FAIMER®
Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research

10 Years of Improving World Health through Education
Introduction

This book aims to tell the story of the first 10 years of FAIMER’s Fellowship Programs through the individual stories of FAIMER Fellows. As part of its commitment to improving world health by improving health professions education, FAIMER established a two-year fellowship program for faculty development in 2001. This program, the FAIMER Institute, is designed to teach education methods, management, and leadership skills to international health professions educators who have the potential to play key roles in improving health professions education at their home institutions. By cultivating strong professional bonds among the Fellows, the program also seeks to create and maintain a global network of health professions educators.

Under the co–directorship of William P. Burdick, M.D., FAIMER Associate Vice President for Education, and Page S. Morahan, Ph.D., the FAIMER Institute began with 12 Fellows. In the 10 years since its inception, not only has the FAIMER Institute flourished, but FAIMER has also used the FAIMER Institute program as a model to create five additional fellowship programs in key regions, chosen based on need and their prospects for sustainability. Regional Institutes were established in Mumbai, India, in 2005; Ludhiana, India, in 2006; Coimbatore, India, in 2007; Fortaleza, Brazil, in 2007; and Southern Africa in 2008. By the close of 2010, there were 538 Fellows from 40 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; by the end of 2011, there will be more than 635 Fellows.

Upon graduation from the FAIMER Institute or one of the Regional Institutes, Fellows become eligible to apply for an International Fellowship in Medical Education (IFME). Fellows selected for the program pursue an advanced degree in health professions education at participating universities.

The work of FAIMER and its Fellows has reached far beyond the fellowship programs. FAIMER is increasingly recognized internationally for its expertise in health professions education. Fellows play ever more important roles in national-level decision-making in their respective countries; they serve as organizers and presenters at international conferences on health professions education, and as peer-reviewers and editors of prominent health professions education journals.

Efforts in India have led to the creation of a biennial National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education (NCHPE). Conferences so far have been held in Delhi in 2007 and Pune in 2009, with another to be held in Vellore in 2011. Fellows regularly serve on national-level education committees; lead workshops as part of national faculty development programs; and hold leadership positions in international organizations, such as the South East Asia Regional Association for Medical Education (SEARAME) of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME).

In Brazil, the government has invested in FAIMER—most of the costs of the Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute are underwritten by the Brazil Ministry of Health. Graduating Fellows receive a nationally recognized Specialty Diploma in Health Professions Education from the Federal University of Ceará. In addition, FAIMER Fellows are increasingly filling the leadership ranks of the Associação Brasileira de Educação Médica, Brazil’s national organization of medical educators, and are taking part in national research and scholarship programs to advance health professions education.

In Southern Africa, FAIMER Fellows have contributed to the growth of the South African Association of Health Educationalists (SAAHE), where they are organizational leaders as well as workshop facilitators and speakers at the annual meeting. FAIMER Fellows have also spearheaded the creation of the African Journal of Health Professions Education, and the Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute (SAFRI) program is moving toward certificate status in Southern Africa.

Through workshops, conferences, and even the creation of new degree and diploma programs, FAIMER Fellows have led efforts to improve health professions education in other countries as well: Nepal, Pakistan, Egypt, Uganda, and Mongolia, to name just several. Fellows in South America and Mexico have organized to form the FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America (FRILA) in an effort to improve health professions education in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries.

FAIMER’s education initiatives extend beyond the fellowship programs. For example, in collaboration with The Open University in the United Kingdom and WFME, FAIMER launched The Open University–FAIMER–WFME Distance Learning Modules in Medical Education in 2010. This program offers series of on–line learning modules on different topics in health professions education. Thus far, eight modules each have been developed in the themes of “Self Review and Accreditation” and “Educational Management and Leadership.”

FAIMER continues to develop other initiatives outside the fellowship programs as well. The Fellows are the core of FAIMER’s education program. Each Fellow shares FAIMER’s mission and methods with his/her community, teaching other health professionals, connecting with other Fellows and educators, and building a truly global network of health professions education. There is still much work to be done, but FAIMER is proud to celebrate its first 10 years in this book by celebrating the stories of FAIMER Fellows, the individuals around the globe who are transforming world health through their expertise, their dedication to the promise of successful medical education, and their undaunted optimism.
Message from the Chair

What a privilege it is to be a part of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) on the occasion of its 10th anniversary! Founded in 2000 by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), FAIMER is charged with supporting ECFMG’s mission of promoting international medical education. Over the past decade, FAIMER has met this challenge, innovating in the areas of research, data resources, and the area covered in this volume—programs to enhance international health professions education.

The individuals highlighted in the pages that follow are part of an international community of educators who share FAIMER’s dedication to improving world health by improving health professions education. Selected by FAIMER for their ability to enhance teaching and learning in medicine and other health professions, these individuals have participated in one or more of FAIMER’s fellowship programs. As such, they are now ready resources for local partners who share the ultimate goal of improving health outcomes. They represent attainment of an early and enduring FAIMER goal—creating networks of professionals that can initiate and sustain positive change in the education of health care providers.

Each year, FAIMER administers more than 100 fellowships, and the potential impact of this growing community of FAIMER Fellows on local systems of medical education and health care cannot be overstated. On behalf of FAIMER’s Board of Directors, I offer sincere congratulations and thanks to FAIMER’s Fellows around the world and to the staff of FAIMER’s education programs for their outstanding commitment and contributions to the missions of FAIMER and ECFMG.

**Emmanuel G. Cassimatis, M.D.**
Chair, Board of Directors
Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research
President and Chief Executive Officer
Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates

---

Message from the President

Ten years ago the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Board made a decision to try to improve the health of communities around the world by creating the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER). Investing in the education of the next generation of health professionals was consistent with the source of ECFMG’s funds and it was believed that this would make a difference in improving global health. How it would be done, and whether this long-term outcome would be achieved, lay in a story yet to be told.

Faculty development was one of the paths we chose to achieve our purpose. From a simple beginning with 12 Fellows, the program grew and evolved into what is now a global community of health professions educators. Through this community, the world is now a more connected and informed place, and we can envision ways of doing even better. The ultimate goal, improving global health, is still ahead of us, but the power and hope of this story can be found in the words in this book, the stories of individual FAIMER Fellows. FAIMER Fellows are creative agents of change who are making a difference every day in large and small ways, and by their actions are redefining, accelerating, and attuning what it means to improve world health through education.

Fellows, we are proud to be among you, the FAIMERly, a term coined by Nalin Mehta, a 2007 PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute Fellow. We are awed by your energy and committed to your success.

**John J. Norcini, Ph.D.**
President and Chief Executive Officer
Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research
Through 2010, there were 538 Fellows from 40 countries in the FAIMER Community. As of November 4, 2010, there were 2,192 recognized and operating medical schools in 176 countries or territories listed in IMED.
A slow and silent yet steady revolution is taking place... There is so much more to do, and do together—toward winning a victory for humanity; toward making the world a better place.
As all Fellows do, I worked on my project thinking of it as a one-year assignment to go along with the fellowship. Then I started the first residential session in January 2007 in Ludhiana, India. During the program evaluation and project discussion sessions, I came to know that I needed to think about the bigger picture for my project. I was told to develop intermediate and long-term outcomes at that time. I had never thought of that when I planned my project. I was a bit confused and worried about how I could make a difference with my project. However, the words of faculty members about how the project will benefit the community had a big impact on me. I started thinking about the usefulness of the project to others, expanding it, and making a big difference.

The next year I worked on my project and completed it successfully with few hassles. I got very good insights when I started it at my institute. I read a lot of information related to simulation, simulation in teaching, etc. I thought of modifying the curriculum of pharmacology practical exams, including using simulation to replace animal experiments. In the process, I wrote my first book, Practical Manual of Pharmacology, released in April 2008 during a workshop on medical education sponsored by the Medical Council of India (MCI). The book has become very successful, and the publisher asked to print a second edition to coincide with the new curriculum for medical undergraduate courses from MCI.

I presented my project during the second residential session of CMCL-FRI in January 2008, and then went ahead and expanded it. I completely replaced animal experiments in undergraduate pharmacology teaching during the next year (2008), and animal mortality was reduced to zero. I then presented a paper on the expanded project at the 6th Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference at the National University of Singapore in February 2009. I interacted with other international medical educationists there and acquired more knowledge about research in medical education. I went deeper into scholarship and published the extended project as a full paper, “Computer simulation models are implementable as replacements for animal experiments,” in the international journal Alternatives to Laboratory Animals (ATLA). The paper was highly appreciated, and I still receive requests from around the world for PDF copies. Somehow my personal growth during the fellowship period helped me to project myself as a good pharmacologist and medical educationist, and I was elected as the Editor of The Clinical Researcher, the official publication of the Clinical Research Board.

I conducted two big events at my institute: a CME program on depression and a three-day “Workshop on Clinical Research,” sponsored by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Just two months after that I was invited as a guest speaker at an international conference by the University of Hong Kong. After that I was a guest speaker with Dr. K. Satyanarayana, Editor of the Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR), to conduct a workshop on writing scientific papers at the National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education in Pune.

These developments helped me a lot, and with each development, CMCL-FRI was somehow involved. I got a lot of support from FAIMER Fellows. A number of Fellows belong to my specialty, pharmacology, so we got together to improve our specialty at a national level. I wrote to the Medical Council of India in July 2009 to ask them to sponsor a CME program. They agreed and we successfully conducted “Alternatives to Animals in Medical Education” in February 2010. The CME was attended by 150 delegates from all over India. Some of them (including one of the top medical colleges in Delhi) have now written me that they have started using simulation models. This was another of my project’s intermediate outcomes.

In October 2009, I attended the FAIMER Institute in Philadelphia in the United States. On International Medical Education (IME) Day, I met an administrator from a national body in India, who encouraged me and, in principle, agreed to sponsor my expanded project on “Simulation Lab to Replace Animals,” my project’s long-term outcome. The suggestion was made to develop such a lab to cater to basic and paraclinical sciences, and then replicate it at other colleges.

When I started writing my project in 2006, I never thought of all the possible outcomes. Now in 2010 (five years down the line) I am planning to start the long-term outcomes. A bigger dream became reality.
This is the story of a journey of hope. I have always been a dreamer, a dreamer in a third-world country in which every problem becomes a new opportunity. I had been battling in the medical school for 10 years, trying to introduce low-cost technologies that would allow a democratization of knowledge and a more intimate relationship to learning for patients, students, and faculty. I believe we all have a social responsibility toward a better future for all in our country and the world. I believe it is not only the government’s responsibility.

When I arrived in Philadelphia, it was a dream come true. I would be able to learn and meet other people that could possibly share the same ideals. At the beginning, it was frightening to see how long the road was to be walked in order to make a positive dent in the lives of our community. I lacked a great number of tools that were required, but as each day passed, new abilities were acquired, new friendships were made, new ideas were born, and, best of all, greater dreams were constructed. Many difficult moments occurred and are still present, but the FAIMER staff always has been there to help guide us and make us responsible for constructing together a new future. When we went back home, facing reality was extremely difficult, but the leadership tools we received have proved to be of great help.

Our projects are no longer local but integrated with other Fellows and other nations, and focused around one main objective: creating a better world. One of the important global outcomes has been the creation of the FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America (FRILA), which is making its first steps, with a strong conviction that we will be able to contribute to the medical education and health of Latin America.

Because of the FAIMER experience, we have begun to improve medical education with the faculty at my medical school. We have made a reappraisal of the curriculum, assessment procedures, and teaching techniques. This doesn’t mean that we are not facing major difficulties, but the leadership tools we received have proved to be of great help.

Thanks, FAIMER, for a new life.

Ricardo Borda
FAIMER Institute 2008
Colombia

When Dr. Bose Afolabi (PHL 2002) told me in February 2005 to apply for a place in FAIMER, I did not realize then that she was giving me a priceless gift. Thank God I followed her cue and sent in my application.

My experience in FAIMER was and continues to be life-transforming, as I continually make new discoveries of those hidden talents in me. Thanks to FAIMER for the time given to train us by the FAIMER staff, as their commitment was commendable; for the demonstrated interest and commitment to all, which was a great teaching point for me; for the exposure to modern teaching methods; for the experience of crossing the “crocodile infested river” in a group; for the knowledge of the “monkey(s) carried on the shoulders;” and for making me truly international, meeting and networking with colleagues from all over the world.

