Melinda Gates Visits the Centre

Our partner in health, icddr,b in Bangladesh, received a special visit from Melinda Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation earlier this year. She toured the hospital, met with scientists and traveled to field sites. The visit provided her with an opportunity to see the wide range of interconnected health challenges and solutions related to child and maternal health.

The Centre has worked closely with the Gates Foundation since 2001 when they received the first ever Gates Award for Global Health for their research work with Oral Rehydration Therapy. Today they are key partners.

Overcoming Malnutrition

The Organization for Research, Extension and Training Agriculture (ORETA), Uganda, which received a 2010 Small Grant to empower the community to reduce malnutrition by encouraging breastfeeding and producing micronutrient-rich foods, has sent their final report.

In their interim report they reported that they found many pregnant women and lactating mothers did not know what to feed their children in order to prevent malnutrition. Thus they held a training program to teach breastfeeding, and the inclusion of green leafy vegetables, rich in iron and vitamin A, in their children’s diets.

Now they report that they have introduced the feeding of orange-fleshed sweet potato varieties, high in Vitamin A and locally available and in household gardens, and thus reduced the incidence of Vitamin A deficiency. As a result, the severity of infectious diseases in under five year-old children and morbidity and mortality of pregnant women has been reduced, the rate of hospitalizations has been reduced, an increase in savings has been noticed in household expenses. We are pleased with these results.

Full reports of all the projects are available upon request
New Member of the Board

Veena Hammers, BA, MBA, is presently the Director of Product Management for the College of Health Sciences at Walden University, part of the Laureate International Universities Network. Prior to joining this position, she was the Director of Partnership Management where she established a new team within the University Business Development group to facilitate local partnerships. Ms. Hammers has a history of marketing and product management roles both in the telecommunications industry as well as education.

Ms. Hammers has dedicated her time to international development through varied volunteer work. Most recently, she spent several months in Bangalore India working with Unitus Capital, investment arm of the U.S. based non-profit Unitus.

Veena lives with her husband, son and infant daughter in Columbia, Maryland. We are very pleased to welcome Veena aBoard.

Esther Lazarson

Miss Lazarson of New York City has been our Bangladesh hero since 2002, funding a project (EPRC*) that supplies clean water to thousands of people. Here is a bit of her “autobiography” in verse:

I am nearly eighty-nine
And I’m feeling well,
And whenever my sleep is deep
I wake up looking swell.

I always thought pure water was
Birthright, necessity,
But then I learned that for some folks
It is rare luxury.

And so I give what I don’t need
To Bangladesh and to Peru,
And I’m happy some have better living
Because of what I do.

And I admire and I salute
Each hands-on activist.
Who works so water gushes out
At the twisting of the wrist.

When I sit alone in my armchair
I love my solitude
Can it be ‘cos folks in far-off lands
Are wishing for my good?

*Go to our website and read the latest EPRC report on the map.

Rain Water for Better Health

Friends Orphanage School, Uganda, 2011 Humanitarian grant recipient, has submitted their interim report in which they say that the rain water harvest tank has been installed and they just have yet to purchase water cleansers, water supply plastic pipes with water tank wire nets.

In the photographs, kids and local women are happy to have free safe water again for better health. We will hear from them again soon.

Solar Disinfection

Life Concerns Foundation in Uganda held training sessions and radio broadcasts to promote using sunlight to improve the water quality at 5 primary schools. The children then began bringing their bottles to school and putting them in the sun. This simple, low-cost method was popular also because it reduced the need spending on firewood and kerosene and was kind to the environment. The project continues.