical schools, each shares a gripping personal story and commitment to their community. Take, for example, the story of Alexandre Wilda, who lost both of her parents to tuberculosis, faced life-threatening pulmonary tuberculosis herself, but overcame the odds to persevere in her studies and gain admission to medical school last year.

As a sign of solidarity with their Haitian counterparts and with the backing of the Cange community, these Brigham residents and faculty presented each student with a new laptop to assist them in the pursuit of their medical studies. The sense of community pride and camaraderie between GHE residents and their Haitian colleagues was palpable—evidenced by the resounding applauds from the crowd and the many warm embraces exchanged.

These Haitian medical students are living proof that comprehensive community-based approaches to the delivery of health and education services are not only sustainable, but yield untold benefits for future generations, from creating economic opportunities for patients to building the next cadre of healthcare professionals. But don’t just take my word for it, ask Alexandre.

—Michael Herce
Medical resident and PIH volunteer

House of Hope: A new home and family for children orphaned by AIDS and tuberculosis

The little girl’s name literally meant “Help me” in Sesotho, and it was clear to Dr. Hind Satti of PIH’s partner organization in Lesotho that she and her two younger sisters needed help.

“It was painful to see them, the wind was so freezing, they were so hungry... [Their clothes] hardly covered their little bodies,” Hind recalled.

Unfortunately, the situation of these three girls is far from unique. The pandemics of HIV/AIDS and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) threaten to wipe out a generation of adults across Africa, orphaning millions of children in the process. In the small, mountainous country of Lesotho, some estimates say that up to 30 percent of children under the age of 14 are orphans.
The three girls, who range in age from 10 to 6 years old, lost their mother to tuberculosis. With no one to care for them, the sisters were forced to beg for food in their village.

Hind’s co-workers could not turn their backs on these girls when they turned up at one of the rural health centers operated by PIH Lesotho (PIHL). And so the House of Hope, a safe home for orphans, was founded in August in the capital city of Lesotho.

One of PIHL’s housekeepers, a kind-hearted grandmother named M’e Leomile, agreed to serve as a mother to the girls. Two other children, a 5 and 6-year-old brother and sister, also joined the little family after their father passed away from advanced cases of both HIV and MDR-TB.

The children quickly took to M’e Leomile, as well as each other, says Hind. They already consider themselves a family, calling M’e Leomile “Mama” and referring to each other as brother and sister, she added.

PIHL staff procured a house for them to live in (along with M’e Lemile), and ensures that they are fed, provided with any needed medical care, grief counseling, and psychosocial support. PIHL is also helping the children attend school, which will give them the skills they need to support themselves when they become adults.

PIHL already has other orphans on the list to join the program—three are currently MDR-TB patients receiving treatment for the disease. As soon as they are not contagious, they will join the others. PIHL is also hoping to start another House of Hope nearby.

Read the full article.
To fight malaria, APZU blankets Malawi district with bednets

Splashes of brilliant blue recently brightened the brown dirt roads and narrow muddy footpaths throughout Malawi’s Neno district as part of an effort to curb the area’s malaria epidemic.

Last month, PIH’s partner organization in Malawi Abwenzi Pa Za Umoyo’s (APZU) worked with the Malawian Ministry of Health to launch a campaign to distribute over 26,000 insecticide-treated mosquito bednets (ITNs) to the households with individuals at most risk of contracting the disease. With thousands of nets to transport, APZU’s network of community health workers (CHWs) quickly got to work loading their bikes, arms, heads, and chitenjes (the colorful wraps worn by women) with ITNs wrapped in bright blue plastic to carry back to their villages.

Last year in the Neno district, which has an estimated population of around 140,000 people, more than 52,000 cases of malaria were reported. Malaria was responsible for hundreds of deaths—most of them children—and malaria is the most common diagnosis in the outpatient clinics. The disease also contributed to many missed days of school.

As the species of mosquito that carries malaria is most active at night and tends to bite people as they sleep, ITNs have been proven as a safe, effective, low-cost way of protecting against bites from malaria mosquitoes, thus preventing the disease.

Because malaria is most dangerous for children under five, pregnant women, and people living with HIV and AIDS, the campaign prioritized these individuals. In addition to the CHW distribution chain, several of the health centers in the district were also provided with an ample supply of nets, to be distributed during regular activities organized by the pediatric clinics, antenatal clinics, immunization outreach activities, HIV testing activities, and HIV clinics.

The Against Malaria Foundation and Together Against Malaria stepped in to generously donate about 26,000 ITNs for the campaign. The Malawi Ministry
of Health provided several thousand more nets. By the end of this year, APZU community health workers and the MOH will have distributed over 34,000 ITNs.

As Malawi’s rainy season begins next month, the APZU team hopes to begin seeing clinical results from the campaign. The rains will bring puddles and standing water, breeding grounds for malaria mosquitoes. But armed with the ITNs, APZU hopes that families will be well-protected against the onslaught of hungry mosquitoes—and APZU clinics will see far fewer cases of the deadly disease.

[Read the full article.]

