"I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty."—John D. Rockefeller

Public Health In Action: Sanitation and Water Pilot Project in Angolela

We are happy to report the completion of the partnership’s inaugural project, Angolela Sanitation and Water: Pilot Project in Angolela, Ethiopia. In partnership with Feed the Children (FTC) Ethiopia and Addis Continental Institute of Public Health (ACIPH), the Saving Lives Partnership used a donation from Scott and Ann Marie Robertson, anonymous donor, and funds from the Brotman Award to provide Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines and install water tanks. (Please see page 2)

MIRT Program Awarded Funding for Another 5 Years

We are happy to report that the MIRT Program received funding from the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities (NICHD) and Fogarty International Center (FIC) for another five years. Thank you to all who helped in getting this important training grant renewed.

MEET MIRT 2009 Fellows

“When I first heard about MIRT, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for—a chance to engage in global health research first-hand, to not only travel, but to help a community as well.” —Nicole de Paz, MIRT 2009, Peru

“I am both thrilled and honored to be a MIRT Fellow. Rarely does one get an opportunity to combine international travel with meaningful health-related research.” —Nam Nguyen, MIRT 2009, Ethiopia
Public Health In Action: Sanitation and Water Pilot Project in Angolela

The United Nations (UN) estimates that two and a half billion of the world’s people (>40%) do not have access to a safe toilet, while a billion people live without a safe water supply. It is with this understanding that the Rotary-UW Saving Lives Partnership undertook the task of creating local solutions to sanitation and water needs in rural communities in Africa. While addressing these global public health problems, the Saving Lives Partnership is also committed to providing exemplary educational opportunities to students through innovative research and health service programs. In this newsletter we are happy to report the completion of the partnership’s inaugural project, the Angolela Sanitation and Water: Pilot Project, in Angolela, Ethiopia.

The project site is the Angolela Primary School, which serves some 800 students. Built about 40 years ago, the school is located approximately 135 kilometers northeast of Addis Ababa (the capital city). Unlike elsewhere in the country, students in Angolela can’t afford to be in school all day. Thus, they have two shifts: morning and afternoon. The teachers in Angolela are dedicated, determined and hardworking. Although they lack many necessary teaching resources, they are using all they have to provide much needed education to their students, and with the help of the community they have built rooms to expand their classes. In this vibrant educational environment, just two things are lacking: a functional toilet and a nearby water source for the students.

A survey conducted a year ago in the region found a high prevalence of trachoma infection and intestinal parasitic infection. Trachoma is a leading preventable cause of eye blindness, which disproportionally affects people, especially young children, in developing countries. Although trachoma has long been eradicated from the Western countries, it remains a significant public health problem in many parts of Africa.

In partnership with Feed the Children (FTC) Ethiopia and Addis Continental Institute of Public Health (ACIPH), the Saving Lives Partnership used donations from Scott and Ann Marie Robertson and anonymous donor along with funds from the 2007 Brotman Award to provide Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrines and install water tanks at the school. (FTC Ethiopia is a local non-governmental organization that has been working in different local capacity building activities for more than 23 years.)

An unpredictable rainy season and rocky ground made building the VIP latrines complicated, but thanks to dedicated community members and FTC staff the project was completed successfully. Since February of this year, the students in Angolela have had access to latrines and clean water. Moreover, the teachers have introduced hygiene education into their curriculum. Students have formed health clubs to talk about trachoma and intestinal parasitic infection.

Another Partnership goal aimed to document the burden of disease before and after the intervention. A baseline survey was conducted by ACIPH in October 2008, and a post-intervention evaluation will be conducted next week to evaluate the extent to which new latrines, access to water and hygiene education have affected the occurrence of trachoma and intestinal parasitic infections among the students. We will provide updates in our next issue.