There are four FAIMER Fellows in my institution. The institution calls upon us for direction in matters of medical education and curriculum. Recently, I found myself in a committee with seasoned educators—chief medical directors, faculty chairmen, and editors of medical journals. I could not help but inquire if I had not been mistakenly nominated into such a powerful committee. The college president assured me that he “did his research” before selecting members. I know my FAIMER fellowship had a great part to play in influencing his nomination.

I am now Head of the Department of Radiodiagnosis, since November 2009. Through the training received at FAIMER, a “downtrodden department” that no one respected has ascended, in a short period of time, to a position of positive prominence. This dramatic transformation has included more opportunities for hands-on, practical experiences for radiology residents, and improved staff attitude, communication skills, and patient handling skills. In addition, for the first time in the history of the hospital (48+ years), our department presented at the hospital’s grand rounds in May 2010. The hall was filled to the brim, which was so very unusual, and the presentation titled “From Clinicians to Radiologists: Bridging the Gap” was marked the best presentation ever! All of the above and more were accomplished in less than seven months thanks to my education at FAIMER.

The eight-person Medical Education Committee at my institution, which includes myself and another FAIMER Fellow, recently organized a medical education workshop for newly appointed lecturers at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos. We used several tips from FAIMER, including seating arrangement, interaction, and participation of committee members throughout the three-day workshop. The outcome was a truly satisfied group of newly employed lecturers who promised to use the new ideas in their own practice.

I must say that I look forward to increasing my knowledge through advanced training and to continuing to press on for a medical education department in my college, knowing that only then can we truly perform the duties we’ve signed up for.

Kofoworola Soyebi
FAIMER Institute 2006
Nigeria
true that was, and I continue to use those skills for all work that we do in our department. Another important thing I learned was long-term outcomes. When I wrote my project, I thought I would complete it within a year, and that would be the end of it. I hadn't planned anything beyond that. The faculty made us think of long-term outcomes, and I thought to myself: How can a small project such as mine have any impact on our nation's health? They made us realize how it is possible, and that was an eye opener. That's how I started thinking about long-term outcomes for everything that I do now!

Back at home, I started working on my project. Overcoming the challenges and making some changes along the way, I managed to finish the designated project. That gave me a sense of having accomplished something, albeit small. The journey and the learning did not stop there; it continues. I cannot say that my project had a major impact in our department. But for me, the fellowship was the beginning of a process of reflection and change. It is not for me. I'm working on developing another module for my project forward got delayed, but I am now working on developing another module for the students.

FAIMER taught me to dream big and think of long-term outcomes.

The FAIMER experience is one of my greatest experiences in life, playing an important role in career and personal development. My life is divided into “before and after FAIMER” periods. It has had tremendous impact on the better parts of who I am, on my mind, heart, and life. FAIMER gave me new knowledge, and that knowledge made me more “powerful.” I observed how the real world works and became more self-confident, going in the right direction, creating my own experience.

My fellowship innovation project was about institutional self-study at Tbilisi State Medical University in the process of accreditation. My experience, gained through FAIMER, and my knowledge in the field of institutional accreditation were the main reasons I was nominated to different regulatory positions that work on setting norms and standards in postgraduate medical education and professional development, accreditation of health care providers for postgraduate education, competency standards and licensing of health care professionals, and development of effective program evaluation and competency measurement systems in Georgia. I am sure that, in the near future, effective regulation of postgraduate medical education and professional development will contribute to increased qualification of health care professionals that, in turn, will promote better quality of care.

Social support from the FAIMER family is extremely important in a hard, unstable, critical lifetime. Every FAIMER Fellow knows how sweet the feeling is when you are protected by a global family. I went through different challenges, and even wars, which happened in my country, with high emotional support from the FAIMER side. FAIMER is a global educationalist’s community for the most noble and positive aim: to share knowledge and wisdom with a sense of collaboration and support. It has a major impact on its family members and on development of national educational systems in FAIMER Regional Institute home countries. I wish to meet with FAIMER faculty and Fellows again, and do hope that FAIMER will find ways for international meetings of alumni.

The outcomes of my FAIMER experience were completely unexpected, even for me. My career underwent “uncontrolled” expansion to different agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the State Ministry for Reforms Coordination, and The World Bank. Since July 2009, I have been Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs at Tbilisi State Medical University, and I continue to cooperate with the above-mentioned governmental and non-governmental agencies toward development of medical education in my country.

From my point of view, the best parts of the fellowship are development of a dense professional network, refinement of methods of teaching and learning, assessment, program evaluation, and dedication of a highly qualified faculty and staff. I adore their attitude, artistry, wisdom, and depth.
I read the inspiring story of one of my CMCL-FAIMER Regional Institute Fellows, and I would have loved to share something similar. But not all stories are success stories—some disappoint us, but in doing so, make us think deeper. My story belongs to this second group—it doesn’t really end, and continues as a stepping stone to greater thinking.

I joined CMCL-FRI in 2007, pretty early in my career as a medical teacher. The intention was to have an insight into what I thought I had imbibed naturally, “the art of teaching.” Thanks to the FAIMER experience, I realized that teaching was much more than just teaching. It was the art of helping your students learn and understand the art of learning. It gave me the ability to think more logically and practically toward what we all referred to as “doable.”

My project evaluated the utility of a computer-based, self-learning tool. While dissecting the project during the on-line interaction session, I realized that my project was easy to accomplish during the one-year fellowship in the form I had planned. The long-term plan and possible wider applications, like creating an e-library, were very encouraging. My project went smoothly.

The second and logical step of every Fellow is to take the project results back home and apply them more generally. I thought the same, and with the help of my then Head of Department, Dr. Tejinder Singh (PHIL 2003; IFME 2006; Director, CMCL-FRI), I practically worked with me over these 10 years and are kind of our faculty community, but also my very dear friends.

Reflecting on the events that happened while I was at home facing one of the most difficult problems in my personal life. I appreciate so much that they consider my work valuable and recognize that my low profile leadership style can help them in their development as faculty of our medical school.

FAIMER has always been working by my side; they have never forgotten me despite my long silence on the listserv. Jack Boulet and Marta van Zanten have kindly worked with me over these 10 years and are part not only of the final success of my project and members of our faculty community, but also my very dear friends.

I was a member of the first group of Fellows. I should say instead that I had the privilege to be in the first group of Fellows sharing all the emotions that witnessing the launching of the FAIMER international project had. After 10 years of undeniable success, FAIMER keeps raising emotions in new groups of Fellows, extending the boundaries of this family all around the world.

In 2001, my project was about how to set an objective structured clinical exam (OSCE) before graduation in our medical school. Reflecting on the events that have occurred since then, introducing standardized patients in a traditional-minded community of faculty was, by far, the greatest challenge that I faced. I could taste not only the bitterness of rejection but also the sweetness of little victories that allowed me to succeed in my attempt.

I recognize how important the authorities’ support was to achieve success with the project; but the key of the final success was support from my colleagues and friends, who shouldered the initiative by my side. Now, we have two groups of faculty working in clinical skills assessment using OSCEs as their own project. If I disappear, the project will go on with new actors; this means that I finally achieved my goal.

I have been working in medical education mainly in the department of internal medicine, the most difficult field in our medical school. After 10 years, the seeds that I spread, with effort and persistence, have shown to my colleagues and their representatives. It happened while I was at home facing one of the most difficult problems in my personal life. I appreciate so much that they consider my work valuable and recognize that my low profile leadership style can help them in their development as faculty of our medical school.
I was a hot, sultry afternoon in July 2002 when I received an envelope containing an application blank for the FAIMER fellowship. There was no name to indicate who the sender was. The contents of the brochure looked attractive though, being in alignment with what I was doing and wanted to do. My Dean was more than willing to let me try for this and I applied for it. A telephone interview and then the selection confirmation—wow!

The program started and with each passing day, a new light, literally transforming the way we should look at teaching. I came to realize that there was so much to do and see. There were all kinds of seminars, workshops, and networking opportunities, all designed to challenge and change one’s perspective on teaching and learning. It seemed as though one could become a better teacher just by being there.

Being a Fellow is OK, but running a Regional Institute as a director looked tricky. With great difficulty and using a lot of personal influence, we collected 12 teachers to participate as faculty at the CMCL–FRI. Bill came for the first session in January 2006 and it was considered a success in local academic circles. Participants were introduced to a new methodology, a new way of looking at teaching and learning, and a longitudinal process of development. Like an old Indian proverb that love and fragrance cannot be hidden for a long time, we have been able to project FAIMER as a brand. In a matter of months, we were able to turn around people’s perceptions about medical education.

Five years of being a Regional Institute Director have been satisfying and challenging. Satisfying because we have been able to project FAIMER as a brand. In their last letter to all medical colleges, the Medical Council of India specifically asked for people who are FAIMER trained. Many medical schools have appointed FAIMER-trained faculty as coordinators of their medical education units. Challenging because we still have to reach a large number of medical schools and faculty.

I also had the opportunity to attend a Master’s of Health Professions Education (MHPE) and then a Ph.D. program at Maastricht University through FAIMER support. I was doing medical education for all these years but the theoretical inputs in these courses truly helped to make the tacit knowledge explicit and give a sense of direction to my efforts. I am particularly happy about this because I am able to disseminate this knowledge and these skills to a larger audience through the listserv, workshops, and writings. The degree of growth has been phenomenal. For years, CMCL was a type of “also run” player in medical education; now no meeting in medical education is complete without participation from this institution. From invited membership in an expert group to decide on faculty development interventions in India, to a regional center for basic medical education workshops, to a nodal center for advanced workshops, we have travelled a long way and the journey has always been cushioned by help and support from FAIMER.

The journey has just begun but the beginning has been with a bang. There are still paths to be traversed and difficult terrains to be covered, but the past experience gives hope that the outcome will be as fruitful as it has been so far. I have one more task to complete, and that is to find out who sent me that envelope containing the FAIMER application so that I can thank that person for introducing me to a new way of life.
I am a lecturer in an epidemiology department of a faculty of public health in Viet Nam. I applied for the FAIMER course by chance because, before me, no one from Viet Nam had attended a FAIMER program. By chance, talking with my friends, I learned that there was an organization working on the advancement of international medical education and research, FAIMER. With my interest in teaching methodology, I searched on-line and found the FAIMER web page and applied for the fellowship. I was really worried before the telephone interview because, at that time, my English was not good. But Bill and Katherine were so nice that I was confident enough to pass the interview by answering questions related to my ability, experience, and the feasibility of implementing my project.

I had challenges that might have prevented my plan to attend the two residential sessions in Philadelphia. My pregnancy caused me to postpone my start by a year. The next year, I fractured a bone in my leg two months before the program was to begin; however, support from the FAIMER faculty made my impossible possible. I will never regret attending the course, because I gained a huge amount of knowledge taught by FAIMER and had the chance to meet other colleagues whom I consider my friends, my brothers and sisters, and my teachers working in this field.

The things that impressed me about the program are: the way FAIMER organized the course; the FAIMER staff; the way Fellows worked in small groups; the way FAIMER organized the course; the FAIMER colleagues whom I consider my friends, my brothers and sisters, and my teachers working in this field. The wide variety of teaching approaches, including role play, case study, group work, listserv, Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) groups, the unforgettable river crossing exercise, learning circles, poster presentations, and field work, all made the course alive and useful. Working individually or with group mentoring made Fellows’ projects doable when they returned to their countries. Mentors sat with their students individually, working on their abstracts before submitting them to “Really Good Stuff.”

One thing that is important to mention is the teaching staff. They were so wonderful. It was the first time I had attended a course where co-teachers shared their knowledge and experience within one period. They worked as a teaching team and supported each other in not only a professional way but also with a teamwork spirit. With Fellows, the teaching staff was very friendly even though they are at a high level of academic profession. They were always available to help.

In the first moment, I felt like a fish out of water, but gradually I found my confidence. And at the end of the second residential session, I felt that FAIMER had become one of my academic families.

Before joining the course, I was only a postgraduate coordinator in my epidemiology department, one of the seven departments in a huge faculty. With the knowledge and skill taught by FAIMER, I have proved that I am a useful person for the cause of medical education in my institution. I have been promoted to Coordinator of the Epidemiology Module working on designing curriculum, developing lesson plans, tutor guides, and student assessment tools, and writing the handbook. The impact of this contribution on my institution and on all eight medical universities in Viet Nam is that there will be a consensus epidemiology curriculum for all medical universities nationwide, improving the preparation of preventive medical doctors to face challenges in the field of preventive medicine in Viet Nam.
I first heard about FAIMER’s IFME fellowships in the year 2003 when the application forms were paper-based. I started filling out the form, but it was too elaborate and, because of conflicting interests (I had my interviews coming up for promotion), I could not complete it by the deadline and then forgot about it. Then, when I was invited for the consultation meeting (for development of regional FAIMER institute curriculum) at Christian Medical College, Vellore, in December 2004, I met Dr. William Burdick. Meeting and talking to him inspired me again to take up this initiative to pursue my application process for the FAIMER fellowship. By this time, the application submission process had moved online, and I applied.

