

ATS NEWSLETTER

NEWS FROM

AFRIKAADA TEETHSAVERS

NR 2 2009

Oral health for everyone

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GOLSARA REPORTING

I had already made up my mind, long before I ever had the idea of becoming a dentist, to go to “Africa” and work. I can’t exactly recall when this longing and wanting started to grow in me.

Maybe when the food crisis in East Africa in the 80-ties entered our living rooms with images of little children with swollen bellies? Maybe when I became conscious about the next to non existing media coverage from the several conflicts which are ongoing in this wounded continent? Maybe when a few secrets were unveiled for me as a Social Anthropology student, discovering and learning a few things about the cultural richness of several ethnic groups in Africa?

When the offer to go to Gambia and work as a dentist came along, it took me three seconds to make up my mind. I went there and worked in the private Swedish owned clinic Swedent Clinic. The first months my attention was only on the clinic because it was in a state I wasn’t ready to work in. To keep the clinic running is very important, since here is where you make your income. The months passed and the work gave better and better results every day.

After four months in the clinic I felt psychologically ready for the work with Afrikaada Teethsavers, but I didn’t want to carry all the responsibility alone. So when a colleague, and now dear friend Silvio Kosovic, came to Gambia, the work with the project in Afrikaada Teethsavers kicked off. We had a general idea what kind of work we needed to carry out but we weren’t prepared for how to do it. Four different caries prophylactic methods will, during three years, be performed and evaluated on approximately one thousand school children in the ages of ten to twelve years old. The schools and the children had already been chosen and screened managed and supervised by Jette Lehrmann Madsen, now the task was to try the different methods and get the children free from oral pain. At first the challenge seemed impossible, but shame on those who give up without even trying.

We started with a three week “dental assistant” course with twelve young, ambitious and curious Gambian students. They got theoretic and practical knowledge about the most basic within dental care and hygiene. After the course an intensive period started where we made visits to the schools in the project. Sometimes everything was really easy, sometimes not... We learned the true meaning of patience, cultural differences and an open mind. The most important knowledge I got was that it’s not possible to arrive somewhere and expect that everything will happen as I want and have planned because that’s how it is in Europe, “back home”. I also learned that with a smile and a little joke you will be more successful than with an angry face and a bad tem-



This Dr Golsara is the tooth that hurt me....

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GOLSARA REPORTING CONT.

We examined and registered the oral status of the children in the project. Those with pain from primary teeth got treatment immediately with an extraction. Those with pain from permanent teeth got an appointment to the clinic for necessary treatment, generally a filling or an extraction, free of charge. A lot of blood, sweat and tears during this amazing period, but also a lot of laughter, smiles and appreciation. The work with the project brought us to different parts of Gambia, from developed coastal areas with over crowded schools and abundant with sugar, to upcountry where there are villages that don't even have electricity, let alone shops. We also went to Senegal and visited a few schools in the northern parts of the country. A different country according to the illogical borders of colonial rulers, but the same people, same culture and same contagious smiles and laughter.

Everything didn't go as we had planned and hoped, but even so a great part of the work got done and I'm happy with my effort. I learned an enriching and innovative way of working, and had an excellent opportunity to smash my prejudice. Going to Gambia and work for ten months has touched me deep, in my heart and soul, and I'm absolutely positive that before I know I'll find myself on a flight to Banjul International Airport.



Who is who on the board of Afrikaada Teethsavers

Golsara Mehryar, DDS Board member

-What is your relationship to The Gambia?

None, really, before I went there, but now I have a lot of friends for life and unforgettable experiences after ten months of hard work and surprises!

-When did you go there for the first time?

February 2008.

-What was the first word you learned in any of the languages spoken in The Gambia?

I don't recall the very first word I learned, but among the first were "halis" ("money" in wolof), "toubab" ("white man" in wolof), "nikonjol" ("black man" in wolof) and "jerejeff" ("thank you" in wolof).



