

CONTROVERSIES IN SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS



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PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

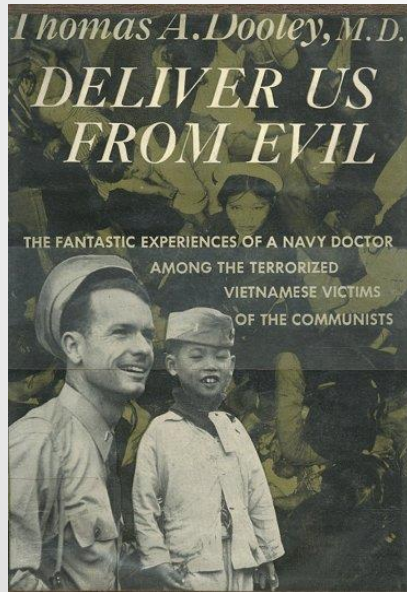
- Recognize the issues of effectiveness, ethics, and cultural relevance in Short-Term Healthcare Missions.
- Develop reliable partnerships with host national leaders.
- Assure continuity and ongoing commitment





SOMALIA 1993

MY ENTRANCE INTO INTERNATIONAL HEALTHCARE



In high school I read
this exemplary
account of courage
and compassion. “I
want to do the same!”
was my heartfelt
conviction.

