

Amanda Martinage, (Occupational therapist) Dr. Martha Collins, Gwen Bertrand (Special education teacher), Nilofer Naqvi (Psychologist) and Noor Al Radi (Speech and language therapist) traveled to Tanzania this summer with the Organization for Medical and Psychological Assistance for Children overseas (OMPACO). For the first week the team completed a 4 day training on Autism for approximately 40 teachers in Dar es Salaam at the Tandika School. Topics covered include: What is Autism, Teaching strategies, Communication, Behavior Management, Sensory Integration, IEP's, Assessment and more. Nilofer conducted 2 focus groups with a subset of teachers to discuss the possibility of using mobile technology to provide additional training throughout the year.

Nilofer facilitated a visit with the Agakhan Foundation to investigate possible options for additional funding to expand our work. We also met with the USAID at the American Embassy to explore the possibility of getting a grant or partnering with them.

Amanda, Gwen and Martha then traveled to Dareda to visit the students from the Patrick Winter School and delivered teaching supplies. A training was given to the nursing students at the Dareda Hospital covering what is Autism and how to diagnose and provide support.

For the second week the team traveled to Arusha and completed a 3 day training for approximately 45 teachers. On the 4th day we met with parents and facilitated getting the teachers and parents to meet together. Teachers had the opportunity to share the challenges they face and what specific questions they would like addressed. Nilofer obtained an IRB for research approval so for each series of trainings a pre and post test was administered to assess the effectiveness of the trainings. Results of the data proved to be very favorable that the trainings were effective.

We also had the opportunity to meet with a speech and language therapist and occupational therapist from the Lotus Clinic to brainstorm how we could collaborate and support each other.

During the last week Amanda, Gwen and Martha traveled the roads of Dar es Salaam to deliver schools supplies to several schools (Chekeni-Mwasonga, Kabata Kimanga, Nzasa, Msmbazi Mseto and the ASD Assessment Center). Students received the supplies with loud cheers of excitement and had the opportunity to try out some of the more exciting items such as crawling through a play tunnel or playing ball. Supplies had been collected over the course of the year and many donations were accepted from the staff at the Concord Area Special Education Collaborative. A collection of books was also obtained and delivered from the Autism Resource Central. Dr. Martha, Amanda and Gwen also provided a family consultation for 7 students and family members.

It was a very busy but successful trip. Trainings were met with enthusiasm by teachers and parents and proved to be useful. It is our hope that what teachers learned will be carried over into the classrooms to further educate students with ASD.

For more information about OMPACO please visit their website at www.ompaco.org/, follow them on Facebook or ask one of the members of the team. If you have teaching supplies or

rolling suitcases you would like to donate you may contact Gwen Bertrand
at gंबरtrand26@gmail.com .