

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1978 FOUNDATION  
SUMMER PROJECT REPORT**

SCOTT LEE, MPA 2006

WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

AUGUST 2006

# PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 1978 FOUNDATION SUMMER PROJECT REPORT

SCOTT LEE, MPA 2006  
WOODROW WILSON SCHOOL  
OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

---

## I. Summary

Through the generous support of the Princeton University Class of 1978 Foundation, I had the privilege of traveling to Kenya this summer to volunteer with Ugunja Community Resource Center (UCRC), specifically with its affiliated initiative, St. Paul's Health Center. This marked my fifth volunteer stint with UCRC in as many years, and my first since 2004. After a two-year absence, it was a joy to return to the community that has become such an integral part of my life. I am



happy to report that my trip was an unequivocal success. In this report I offer a brief summary of my activities during my trip, and in particular I comment on my performance with respect to the goals that I had set out in my project proposal. Reflecting on my activities, I thank the Class of 1978 Foundation for making my summer project possible and for enabling me to continue to serve the people of Kenya.

## II. Background

Established in 1992, Ugunja Community Resource Center is a small non-profit organization dedicated to promoting social change through indigenous community mobilization and activism. Instead of committing itself to a particular *cause*, UCRC's guiding commitment is to a particular *community*—the people of Ugunja, a rural township of 8,000 residents. To this end, UCRC oversees a variety of programs in order to address the whole spectrum of needs and challenges in the local community. Run entirely by local villagers, UCRC's program areas have grown to include sustainable agriculture, community health, women's empowerment, microfinance, information technology, education, and human rights advocacy.

During my last trip in 2004, I spearheaded the launch of one of UCRC's newest initiatives: St. Paul's Health Center. Our motivation was one of moral necessity:

community members were increasingly falling ill and dying, and yet health care was becoming increasingly inaccessible. Social, economic, and health indicators in the Ugunja region are consistently the worst in all of Kenya. Two in three live below the poverty line, one in three is HIV-positive, and one in five children is an orphan.

In 2004, in an effort to respond to this dire health crisis, we rented space in the vestry of a local church (called St. Paul's) and established a one-room, one-man pharmacy. Despite this humble beginning, our vision was ambitious and inspired: with the commitment and strength of local villagers and the dedicated support of international partners, we felt that St. Paul's could develop into an innovative health care facility that is fully integrated with the local community—a facility that builds local capacity by training and employing community members, that mobilizes community health workers for home-based care and outreach, and that provides high-quality care irrespective of a person's ability to pay.

In the two years since its establishment, St. Paul's has grown by leaps and bounds (see box). In all of its achievements, we've been firmly committed to principles of equity, compassion, and local empowerment. We provide most of our services at-cost. We've never turned away a patient in need of urgent care on grounds that he or she lacks money. And we are still entirely community-based and locally-driven; all of our staff were born and raised in the local area.

#### **St. Paul's Health Center: Recent Achievements**

- We've moved into a ten-room compound of our own featuring a general outpatient clinic, a laboratory, a pharmacy, a maternal and child health clinic, a dental clinic, and an HIV counseling and testing center.
- We offer a wide variety of services: primary health care, laboratory tests, dental cleanings and extractions, free voluntary counseling and testing for HIV, mobile outreach services, maternal and child health and family planning, and nutritional support.
- Our on-site staff numbers twelve, including two nurses, a nurse's assistant, three HIV counselors, a laboratory technician, a dental assistant, a mobile outreach worker, and three general volunteers.
- Seventeen community health workers continue to provide basic health outreach, education, and referral in their villages.
- We've set up a website through which we hope to provide regular updates on the health center's work: <http://www.ugunja.org/healthcentre>.
- Through a partnership with a nearby nursery school, we provide free comprehensive care to seventy children, including immunizations, deworming, acute treatment, nutritional support, growth monitoring, and insecticide-treated bednets.
- We've begun an HIV care program through which we provide free treatment of opportunistic infections, nutritional support, and psychosocial counseling to 180 persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- In the past year, we've provided care and treatment to roughly 2,000 patients; we currently see 400 patients per month, and this figure is increasing every month.

### III. Project Activities

Despite its rapid growth, St. Paul's still faces numerous challenges. St. Paul's needs an infusion of long-term financial resources and capacity-building assistance if it is to continue to grow. Resources are needed to expand the health center's infrastructure and facilities—e.g., inpatient wards, electricity, water mains. Resources are also needed to recruit and employ medical staff, to adequately cover the purchase of medicines and other supplies, and perhaps most important, to develop the health center's capacity for administration, financial management, and program evaluation. Only with such capacity can the health center operate efficiently and continually seek other sources of funding.

The purpose of my Foundation-sponsored summer project was to address this last need for administrative and financial capacity. Specifically, in my application, I identified three goals for my trip:

- (1) Develop a strategic plan for St. Paul's Health Center
- (2) Train local staff in policy advocacy and financial and non-profit management
- (3) Expand SPHC's institutional network by pursuing beneficial partnerships both within Kenya and internationally

I now report on each of these goals in turn.

#### ***Goal 1: Develop a strategic plan for St. Paul's Health Center***

Partly because St. Paul's Health Center was launched as an emergency response rapidly deteriorating health conditions, it has not had the opportunity to undergo a thorough long-term planning process. Needless to say, long-term strategies and principles are critical for an organization's growth and stability. Thus, I facilitated a week-long strategic planning process for St. Paul's. This process consisted of sensitization among SPHC management and staff about the importance of strategic planning, individual interviews with SPHC management and staff and external stakeholders (community members,



*Nurse Eunice Awuor examines a young patient*

government officials, other health care providers), a review of all internal documents and correspondences, and a one-day planning retreat involving eight management and staff personnel. As much as possible, I sought to employ participatory methods during these deliberations, and the planning retreat in particular was a thoroughly collective effort involving group discussions, break-out sessions, and team-building

### **St. Paul's Health Center's Strategic Outlook**

**Mission:** St. Paul's Health Centre will be an innovative and equitable health care facility that promotes spiritual, mental, social and physical well-being through prevention of disease, relief for the sick and advocacy for the vulnerable.