TWO WEEKS AS A JUNIOR MEDICAL STUDENT

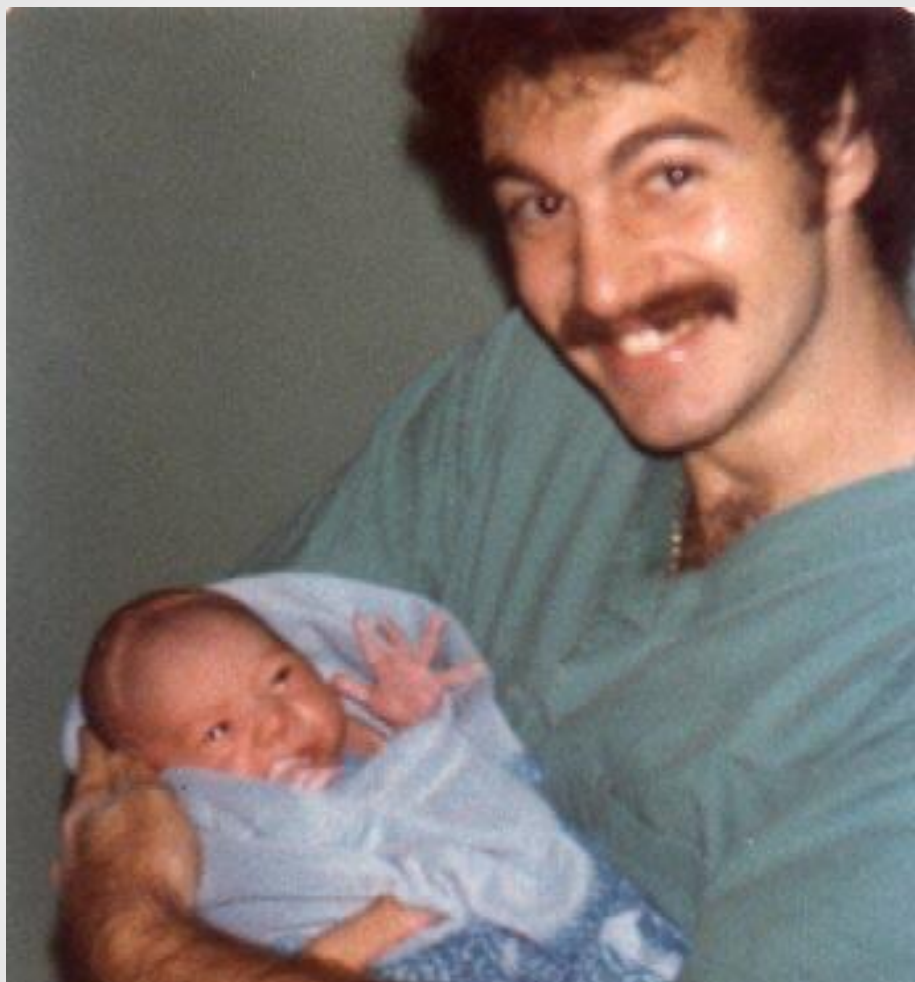


**Maternity Hospital
in Port-au-Prince, Haiti**

TWO MONTHS AS A SENIOR MEDICAL STUDENT



Clinica Evangelica Morava, Honduras



TWO MONTHS AS A RESIDENT PHYSICIAN



**Galimi Hospital in Niger
and Burkina Faso**



TWO YEARS AN ATTENDING PHYSICIAN



Shanghai Charity Hospital



TWO YEARS AS AN ATTENDING PHYSICIAN



Kalukembe Hospital, Angola, southern Africa



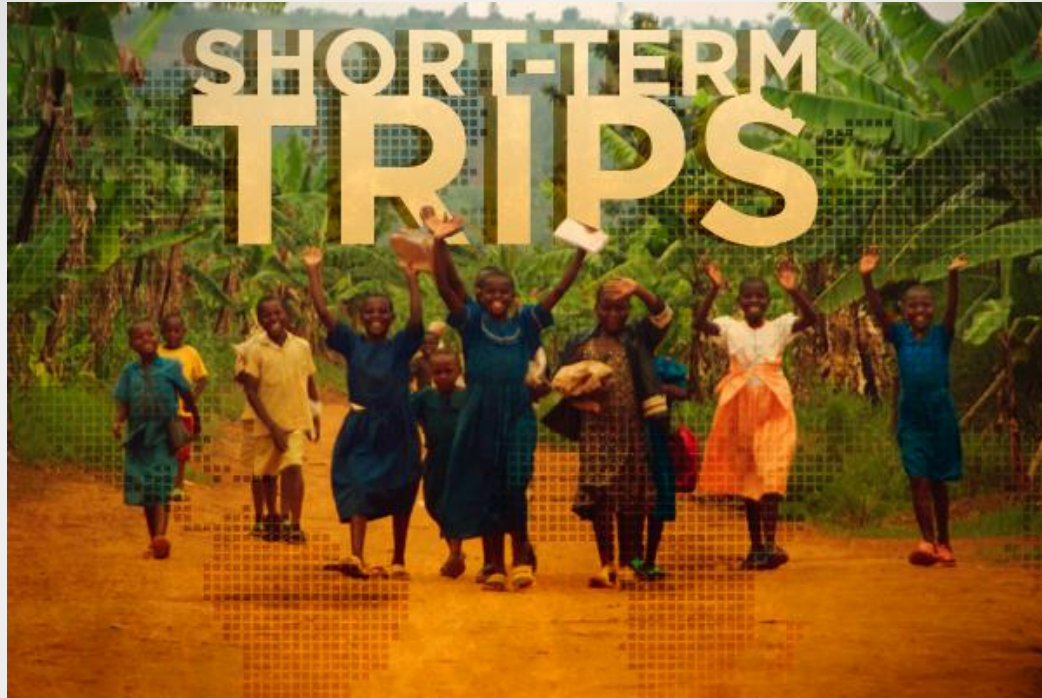
**SINCE 2003, EQUIPPING
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
TO SERVE THE FORGOTTEN**



INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL
MEDICINE



**SOME 5,000 SHORT-TERM
HEALTHCARE TEAMS TRAVEL
OUTSIDE THE US EACH YEAR**



**5-10 DAYS IN LENGTH, MOSTLY
PROVIDING EPISODIC MEDICAL CARE**

WHY ARE WE SO FASCINATED WITH THESE?