Choppers for doctors: Motorcycles help health workers traverse Lesotho’s mountains

In Lesotho, it’s difficult to get around. Villages in the mountain kingdom are sometimes accessible only by single-engine propeller aircraft or on horseback. There are often no roads in rural areas and patients must walk hours to clinics, which is extremely difficult for the critically ill.

Transporting patients and medical supplies is often an ordeal. Since 2006, Partners In Health’s partner organization in Lesotho (PIHL) has grappled with the problem of moving people and things. PIHL formed partnerships with the Lesotho Flying Doctors Service and Mission Aviation Fellowship to facilitate air transport. Now, PIHL is adding motorcycles to the mix through a new arrangement with the nonprofit Riders for Health.

Riders for Health is sending 120 ultra-rugged motorcycles to Lesotho. The Honda CTX200 is a special, no-frills bike made for the outback ranchers of Australia. The machines have features such as enclosed chains and handlebar protectors that make them ideal for the harsh conditions of Africa.

So far, Riders for Health has delivered nine motorcycles for use by PIHL staff, eight of whom have been trained to ride the bikes. The vehicles are expected to greatly enhance health-care delivery, allowing health workers to regularly and reliably visit communities previously inaccessible except on foot. In addition to visiting patients, PIHL staff can also use the bikes to transport samples back to the lab for testing, and to screen neighbours and family members
of the patients for health problems—uses that are particularly important to PIHL’s multidrug-resistant tuberculosis program.

Lesotho’s alarming epidemic of HIV/AIDS and drug-resistant tuberculosis prompted Riders for Health to send the motorcycles. PIHL’s own project focuses on bringing HIV and TB care and treatment to poor, rural communities that have largely been neglected by other AIDS programs and non-governmental organizations. Approximately one quarter of Lesotho’s adult population is HIV-positive and life expectancy has plummeted to less than 35 years. Lesotho’s TB rate is the fourth highest in the world.

“We are delighted to be working in Lesotho once again with such fantastic partners,” said Andrea Coleman, co-founder and CEO of Riders for Health. “Partners In Health is effective in a way rarely seen in development, but by ensuring that their dedicated staff has access to reliable transportation, this innovative partnership will help to make their vital work even more effective and efficient.”

Read the full article.

Dateline PIH: Project updates from all over

Pushing boundaries, past, present and future:
Partners In Health held its 15th annual Thomas J. White Symposium on October 4, in Cambridge, MA. The theme this year was “Pushing Boundaries: past, present, and future.” The program featured a panel of HIV patients who shared their stories of being provided with life-saving antiretroviral drugs by PIH’s partner organization in Haiti, Zanmi Lasante. Another panel featured activists who have used the PIH model and philosophy of social justice to create their own programs to provide healthcare to the poor and inspire the next generation of social justice activists. PIH co-founders Paul Farmer and Ophelia Dahl were also featured speakers.

View videos of the speakers and panels.

Lights, camera, action:
PIH’s partner organization in Peru, Socos En Salud (SES) recently held a contest for short films to help harness the innovation and skills of local experts in the communications field. The contest, Venciendo la Tuberculosis Resistente en el Perú (Overcoming Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis in Peru), was designed to help produce creative, high-quality audiovisual materials to teach the general public about drug-resistant TB, a disease that persistently plagues the country.

Peruvian TV producer and film maker Roberto Barba was named the winner earlier this month. His animated film TBC/TVC or Tuberculosis/Toda la voluntad curarse (Having the motivation to cure...
herself) tells the story of Avdee, a former TB patient who narrates her doubts, fears and frustrations, as well as the hope she finds in the volunteers who encourage her to stay on treatment. The film was inspired by the book Venciendo la TB-MDR: 20 Testimonios de Expacientes con Tuberculosis Multidrogorresistente (Conquering MDR-TB: Stories of 20 former Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis Patients), published by SES.

For more information about TBC/TVC and the book that inspired it, please contact Elaine Weisman at eweisman@pih.org.

**Socios En Salud honored with awards:** In recognition of its success in combating MDR-TB and other global health issues, Socios En Salud (PIH's partner organization in Peru) recently accepted two distinguished awards.

The Carso Institute, which funds organizations in the Latin American and Caribbean region who are effectively enhancing the well-being of the population and building leaders in these fields named SES an “exceptional institution” and presented the award to SES founder and executive director Jaime Bayona on behalf of the organization on September 8th in Mexico City.

The Stop TB Partnership and Kochon Foundation also recognized SES’s contribution to global health care by awarding it the Kochon prize. The award is bestowed annually to leaders in the fight against tuberculosis. Jaime Bayona accepted the honor on behalf of Socios En Salud on October 17th at the opening ceremony of the World Conference of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease in Paris. (See below for more about this conference).

**IUATLD:** This October, the 39th World Conference of Lung Health of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease brought together hundreds of practitioners, researchers and other key experts in the field of tuberculosis treatment. PIH and its three institutional partners sent a delegation of 36 to the conference, which was held in Paris, France. The team members included site representatives from Boston, Haiti, Lesotho, Peru, Russia and Rwanda, who all enthusiastically participated in over 26 presentations, poster displays and panel discussions. There was a great amount of excitement over GHDonline, which recruited over 100 new members and moderators (please email Amy House at ahouse@partners.org for more information about GHDonline).