Though I had been trained in educational methods and had been involved in conducting faculty development workshops for many years, I had no exposure to the leadership skills. The terms “change management” and “conflict management” were new to me, and yet I was required to lead our school’s Centre for Medical Education.

The journey through these last five years has been very exciting and rewarding for me. One great feeling that I got when I joined FAIMER was to experience the first session in October 2005 was to know that I was not alone in my struggle to get recognition for my and others’ involvement in medical education; it was the same story globally. The first meeting (meet the experts session) with Jim was very comforting and reassuring and further increased my determination to follow my passion. The sessions on change management, conflict management, and appreciative leadership were eye-openers for me and made me look at the same work environment differently and more positively.

Knowledge of the process of change and barriers to change was very helpful in successfully pursuing my project despite many challenges. The listserv experiences were just too exciting and learning was so much fun. I got addicted to the listserv and have thereafter become an avid online learner.

Then the experiences as faculty at the FAIMER Regional Institutes, under the mentorship of Bill and Page initially and then Debby, Janet, Stewart, and Ray, were the boosters and have been great learning experiences for me. They have made me a much more patient and confident facilitator who need not always depend on PowerPoint presentations, and they improved my skills for conducting more interactive sessions. I have become more accepting of the unexpected outcomes.

The knowledge and skill enhancement in the areas of educational research and scholarship, and leadership and change management, have really, really changed my life in many ways. Although I had been working quite a hit in terms of educational innovations and faculty development activities for nearly 15 years, I was a hesitant writer. I had been usually a quiet worker and had edited two books on medical education (one on assessment methods in 1995 and another on postgraduate education in 2002), but I did not quite work on promoting these. Over the last three or four years, after my second session at FAIMER, I have to some extent learned the skill/art from Page that she calls “graceful self-promotion.” I am less hesitant to talk of my achievements than I was earlier.

Before FAIMER, I had never in my life had mentors like Page and Bill, who brought out the strengths in me of which I myself was not aware. It was one of the best experiences for me to organize the first National Conference on Medical Education at my institute with the support of FAIMER. The presence of John Norzini and other board members was really very encouraging. This conference was complimented as a landmark event in medical education by most of the people who attended.

FAIMER has played an important role in increasing my visibility and has made a significant contribution to my international accomplishments, the latest of them being an invitation to the Karolinska Institutet as faculty for its leadership program and by the British Medical Journal to speak during its annual International Advisory Board meeting.

Personal growth—the change in me as a person—has meant more to me than the professional development. I think others have also noticed and appreciated this change. I have become much more patient, accepting, and tolerant of others’ points of view and have developed an “appreciative eye.”

I have become more positive in my approach to work and life. This stood me in great stead while leading work teams in my medical unit and also at the Centre for Medical Education while I was in charge for three- and a half years. This approach has also helped me in coping smoothly with ups and downs in my career.

To summarize, the FAIMER experience over the last five years has contributed immensely to my professional and personal development, and I consider myself fortunate to be part of this wonderful FAIMER family. I thank everyone at FAIMER for providing me with this opportunity.

V.V. Unnikrishnan
PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute 2007 India

FAIMER was a revelation for me. I am a “right-brained” physiologist, who wishes to dream and hope. Quite often I wondered why my dreams and hopes do not materialize into realities in flesh and blood, in the way I want them to. FAIMER gave me answers in more than one way. The FAIMER way of thinking gave me a totally different paradigm in approaching medical education and life. It unveiled a methodical, systematic approach, which is bound to achieve its goals. The most recent trends in management, statistics, medical research, and even cost accounting were incorporated into the curriculum. The process of sifting through volumes of information and data, especially from the listserv, and reaching concrete conclusions from them was a revealing experience.

The commitment of Bill, Janet, Katherine, and Thomas, and the wonderful way in which one’s queries were addressed during a remarkable period of time, were some of the high points. It is with unbounded pride that I look up to my contemporary fellows—Saira, Ravi Shankar, Jayoti, Reem, and Supten—who have since excelled in the FAIMER pathway.

FAIMER stands as a pillar in my career, to help me determine my bearings.

The FAIMER way of thinking gave me a totally different paradigm in approaching medical education and life.
When I was first appointed as academic medical faculty at the College of Medicine, University of Lagos (CMUL), Lagos, Nigeria, I was lost in a sense, being uncertain of what the rules, regulations, and expectations were for my new job. As a newly appointed academic medical faculty, I wondered why new and junior faculty were neither formally orientated to the institution nor prepared to carry out their core roles of teaching, research, and service before ever daring to commence any of these crucial duties.

So when the FAIMER fellowship program application came up, it suited my career development dreams and ideas, and I did not waste time in seizing the opportunity to apply. Although the process for completing the then paper-based application was quite tedious, things worked out for me faster than I ever imagined. I looked forward to implementing innovative educational programs and using the FAIMER fellowship experience to influence the way medical education business enterprise is run, since I strongly believe that improving medical education will eventually translate to better health care for all peoples.

My first shock during my first FAIMER Institute session was the culture mix and the widely varied professional and academic attainments of the Fellows. I could not but doubt my ability to match the knowledge and skills of some of the more experienced participants, some of whom had written books in medical education, or chaired medical education departments in their institutions. Kudos to the enthusiastic and engaging team of FAIMER faculty, who reassured us and were able to engage all of us, notwithstanding our glaring disparities and diversities. The two FAIMER Institute sessions were memorable, but humbling learning experiences for me.

The FAIMER Institute brought to the fore the impact that formal training in medical education can have on one’s career as a medical educator, and the tremendous value such training can add to the teaching and learning process at all levels of medical education. The innovative FAIMER fellowship projects conducted in participating Fellows’ home institutions served as the workshop in which to test and practice the skills learned during the FAIMER Institute. For my FAIMER project, I designed, implemented, and evaluated, along with a multidisciplinary team of faculty, a program on evidence-based medicine to determine its impact on medical students during a paediatric clerkship.

Many of my roles and responsibilities are attributable to my FAIMER experience including coordinating the integration of newer educational domains such as ethics and professionalism, evidence-based medicine, communication skills, and introduction of early clinical exposure, coordinating development of a medical education and research unit, and participating in planning, implementation, and evaluation of faculty development programs. I have also been invited as a resource person for faculty development on research skills and writing for publication in neighboring medical schools.

My FAIMER story is incomplete without Dr. Nancy Gary who, on my first day of the FAIMER Institute, offered me a warm handshake and engaged me in conversation about my country and my career. The sparkle and excitement in Dr. Gary’s eyes, and her kind words practically dissolved my uncertainties about what the fellowship program was all about.

My FAIMER story is yet unfinished and is an evolving story. Thank you for giving me, and the growing community of FAIMER Fellows, the opportunity to explore the world of medical education and educational research.

Juanita Bezuidenhout
Co-Director, Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute
FAIMER Institute 2005
South Africa

Becoming a FAIMER Fellow was one of the single defining moments of my life. I entered a community where I found meaning and affirmation of what I believe in with regards to education.

The first day at FAIMER I met many people that I became good friends with and a few from whom I’m inseparable, including David Cameron and Christina Tan, and I built bonds across oceans. Through FAIMER I developed a set of skills that is fairly unique in my environment and I developed a confidence that I can feel. I am now regarded as a health sciences education expert in my institution, my country, and in Africa. I am actively involved in numerous activities and committees, most recently as a board member of the Medical and Dental Board of the Health Professions Council of South Africa. None of these achievements I would have envisaged prior to joining FAIMER.

Through my participation in SAFRI, I have found the “cause” that a person with a Myers-Briggs INFP personality searches for and I believe that this is one of the most worthwhile things I do. Although it is very time-consuming, it is worth every minute to see how Fellows from all over Africa develop and not only follow in our footsteps, but pass us and lead the way.

The FAIMER community accepted me as an individual, allowed me to be as creative as I wanted to be, and did not frown upon my slightly odd way of thinking. In turn I felt safe to develop my creativity even more, came into my own, and realized that odd is more than OK. I’ve learned that what I thought was “agonizing over things” is actually “reflection” and OK.

From a research perspective, it has opened new doors as well. I have developed a collaborative project with FAIMER and SAFRI Fellows from all the institutions in South Africa, and through Janet Grant, an arm in the United Kingdom as well.

Most importantly, as you can see from my short story, the network that I developed is amazing. Never before did I contemplate that I would meet the education gurus and become friends with them.
O ur institute, Pramukhswami Medical College, situated in Gujarat in western India, is a prestigious institute always looking forward to developing innovative teaching-learning methods, working for betterment of students, and serving the community at large. I came to know about the FAIMER fellowship at a workshop conducted by one of our FAIMER Fellows in the college, along with a FAIMER Fellow from another institute in 2007. The workshop was very useful.

After knowing the objectives and activities of FAIMER, both I and my wife, Suman P. Singh, applied for the FAIMER fellowship at Christian Medical College, Ludhiana. I am a teaching faculty member in anatomy and my wife is a teaching faculty member in microbiology at the same place. We were used to discussing various methods used for the teaching-learning process, so we were very happy to learn that there is an international organization like FAIMER, concentrating on health professionals’ education. We went through the process required for FAIMER application, and then eagerly waited for our turn.

Now the day of the result came and I received a letter from CMCL-FRI stating that I have been selected for this prestigious fellowship. It made me very excited, as I was looking forward to the academic feast that was going to follow. But at the same time, it was a bit sad, as my wife did not receive the letter. This didn’t last long, as my wife was informed that she also was selected, after the waiting list was cleared at CMCL-FRI.

We reached Ludhiana with the preparations that we were required to undergo. We were enthusiastic about the whole process. We were highly impressed by the quality and quantity of knowledge that we received from Dr. Tejinder and team. We were actually expecting the environment to be similar to our departmental conferences and workshops, but the scenario was totally different. Each day started sharp, right on-time, and the sessions were so different—interactive and well managed—that we were spellbound. The environment at CMCL was so charged that we were even discussing issues during our breakfast and lunch times. For the whole week, we were very much enriched by knowledge, along with a very important message by Dr. Tejinder that we cannot stop and wait for the world to change, but we should ourselves start the process and act as a role model.

Leaving Ludhiana was different for us from any other conference. We knew that our day was not ending there, but would continue on and on, unlike other conferences or workshops. We were committed to the work, and enjoyed our on-line intersession period with monthly moderated discussion topics, and most importantly, continued with our project work. The faculty and our senior Fellows were very cooperative in solving whatsoever difficulties that surfaced during this time. Only at FAIMER could we see a concept of co-mentorship, where seniors helped us wholeheartedly. At times when we needed help in our listserv discussions, it was available in no time.

In these two years, with the help of knowledge acquired through FAIMER and its resources, we conducted many workshops on medical education at our place. I presented my curriculum innovation project at our national conference, where the work was duly appreciated. Because of FAIMER, we were able to introduce changes in the anatomy curriculum in the form of introducing case-based learning as a part of the curriculum for the phase one students.

After successful completion of our fellowship, we were happy and fortunate to be called back as faculty at CMCL-FRI, which has helped us grow in the field of health professions education. Our experience of FAIMER helped us in conducting a three-day workshop on basic medical education at our institution. For this we not only invited faculty from our place, but from across the whole of the Gujarat state. Because of my activities, I am part of a faculty development program at our institute.

FAIMER helped us in achieving expertise in the field of medical education. This insight will further help us in taking care of the teaching-learning processes at our medical college, spreading the light of medical education to regional medical schools by conducting workshops, thereby helping us in the end to serve the community at large.

I t was sometime in July 2006 when I attended a faculty development program at our institute. One member of the faculty was a FAIMER Fellow and I got interested in this unknown world at that time. I wanted to know more about it due to my inherent inclination towards teaching. The more I knew about it, the more fascinated I became with the philosophy of FAIMER and its determination to serve mankind through its mission to improve education.

I applied for the FAIMER fellowship at CMCL, but did not get selected at first. I was wait-listed, but I got a call at the last moment. I was very happy as my life partner was also among the selected Fellows.