Our deep gratitude goes to Dr. Wondimagegnehu and Mr. Ashenafi from FTC and Professor Yemane, Dr. Abera and Mr. Nigusu from ACIPH.
There are some stories that are worth sharing—not glamorous, but very up-lifting. The story of Mr. Tekle is a case in point. Mr. Tekle is teacher and principal at one of the schools in Angolela. Originally from the southern part of the Ethiopia, he visited Angolela in the 1980s, not intending to stay longer than two months. But he fell in love with the kids, who were hungry for learning, and couldn’t leave them.

He has been teaching in the Angolela region for more than 25 years. He walks three hours every single day to get from one school to the other. There are no chairs—his students sit on the dirt floor. He is passionate and determined. He gets satisfaction by keeping the best works of his students in a safe box in his house—that is his currency! When he feels discouraged, he pulls one of them out and he’s happy—just like that. I asked him to share with us his proudest moment—one day, his friend was seriously ill and was referred to Ethiopia’s premier hospital: Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa. Mr. Tekle took his friend to the hospital, where one of the doctors looked at him and cried, “Teacher!” and gave him a hug. He nearly cried to see that one of his students ended up in such a high place! In his humble way, he continues to train the next generation of leaders. His story is an inspiration for us all!
Hello, my name is Andrew Hillman. I am a junior at Queens College in New York, where I major in Nutrition and Exercise Science and minor in Chemistry. I have a LOT of goals for my future, which include becoming a culturally conscious and clinically ethical physician. I also would like to obtain my masters in public health so that I can look at the various health disparities that cause obesity. The pursuit of my bachelor’s degree in Nutrition and Exercise has deepened my knowledge of the issues that affect individuals on a global scale, such as obesity. I know that the MIRT Program will give me scientific tools and cultural experiences that will guide me along my path to service and research. I am really excited to travel to Thailand with the MIRT Program. I truly believe that this highly regarded program will help me to grow as a person and meet new, interesting people.

My name is Hau Do. I am a senior at the University of Washington, majoring in Biochemistry, with minors in Public Health and Medical History and Ethics. My ultimate goal is to obtain MD/MPH degrees. Coming from an immigrant background, I have always been interested in health disparities. This interest has motivated me to pursue a minor in Public Health and has led me to apply to the MIRT Program. I am honored to participate in the MIRT program this summer. MIRT will provide me an opportunity to learn more about health disparities that affect people in developing countries like Thailand. Moreover, I am very excited to learn more about new research skills in Epidemiology and how to conduct population-based research. The MIRT experience will help me to be a culturally competent physician and an understanding person by allowing me an opportunity to immerse myself in a new culture.
Greetings! I’m Nam Nguyen and I’m a second year student at the University of Washington, Seattle. I’m studying both Biology (with a focus on Physiology) and Anthropology (with a focus on Medicine and Public Health). In between my classes, I’m really active in my neurophysiology research. The lab I’m part of studies the auditory physiology of the Big Brown Bat, *Eptesicus fuscus*. We look at how specific neurons respond to certain auditory stimuli, and we track the patterns of these cells in the bat’s brain. It’s an interesting research position, and I’m honored to be a part of it all. Even though Seattle is where I have called home for the past two years, I’m originally from the City of Roses – Portland, Oregon. It isn’t too far away from the U, but far enough where I can get a little independence. In my free time (which seems to be a disappearing commodity), you can find me at the gym, playing the piano, listening to music, at the tennis courts, hitting a few balls around, watching CNN (never expected that, eh?), and napping (to make up for all the lost hours of sleep).

I am both thrilled and honored to be a MIRT Fellow. Rarely does one get an opportunity to combine international travel with meaningful health-related research. The prospects of what the future may hold in this program are exciting, and I’m thrilled to be a member of this experience. I am looking forward to developing skills in researching international health, particularly that of developing countries, and use those skills for a meaningful outcome for the research project. In addition, to be able to interact with the local populations, not just from a researcher’s point of view, but on a personal and individualized level, and to be empathetic with each individual’s situation is a humbling experience I look forward to sharing. Finally, as an Anthropology major, I’m eager to explore and learn more about Ethiopia – the location where many believe humanity may have started. So with that, I head forth toward the challenges and experiences that await me in Ethiopia!

