

News and Publications

- News Archive
- Feature Archive

**Partners In Education:
UCSF In Tanzania >>**

**Interview with Helen
Loeser >>**



Stephanie Taché

The Global Health Sciences Initiative In Tanzania

03.27.06



Stephanie Taché (middle) with UCSF visiting team.
Photo by Mwanzo Millinga

The UCSF Global Health Sciences' (GHS) capacity building effort with the Muhimbili College of Health Sciences (MUCHS) in Tanzania is being anchored by Dr. Stephanie Taché, assistant professor of family & community medicine, who moved to Dar-es-Salaam in September to lead this program. The recent visit of the school's medical education team to MUCHS is one component of a multi-pronged program to increase the quantity and quality of healthcare workers in Tanzania. It is funded by the Centers for Disease Control, with the National Institute for Medical Research in Tanzania as the lead institution. UCSF GHS is a subcontractor.

Capacity building in the developing world is a novel initiative for UCSF, but a key strategic objective for Global Health Sciences. Dr. Haile T. Debas, executive director of GHS, realized early on that much of the healthcare aid to Africa was doomed to fail because those countries lacked the systems and institutions – capacity – to deliver medicines to those in need, to assure clean water, or to train needed numbers of healthcare workers. "However well intentioned," Dr. Debas asserted, "if development assistance is not structured to be sustainable by the recipient country, the benefit is short lived."

The GHS initiative in Tanzania aims to directly address the problems of capacity and sustainability through focusing on training, preferably in-country, with one institution. A long-term commitment with one institution - MUCHS - is fundamental to strengthening institutional and human competence as a basis for sustainable development. The program has been jointly planned by MUCHS and UCSF.

One objective of the UCSF-MUCHS partnership is to build up the basic science teaching faculty. During a visit last September of four MUCHS' faculty to UCSF, it was learned that there was only one biochemistry lecturer to teach the winter course to 400 students. UCSF was able to provide short-term assistance in the persons of two biochemistry postdocs, Gilles Hickson of UCSF and Selma Omer of Oxford. Dr. Hickson described the experience as both humbling and moving and noted that "there is a naïve potential in the students that needs to be unlocked. The paucity of faculty to teach these courses has imposed a rigid, large-lecture format, with little opportunity for student participation."

The work of the biochemistry lecturers like the rest of the GHS program has been facilitated by Dr. Stephanie Taché. In addition to the work associated with the UCSF-MUCHS partnership, she is developing a family medicine curriculum at the Aga Khan University also located in Dar es Salaam. She is also overseeing rotations of medical students and residents to both MUCHS and Aga Khan as well as establishing a research project with the National Institute of Medical Research in Tanzania. An American-French-Québécoise trained at UCLA and UCSF, Dr. Stephanie Taché credits her multicultural background, in addition to her strong sense of social responsibility, as factors leading to her work in East Africa.

Source: Joyce McKinney

TOP ▲

Updated: March 27, 2006