It was a year full of academic activity, learning, understanding new concepts, and the excitement of becoming a part of the big FAIMER family. The best thing that I have gained through FAIMER is to be patient and optimistic and make every effort to be the change that we want to see. In short, I have learned to live through FAIMER. The persistent efforts have started to bear fruit, and the perception of my institution toward medical education has changed in a positive direction.

I and my life partner, Praveen Singh, also have the privilege of being selected as FAIMER faculty at CMCL, and thus of having the responsibility to maintain the change that has been initiated, to fulfill the mission of serving society through improvement of medical education and the health care of society at large.

Thank you FAIMER, for providing us the opportunity to serve mankind in a noble way.
As soon as I heard about FAIMER’s noble mission, I decided to apply for its international fellowship program. It was midnight Cairo time, and I did not realize then that I had to fill in the application form on-line. When I got to the research project section, it was the next morning already, and I was too exhausted to think of a sound, genuine, and creative idea for my project! It was as if I fell asleep on my computer and was dreaming when I said to myself: I FOUND IT!!!

I always dreamed of leading change in medical education in my country, Egypt. A few years earlier, I had established the first academic medical education department in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean Region. One of its postgraduate programs was the Joint Master of Health Professions Education (JMHP) through distance learning, in a partnership between Maastricht University in the Netherlands and Suez Canal University in Egypt (www.medfomsuc.org). As a regional (now international), highly expensive program for the Egyptians, I felt guilty because I could not be of more help to the Egyptian health professionals working in academic or training positions. Although it’s the most affordable among comparable programs in the world, I still had a long list of Egyptians who applied for the JMHP program but failed to register because of its relatively high fees. I asked myself: can we plan, this time on our own, another more affordable program to encourage more Egyptians to enroll? Again, I said to myself: I must be dreaming! This requires a lot of experience in planning such a high-tech program with limited resources and also needs a major, courageous sponsor. I was too tired to think of another project, and also too enthusiastic about the idea to let go! I took my chances and planned my FAIMER project

based on faith in my personal, sincere motives and relied on FAIMER’s understanding and support as the major, technical sponsor of my project.

As much as I felt happy and honored to be chosen as one of the 16 international Fellows (PHIL 2007), equally as much I felt committed to make my dream come true and responsible for proving to FAIMER that it was a vision rather than a dream. Once I shared this vision with my FAIMER faculty and colleagues, I could see clearly the end of the road, and I learned at FAIMER how to reach it by the straightest line—through good planning and concept mapping.

We started our first FAIMER on-site session in the first week of October 2007, and I promised to open my national “Diploma of Health Professions Education through Distance Learning” program (www.dhpescu.org) in the first week of October 2008. I fulfilled my promise, and opened this program exactly on time. A gush of highly ranked faculty formed the first cohort of this program, mainly chairpersons, full professors, and a dean of a medical school. In the first round, we received 56 fellows and graduated 36. By the end of 2010, we had 97 fellows, which reflects the credibility of the program and its sustainability. The Egyptian government and the World Health Organization are sponsoring almost half of the applicants, and the government and the World Health Organization are the main providers of the program and its sustainability. The Egyptian government and the World Health Organization are sponsoring almost half of the applicants, and the government and the World Health Organization are the main providers of the program and its sustainability.

In short, FAIMER helped me become more self-confident, more professional, and more loyal to my country and to the whole global medical community. Thank you, FAIMER.

Wagdy Talaat
FAIMER Institute 2007
Egypt

I n 2003, my institution changed its curriculum after a long process of discussion. Everything seemed to be perfect. However, out of 180 faculty members, only 15 applied to the faculty development program. After some time, a lack of motivation took hold among those engaged in the movement. I felt the need to look for some strategy that could raise my motivation and bring more results to our institution. I didn’t realize then that FAIMER would be so important in and to my life.

Even before going to Fortaleza to attend the Brazil-FRI, I discovered that I was not alone, because we started on the FAIMER listserv and began to present ourselves to each other and to discuss some articles, sharing opinions and experiences. When I got to Fortaleza, I met many peers, who were experiencing situations very similar to mine and with whom I could share ideas and feelings.

The care taken by each of the FAIMER team members during the whole meeting in Fortaleza was fantastic. The organization and the environment were perfect. The faculty was highly qualified and accessible, models to be followed. This context contributed to a jump in my process of learning. I learned a lot about: medical and health professions education, the project to be developed, planning, leadership, and myself through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. All of these processes, which, in a very agreeable environment, promoted closer ties and supported our efforts to improve ourselves to be able to improve our reality, made me become a very different person and gave me energy.

In 2007, I had my first experience as a FAIMER fellow, I found that I was not alone anymore. With FAIMER, I had the opportunity to belong to a group, to belong to a family, with many wonderful relatives...

When I came back to Florianópolis, I knew I was not alone anymore. There was a lot of work to be done. I carried out my project on the pediatric internship student assessment. It was very important to trigger the feeling among the students, staff, and faculty that students’ assessment in internship should change. We organized a Student Assessment Committee to study and implement new tools for the assessment of competence, and we are still discussing how to do it.

My two years of participation as a FAIMER student made a difference in my way of seeing things—perceiving possibilities—and in my behavior. I began to deal better with reality. I became more patient, giving some suggestions and pointing out strategies, but understanding that some time is required until some stakeholders perceive the need for them.

Recently, I have begun to feel that there is a progressive involvement of students and faculty in the improvement of our curriculum. The students invited me to join an interdisciplinary group to discuss ways to improve undergraduate students’ mental health, and the doctors of a Basic Health Unit invited me to discuss strategies to reinforce their relations with the university. I hope I can involve more students and faculty members, so that we can again structure a committee to evaluate and improve our course. I believe this can be done in a more systematic way thanks to The Open University distance learning course on self-review and accreditation offered by FAIMER.

Recently, Brazil-FRI Co-Director Henry Campos invited me to join the FAIMER leadership discussion group, and the FAIMER team gave me the opportunity of being a faculty member. For me, it was a gift; it was like a dream come true. I have to confess that I have never felt so valued in all my academic life. And I was, I am, and I will always be grateful to FAIMER for the opportunity of experiencing this continuous and intense process of learning in a program that addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions.

Being a FAIMER participant gave me the feeling of belonging to a group, a family with many wonderful relatives...

Suely Grossman
Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute 2008
Brazil

Being a FAIMER participant gave me the feeling of belonging to a group, a family with many wonderful relatives, spread all over Brazil and other countries, which gives support and empowers and strengthens each of its members to improve professional education in an effort to improve health care, not only in the institutions where they work, but also at the regional and national levels.

FAIMER is the best program I have ever experienced in my life and my hopes are to be able to continue growing and contributing to the development and strengthening of this very special new family to which I belong.
The journey for me has been like writing an article. The Introduction and Background to my journey was provided by the on-site interactions at SAFRI, as well as by the ongoing Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) discussions. During the on-site sessions, the gap in my knowledge was highlighted, but the sessions also assisted in emphasizing the contribution that I could make to health science education and research.

The Methodology section was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Getting to understand my Myers-Briggs type, leadership style, and ways of managing conflict contributed hugely to understanding the phenomena called MYSELF. During the process, I was able to identify my strengths and my weaknesses, as well as ways and means of overcoming these weaknesses. In addition, sessions on different assessment methods and providing feedback helped me to learn how to objectively measure physiotherapy education in our department and nationally.

The Results of this SAFRI/FAIMER experience are that I am currently applying many of the concepts I learned on this journey in teaching, research, and administration. In the past two years, I have been able to implement well-structured faculty (staff) development workshops relating to writing for publication within our department and for our faculty. The process and planning required to cross the crocodile river has been used as a framework for conducting research projects in my research methodology course and is often used in youth development programs to highlight the importance of teamwork and planning.

The Conclusion is that this journey has not ended—it is only starting, and the recommendation being made is that after this article has ended I will continue to write others. The seed has been planted, and over the years you will have to watch the tree grow.

Thank you for the experience.
In 2001, a new school of medicine was created in Chile. I was invited to this new project, coming from a very warm and well-established environment. I had been a full-time pediatric intensivist, dealing with very sick children and complex diseases. I was able to measure almost all the physiological variables, like cardiac output, respiratory mechanics, and intracranial pressure. My role as a teacher was almost completely dedicated to pediatric intensive care fellows.

However, I accepted this challenge to teach at the new school. The dean gave me a task: “we need to professionalize our learning-teaching process.” And I told him to give me some time. I needed to learn what this was all about. In the beginning, it didn’t feel good doing something that I was not trained for at all. I will never forget the day when I received the acceptance from FAIMER. I saw that e-mail like a hope, a new beginning. I was afraid of doing it, as in a private general intensive care unit as well. As a clinician in the pediatric Pediatrics, working as a clinician in the pediatric intensive care unit, I had to become a full-time pediatric intensivist.

At the office for educational development we initiated a faculty development program. This is a one-year program with seven modules conducted twice a week. The faculty members really like it. For assessment, we started with objective structured clinical examinations that now have been developed for all the clinical rotations, and we do course evaluations. Still there are important questions: How do we know that as a college of medicine we are doing a good job? How do we know that our courses are well-planned and delivered? How can we be certain that our students learn what is necessary? My priority is to engage a bigger core of faculty with the challenge of education. Sometimes starting a new project is, in some ways, easier compared with sustaining it. This is my second goal: Sustain the project. Our first generation out of the school will work as an engine for this purpose. Thanks to FAIMER support, we have been growing in the number of faculty working on medical education, always keeping in mind that education can make an impact on the people’s health.

We are a team now of five people. My job is to lead the team and try to get the best out of each person. I show them the map, and they drive the car. In the meantime, I was named Chairman of Pediatrics, working as a clinician in the pediatric intensive care unit as well as in a private general pediatrics office. Plus, I was mentoring some interns in a public hospital, the clinical venue for the school of medicine. My role has been transforming this into a hospital with rounds, medical discussions, and treatment guidelines. My days are long and so are my nights.

One fateful day, I stumbled on the FAIMER website and saw the call for applications for fellowship. From that moment my approach to teaching and training medical students and medical residents has never been the same. Even my approach to health education for patients and rural women in Nigeria changed. I now use problem-based learning and interactive teaching for all these cadres of people. I also plan learning outcomes ahead of time.

My knowledge of medical education has also risen exponentially since then. First, in the course of completing the application and writing the proposal for my FAIMER project, I had to seek out medical education journals and read about topical issues in medical education, which I was not in the habit of doing. My self-directed learning and research had been on clinical medicine and endocrinology topics only.

Before my FAIMER experience, I had been a clinical endocrinologist and university teacher for 13 years at the University of Nigeria, Enugu campus. Three years prior my FAIMER fellowship, I developed a keen interest in medical education as a discipline, and in particular faculty development, when I was appointed Chair of the Faculty of Medical Sciences Curriculum Committee. It was then that I observed that lecturers in my institution did not get any formal capacity building for “lecturing.” Content experts were engaged as lecturers and left to their own devices as to how they facilitated learning, imparted knowledge, and assessed students. Since I was saddled with the responsibilities of Chair of the Curriculum Committee, I undertook a sabbatical year in the Office of Medical Education at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. There I equipped myself with the required skills for student assessment, curriculum evaluation, and innovative teaching methods.

On my return to my home institution, I was mandated to set up a proper office of medical education in our institution for advancing and improving medical education. On being awarded the FAIMER fellowship, with the advice and mentoring of FAIMER faculty—in particular Page Morahan and William Burdick—I chose the establishment of an office of medical education in my College of Medicine as my FAIMER project.

I have advanced professionally, undertaking leadership roles in varying situations and positions with confidence as a result of the leadership training I received from FAIMER. These leadership roles include: reviewer for several academic journals, external examiner to several medical schools in Nigeria, examiner and member of the accreditation team for the West African College of Physicians, first female Chair of Internal Medicine in my institution, and member of the accreditation team of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria.

I also acquired much needed leadership skills from my FAIMER experience, which has stretched from my FAIMER fellowship years to my subsequent appointment as a global faculty advisor and currently as a participant in the Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) activities. These on-line discussions have kept me abreast of advances in medical education.

The most important benefit I derive from my FAIMER experience is the level of comfort I enjoy with regard to conducting faculty development programs, teaching medical students and resident doctors, addressing student assessment at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and educating patients and people in the community.
My association with FAIMER dates back to 2005 when CMCL-FRI was conceived. Reflecting back on the journey, I feel I have come a long way since then, and FAIMER in one way or the other has made a significant contribution in fostering my professional and personal growth over these last few years.