*I am both thrilled and honored to be a MIRT Fellow. Rarely does one get an opportunity to combine international travel with meaningful health related research.* — Nam Nguyen
My name is Nicole de Paz, and I was born and raised in Orlando, FL. I’m currently a sophomore at Yale University, majoring in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, and I plan to pursue an MD/MPH after college. I first became interested in public health when I began volunteering as an interpreter for Spanish-speaking patients at a free clinic in Fair Haven, a predominately Latino community near my school. My experience there exposed me to the unique health-related challenges that Latinos face and introduced me to the idea of become a physician focused on community health, particularly for underserved populations.

I am honored to be a 2009 MIRT Fellow, and I am very much looking forward to immersing myself in the culture of Peru and learning about health care and public health research in an international setting. I expect to be challenged, to grow and to learn a great deal, not only about the technical aspects of global health research, but also about myself and how I can best contribute to the field. When I first heard about MIRT, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for—a chance to engage in global health research first-hand, to not only travel, but to help a community as well—and I am excited about the experience that awaits.

My name is Damarys Espinoza. My family is Cora and Chicana from Nayarit and Tijuana, Mexico on my mother's side and on my father's side we are from Queretaro, Puebla, Hidalgo and Mexico City. I am a member of Danza Mexica Cuauhtemoc, an international Mexica and Aztec danza circle dedicated to maintaining our Indigenous life ways and ensuring that our people have the means to live with dignity and thrive with health and wellness. I am a third year Ph.D. student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Washington.

My research foci include indigenous healing and wellness, HIV/AIDS, indigenous women's health, medical anthropology, and the history and politics of Mexican immigration. As a 2009 MIRT fellow, I look forward to working with colleagues both at the University of Washington and in Lima, Peru on issues that are deeply relevant to the health and well-being of Peruvian women, families, and communities. Mexica Tiahui, Ometeotl.

“I expect to be challenged, to grow and to learn a great deal, not only about the technical aspects of global health research, but also about myself and how I can best contribute to the field.” — Nicole de Paz
Dr. Vitool Lohsoonthorn, is an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Chulalongkorn University. Dr. Lohsoonthorn got his M.D. and M.Sc. in Community Medicine from Chulalongkorn University, and an M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Epidemiology from The University of Washington. Dr. Lohsoonthorn has been a core faculty member of the MIRT Program for the last 4 years. Dr. Lohsoonthorn was instrumental in creating The University of Washington-Chulalongkorn University partnership. Dr. Lohsoonthorn has published several articles in domestic and international journals.

**Why did you choose epidemiology?**
Epidemiology can provide the opportunity to develop a set of tools and methods I need to become a successful clinical researcher.

**Who is your role model?**
Dr. Michelle Williams. She is a special person and an exceptional mentor; she effects great change in students, providing them the tools needed to become independent professionals.

**What job would you have chosen if you were not an Epidemiologist?**
A biostatistician. I love biostatistics!

**What in your life are you most proud of, and why?**
I am very proud of my family and my friends in Seattle. They always kindly support me.

**What is your favorite music?**
Classical music.

**What is your favorite movie?**
I love science fiction and action movies.

**What is your favorite quote?**
"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."

**What is something most people would be surprised to learn about you?**
People are always surprised to learn I am Thai since I am much bigger than typical Thais.

