

Aslan, the Ministry of Health, and TASH Launch a National Pediatric Hematology–Oncology Training Program

A fundamental goal of the NCACCP is to improve standards of pediatric cancer care within country in order to increase survival rates -- and its key strategy both to achieve this goal and to ensure sustainability is to strengthen the size and skills of the country's pediatric oncology workforce. At a ceremony on March 3, the FMOH, TASH, and Aslan made a huge collective stride toward that goal by signing a landmark agreement establishing a national pediatric hematology-oncology training program at TASH.

We are thrilled to share that two core initiatives of the program have already launched.

First, in late March, Aslan, TASH, and Addis Ababa University (AAU) began a two-year fellowship program to train Ethiopian pediatricians to treat children with cancer. In the first four months of the program alone, six members of Aslan's expert all-volunteer faculty -- hailing from world-class institutions in the United



Dr. Daniel Hailu, Chief of TASH Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Department

States and Canada -- have visited Addis Ababa to share their knowledge and expertise with the current fellow, AAU pediatrics residents, and other TASH health professionals. We hope to welcome additional fellows next year from TASH and other major hospitals around the country, who upon graduation will return to their home institutions to lead their respective pediatric oncology units.



Ethiopian and Kenyan pediatric oncology nurses training in Pakistan

Then, last month, we were privileged to partner with our former Medical Advisory Board member, Dr. Julia Challinor, and the Indus Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan to train senior pediatric oncology nurses from TASH, Jimma University Medical Center, and Kenya's Gertrude's Children's Hospital (GCH) and Kenyatta Hospital.

The intensive three-week training program consisted of mentorship by senior nurse leaders and educators and participation in an award-winning course in pediatric oncology nursing led by Rehana Punjwani, RN, the manager of the hospital's renowned pediatric oncology nursing department and a member of the nursing steering committee of the International Society of Pediatric Oncology.

As with the fellowship program and our other training initiatives, the goal of the Indus course is to "train the trainers" -- i.e., to develop a local expert team of pediatric oncology nurses who are then equipped to share their knowledge with colleagues in their home country. As Stephen Kinuya, a senior pediatrics nurse from GCH, shared upon his return to Nairobi, the course promises to do just that:

"[M]y colleague Sabina and I wish to thank the Aslan Project for sponsoring us to come to Pakistan and add to our knowledge in oncology. We are indeed learning a lot and the knowledge acquired here will be of great help when we go back to our hospital Gertrude's Children's Hospital. We will endeavor to implement [what we have learned] and to improve on the care to our patients."