It was in January 2006 that I attended the first session of CMCL-FRI as a Fellow of the pioneer batch. I was a novice in the field of medical education then. I vividly remember how overwhelmed I was subsequent to being introduced to this whole new world, and the realization that despite being faculty of a prestigious medical school most of us were oblivious about it. The first residential session was indeed an eye opener, and I would say it turned around the way I even thought—after that there was no looking back!

As a CMCL Fellow, I got the opportunity to spruce up my teaching skills, and immense learning happened as I went through each phase of my curriculum innovation project. Since my project involved contributions from other faculty members in the department, they were also sensitized in the process. As part of the project, a faculty development workshop was organized for the institution. This was much appreciated and helped in increasing awareness about the need for such programs for the faculty.

An integral part of the Institute was to impart management and leadership skills. For me, this component of the program was invaluable and had a meaningful impact on my professional growth. The timing was just right. The same year I was given the responsibility of heading the Department of Ophthalmology—a department where a lot could be done. Although this was unexpected, I took up the challenge, and much of where the department stands today has resulted from the application of skills I learned at FAIMER. Concepts of program evaluation need a special mention here—these were very new to me then but came in handy and helped in establishing liaisons with international developmental organizations like ORBIS, which is devoted to the prevention and treatment of blindness. FAIMER had equipped me with the process of program evaluation. I could systematically outline the outcomes, activities, and indicators of a potential child eye care project. Effective communications regarding these convinced ORBIS of our capability, and we received immense support for capacity building.

The pearls gathered in project management helped me get recognition from a German foundation, and they invited me to conduct a series of workshops in India and Bangladesh to train their partner organizations in project cycle management. We also created a program to train primary school teachers from rural, underserved areas to carry out vision screening of school children and to identify children with low vision, who were later provided free treatment by our team. This sustainable strategy was quite effective in reaching out to a lot more underprivileged children, thus saving several families from the misery of childhood blindness.

Sooner than I knew, I became a part of the faculty for CMCL. Subsequently, our Regional Institute team also conducted faculty development workshops for other medical schools of the country. We have now been given the status of Regional Centre for faculty development by the Medical Council of India.

An integral part of the Institute was to impart management and leadership skills. For me, this component of the program was invaluable and had a meaningful impact on my professional growth. The timing was just right. The same year I was given the responsibility of heading the Department of Ophthalmology—a department where a lot could be done. Although this was unexpected, I took up the challenge, and much of where the department stands today has resulted from the application of skills I learned at FAIMER. Concepts of program evaluation need a special mention here—these were very new to me then but came in handy and helped in establishing liaisons with international developmental organizations like ORBIS, which is devoted to the prevention and treatment of blindness. FAIMER had equipped me with the process of program evaluation. I could systematically outline the outcomes, activities, and indicators of a potential child eye care project. Effective communications regarding these convinced ORBIS of our capability, and we received immense support for capacity building.

The pearls gathered in project management helped me get recognition from a German foundation, and they invited me to conduct a series of workshops in India and Bangladesh to train their partner organizations in project cycle management. We also created a program to train primary school teachers from rural, underserved areas to carry out vision screening of school children and to identify children with low vision, who were later provided free treatment by our team. This sustainable strategy was quite effective in reaching out to a lot more underprivileged children, thus saving several families from the misery of childhood blindness.

Sooner than I knew, I became a part of the faculty for CMCL. Subsequently, our Regional Institute team also conducted faculty development workshops for other medical schools of the country. We have now been given the status of Regional Centre for faculty development by the Medical Council of India. As other medical schools were benefiting from the faculty development workshops, my personal knowledge and skills kept improving with each subsequent session.

To further enhance my skills, I applied for the FAIMER Institute in Philadelphia. The FAIMER Institute was indeed an exceptional experience with a more international flavor to it. Besides providing an outstanding educational experience, the Institute additionally offered a platform to interact with educators across the globe to share ideas, learn from each other, and grow together. It was noteworthy that some virtues were inherent to all faculty at FAIMER—positivity, optimism, enthusiasm, flexibility, support, and encouragement—you couldn’t possibly go back without imbibing these.

My project for the FAIMER Institute 2008 was aimed at structuring the internship program in my department. As part of the project, the faculty of ophthalmology underwent training in newer assessment methods including the mini-clinical evaluation exercise (mini-CEX) and direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS). With the guidance and motivation received from FAIMER faculty, I could get my project results published as “Really Good Stuff” in Medical Education, which has helped in disseminating the model to a larger community of educators. Early this year, I also got an invitation to be a reviewer for Medical Education, which was yet another milestone in this inspiring journey.

Thank you FAIMER for touching my life and changing it forever!
Dianne Manning  
FAIMER Institute 2008  
South Africa

My FAIMER journey began with a casual conversation conversation with two previous Fellows, Jacky van Wyk (PHIL 2004) and Francois Cilliers (PHIL 2004), both of whom suggested that I apply for a fellowship. The seed was planted, and by the time I arrived in Philadelphia it had germinated, ready to be fed and watered by the faculty, Fellows, and global faculty advisors who were soon to become so familiar that it was hard to remember we had known each other such a short time.

Being a FAIMER Fellow has changed me in a number of important ways. First, it has strengthened my self-confidence as a medical education specialist with the expertise to share, guide, and support others. Besides what I learned during the on-site sessions, I believe the Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) has been enormously useful in maintaining the momentum of learning and in providing a wealth of additional resources and skills.

I believe the relationships I have built with other faculty and Fellows, both in my year and other years, will be one of the most enduring benefits of the program. I truly feel part of a caring and supportive network and, as I learn more about others with similar and different problems in their corners of the globe, I know that I will never need to feel isolated.

Becoming a member of the SAFRI faculty has been a particularly affirming experience. Being able to contribute to the development of more Fellows in direct and practical ways has provided me with further opportunities to grow and enhance my own knowledge and skills in medical education and leadership. Representing SAFRI in the Program Evaluation Advisory Group has also added to this experience by providing further links to the other Regional Institutes and, thus, has strengthened my sense of community membership and participation. I see the work of the Regional Institutes as potentially the most important legacy of the FAIMER program and something I would like to contribute to in meaningful ways in the long term.

Although the impact in my school and (through SAFRI) the wider area of influence in Africa is still in its infancy—it being less than two years since my fellowship began—I am confident that what I have to offer is already visible in the education courses I run and am developing. It’s visible in my mentorship of students, faculty, and new Fellows, in the leadership roles I am taking on, and in the relationships I am building as I work toward expanding my project. FAIMER and SAFRI have made me proud of who I am and of what more I can achieve through working with others.

Thomas V. Chacko  
Director, PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute  
International Fellowship in Medical Education 2002 & 2006  
FAIMER Institute 2004  
India

I was an active member of my medical school’s Medical Education Unit when I heard about FAIMER and was awarded the IFME fellowship in 2002, so that I could get exposed to the fundamentals of medical education at the world’s first Medical Education Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It was an enriching experience for me and enlarged my world view, and since then there has been no turning back. I was then selected for the 2004 FAIMER Institute in Philadelphia, where I met leaders in medical education and was inspired by their achievements and their dedication to the cause of medical education.

The FAIMER Institute program equipped me with skills and confidence to take up a leadership role for furthering the cause of medical education in my part of the world.

The FAIMER fellowship programs and my role as an FRI Director have made me a full-time medical education professional, and my expertise in the field is being sought after at the national and international levels. This capacity building in me has been especially possible through FAIMER’s support, through its IFME master’s program, as well as by providing me the opportunity to exhibit my talents in international fora and conferences.
I think it’s better to start backwards. In May 2010, I attended the Ottawa Conference in Miami, Florida. Although I had to present a poster I had sent, I was more excited about meeting FAIMER Fellows and faculty members. Before going to Miami, a group of Latin FAIMER Fellows had made an appointment to get together to work on our big project: the FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America (FRILA). Also, I wanted to meet Jack Boulet to arrange his visit to Chile. And that’s a big difference. Without FAIMER, I wouldn’t have been doing any of these activities.

Medical education is not only transferring knowledge. As I learned from other Fellows, I can see that the focus is every person in the world. And the more people who get involved and exchange experiences, the better we will do our task.

In my school of medicine, I have had the support of two other FAIMER Fellows and two faculty members who were at McMaster University. Working together has made it possible to develop projects that improve our teaching and assessment methods, and to enhance critical thinking in our students. We’ve also been working on faculty development. Reading all the opinions posted on the listserv is a big support that we are doing things right and that we can do them even better.

I have learned to plan and to crystallize ideas. If an idea is good and it will benefit our students and our patients, just plan it. The sky is the limit.

Leilanie A. Nicodemus

I just wanted some sort of help, and I was lucky to find it on the internet! That was my serendipitous encounter with FAIMER. To be included among the ranks of esteemed educators in the world as a FAIMER Institute 2007 Fellow has been an honor for me—one that I never expected.

My project when I applied was very vague. I believed in its potential to help us address primary care physician brain drain and to enhance the competency of family physicians, but I had no idea how to write down my thoughts about how to give this innovation structure and direction.

My two-year learning experience in the FAIMER Institute was very productive and quite fast. I accomplished so much starting with concretizing my idea into a workable project, through implementation, to writing the results in a way worth sharing. I shared methods and ideas from my Institute colleagues that I learned during the residential sessions with my institution—as a result, the more I learned from the Institute, the more responsibility I was given at my institution (on top of doing the project).

Writing a publishable item and submitting it to Medical Education is another milestone in my career as an educator. The comments of reviewers gave a realistic perspective to the results of my project. Even though my paper was not considered for publication, the experience of submitting and meeting the standards of peer-reviewed journals was inimitable. Just getting inspiration from other Fellows who successfully published gives courage and motivation to follow suit.

Today, as I take a moment to trace back my steps since Day 1 of FAIMER, I realize that I have gone far (and soared high) in terms of my contribution to the education and training of family physicians in my country and in my professional development as an educator. My contributions are being recognized in my institution, as shown by the tasks that were given to me, which include: I have been asked to lead improvements to the family medicine graduate program, Co-Chair the Committee on Quality Assurance of the university, continue to serve as Training Coordinator of Family Medicine, and as a member of the Medical Personnel Board and the Training Committee. The recognition extends beyond my medical institution to the specialty society of family medicine in the Philippines, where I have been designated Chair, Specialty Board of Family Physicians; Executive Secretary, Association of Family Medicine Educators; and Chair, Task Force for the Future, Philippine Academy of Family Physicians. In February 2011, I chaired the Global Standards in Family Medicine Training session at an international meeting.

I believe that I would not have been given all of these tasks without people believing in what I would be capable of doing after my stint as a FAIMER Fellow. I did not undergo any formal training in health professions education, yet I am being afforded recognition as an esteemed educator, including having been chosen as best teacher of the year by medical students.

I am forever thankful for my serendipitous encounter with FAIMER because of what I have become as an educator today. The seed that was planted by FAIMER in 2007 grew fast and many were able to reap its fruits—me, my colleagues, my institution, my specialty, and my country. And that’s the legacy of FAIMER in the world!
Ahuka Ona Longombe  
FAIMER Institute 2003  
International Fellowship in Medical Education 2005  
Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2002, one of my former residents living in the USA told me for the first time something about FAIMER: that this Foundation could help to improve what I do as a teacher. I applied and was accepted, but it was not possible to go to the States because of a horrible civil war that year (2002) in the Nyankunde-Bunia/Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where I was living. However, FAIMER gave me another chance to join the 2003 Institute class.

In October 2003, I went to Philadelphia. Please follow how my trip was a challenge: from Nyankunde-Bunia to Goma (DRC): 750 km; from Goma (DRC) to Kigali (Rwanda): 150 km; from Kigali (Rwanda) to Johannesburg (South Africa); from Johannesburg to Rome to Philadelphia. Many things were challenging for me coming from a French-speaking country: language problems, and new methods of learning and teaching like problem-based learning (PBL).

After the FAIMER experience, I began to see learning and teaching with new eyes. I began to apply new methods of learning and teaching. I understood better how human beings learn things. Step by step I became a good learner and facilitator able to help students.

For my school and other medical schools in the provinces of DRC, I became a resource person in medical education. I established the first Department of Family Medicine and Primary Health Care at Goma University. I was appointed as President of Continuing Medical Education of North-Kivu.

In 2005, I received an HME scholarship from FAIMER to get a Master’s in Health Professions Education from Maastricht University in The Netherlands. I received this degree in 2008 and I am now consulting in many medical schools, giving advice in the field of health professions education.