**What is your preferred menu?**
It is variable. I most enjoy Japanese, Chinese, Thai, and American cuisine.

**What are your hobbies?**
Listening to music and watching series movies like 24 or Prison Break.

**Are you a 'morning' or 'night' person?**
I am a morning person. But I noticed that I write best around midnight.

**Where is your favorite place to travel to?**
My second home, Seattle.

**Which kind of sport do you mostly play?**
None.

**Which publication are you most proud of?**
My recent article published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

**If it was possible, with whom would you like to change places for one month?**
No one.

**What is your favorite word?**
Yes, we made it.

**What is your least favorite word?**
No.

**What do you like most about Bangkok?**
Many enormous shopping malls, department stores, and colorful markets.

**What do you like least about Bangkok?**
Traffic jams and hot weather.

**What’s your best advice to students who want to succeed?**
Work hard! Don’t give up until you’ve really tried with your whole heart.
Every year MIRT fellows and faculty work on diverse research projects that address the needs of the communities at each site. In the Science Corner we provide abstracts of recently published papers from selected sites. In this issue we present two studies from Thailand and Peru. The full text of the papers can be accessed from the links below.

**Objective:** To examine the relationship between vaginal bleeding during early pregnancy and preterm delivery.

**Methods:** Study subjects (N = 2678) provided information regarding socio-demographic, biomedical, and lifestyle characteristics. Logistic regression was used to estimate odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (95% CI).

**Results:** Any vaginal bleeding in early pregnancy was associated with a 1.57-fold increased risk of preterm delivery (95% CI: 1.16–2.11). Vaginal bleeding was most strongly related with spontaneous preterm labor (OR = 2.10) and weakly associated with preterm premature rupture of membrane (OR = 1.36) and medically induced preterm delivery (OR = 1.32). As compared to women with no bleeding, those who bled during the first and second trimesters had a 6.24-fold increased risk of spontaneous preterm labor; and 2–3-fold increased risk of medically induced preterm delivery and preterm premature rupture of membrane, respectively.

**Conclusion:** Vaginal bleeding, particularly bleeding that persists across the first two trimesters, is associated with an increased risk of preterm delivery.


**Objective:** We sought to identify correlates of violent response among women exposed to intimate partner violence (IPV).

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study was conducted among 2,392 women who delivered at the Instituto Nacional Materno Perinatal, Lima, Peru. A structured questionnaire was used to collect information on exposure to IPV and women’s physical violent reaction towards their abuser. Information on socio-demographic and lifestyle characteristics was also collected. Logistic regression procedures were used to estimate multivariable adjusted odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (95% CI).

**Results:** In bivariate analyses, maternal educational attainment, access to basic foods, help seeking behavior, witnessing parental violence during childhood, and type of IPV were statistically significantly associated with women’s violent response towards their abuser. In multivariate analyses education, history of witnessing parental violence during childhood, and type of IPV remained as statistically significant risk factors of violent response to IPV. More highly educated women (> 12 years of education) were 2.17-times (OR=2.17; 95% CI 1.28-3.68) as likely to report responding violently towards their abusive intimate partners than less well educated women (≤ 6 years education). Women who were sexually abused by their partners, as compared with women who experienced emotional abuse only, were more than twice as likely to respond in a violent manner to the abuse (OR=2.32, 95%CI: 1.14-4.74). Similarly, women who reported being physically abused, were 4-times as likely as those who experienced emotional abuse only to retaliate in a physically violent manner (OR=4.04, 95% CI: 2.68-6.11).

**Conclusion:** Women’s educational status, history of witnessing parental violence as a child, and type of IPV are significantly associated with women’s violent response. Community support networks and culturally appropriate intervention programs designed to prevent and mitigate the impact of IPV are needed.

Full text available at: [http://jiv.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0886260508329127v1](http://jiv.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/0886260508329127v1)
A special thank you to all those who participated and helped us in making the 2009 UW MIRT orientation a great success!