**Vision:** We envision a healthy and well-informed community in which every individual is able to live a long life in good health.

**Values:** St. Paul's Health Center values equity, justice and compassion; local empowerment and capacity-building; sharing and partnership; honesty, transparency, and accountability to stakeholders; and innovation in quality of care.

#### **Core Strategies:**

- (1) Develop and strengthen administrative, financial, and governance capacity.
- (2) Identify and pursue innovative and diverse modes of resource mobilization.
- (3) Scale-up outreach and prevention services and ensure high-quality curative services.
- (4) Seek and formalize partnerships.

exercises. During this planning retreat, the mission, vision, and values of the health center were agreed upon, and four core strategies for the next five years were identified (see box).

After the planning retreat, I was charged with the responsibility of writing the strategic plan. This document will guide the health center's work during the next five years and will also provide the basis for annual operational workplans for the health center. The strategic plan has already benefited St. Paul's by injecting a shared sense of resolve and excitement into all those involved with the health center.

### ***Goal 2: Train local staff in policy advocacy and financial and non-profit management***

As stated in the box above, one of SPHC's core values is local empowerment and capacity-building. In contrast, many health initiatives in Kenya and other developing countries are dependent on the human and financial resources of international medical groups. Our vision for St. Paul's is that it become an innovative health facility that builds the skills of local community members so that they can take ownership of the health center and ensure that it is fully responsive to the needs of the community. To this end, we hope to train local staff not only in health care, but also in such areas as advocacy, financial management, and non-profit administration.

It had been my intention to provide training in these areas during my summer trip. In the end, however, three other international volunteers (two Canadian, one Australian) arrived during my stay in Kenya. One is a registered nurse; another is a non-profit manager; and

a third is a certified public accountant. Given their expertise, we decided that they would take the lead in building the administrative and advocacy skills of SPHC staff. This process is ongoing, and already the benefits of this capacity-building are apparent. For example, the accountant has set up a new computerized financial management system for the health center that has streamlined its operation, and he has trained a local community member in accounting.

***Goal 3: Expand SPHC's institutional network by pursuing beneficial partnerships both within Kenya and internationally***

Clearly, St. Paul's Health Center cannot single-handedly solve all of the health and economic problems that affect the surrounding community. Partnerships with both Kenyan and international stakeholders will be vital as SPHC pursues its mission of serving the poorest and most vulnerable members of the surrounding community. To this end, I devoted the bulk of my summer project to establishing relationships with other organizations and health care providers in Kenya through intense networking and external communication. First, I met regularly with officials within the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MoH). Strong relations with the MoH are critical because the MoH is the official coordinating body of both public and private health institutions in Kenya, and because the Ministry has recently adopted a policy of incorporating non-profit and faith-based health institutions into its initiatives and campaigns.

Through a series of meetings with senior officials in the district-level MoH office, I was able to (1) secure invitations to future MoH-sponsored trainings for SPHC's staff, (2) establish a voice for SPHC in district-level health policy-making deliberations, and (3) initiate discussions for support from the MoH through the provision of essential drugs and supplies.

In addition to meeting with the Ministry of Health, I also established contacts with various other health stakeholders in Kenya—e.g., mission hospitals, health care NGOs, and academic institutions. Through these contacts, St. Paul's Health Center now has a dense and dynamic network of “institutional friends” that can serve as resources and partners in future endeavors.

As for international partners, while in Kenya I sought and pursued avenues for collaboration between St. Paul's and American NGOs and universities. In particular, I am in the process of formalizing a partnership between Harvard Medical School and St. Paul's, through which Harvard medical students and faculty will (1) advise and support



*Growth monitoring of pre-school children*



St. Paul's in all areas of the health center's operations and development (strategy, resource mobilization, research, advocacy) and (2) travel to Kenya for short-term medical service trips.

### ***Other Activities***

In addition to the specific activities described above, I was also able to participate in and further the work of the health center in other ways. On a day-to-day basis, I acted as a volunteer at the health center, in which capacity I interviewed patients, performed laboratory tests, assisted with drug dispensing, and so forth. I also traveled for one week to Uganda to meet with Ugandan Ministry of Health officials and visit several sites that are providing innovative interventions to AIDS and tuberculosis. The observations I made during these will be invaluable as I help to design and improve SPHC's own services. Finally, I helped to draft a few grant proposals for St. Paul's that we hope will provide a stable immediate source of funding for the health center.

### **IV. Conclusion**

Not a day passed this summer in which I did not feel a tremendous sense of privilege to be able to work in Kenya. As recently as March of this year, due to a lack of funds, I did not think I would be able to travel to Kenya this summer. The Class of 1978 Foundation's selection of me as a summer grant recipient came as a huge surprise and honor. I hope that, through this report, I have been able to convey to you a sense of the tremendous progress that has occurred as a result of my trip to Kenya. Thus, on behalf of the people of St. Paul's Health Center and the surrounding community, I once again offer my sincerest thanks to the Princeton University Class of 1978 Foundation for making my summer project in Kenya possible. Through your support, St. Paul's has moved a great deal forward in its efforts to provide compassionate care and support to a community beset with widespread disease and destitution. Thank you.



*Performing a malaria test*