Sekelani Banda  
FAIMER Institute 2003  
Zambia

FAIMER is a unique educational model that stands up to any networking and change agent model I know of. Medical education as an academic discipline is evolving rapidly, as evidenced by the many master’s and doctorate degree programs on offer. FAIMER has served as a catalyst in making many academicians become aware that medical education is an academic discipline in its own right, and indeed several Fellows have gone on to study for medical education academic degrees after FAIMER. My FAIMER project, self-evaluation using WFME standards, has been a dramatic success and eye-opener for me and the organization I work for. I have presented my project at two international conferences, had two publications from it, and I continue to serve as a local authority on the subject. FAIMER has also given me a community of friends, collaborators, and mentors from among FAIMER Fellows and Directors. Bravo, FAIMER.

P. Ravi Shankar  
PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute 2007  
Nepal

I was informed about the FAIMER Regional Institutes by one of my friends during my postgraduate training in February 2007. I read about FAIMER on the web, was interested, and decided to apply for the first batch of the PSG-FRI. One of the challenges was developing an educational innovation project for implementation in my home institution. I decided to develop a medical humanities (MH) module, considering my interest in arts and literature. It was challenging—developing a new module, keeping in mind important areas to be covered, and at the same time considering the feasibility and ease of implementation of the project. Also, MH programs were uncommon in South Asia. My dean at Manipal College of Medical Sciences (MCOMS), Pokhara, was supportive and we decided to offer the module as an elective to interested students. MH educators from developed nations helped with developing the program. I conducted the module for both clinical and preclinical students at MCOMS. I enjoyed conducting the sessions, and the participants (students and faculty) enjoyed participating. For clinical students, sessions were held in the evening after dinner, and it was wonderful to see the participants’ enthusiasm.

In October 2007, I shifted to KIST Medical College in Lalitpur, a new medical school. The institution wanted to be different and become a center of excellence. The hospital director and the Chief Academic Officer were supportive and I found an internal medicine specialist, Dr. Piryani, who shared my enthusiasm for the humanities. With the support of management, we started an MH module for faculty and medical officers. Dr. Piryani was a co-facilitator. Certain faculty participants were enthusiastic while others had problems with certain aspects of the module.

The first batch of undergraduate medical students joined in November 2008. Our Principal and our Director of Academics were keen to have a module for first-year students. Dr. Piryani and I created a module, Sparshanan (“touch” in Sanskrit), for students, drawing upon our experiences with the faculty module. Students enjoyed the classes overall, though attendance was low during sessions just before exams. Certain interested faculty members who had attended the previous module joined as co-facilitators. In November 2009, the second batch joined. This was a larger batch of 100 students, and we were thinking about how to organize the sessions, eventually settling for two separate sessions of 50 students each.

The journey has been long and still continues. Introducing a new subject into a crowded undergraduate curriculum was difficult. I thank all individuals who have supported me in this effort. The fellowship has given me a better idea about medical education and educational leadership. I have been able to obtain knowledge about MH programs in different parts of the world, and have been able to build ties with other educators working in this field. I am happy to inform you that I have been selected as an editorial board member of BMJ Medical Humanities. I have learned a lot from the listserv. The fellowship has resulted in me being considered an “expert” in medical education in my institution.
I n 2006, I first heard of FAIMER and wanted to apply to GSMC-FRI. But I was not allowed to apply, I was told, because I had already been trained and someone else would be given the chance. But I persisted, and in 2007 I was selected for my CMCL-FAIMER fellowship. In the beginning, I didn’t quite understand all the emphasis and hullaballoo surrounding refining our curriculum innovation projects and wished they would shift the focus to teaching, for that is what we did in class. But it all began to make sense when I began doing my project.

I introduced case-based learning in my classes to emphasize rational use of investigations in clinical pathology. I was just trying to make a small modification in the teaching style in my own class, and I did not expect it to affect anybody else. But the ripple effect amazed me. I got reactions of all kinds. My undergraduate students supported the innovation and called my classes “a welcome relief from the regular spoon-feeding that we are subjected to.” My postgraduate students, who had been subjected to a firing squad for my NTTC course, I finished my NTTC course, I was selected for the FAIMER Institute fellowship in India. Having a core group that understands the need for change does help tremendously. In 2009, I was selected for the FAIMER Institute fellowship in Philadelphia. Interacting with Fellows from around the world was an eye opener. We were so surprised to see three or four faculty presenting a single session without stepping on each other’s toes. In an environment where rigid rules and hierarchy ruled, bringing in teamwork and informality, and getting participants to speak instead of listen passively was an achievement in itself.

The FAIMER experience has brought me recognition, and I get invited to local and national fora to conduct sessions and workshops on different topics. I was able to publish four papers on medical education themes with guidance from FAIMER faculty. I have been able to encourage others to train in medical education. Having a core group that understands the need for change does help tremendously. In 2009, I was selected for the FAIMER Institute fellowship in Philadelphia. Interacting with Fellows from across the world was an eye opener. We were so similar, had the same problems, and yet listening to the experiences of others showed me how they had surpassed the hurdles. It was an inspiring and humbling experience. In Philadelphia, I learned subtle skills on how faculty designed sessions and conducted them, things I wish to apply in my own setting.

Change is a gradual process, and for someone like me, who is impatient, learning to do things patiently and understand how people think has been valuable. Being a part of the FAIMER family has changed my outlook on the world, given a new direction to my life, and finally I am able to do what I always wanted to do.
I am very proud of being part of this fabulous Brazilian-FHRI family. In 2007, my project was chosen from among 90 candidates and I felt instantly that I was in the right place. I belong to the FAIMER world. Since I entered and attended the first residential session of studies at Fortaleza, I have been growing and learning and sharing my experiences in medical education. I have become a better teacher, colleague, and human being.

Besides the enormous acquisition of information in education practice in general, we are being trained to build our knowledge in: strategies of teaching, planning, organization, dealing better with conflicts, leadership, humanization skills, managing and scoring the evaluation of students and processes, appreciative inquiry, positive deviance, and stakeholder analysis. What is the most interesting is that I am always remembering sessions, classes, and advice such as “CELEBRATE every little thing you have conquered in your life!”

My research was done to upgrade and review our current practices in the assessment of medical doctors, who are themselves tutors, and postgraduate students in the Basic Family Medicine Units under the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Medicine of Petrópolis, two Brazilian federal programs called PET-Saúde and PRÓ-Saúde. Our project has been growing and is respected by all departments at the school. It’s a pleasure to say to everyone that it was constructed and exhaustively discussed with my FAIMER teachers for whom I have great gratitude.

In 2010 I was invited to be a member of a new department at the Faculty of Medicine of Petrópolis: The Department of Educational Development and Research focuses on discussing curriculum reform. Besides this I am a member of a key decision-making group at the school.

For the next 10 years I am looking forward to remaining a part of the FAIMER family and continuing to learn, share experiences, and make great friends. To be more specific, I want to be part of their lives forever.

Thanks for everything you gave to me.

Maria Cristina Diniz Gonçalves Ezequiel
Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute 2007
Brazil

In 2003 Fellow. In pursuit of excellence as a teacher and leader in medical education, I applied for the FAIMER Institute in 2004. My particular area of interest was integrating clinical skills training into pre-clerkship training, an innovation that Makerere had taken on but was experiencing challenges in implementing.

My experience at FAIMER was eye-opening. The experience of joining a team of diverse individuals, and the experiential learning of teamwork, leadership skills, and medical education advances left a visible mark on me. For the first time I understood why I behaved the way I did, my strengths and weaknesses, and why the people around me behaved the way they did. This was true for my relationships both at work and home. I learned to appreciate and accommodate people of different personalities.

My outputs in my department and faculty improved, and everyone desired that I become a member of their team. I was given more and more assignments at work. Within 12 months of being admitted to FAIMER, I applied for the position of Senior Lecturer, and within four years, I applied for the position of Associate Professor. I am glad to say that within six years of being a member of the FAIMER family, I moved from the academic level of Lecturer (where I had stagnated for 10 years) to Associate Professor. My academic growth is a manifestation of the personal development skills that I learned at FAIMER. I have been exposed to regional and international leaders in medical education and I have been able to contribute to the growth of medical education in my department, my institution, and sub-Saharan Africa.

I enjoy the on-line discussions and learning opportunities offered by the listserv. I am privileged to be mentored by the FAIMER faculty and to be a member of the FAIMER family. I receive special recognition and admiration whenever I mention that I am a FAIMER Fellow, and I usually attribute my successes and achievements to this experience. I often encourage faculty in my institution to apply to FAIMER, although it is becoming more difficult to be accepted as a FAIMER Fellow. I hope that I will be given more opportunities to participate in the existing FAIMER programs as a faculty member in the future.

My dream is for all faculty in my school to be exposed to the education that I gained at FAIMER. This will give them the knowledge and skills to lead in medical education, to manage change, and create a learning institution. I hope that the network of medical educators in the region will grow, and that together we will promote the health of our population by educating and training health professionals with the appropriate competencies to address the ever-changing needs of the community. I also hope that Fellows will continue working together to promote international medical education and research through collaborative learning and research projects, participating in medical education activities (local, regional, and international), and sharing experiences at every opportunity. We should also be groomed to create local institutes in our countries and regions, so that we reach all educators.

Sarah Kiguli
FAIMER Institute 2004
Uganda
The journey began in 2007 when I was selected for the third GSMC-FRI. Initially, I had apprehensions about my participation with the FAIMER fellowship. With the help of my principal, Dr. S. Kumar, I was able to overcome my apprehensions about the fellowship. Through the first on-site session, the nerves calmed down and the curriculum innovation project became manageable. The ML-Web really triggered interaction between Fellows and faculty and greatly helped develop knowledge, attitude, and skills in various aspects of medical education. The second on-site session made the curriculum innovation project a reality when the poster was presented and well received. My educational scholarship output included presentation of the project at the 56th National Conference of the Anatomical Society of India in 2008 and the National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education in 2009. Things learned at FAIMER have been applied in the day-to-day functioning of the departmental activities at Seth G.S. Medical College in Mumbai. More and more faculty members are now aware of FAIMER, and hence one can see a tremendous rise in the number of applicants for the fellowships offered by FAIMER. Many FAIMER Fellows in my institution are faculty for conducting sessions on medical education technology. Because of this, many curriculum innovations are being tried out in various departments to enhance student learning.

The fellowship has changed me in several ways. It had a direct influence on my career in medical education. I became a member of my institution’s medical education unit (MEU). Also, I am now a faculty member at GSMC-FRI. I have imbibed leadership skills and have developed good networking skills. I have developed a different perspective on medical education. My attitude toward my colleagues has become better. I am now more comfortable in resolving conflicts, in both my professional and personal life. From being actively involved in conducting certificate courses of our MEU, to being guest faculty at other institutions, FAIMER has given me the opportunity to grow in stature.

I felt enlightened about an array of issues related to medical education, from teaching to administration to crisis handling. I went back to my institute and joined hands with a few other FAIMER Fellows, and we started orienting other colleagues about FAIMER. We did inspire a few more friends to take up fellowships, and more importantly, we started getting them to participate in our medical education projects.

In October 2008, along came a proposal for a teaching contract at a medical university in Libya. I entered the college every day, my eyes used to gaze through the office notice board for any interesting news. One day, around early January 2008, there was a very attractive poster announcing on-line learning with a project, spending two hours per week on the internet. This interested me, as I was gaining curiosity about medical education after attending the International Conference in Medical Education (ICMEI) at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi in March 2007.

But then I hesitated, as I had to approach the Principal of our school, Dr. S. Kumar, and I was a newcomer and a junior in my department. First, I approached my department head, Dr. Roopa Kulkarni, who was very encouraging and permitted me to go and meet Dr. Kumar. After meeting Dr. Kumar and voicing my interest in enrolling for the fellowship, the PSG-FRI program, he was happy to be of service to me. He sat with me for four hours in multiple sessions after college hours, and guided me through each step in the on-line application form.

With god’s grace and my principal’s encouragement and guidance, I went through the application process and got selected. It was a real achievement, and motivating for a beginner. The whole experience of the FAIMER on-site sessions and off-site sessions was enriching in terms of knowledge, networking, and collaborating with other Fellows. The learning experience in the form of adult learning (ML-Web learning) was incredible—a totally new way of learning that gave me my own time to comprehend and utilize the knowledge in my routine teaching experiences. Of course, deadlines were there to urge me to keep up my work and be on time with assignments.

