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Dartmouth and Peru partnering to improve lives

Guided by Dartmouth's tradition of developing global citizens, the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth is forging new partnerships in Peru to create educational opportunities and improve lives.

Dartmouth medical and undergraduate students and a leadership team from the Medical School spent time in Peru this summer learning about the Peruvian health-care delivery system and public-health challenges, examining health needs in low-income communities, and exploring ways to partner with the Peruvian government, as well as with academic, health-care, and community organizations.

"Peru is a natural partner for Dartmouth in global health work," says Dr. Chip Souba, dean of Geisel. "It has wonderful diversity among its people and regions, a strong spirit to improve lives, and a tradition of excellence in medicine and education."

"Partnering with Peru offers important educational experiences for our students, particularly with underserved communities," he adds. "They build their empathy, clinical skills, and leadership capabilities . . . which are integral to solving health care's most vexing problems . . . whether in Peru or our country."

Building a biblioteca: One immediate result from the visit includes Geisel joining forces with the Arenal Alto-Villa Maria del Triunfo community, along with a community organization called the Visionarios, to construct a small library within this impoverished area. Nearly 80% of residents in the Arenal Alto community live in poverty. Many children and families are malnourished. Arenal Alto's housing is often makeshift, and the community's residences terrace up the side of a mountain found at the southern edge of Lima.

"In this partnership, the Geisel School of Medicine and Dartmouth are using a community-needs-driven approach, starting with visiting the leaders and families of El Arenal Alto," says Dr. Jaime Bayona, Geisel assistant profes-

sor of community and family medicine and leader of Dartmouth's Peru Program. "We aim to build a sustainable, mutually beneficial partnership, putting in practice global experiences for local solutions with high impact in the community."

Bayona, who is also director of global-health programs and practice at the Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science, adds that "at the same time, the lessons learned with this community in Peru will help us become truly global citizens who care about equity regardless of where we live."

Prior to joining the Dartmouth faculty, Bayona was the cofounder and director of Socios En Salud Sucursal Peru, the Peruvian branch of Partners In Health.

"The Visionarios team is excited and honored to begin this work with Dartmouth," says Malena Ramos, the director general of Visionarios. "The Medical School's contribution will also strengthen our existing partnership with the community of Villa Maria del Triunfo."

Potential partnerships: Gary Snyder, Geisel associate vice president for communications, and Dr. Robert Gougelet, Geisel assistant professor of medicine and director of the New England Center for Emergency Preparedness, joined Souba and Bayona to assess opportunities for educational rotations and potential collaboration areas with Peruvian leaders.

The group met with senior leadership from several Peruvian governmental, health, and academic institutions. These included the superintendent of SUNASA, Peru's National Health Insurance agency within the Peru Ministry of Health; the dean of the Alberto Hurtado School of Medicine at Cayetano Heredia University, one of Peru's premier medical schools; the director of Peru's National Cancer Institute; and the director general and chief of emergency medicine at Cayetano Heredia National Hospital, which serves a sec-



GARY SNYDER

Malena Ramos (right), the director general of the Peruvian community organization Los Visionarios, and Lorena Mestanza Cordova, a Visionarios community leader, are working with Geisel to build a library in an impoverished area of Lima, Peru.



GARY SNYDER

Left to right, Carla Tafur, an emergency medicine physician at Cayetano Heredia National Hospital; Chip Souba, dean of the Medical School; Raul Acosta, chief of emergency medicine at Cayetano Heredia; and Jaime Bayona, Geisel faculty member and director of global health programs at the Dartmouth Center for Health Care Delivery Science.

tion of Lima that includes the Villa Maria del Triunfo district. Discussions with the leaders of these organizations included how Geisel might partner to work on shared decision-making, community health, best practices in cancer care, and disaster preparedness.

Three medical students participated by completing educational rotations in Peru: second-year students Anna Huh and Sadie Marden and fourth-year student Karl Dietrich. "This experience was transformative in many ways," said Anna Huh. "I'm particularly interested in SUNASA's plans for expanding oncology services in Peru. It's exciting for students to see the Medical School's support for building these educational opportunities." Several Dartmouth undergraduates took part as well.