- Deep instinct to help people in need
- Excitement of cultures and travel

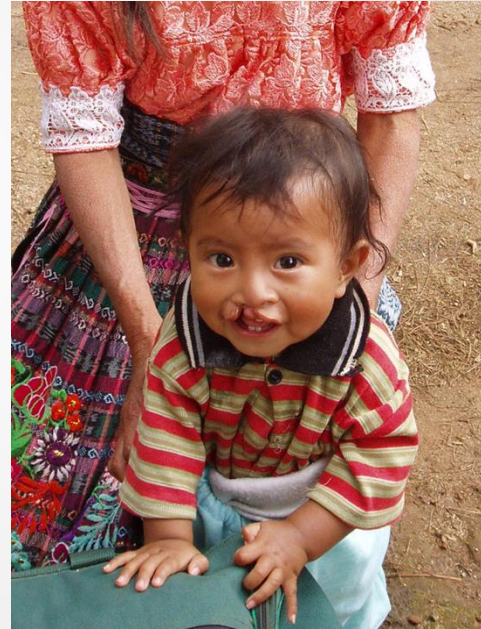


WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS?



BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Providing care for forgotten people
- Creating a vision for future service
- Expressing compassion
- Contributing to local healthcare infrastructure?



WHAT ARE SOME SHORTCOMINGS?



SHORTCOMINGS INCLUDE:

- Lack of understanding local conditions, language, culture
- Deficient continuity of care
- De-emphasis on preventive care
- Lack of contributing to long-term solutions



ARE SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS *EFFECTIVE?*

- Our altruistic motives must be tempered by a reality check of whether they are indeed effective.
- *By what criteria shall we measure such effectiveness?*



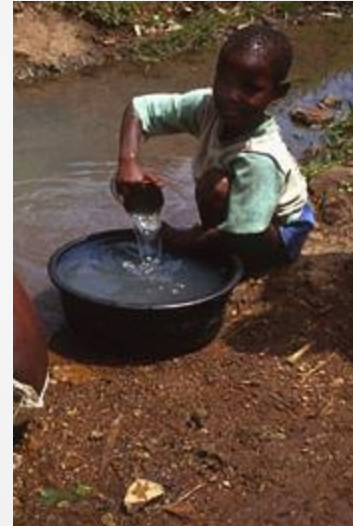
POTENTIAL CRITERION

- Overall satisfaction of the participants?
- Overall satisfaction of the hosts?
- Number of services rendered?
- Acts of compassion?
- Increase in community's health status?



ASK OURSELVES...

- Is it effective to administer de-worming medication to children, and yet to not address the contaminated water they drink?
- Is it effective to diagnose an individual's diabetes, while there's no access to treatment, testing or follow-up care?



ASK OURSELVES...

- Is it effective to treat diarrheal disease among children but not to address their underlying malnutrition?
- Is it effective to treat malaria among children but not to providing bed nets to the families to prevent the malaria?



ARE SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS ETHICAL?



What are some related ethical issues?

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Is it ethical to practice in another nation without a license?
- Is it ethical to allow students to care for people without the supervision they would receive in their home nations?



EXAMPLE ETHICAL ISSUE

“Our healthcare team saw a Honduran lady who was treated by an American physician for her chronic neuropathic pain with Neurontin samples. After the physician left, the lady developed severe adverse effects, with no one to care for her, let alone anyone who was familiar with the drug...”



Nancy Crigger

EXAMPLE ETHICAL ISSUE

“While well intended, the physician's care was neither sustainable nor safe. Even if the drug had been effective, she would never be able to obtain it in Honduras. Using prudence in prescribing (limiting medications to those on the WHO Essential Drug List) and assuring that a local follow-up was in place may have helped avoid this precarious situation.”

ARE SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS CULTURALLY RELEVANT?



CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

- What are the cultural barriers that separate North American healthcare professionals from marginalized people?
- What are some of the cross-cultural dilemmas encountered in we provide care for them?



CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

"Our team traveled to South Africa, where almost every other person is HIV positive." Stanley, a public health specialist, expressed high hopes for their two-week journey. "I designed a presentation about sexual abstinence and condom use, and I gave it to several audiences. They all listened politely enough..."

CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

“But later, an elder quietly explained to me that Zulu males are instructed and expected to initiate sexual activity before even reaching their teen years. How could I be an effective educator when I knew almost nothing about sexuality in their society?”



CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

“A young mother returned to our mobile clinic saying ‘My babies are crying uncontrollably and are feverish. Yesterday, you put a curse on them when I brought my babies for vaccinations! Your evil eye is black magic!’ The lady glared at me, and I had no idea what she was talking about.”



CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

“After the mother left in a torrent of screaming my translator asked, ‘Doctor, when you examined her babies did you touch them fondly? Touch is necessary to express genuine affection. Without such touch, you only communicate envy – that what you really want is for the babies to be dead.’”



SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS SHOULD PROVIDE CARE THAT IS:



- Effective
- Ethical
- Culturally relevant

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS?



SOLUTION:

- Partnerships with our national hosts
- Continuity of commitment





The guidance of partners greatly increases the likelihood that health care will be more effective, ethical, and culturally relevant

PARTNERSHIP WITH WHOM?



PARTNERSHIP WITH WHOM?

- National healthcare professionals
- Healthcare facilities
- Educational institutions
- Government agencies
- Religious and civic organizations

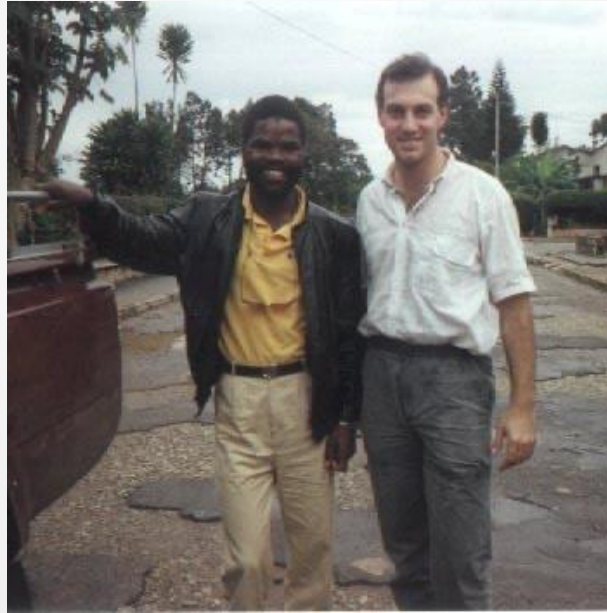


PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS EVERYONE



Especially the
stature of our
partners within
their own
nations

WHAT DOES HEALTHY PARTNERSHIP LOOK LIKE?



PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4



“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

**PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLE:
ASK “WHAT CAN I DO TO ASSIST
AT YOUR FACILITY?”**



PROVISION OF HUMAN POWER

- Community health projects (vaccination, safe water, microenterprise)
- Outpatient care (well childcare, maternal care)
- Inpatient care
- Emergency care

*Always in collaboration
with, and ideally, under
direction of a national host*

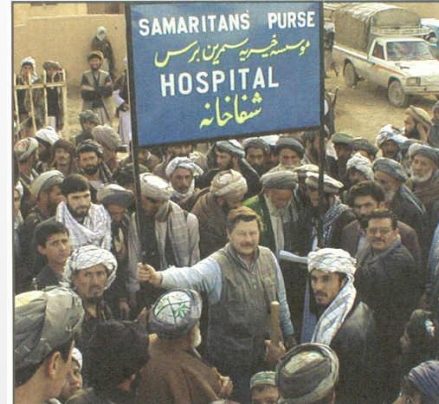


PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLE: ASK “WHAT MATERIALS CAN I HELP SUPPLY?”



MATERIALS FOR ASSISTING

- Textbooks & teaching aids
- Critical/essential medications
- Appropriate technology
- Plumbing/electrical
- Information access
- Disaster aid



PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLE: ASK “WHAT SUBJECTS CAN I HELP TO TEACH?”



SUBJECTS FOR EFFECTIVE SHORT-TERM TEACHING

- Newborn resuscitation
- Management of obstetrical complications
- Cardiac life support
- Trauma life support



PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLE: ASK “WHAT SPECIAL SERVICES ARE NEEDED?”