The ML-Web learning gave me scope to network with people of different faculties, and this could be utilized for improvisation and critical review of whatever I did, be it a questionnaire, methodology of my innovation project, statistical analysis, or scholarly writing. I got constructive feedback at every step of my project.

I was exposed to new concepts of group dynamics, collaborative learning on-line learning, and scholarly writing, with input from international faculty, which was an added advantage. I was able to publish my innovation project in “Really Good Stuff” in the journal Medical Education. I am now working on my scholarly report on the ML-Web learning experience.

With all these inputs, I have transformed into a medical educator. I am a member of the Medical Education Cell of my institution, and I am more knowledgeable and able to actively participate in the in-house activities of medical education, such as faculty development, research methods workshops, and evaluation of the teaching process.

I thank all the members of the FAIMER family for giving me an opportunity to go through this unique learning experience. Thank you once again!
I am an associate professor of pediatrics in the public school of medicine of Uruguay. I have the happiness and pride of belonging to the 2008 batch of the FAIMER Institute. Some years before 2007, I was trying to improve my teaching abilities by participating in any short or long course I could find. I had never heard about FAIMER. One day, I received an e-mail from the university with the FAIMER link. I followed the link, and as I started to dig deep into it, I became very excited with the remote possibility of the fellowship. It would be an excellent opportunity for completing my teaching training with the extra challenge of the language. I prepared my application. I was absolutely happy the day I received the provisional acceptance e-mail, and then very stressed the day of the telephone interview until Alberta’s sweet and quiet voice appeared.

The FAIMER experience exceeded by far my expectations. I thought I was starting a very formal, cold, and exclusively cognitive learning course. And I was wrong. I thought I was starting a very formal, cold, and exclusively cognitive learning course. And I was wrong. The FAIMER experience exceeded by far my expectations. I thought I was starting a very formal, cold, and exclusively cognitive learning course. And I was right in some part; I found an absolutely formal and serious organization that, with lots of dedication and love, prepares everything for this extraordinary and extraordinary experience. Special mention in this area goes to Katherine and Alberta, two real queens. I learned a lot from them. Thank you.
F AIMER was introduced to me by Joe Cueto (PHIL 2002), a colleague in medical education in the Philippines. It took some time before I eventually filled out the FAIMER application form for myself. I was not accepted as a FAIMER Fellow in the first year that I applied, although I was considered an alternate. Being a bit fatalistic, I thought then that it wasn’t for me. I didn’t know until later that another colleague from the Philippines, Lani Nicodemus (PHIL 2007), had been accepted as a FAIMER Fellow that year. That was a fortunate turn of events because our college dean then became more aware of the FAIMER Institute, especially when Bill Burdick updated him about Lani’s project. I got a call from my dean to ask if I was still interested in the FAIMER fellowship, as he wanted me to assist him in implementing a return of service agreement for medical graduates. I then developed a study proposal to review existing efforts in community immersion and their impact on continuing medical practice in the country. This was entirely different from my previous proposal and required me to review my own thoughts and perceptions about community immersion and community practice. I barely met the deadline, and the dean offered to shoulder the cost of mailing the application to FAIMER. I am fortunate to have been accepted into the FAIMER Institute in Philadelphia and to have met friends with similar interests in 2008.

At about the same time, I was tasked to help organize an international conference on health professions education. Thus began my correspondence with John Norcini, who graciously accepted the invitation to speak at our convention. I also met the other FAIMER Fellows from the Philippines, Mila Rabe (PHIL 2005) and Roy Cuison (PHIL 2004), during a dinner that we hosted for John when he visited the Philippines. I have been at the forefront of medical education in my institution and have recently been elected as a member of the curriculum committee. In my capacity as Associate Dean for Academic Development from 2003 to 2006, I was able to implement an organ-system, integrated curriculum. Sitting on the curriculum committee now after my FAIMER experience will allow me to bring a fresh perspective to monitoring, evaluating, and improving our curriculum. My FAIMER project on the impact of community immersions on choice of medical career should guide our college in the implementation of return of service agreements after graduation in 2018.

On a personal level, the FAIMER experience has taught me to be more introspective and reflective. It has offered me a global perspective on many issues not limited to medical education alone. I have also been given the opportunity to present at an international conference, the Asian Medical Education Association conference, through Sari Dewi (PHIL 2008). I am inspired by the many achievements of other FAIMER Fellows, and I hope that I can make the FAIMER community proud some day. Together with Joe, Lani, Mila, and Roy, I hope to be able to put the Philippines on the medical education map.

I will summarize my FAIMER experience thus: “Experience FAIMER training and you will never be the same again as a medical educator— you are completely changed for the better for life. You will learn several tools of change and change management, leadership, and modern teaching methods and technologies... in a conducive atmosphere where teachers freely interact with Fellows, where ideas in medical education and leadership freely flow, and where opinions are appreciated.” I had a wonderful, memorable, unparalleled, and landmark training experience in FAIMER. Meeting and interacting with a family of medical educators from around the globe (particularly FAIMER faculty and senior mentors), abstract writing and submission, Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) discussion, and International Medical Education Day are experiences that will remain useful to me and my institution forever.

My FAIMER experience has impacted positively my life as a teacher in a medical school, and it is helping me in the discharge of my duties as a teacher and administrator with renewed vigor, full of confidence. The FAIMER support to participate in medical education workshops and conferences has also helped in building my capacity. This has improved my recognition both by my students and my institution. I am a better teacher.

The impact on my institution has been positively enormous. My inclusion as a tutor and contributor in the newly established master’s degree program in biomedical education is a result of my FAIMER training and experience. I have been more actively involved with increased responsibilities, such as curriculum development and implementation, and coordination of students’ programs (including the lecture timetable) and examinations. The recognition of the need to train others has resulted in our using the committee system for these programs. Faculty members who are less experienced in the system are brought into the committees to acquire training.
Managing our medical program became one of my responsibilities when I was named Head of the School of Medicine of the University of Stellenbosch, and this is when my passion for health sciences education truly began. Three colleagues preceded me at FAIMER. The value that these colleagues added to teaching and learning at our institution prompted our dean to nominate me for a fellowship in 2005 (which I did not receive) and again (successfully) in 2006. My FAIMER project dealt with the use of neural network analysis to find the most powerful predictors of success in the first year of our M.B.Ch.B. program, the results of which were published in an international journal.

After my term as Head of the School of Medicine ended, I became the first Director of our newly established Centre for Health Sciences Education (CHSE). The aim of this Centre is to promote the scholarship of teaching and learning at our institution. I was able to recruit a number of talented and skilled personnel for the CHSE. Armed with the knowledge and skills I obtained from FAIMER, and assisted by a superb team, we were able to get a number of important initiatives established, including a master’s degree in health sciences education in 2008, of which I am the program coordinator, as well as a well-coordinated educational research program. The Masters program proved to be so successful that we have now applied for the introduction of a Ph.D. in health sciences education. We are also currently developing a faculty development plan in health sciences education for our own faculty. A number of workshops and short courses have already been developed for this purpose.

One of the most exciting and fulfilling activities that I became involved with outside of our institution started when the Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute (SAFRI) was established in 2008. I was a founding member and still am a member of the SAFRI Council and faculty, helping to develop and continuously improve the curriculum and continuing to facilitate sessions. Since my introduction to FAIMER in 2006, I’ve become very interested in the field of education leadership. In 2009, Juanita Bezuizenhout (PHIL 2005 and Co-Director, SAFRI) and I became part of a FAIMER Leadership Curriculum Working Group led by Page Morahan and Ray Wells. Juanita and I became co-leading members of an expanded working group in 2010. The group also consists of a number of Fellows from Brazil, India, and Pakistan. We meet regularly by way of telephone conferencing. My involvement in this initiative means that my association with FAIMER is still active and formally continuing; a great privilege and very satisfying experience.

Another landmark in my association with FAIMER was when I was asked to become a global faculty advisor in 2008. This presented the opportunity for further personal and professional development as well as the opportunity to be in Philadelphia during and in the aftermath of a World Series victory!

The period since 2006 has been personally and professionally the most satisfying of my entire career. There is no doubt about the enormous positive and catalytic role that my involvement with FAIMER and SAFRI has played in this.

When David Cameron (PHIL 2005) returned home from his FAIMER fellowship, he left me with conflicting emotions. On the one hand, his endless talk about how great it was and the positive influence it had on him was a bit irritating and hard to believe, but it also made me wonder and wish that it could have been me, especially after he started using his new skills and knowledge in the department. I applied, not really believing that I would be accepted, because I was still relatively new to the world of medical education. So when I got accepted I was over the moon and could not wait to learn and experience more—and more it was—more than I ever expected!

I have now been part of the FAIMER family for almost four years, and I am continuously surprised and humbled by the effect it had on me and my department. I changed from a very unsure new medical educator to someone who is skilled and equipped to be of use. How nice it is to see the results and get feedback from a teaching session that went great, or an assessment that worked, or a thank you note from a fellow teacher who benefitted. As I’m a HUGE “ENFP” according to the Myers-Briggs, obviously people are of utmost importance to my existence, and, wow, FAIMER opened the world to me. I still Skype with my friends from all over the world on medical education topics but also on personal issues because we became more than colleagues, we became friends. International and national conferences became meeting places for old friends, and I know that when I need advice or someone to brainstorm with me (and I can’t find someone close by) the world is at my fingertips.

The birth of SAFRI was a privilege and a huge learning experience to be part of. Like FAIMER, it has its own identity and a life of its own now. It is bigger than the individuals who started it, and I saw how teamwork and using the strengths of each team member WORKED! A new phase in my life has started now with the birth of my daughter in August 2010, and with that a lot of new challenges and uncertainties. But one thing will stay true no matter what—once a part of the FAIMER/SAFRI family, always a part of the FAIMER/SAFRI family!
Vinod Pallath  
GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute 2008
India

Our institution is experiencing a well-controlled chain reaction, catalyzed by FAIMER. Each faculty’s project opens the way for another, enriching our institution’s educational scholarship profile and its curriculum.

fellowship provided a safe, nonthreatening environment, which nurtured the participants’ abilities and ensured personal growth. I should emphasize that the experience liberated our thought process to believe in ourselves and demonstrated the power of empowering people in bringing and sustaining change.

The project that I undertook for the FAIMER fellowship was part of the program evaluation of the curricular reforms that we had implemented at Melaka Manipal Medical College. The project helped us to understand our strengths and also the areas where we can improve. The results were presented to the faculty council and to the accreditation bodies (Malaysian Medical Council). The results of my project functioned as a reliable indicator of the performance of our curriculum. It made us review, reflect, and reorganize our teaching-learning practices. The net effect, I believe, was the strengthening of our curriculum, making our medical program a model for international medical education programs of excellence. The results of the project were presented at two international conferences—one in Malaysia and the other in Saudi Arabia.

Our institution is experiencing a well-controlled chain reaction, catalyzed by FAIMER. Each faculty’s project opens the way for another, enriching our institution’s educational scholarship profile and its curriculum.

Sanjay K. Diwan  
GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute 2008
India

I first came to know about the FAIMER program through the National Conference on Medical Education (NCME) in 2007 at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. I was already a trained faculty member at my institute, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (JNMC), Wardha, from the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Pondicherry. I was interested in medical education technology and engaged in faculty development activities. At around this time JNMC became a Deemed university, and I personally felt that faculty development would be a big task in this expansion program if we were to succeed in our mission.

I was exposed to leaders in the field from India and abroad at the AIIMS meeting, and became keen to enroll in the GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute fellowship program. Internet connectivity as prerequisite was the immediate stumbling block then. Finally, in 2008, internet connectivity came to our place and I could enroll myself for the fellowship. My area of interest was curriculum and evaluation, and I chose the same for my project. During the course, I had a chance to seek guidance directly and at a distance from leaders in the field. I learned a great deal about distance learning, adult learning, workshops, and research in medical education.

Apart from the very unique and impressive format of the course, the faculty has left a big impact on me. Dr. Supe from India, Janet Grant from the UK, and Bill, Dr. Norcini, and Debby from FAIMER, USA, have been just great all along. The 2009 National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education (NCHPE) in Pune further fortified the impression of FAIMER. Program and faculty were simply the best. Attending the workshops made the entire learning a great experience.

