Dr. Robert Einterz (IU School of Medicine), director of the Indiana University School of Medicine linkage program in Kenya, first became interested in international issues while a high school student in Indianapolis. It was his experience participating in Indiana University's Honors Program in Foreign Languages, an immersion program in St. Brieuc, France, that sparked his initial interest.

Years later, Einterz, recipient of a 1999 President's Award for Outstanding Faculty at the Founder's Day ceremony on March 27, still appreciates the potential of international experience and collaboration.

“As far as I'm concerned, it's because of Roy and Alice Leake [former directors of the Honors Program] that Indiana right now is involved in Moi University in Kenya. It was that immersion experience that opened my eyes, and my ears, and my mind to the possibilities of this world,” he says.

When Einterz was first offered a teaching position at the IU School of Medicine in 1985, he made clear his dedication to medical education in developing countries. He used only half his salary that first year, and saved the other half to support himself and his young family in Haiti the following year, where he worked as a volunteer primary health care provider, organizing mothers' groups, immunization projects, and income-generating projects among community health care workers.

Inspired by these experiences, Einterz wanted to create avenues for other doctors to be involved in developing countries, because he had found it so rewarding, both personally and professionally. Working with Joe Mamlin, Charlie Kelly (both of the Department of Medicine, IUPUI), and Dave Van Reken (Pediatrics, IUPUI), who also had personal and professional experiences working overseas, he sought to establish a collaborative relationship between the IU School of Medicine (IUSM) and a medical school in a developing country.

After carefully searching for an appropriate partner institution, the doctors identified Moi University Faculty of Health Sciences (MUFHS) in Eldoret, a city of 100,000 people in northwest Kenya. Founded in 1990, the school hadn’t yet opened its doors when the IU doctors began the linkage program. As the centerpiece of the agreement, one full-time IU faculty member teaches on site at MUFHS each year for a one-year rotation, supported by the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics. While in Eldoret, each Indiana physician shares with


BUILDING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

IU Physician Directing Kenya Program

ABOVE: Dr. Robert Einterz, director of the IU School of Medicine's Kenya Program. Photo courtesy: Wishard Health Services

FROM LEFT: Sylvester Kimaiyo, Kenyan medical student, with Hasmeena Kathuria, IU School of Medicine resident faculty member.

IU medicine and pediatrics resident Sabine Sliger with a Kenyan patient.

John Sidle, IU Kenya project team leader, consults with a Kenyan doctor.
IU House in Eldoret, Kenya, where Indiana University medical faculty and residents are housed. Students stay together with the Kenyan students in their hostels.

her or his Kenyan counterpart the responsibility for teaching, patient care, and curriculum development at the Kenyan medical school and at affiliated health centers.

The emphasis was originally on teaching general internal medicine and pediatrics, but the program recently has been expanded to include other disciplines, including dermatology, pathology, and surgery. Talmage Bosin, assistant dean and director of the Medical Sciences Program at IU-Bloomington, has been involved at the basic science level, and has supported several faculty members to go to Kenya on a bilateral exchange for the purpose of faculty development.

**STUDENT EXCHANGES**

The focus of the program is principally on medical education, and at its inception, faculty linkages were emphasized. However, the program has now broadened to include student, resident, and postgraduate doctor linkages as well. Each year approximately 25 IU residents and medical students travel to Eldoret, and up to six Kenyan medical students come to IU for six- to eight-week exchanges.

An especially valuable part of that experience, in Einterz' opinion, is the American students' exposure to a component of the MUFHS curriculum called Community-Based Education and Service (COBES). As part of COBES, the Kenyan students devote a portion of their time to living in both rural and urban communities and learning about the health care delivery systems in these areas. They study epidemiology, statistics, and research methods, and apply these skills by designing and implementing a community-based research project.

The Kenyan students who study at the IU School of Medicine come on full scholarship, typically after their fifth year. They are linked with junior-level IU medical students in teams consisting of one IU faculty member, one resi-

Faculty present survey results to the Eldoret village elders, as part of the Community-Based Education and Service (COBES) component of the medical curriculum.
dent, one intern, and two to four medical students.

A number of other U.S. medical schools have also sent faculty to Kenya through the IU program, including Brown University, the University of Chicago, and Wayne State University. Einterz hopes that the program will be used as a model and replicated by other schools who seek to establish linkages in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The main object of the partnership, according to Einterz, is to develop counterpart relationships between Americans and Kenyans. "We try to promote relationship-building between Americans and Kenyans in a professional, collegial manner. We believe that something good will come out of it, for people on both sides of the ocean," Einterz explains.

Einterz was most recently in Eldoret at the end of February, working to initiate two new grants. One is a four-year, $500,000 informatics grant, led by Bill Tierney (Senior Research Scientist, IUPUI), which will be used to train four Kenyan faculty members in medical informatics.

The Kenyans will spend one year at the Regenstrief Institute for Health Care at IUSM, and upon returning to Kenya, will apply the knowledge they have acquired in the management of large databases used for controlling public health problems such as malaria.

The second grant is a $150,000 Institutional Grant Program, funded by the Educational Commission for Medical Graduates, and headed by Debra Litzelman (IU School of Medicine). This grant will be used for assessing the clinical clerkships, clinical teaching skills, and administrative skills within the Kenyan medical school. It will allow eight MUFHS faculty members to visit IUPUI for one month, and provide IU doctors an opportunity to share information and experiences.

**IMPACT ON A PERSONAL LEVEL**

Over the years the Kenyan linkage program has saved many lives. One poignant story is that of Caroline Jepkorir, a Kenyan who in 1991 was diagnosed with rheumatic heart disease. The daughter of the IU vehicle driver in Eldoret, Jepkorir was at that time 12 years old and badly in need of a heart valve transplant.

Einterz and his colleagues took Jepkorir, along with her father, to Indiana for the surgery, knowing that she would need another replacement five years later. They brought her for the second surgery in 1997, and after she recovered, she enrolled in Marian College, Indianapolis, where she is currently a premedical student on the Dean's List.

Indiana University participants are encouraged to bring their family members to Eldoret. In the case of current IU team leader John Sidle (IU School of Medicine), his sister Joy Sidle came to Kenya to work as a volunteer, helping with administrative tasks.

Not knowing what to expect on her first trip to Africa, Sidle was at first apprehensive, but once she had been in Eldoret for several months she found the experience so valuable that she took a leave of absence from her job at Price Waterhouse in order to stay in Kenya for two full years.

The Kenya linkage program has obviously been a life-altering experience for many people on both sides of the exchange, just as Einterz envisioned nine years ago. Of the IU medical students he says, "I think most of them really are idealistic and medical school can be pretty rigorous. You get trapped, in a way, by life here in this country. But I don’t think most people would choose that if they had a choice and this [program] gives students a choice. It gives them a chance to keep that little flicker alive of a bit of idealism. Plus it opens, literally, a whole new world for them. And that’s what’s so valuable, for so many people. For everyone.”

— EAB