

University of Florida: Joshua Dieudonne and Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim
“Peace Means Staying Healthy” Date: June-July 2015 Location: Niger

Background: Niger is the poorest country in the world, currently occupying the rank of 187 out of 187 countries listed in the United Nations Humanitarian Development Index. Niger’s health indicators are among the worst in the world as well: life expectancy is 56 years (168th in the world), 1 out of every 6 child does not reach his or her fifth birthday, 14,000 Nigerian mothers die every year from pregnancy-related causes, and 1 out of every 50 Nigerians is either blind or suffering from a blinding disease. These alarming indicators are largely due to Niger’s underserved healthcare system, which is maintained by a small number of healthcare providers, who lack essential medical equipment and supplies.

Problem: The shortcomings of Niger’s healthcare system intensifies in Zinder, where the healthcare facilities are either ill-equipped, or unaffordable due to the impoverished majority of the population of 3.3 million. An individual is expected to cover more than 89% of their healthcare cost, which in turn, renders access to health services even more difficult. As a result, many ill people turn to local healers to be treated with traditional herbal medicines or religious rituals, which in most cases are ineffective. There are a few not-for-profit medical facilities that provide inexpensive or free medical services, but they too are struggling like the patients they treat and lack adequate equipment and supplies.

Solution: There are hundreds of charitable organizations in the United States that collect donated medical equipment and supplies from American hospitals, medical companies, and other health organizations; the medical supplies and equipment are sent to other charitable healthcare providers in developing countries.

The objectives of this project are to send medical supplies and equipment to Zinder, Niger, while raising awareness among charitable healthcare providers in Niger about the opportunity to receive high quality medical equipment and supplies at a significantly reduced cost from nonprofit organizations in the United States.

Why Project Global Health?: Joshua Dieudonne and Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim are part of Project Global Health (PGH), a nonprofit that is in the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) organization. PGH’s vision is to improve the provision of healthcare services in Niger in particular. It will achieve this by helping charitable healthcare institutions in Niger procure the types of medical equipment and supplies that they need in order to increase their capacities, and improve the quality of their services. Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim, the President of PGH, was a former executive manager of a charitable healthcare facility in Niger, before coming to the University of Florida to pursue graduate education. Ibrahim spent the summers of 2013 and 2014 in Niger networking with hospitals, NGOs, government officials and US embassy officials, preparing for this project. Joshua Dieudonne is focusing on non-profit management at the University of Florida and he is the coordinator of this project. Joshua has worked to establish contact between PGH and some of the major US non-profits that operate in sending donated medical products abroad, including Project CURE, Advocates for World Health, Brothers Brothers Foundation, and DirectRelief. Ibrahim’s experience in working with healthcare institutions in Niger and Joshua’s technical insights and knowledge of US non-profits constitutes important assets that will help carry out this project successfully.

Project: We will achieve the above-mentioned objective by using the method of “teaching by example.” We will collaborate with Advocates for World Health, a respected US nonprofit, to send a 20ft container full of equipment and supplies valued up to \$100,000 to ONG AFUA.

ONG AFUA is a charitable clinic in Zinder that provides services in primary care, obstetric gynecology, and laboratory sciences. It currently has a treatment capacity of about 1,800 patients per year. Given the clinic’s limited capacity and the increasing number of patients that it receives, its executive board decided to put together an expansion plan that requires a number of supplies and priority medical equipment, including an ultrasound machine and an X-ray scanner. During his need assessment missions in Zinder, Ibrahim visited the clinic several times for a series of meetings with the executive board of the clinic, which led to development of a priority list of needed equipment and supplies. The project’s aim is to provide ONG AFUA with the equipment and supplies that it has identified in its expansion plan. The medical equipment and supplies will be used to increase the capacity of the hospital to treat more people more effectively.

University of Florida: Joshua Dieudonne and Ibrahim Yahava Ibrahim
“Peace Means Staying Healthy” Date: June-July 2015 Location: Niger

Advocates for World Health will ship the container via the port of Cotonou in Benin, where Niger, as a landlocked country, receives most of its shipments. Ibrahim will then supervise ground transportation from Cotonou to Zinder. Joshua and Ibrahim will publicize the arrival and distribution of the medical equipment to illustrate the opportunity to other healthcare organizations. We will also organize a workshop which will be held for the directors of NGOs and clinics in Niamey, the capital city, to focus on the opportunity to acquire medical equipment and supplies from the United States at low cost and how to apply for them.

After the implementation of the project, Ibrahim will remain in Niger until April 2016 doing his dissertation field work. This will allow him to follow up directly with ONG AFUA on the use and impact of the medical equipment.

Timeline:

- 1st Phase Shipping Medical equipment Supplies to Niger: 6-7/2015
- 2rd Phase Reception of Equipment and Media coverage: 7/20/2015
- 3rd Phase Distribution of medical supplies: 7/21-24/2015
- 4th Phase Workshop for healthcare providers and other NGOs: 7/27/2015

Expected Outcomes and Measures of Success:

1. Increasing the treatment capacity of ONG AFUA by 50% from the average of 150 patients per month to 225 patients, starting from the third month after the implementation of the project.
2. Increasing the number of NGOs and clinic directors who know of and apply for surplus medical supplies from America. A measure of success will be determined by having 40-60% of the attendees of the workshop initiating the application process with medical supply NGOs in the US. We will function as liaison between NGOs in Niger and in the United States.
3. A collaborative partnership formed between ONG AFUA and Advocates for World Health by which ONG AFUA can receive additional medical supplies and equipment.

Relevance to Peace: This project impacts peace in Niger in three different ways: First, In Hausa, the dominant language in Niger, the word “health” is *lafiyah*, and “peace” is referred to with the phrase *zaman lafiyah*, meaning “staying healthy.” Locally, this means that peace is only possible when people are healthy, which echoes the famous quote by Ralph Bunche, a 1950 Nobel Peace Prize winner who said that “Peace, to have meaning for many who have known only suffering in both peace and war, must be translated into bread or rice, shelter, **health**, and education.” Second, the rapid spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa has revealed the level of deterioration of the healthcare system in that part of the world, notably the drastic shortage of healthcare institutions and the lack of adequate equipment in places where those institutions exist. The epidemic has also revealed the danger that a degraded healthcare system in a remote part of the world can cause not only to the local population but also to the safety of the entire world. Third, terrorist groups rally the support of local communities and recruit fighters by providing welfare services, especially healthcare in remote areas where neither the state nor the NGOs are present.

Partners:

Advocates for World Health will be in charge of processing, handling and shipping the medical equipment and supplies from Tampa to the Port of Cotonou.

Voice of America: the Voice of America Hausa radio broadcasts will provide coverage of the project in Hausa language.

ORTN (The national television network in Niger): to provide coverage of the project.