EFFECTIVE SPECIAL SERVICES

- Dental Care
- Eye Care
- Surgery for disabilities/burns
- Fistula repair





**PARTNERSHIP
EXAMPLE:
ASK “WHAT
CAN YOU
TEACH ME TO
BETTER SERVE
YOUR
PEOPLE?”**

LEARN FROM OUR NATIONALS HOSTS

- Health beliefs
- Language
- History and culture
- Local economy
- Spiritual beliefs
- Holidays



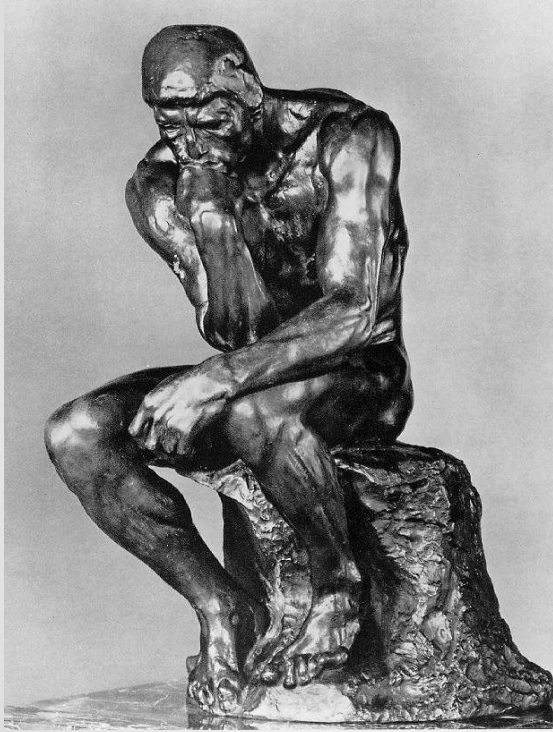
IMPROVED SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS:

- Find national partners
- Ask them how you can participate





**IS THIS POSSIBLE WITH A
COMMITMENT OF ONLY
5-10 DAYS?**



**EMBRACE
THE VIRTUE
OF
CONTINUITY
& LONG-TERM
INVESTMENT**

CONTINUITY & LONG-TERM INVESTMENT: TIM MYRICK IN HORN OF AFRICA







FOR TWO WEEKS EVERY THREE MONTHS, TEACHING AT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL



ALSO GIVING CLINICAL INSTRUCTION AT THE TEACHING HOSPITAL



CONTINUITY & LONG-TERM INVESTMENT: HEART-TO-HEART IN HAITI FOLLOWING EARTHQUAKE



CONTINUITY & LONG-TERM INVESTMENT: DRS. SHAFFER & WICKSTRUM IN HAITI



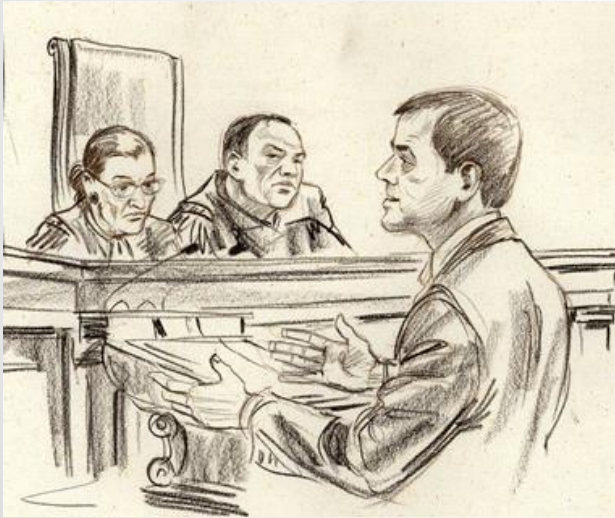
...LEADING TO THE 'BIRTH' OF HAITI'S BIRTHING HOME





**HOW CAN
SHORT-TERM
HEALTHCARE
MISSIONS BE
IMPROVED?**

SHORT-TERM HEALTHCARE MISSIONS THAT ARE:



- Effective
- Ethical
- Culturally relevant

**VIA:
PARTNERSHIPS WITH
OUR NATIONAL HOSTS AND
CONTINUITY OF
COMMITMENT**



- 1. FIND NATIONAL PARTNERS**
- 2. ASK THEM HOW WE CAN HELP**
- 3. COMMIT FOR THE LONG-TERM**



***EQUIP YOURSELF TO BETTER
SERVE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE***



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