"The use of new technology is no excuse for having bad manners (or poor driving skills)."
— Karlotta Rosebaugh

"Good manners will open doors that the best education cannot."
— Clarence Thomas

"Praise is well, compliment is well, but affection—that is the last and most precious reward that any man can win, whether by character or achievement."— Mark Twain

Jaimee Marsh, MIRT 2008 Fellow, received the 2009 President’s Achievement award. The President’s Achievement Award is presented to a senior who has made impressive contributions to the campus and community while maintaining the most outstanding academic record among all graduating Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) students. Jaimee will be graduating this week with a B.S. in social welfare with a minor in public health and geography. She has also received a scholarship in the advanced standing Master’s of Social Work program at the University of Michigan for the fall of 2009 entry. On a related note, a research paper that Jaimee Marsh and Sonya Patel worked on during their fellowship entitled “Prevalence of Workplace Abuse and Sexual Harassment among Female Faculty and Staff” has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Occupational Health.

Jaimee, congratulation on all the accomplishments!

Dr. Annette Fitzpatrick, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health, leading introduction to epidemiology and biostatistics session

Dr. Jim Litch, Clinical Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health and Maternal and Child Health Specialist at PATH, discussing important tips of travel health and Immunization

Kudos!

Jaimee Marsh with President Mark Emmert

Kudos!

Dr. Annette Fitzpatrick, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health, leading introduction to epidemiology and biostatistics session

Thank You!

A special thank you to all those who participated and helped us in making the 2009 UW MIRT orientation a great success!

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Jaimee, congratulations on all the accomplishments!

Kudos!

Jaimee Marsh with President Mark Emmert
After graduating from the University of Washington, Nati Chavez, began working with Sea Mar Community Health Centers in Tacoma and Puyallup. Sea Mar Community Health Center is a community-based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health and human services to low-income, underserved, and uninsured communities in western Washington, with a specialization in services to the Latino population.

As a health educator, Nati had the opportunity to work with a diverse population. Through one-on-one consultations and workshops, She was able to help people manage their diabetes and prevent future complications. Not only did Nati promote health among her patients, but she recruited and encouraged her co-workers to join an after-hours yoga class for Sea Mar employees. Working as a health educator at Sea Mar reinforced Nati’s desire to become a Nurse Practitioner. This fall she will begin a master’s entry program in nursing at Ohio State University. On a related note, Nati had a good fortune of getting a Spanish version of her MIRT paper entitled “Duchas Vaginales Y Otros Riesgos de Vaginosis Bacteriana” accepted for publication in the Journal of Peruvian National Institutes of Health.

Congratulation, Nati!

Alumni Update

Let us know how you’re doing
Do you have an update or new photo to share with us?
We would love to hear from you!

NAME:_______________________________________________________________

UPDATE:________________________________________________________________

E-mail Address:________________________________________________________

NB: We have made it easier for our alumni to make updates directly online. Please go to the MIRT web page [www.depts.washington.edu/mirt/](http://www.depts.washington.edu/mirt/) and click on the Alumni Update.
MIRT is a national program designed to encourage students to pursue careers in biomedical and behavioral research. This program provides support for undergraduates and graduate students to receive research training in an international setting. MIRT is funded by the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD) and Fogarty International Center (FIC) of the National Institutes for Health; the UW MIRT Program has been developed in collaboration with Dillard University, Xavier University and Western Washington University. The program focuses on population-based health research in developing countries and builds on established linkages with academic institutions in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Thailand, Republic of Georgia, Australia, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina.

She is a gifted artist and a figure of quasi-political power. In 1939 she sang on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The Daughters of the American Revolution had refused to let her appear at Constitution Hall, Washington’s largest concert venue, because of the color of her skin. In response, Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the D.A.R. and President Roosevelt gave permission for a concert on the mall. A 10-year-old Martin Luther King Jr. talked about her performance in a speaking contest: “She sang as never before, with tears in her eyes. When the words of ‘America’ and ‘Nobody Knows de Trouble I see’ rang out over that gathering, there was a hush on the sea of uplifted faces, black and white, and a new baptism of liberty, equality, and fraternity. That was a touching tribute…” Throughout her life, she preferred not to make a scene. She is quoted as saying “My music was dedicated to a purpose more important than classical music’s pursuit of excellence; it was dedicated to the fight for freedom and the historical destiny of my people.”

[source: The New Yorker]