



SWB

Specialists Without Borders
meeting needs through medical education

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SUMMER /.
2017 Edition

In Brief.



Chairman's Report:

2017 has been a period of great change for SWB. As part of our strategy to develop the organisation, we have welcomed people from outside the health sector and taken advice from those in the NGO sector and beyond. Part of this process has involved developing a new name, which encompasses what the organisation has grown into. This will be launched in early 2018. My sincere thanks goes out to all those who have been involved in this process.

Our team has recently returned from a successful trip to Malawi and Zimbabwe, where our 30 team members (our largest group ever) delivered programs to over 330 participants. As always, I find it

incredibly rewarding to see our team members working together to deliver high-quality programs for groups of enthusiastic and inspiring health care professionals. Equally heart warming are the resilience, dedication and resourcefulness of the health care professionals who participate in our programs. All this would not be possible without the support of our in country partners; Dr Emma Thomson and Dr Patrick Noah in Blantyre, Dr Gift Mulima and Mrs. Dorothy Kabambe in Lilongwe, and Prof Godfrey Muguti and Mrs Rudo Nyamakur in Harare.

A highlight of the trip was the Inagural Dr Katherine Edyvane Award, which were awarded in Lilongwe and Harare. The quality of all research presented was outstanding and I feel this was a wonderful way to honour our colleague

and friend Katherine. We look forward to continuing to support the research conducted by our colleagues during future programs.

Kate Drummond
Chairperson
Specialists Without Borders



Dr Gift Mulima, SWB's Dr Amanda Foster and Sarah Delbsoc and award winners Dr Vanessa Msosa and Dr Natasha Ngwira in Lilongwe, Malawi.

WHAT WE DO

[www.
specialistswithoutborders.org](http://www.specialistswithoutborders.org)

SWB is an Australia-based non-profit organisation working to enhance the sustainability of medical service provision in developing countries.

SWB co-ordinates an international group of volunteer medical specialists, delivering specialist-led training programs for medical personnel in partner countries. For more about our projects and our volunteer teams of specialists, please visit our website.

Trip report

This year's trip saw our team travelling to Malawian cities Blantyre and Lilongwe and Harare, Zimbabwe. Our team of 30 comprised consultants, junior doctors, nurses, medical students, an adult education and learning specialist, a business analyst and our project officer. Our four day programs in Blantyre catered for nurses and medical and clinical officer students.

In Lilongwe we had well attended programs for students, junior doctors and nurses. Having all surgical trainees able to attend one of the two days meant that these participants were able to collaborate with our consultants in small group sessions highly tailored to their needs.

Our programs in Harare catered to junior doctors, nurses and nursing students. It was wonderful to have previous

participants returning to take part in this year's program and further develop our relationships with doctors and nurses who are keen to share their experiences.



The 2017 SWB team in Lilongwe, Malawi

Nursing Program Participant Profile Wongani Mwaungulu and Kettie Sakala

Why did you want to become a nurse?

K: I have a strong passion for helping the people of Malawi. In a place like Malawi, nursing is a good path. When I was young I was very sick with malaria and was cared for by very good nurses. Because they worked hard, I'm alive today.

W: I love interacting with people, listening to their problems and helping them.

What are some of the challenges that you face in your everyday work?

K: We have shortages in resources and staff, so having the desire to work hard for your patients isn't always enough. Some nurses are in charge of 80 patients on their ward, which is a great challenge.

W: Many of us live far away from where we work and the cost of transport

is high. When we have many patients to care for we have to give priority to the sickest patients and less sick patients don't get as much attention as we would like to give them.



Kettie, Georgia and Wongani during the Lilongwe nursing program

What is the best thing about your job?

K: Seeing my patients being well and knowing that you contributed to their good health is the most rewarding.

What are some useful things that the SWB program covered?

K: There are important things that we learn in our training, but forget over time. Being given resources means we can go back to remind ourselves in the future. We can also share these with our colleagues.

W: Things like correct hand washing and systematic patient assessment seem very simple, but they are more complicated than people think. Being reminded about these things is very useful.



Wongani (R) practicing her basic life support skills

Junior Doctor Profile

Dr Jerry Abrahams

What is your current role and how did you find yourself there?

I'm currently a GP registrar in the Tablelands, far North Queensland. Prior to this I was Principal House Officer at a rural hospital in this region. Working in this region has meant moving back to where my wife is from, a logical move after our daughter was born.



Jerry taking a small group session in Blantyre, Malawi.

Why did you want to join the SWB team?

I have always had an interest in helping under-resourced communities develop knowledge and skills through education, so that they are able to impact their communities in a positive and sustainable way. Having grown up in various countries and being exposed to poverty and social injustices and its impact on overall health of society, I felt that my goals aligned with those of SWB.

What was the highlight of your trip?

The collegiality of the teaching group and the absence of the usual hierarchy found in health settings was certainly a highlight, probably because it's quite different in the everyday work setting! Gaining insight into the health systems of other countries whilst learning about both the strengths and obstacles made me reflect on cultural sensitivity in teaching and learning experiences.

What was the biggest challenge?

Understanding the true barriers to health care within the health systems in Malawi and Zimbabwe was a challenge as was teaching (both content and delivery) in a way

the acknowledges and respects the structure and hierarchies that underpin the health systems in these settings.

What would you say to other health professionals wanting to get involved in SWB?

If you feel called to teach, share and inspire others to learn and help improve their communities, then join SWB! Through providing education for health professionals in low resource settings you'll be contributing to improved health outcomes. Don't do it to boost your CV – do it if you genuinely care about the difference it can make!



The 2017 Junior Doctor Team

Thank you for your support

SWB's work would not be possible without the generosity and determination of many individuals and organisations. From the 2017 team members who volunteered their time and expertise to the Surgical Students Society of Melbourne and Conni Australia, we say thank you! We are also incredibly lucky to have

a small group of individuals who, through their financial contributions, enable SWB to purchase vital equipment used during our programs. We also have ongoing support from the Melbourne University Health Initiative, which enables the donation of high-demand products and teaching materials



to some of the facilities where the team conducts health education programs. Finally, we thank Specialised Therapeutics for their ongoing support. In addition to being our major sponsor, Specialised Therapeutics generously enables the production of SWB's newsletters and programs.

You Can Help.



1. Volunteer as a SWB team member

Please contact us if you are a medical specialist, nurse or allied health professional interested in volunteering your expertise and time with our teaching team in developing countries.

2. Make a Donation

While all the specialists involved in SWB medical education programs fund their own flights and accommodation, general donations are invaluable to our work. These donations are used to cover the costs associated with delivery of our medical education programs. This includes transport and meal costs for local participants, who would otherwise not be able to attend.

3. Join SWB's Supporter Database

Joining is entirely free and means that you will receive our newsletters and other updates about SWB. We appreciate that many health care professionals may be unable to volunteer with us, but still want to know about the work we do.



Visit our website or join our
Facebook group for more.



Instagram:
[specialists_without_borders](#)



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