-How does it feel to be in the board?

It feels great. I hope we will get a lot of things done!

-What would you like to see be done during your mandate?

A good and functioning homepage and lots of new members. Also that the prophylaxis project in The Gambia will head in a good direction.

Golsara who is a member of the board of Afrikaada Teethsavers spend most of 2008 and part of 2009 working in The Gambia is heading back in June to work for another 2 month.

PROTOCOL FOR AFRIKAADA TEETHSAVERS ANNUAL MEETING 2009 RESUME

Date: 090307

Location: Privattandläkarnas kansli, Stockholm

Voting rooster is set for the meeting.

Lars-Göran Wärn is elected as the chairperson for the meeting and Silvio Kosovic as the secretary.

The annual report is approved. Members are requesting i for direct debit (autogiroöverföringar) for members and donors, the treasurer is given the task to investigate about this issue.

The committee is discharged from liability by everyone attendant.

Information about the amount of members, members fee (150kr/year).

Presentation of the project by Jette Lehrmann Madsen, Golsara Mehryar and Silvio Kosovic.

Jette Lehrmann Madsen is proposed as the chairperson and is elected for a period of 2 years.

Golsara Mehryar, Lars-Göran Wärn and Silvio Kosovic are proposed and elected as members of the committee for a period of 2 years..

Göran Önneby and Tuula Jallow are appointed as accountants.

A general discussion about how we can increase our incomes. It is proposed that there will be opportunities for specific donations e.g.

Information about storage for donated materials, the materials can be stored at Jette Lehrmann Madsen or Lars-Göran Wärn before they are sent to The Gambia.

Golsara Mehryar and Silvio Kosovic express the need of the handbook for volunteers in The Gambia to be completed. The board is assigned to finish it.

The home page needs to be updated, the new home page is to be launched by September.

Discussion about what educational programs that can be offered in The Gambia. What can we educate students within and what happens with the students after finishing their course. Employment is proposed.

Use of ART-fillings on subjects that are participating in the study. Attendees are positive to this.

Lars-Göran informs that he has been contacted by a German charity organization that offers us to use a dental-clinic. Lars-Göran and Jette Lehrmann Madsen will investigate if this could be beneficial for us.

Information-material

Amina Esisse is the editor for "ATS Newsletter", the newsletter will in the future be published in English..

Golsara Mehryar will translate newsletter to Swedish and will write a information brochure that can be handed out to everyone who is interested.

We have received almost 1000 kg of fluoridated salt,. The salt was donated by a company called ESCO through Inger Wennhall who is in charge for a fluoride project in Rosengård, Malmö. One future aim is to produce fluoridated salt in The Gambia.

The board will propose requirements of students who are interested in participating in the project in The Gambia.

If you want a complete protocol kindly send us a request by mail.

Golsara Mehryar in action



AFRIKAADA TEETHSAVERS

www.teethsavers.gm

Afrikaada Teethsavers

Org nr 802436/6448

Account nr in Sweden
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We welcome all sponsoring amounts

Membership fee sek 150 pr year

To become a member pay sek 150 into
Our account and make sure you write
your name and e-mail address clearly

Oral health for everyone

AFRIKAADA TEETHSAVERS

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Thank you ESCO

Esco has kindly sponsored us with very close to one ton of fluoridated salt.

The salt that is arriving in The Gambia about the same time as you receive this newsletter is going to be used in our prophylactic project. The salt will mainly be used in the school kitchens. So that as many children as possible will be benefitted.

Thank you ESCO for helping us to help children in The Gambia

*all children in our project have signed consent forms from their guardians

Sometimes the world smiles at you and your wishes com true.

Afrikaada and Afrikaada Teethsavers

has received a wonderful donation from

The Plymouth Dakar Challenge

so we are now the proud owners of a Land rover that will bring us around Gambia and Senegal in years to come.

Thank you



Fluoride rinsing Gambian style