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Mapping UNSW Impact
Global Development

Primary SDG	**GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
Broad theme	Treating infectious diseases in Myanmar
Research	Researching simple diagnostic and treatments for infectious diseases, and training future Myanmar doctors
Impact region	Myanmar
Faculty	Science
School/Institute	The Kirby Institute
Academics	Josh Hanson
Project partners	University of Medicine 2 (Yangon, Myanmar)
	Ministry of Health (Myanmar)
	The George Institute for Global Health
Related SDGs	10: Reduced Inequalities
	9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Funding pitch

UNSW is training local doctors in Myanmar in how to simply and cheaply treat patients with infectious diseases and research new methods, increasing the number of patients receiving treatment and advancing the country's dated medical system.

The Challenge: How can we help Myanmar advance its dated treatment of infectious diseases?

Under military rule Myanmar and its healthcare institutions were closed off from outside developments in technology and research. Now the country has transitioned to a market-orientated system, it is attempting to catch up in areas like medicine that are decades behind Western countries.

One area where it needs help is in the treatment of infectious diseases. Malaria, TB And HIV/AIDS are the top three major diseases of public health concern. Fortunately, there is a large and dedicated medical workforce in place in Myanmar, and the medical system is similar to Australian and British systems.

UNSW's solution: Research simple diagnostic and treatment techniques, train local doctors

Infectious disease physician Dr Josh Hanson has been working in Myanmar on malaria, investigating ways to reduce deaths. Wanting to expand his work into other infectious diseases in Myanmar, he teamed up with Professor David Cooper and the two approached the University of Medicine 2 (UM2) in Yangon.

In partnership with UM2, UNSW is researching and implementing simple diagnostics and treatments for patients with infectious diseases including HIV, TB, encephalitis, dengue fever and helicobacter (stomach ulcers). David and Josh travel to Myanmar up to six times a year to teach trainee doctors in hospitals how to research and implement cheap assessment and treatment methods.

In January 2017, UNSW secured laboratory space at UM2. This lab is slowly being developed as a clinical research base to further straightforward and effective approaches to infectious disease, and to advance medical treatment in general.

The Kirby Institute has also been working with The George Institute on research and treatments around diabetes and heart disease in India and China. They have been targeting prevention, developing pills that prevent high cholesterol and heart disease. With further funding, this work could be adopted in Myanmar.

The Impact: Treat more patients in need, advance Myanmar's medical system

David and Josh are training doctors to expand the number of patients with infectious diseases that are assessed and treated effectively. They are also helping these doctors to become more research literate, advancing the country's medical system.

There is further scope to build capacity in the laboratory at UM2, expand clinical research, and adopt other successful trials such as The George Institute's heart disease pills, to continue Myanmar's progression in medicine towards international standards.

Researchers

Professor David Cooper is the inaugural Director of the Kirby Institute since its establishment in 1986. David is recognised as a leading HIV clinician and clinical investigator around the world, and is a past President of the International AIDS Society and past Chairman of the World Health Organisation-UNAIDS HIV Vaccine Advisory Committee (VAC).

Josh Hanson is a general and infectious diseases physician based in Cairns. He coordinates a medical outreach programme to Indigenous communities on Cape York, and he has been performing clinical research in Asia since 2006 with a focus on clinical management of infectious diseases in resource poor settings.

Ben Falkenmire 27.09.17