At present I am greatly inspired to develop my research ability in education further. I have already published two papers and I am guiding faculty in enrolling for the fellowship program and helping them with their projects.
Avinash Supe
Director, GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute
FAIMER Institute 2002
International Fellowship in Medical Education 2007
India

Though I was interested in medical education, my interest was restricted to the university level. I was introduced to FAIMER when, in April 2002, my then dean asked me to apply for this fellowship. Initially, I was reluctant to apply due to time constraints. However, I was delighted when I was selected. Though there was some information in a brochure, I was curious as well as tense about spending three weeks in a different environment. However, it was such a pleasant experience, from the moment I entered the Sugarloaf Conference Center in 2002, and it has been part of my life ever since. I was especially impressed by Page and Bill and had lots of learning from them. My project was on developing skills labs and I was able to develop and evaluate basic courses. The skills labs are still working in my institute and have become regular features of the curriculum. In fact, I have been able to publish many papers in national and international journals, and have participated in various conferences as a faculty member or speaker. I have also received many awards and honors. And there is definitely an improvement in my soft skills in human management and communication. My growth in the surgical faculty is due to these skills. The IFME fellowship and working with University of Illinois, Chicago has helped me to update my knowledge. The FAIMER experience has helped me to work effectively in the Postgraduate Working Group of MCI and to develop the “Vision 2015” report to restructure postgraduate education in India.

Overall, it is extremely difficult to write or express in one page what FAIMER has done for me. FAIMER has been part of my life for the last eight successful years. I would like to thank Nancy, James, John, Bill, Page, Debbi, Janet, Gerry, Ralf, Vanessa, Ilene, Ara, Tejinder, Thomas, and all Fellows and colleagues who have witnessed this journey and have supported me. I feel proud to be associated with FAIMER.

Thanks.

The unique on-line experience of the ML-Web was almost like having a “friend, philosopher, and guide” whom I could turn to for almost any kind of help and advice.

I still feel as if it was yesterday that I was selected as a Fellow at the PSG-FRI. What ensued was a journey of learning in a great environment. The way on-site sessions were conducted made me so interested and stimulated that I was looking forward to exciting learning experiences ahead.

The two-year long journey was a pleasant one. The unique on-line experience of the ML-Web was new to me. I was initially apprehensive and anxious about whether it would work and whether it would really help me to learn. However, not only did I find that it worked well, but it was almost like having a “friend, philosopher, and guide” whom I could turn to for almost any kind of help and advice. When I needed advice on a faculty development program or intern orientation program, I posted queries and received responses from Fellows and faculty in no time.

The way feedback is given in FAIMER has helped me use it as a model in my workplace, even with the students. I have also started looking at various workshops and programs and activities related to medical education in a critical way, and conveying my feedback to the organizers and speakers to improve the program next time.

FAIMER has not only enriched me in the field of medical education, but also, in general, with all the issues related to health professions and practice.

Animesh Jain
PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute 2008
India

Having undergone the FAIMER Regional Institute fellowship has helped me understand better the issues and topics related to medical education and research. It has also led me to implement small but meaningful changes in the way I teach and the way I frame questions in examinations. I have started preparing a key in all the theory examinations that I coordinate.

The unique on-line experience of the ML-Web was almost like having a “friend, philosopher, and guide” whom I could turn to for almost any kind of help and advice.
Ten years is a long time in an individual’s life, but for an institution 10 years is just a milestone... It is very difficult to separate FAIMER from its Fellows’ lives, hence, it is not 10 years that we are celebrating, it is 10 multiplied by the total number of Fellows whose lifestyles, careers, and, above all, thinking processes have been changed—forever!

I started my journey on the path of medical education with an accident. And, since hindsight is always perfect, this accident turned out to be most favorable for my professional life. It all started when I met one of the FAIMER Fellows in our college who, while chatting, introduced me to the ‘never-heard’ scope and possibilities of medical education and offered me his assistance for the application process. And that was it. I started writing the application with apprehension about whether what I was getting into was something “real” or just a fad. Well, my application was accepted, and I came to the Institute for the first residential component, and it was a complete turnaround. Topics like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Mini-CEX, one-minute elevator talk, and appreciative inquiry were new for me. Topics like distance education, problem-based learning, and educational research challenged my previously acquired knowledge. Some topics, like community-based education, qualitative research, and project management tools, were invigorating. The process and methodology of the Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) sessions was altogether a new dimension of learning. The process of carrying out an educational project not only strengthened my learning but also gave me confidence to bring about change at the institutional level. The project that I carried out as a Fellow helped my institution to adopt a competency-based curriculum for community health, which I have carried forward as a Ph.D. thesis as well.

Presentations, opportunities for participation, and tons of stimulating listserv discussions gave life to the health professions educationalist that was buried deep down inside me. From a reluctant starter, I have now become a believer in miracles that medical educators can bring forth to improve the health of populations. Now I am a bearer of the health professions education torch!

My story would remain incomplete without acknowledging the support, encouragement, learning circles (another term out of my FAIMER dictionary), cheers, and critical feedback of the faculty members, mentors, Fellows and staff. Their support and “soft reminders” brought out the educator in me.

I first heard about FAIMER when one of my colleagues mentioned it, and I thought it was just another new organization. Then I had the experience of observing the FAIMER Regional Institute at CMCL and felt there was a lot of meaning to what was being done. The philosophy of improving teaching and learning was something that was close to my heart, and I wished to be a part of it and, hence, started my FAIMER journey. I completed my fellowship and my project at the FAIMER Institute in Philadelphia and further expanded it to make it a part of undergraduate training. I am now considering including it in the program for postgraduates as well. Also, in an attempt to focus attention on the subject and increase awareness, I delivered a talk at one of the regional conferences and the institutional grand rounds.

Looking beyond the project, FAIMER has impacted various other aspects as well. Just like Katherine’s “gentle” reminders, the FAIMER breeze has gently permeated almost all aspects of my professional life. My teaching skills, patient interaction, leadership skills and style, presentation skills, and also my management skills have all in some way or other been affected. The Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) has been a huge and rich resource of knowledge, which is easily accessible. The interactions on the listserv, in addition to improving my computer skills, have also been the source of two poster presentations, one at the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) conference in Spain in 2009, the other at The Network: Towards Unity for Health conference in Nepal in 2010... and, hopefully, an article, also, soon.

All of this learning and these activities have also helped in my becoming a recognized faculty member for the FAIMER Regional Institute as well as for the Medical Council of India’s faculty development program.
John Tumbo  
FAIMER Institute 2008  
South Africa

I joined the FAIMER family in 2008 after hearing about FAIMER from a 2007 Fellow. I became aware of FAIMER when the Fellow selected me as one of the participants in his project. The topic of study, something to do with validity in the assessment of medical students by objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), immediately struck a chord with my desire to improve the teaching and assessment of medical students. I suddenly realized that the challenges I had faced in teaching, curriculum development and review, assessment, and scholarship had a platform that comprehensively addressed them. It became clear that FAIMER was a great opportunity for me to fill this void. With this enthusiasm, I applied for fellowship and after a tedious negotiation with my dean regarding a recommendation it eventually came out of his office. Surely, the dean and indeed many in the academic institution had not been touched by the FAIMER wave and so were unable to understand the value of the fellowship.

The 20-day contact session in Philadelphia was just overwhelming. The information tsunami on leadership, conflict management, teaching methods, curriculum development and review, assessment, personal development, etc. was very valuable. The structure of the fellowship, anchored by the innovation project, was indeed unique in that it was grounded in an identified need by the Fellow and institution. The fellowship provided an opportunity to put into practice educational research methods, quality assurance, and project management.

For the next 10 months the anxiety of having to present my completed work was the driving force to learn and improve. The unique Mentoring and Learning Web (ML-Web) support system kept the Fellows afloat. The climax of this hectic but very rewarding journey came in October 2009, when all the Fellows presented their completed work and participated in International Medical Education Day which looked at bigger international concepts in medical education. One should not forget the immense energy that went into involving other managers and educators at the home institution to make the project and interventions possible. By the end of the year, pessimism had turned into a major strength as appointments into curriculum development committees and the examination committee started happening for me.

Fairly rapidly the institutional management started seeking my opinions on diverse issues, for example, the development of a linear assessment and evaluation tool for educational programs. A second climax was achieved through the acceptance of my abstract for publication by the prestigious Medical Education journal in May 2010. Well, this was indeed scholarship in action, and this gave me the motivation to conduct and publish medical educational research. Yes indeed, FAIMER training has shown that this is possible!

The principle of sharing knowledge for the advancement of other educators was actualized early in 2010 when I agreed to the request to be a facilitator at SAFRI. I have been involved in the selection of SAFRI Fellows for year 2010 and in their supervision. The development of the Regional Institute has also been an important aspect of my FAIMER life. I have appreciated every moment of the support I give to regional development. In the last two years, we have seen increasing interest in the fellowship among medical educators, not just in my institution, but also the entire country and throughout Africa. For example, two or three years ago there was only one Fellow in my institution, and currently there are four Fellows who are spreading the medical education gospel widely.

FAIMER Facts  |  Education Innovation Projects

A major goal of the FAIMER fellowship program is the completion of an education innovation project, proposed by Fellows in their initial application to the Institute, and then implemented at their home institution during the first distance learning session. Projects with the potential to improve the health of the community, region, or country of the applicant’s institution are given higher priority in the fellowship selection process.

The following table shows a breakdown of Fellow innovation projects by their topic or focus. The data include only projects of Fellows who consented to participation in a recent evaluation of the fellowship program (N=435). Projects were assigned up to two topic focus areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Focus</th>
<th>Description of Focus</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION METHODS/MODELS</td>
<td>Implementation of education methods; application of teaching methods to focal learning areas. Specific examples include projects focused on problem-based learning (PBL), use of simulations, teaching critical thinking, clinical skills education, evidence-based medicine.</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM REVISION/INTEGRATION/CHANGE</td>
<td>Changes to all or part of an institution’s curriculum.</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM EVALUATION</td>
<td>Evaluation to increase understanding of the need for or impact of an intervention.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>Implementation of new or improved methods to assess students, including formative and summative assessment.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALIGNMENT WITH HEALTH SYSTEM, CONTEXT, AND NEEDS</td>
<td>Alignment of content of education with health care context or population health needs; community-based education; health systems change.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTANCE AND COMPUTER-BASED LEARNING</td>
<td>Design/implementation of distance learning programs/modules; use of IT-based education.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACULTY/TEACHER/TRAINER DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Professional development programs for faculty or others engaged in teaching or training.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT AFFAIRS</td>
<td>Interventions to improve student well-being and the learning environment.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONALISM/HUMANISM/ETHICS</td>
<td>Interventions intended to improve the teaching and learning of professionalism, humanism, and ethics.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Changes to organizational structure, such as creation of a center for research in HPE or establishment of a new degree program.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I am a family physician by training, but my interest in medical education has developed over the years with my involvement in curriculum planning and in coordinating various faculty modules and activities in the medical program at the University of Malaya. My FAIMER journey actually started way back in about 1998 when I met the late Dr. Nancy E. Gary (former President and Chief Executive Officer, ECFMG) in Kuala Lumpur during a visit she made to the South East Asia region. She and the then Deputy Dean for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Malaya encouraged me to apply for an International Fellowship in Medical Education. I then spent a six-month fellowship during my sabbatical leave at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque (UNM), with the Department of Family Medicine. This far exceeded my expectations, and it was a wonderful opportunity for me to look at the medical school curriculum and family medicine residency program at UNM, to share experiences with faculty interested in medical education, and to engage in a large variety of activities including “hands-on” teaching.

I subsequently heard about the FAIMER fellowship program through a faculty colleague, Nor Azila Mohd Adnan (PHIL 2002, IFME 2005). The enthusiasm Azila generated on her return from Philadelphia rubbed off on me, and I was privileged to be accepted for the program in 2005. I cannot really find the right words to describe the mind-blowing experience of meeting other individuals from around the world, sharing our common areas of interest/love/passion in medical education, and also being able to feel that we are not alone. Some of the things that particularly stuck in my mind in that first of two residential periods in Philadelphia were the river crossing and the impact of friendships made. In particular, the “instant” friendship I struck up with Juanita Beznudenhowt and David Cameron, both from South Africa and Fellows in my class, was such that we were inseparable, and this continued even after we returned home. I believe we earned a reputation at FAIMER as “positive deviants,” and they invited me to visit them in South Africa in 2006. The initial intention was for social reasons, but this subsequently led to an invitation to participate in the early planning stages for the Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute (SAFRI) in 2007 and also to an opportunity to conduct a workshop at a South African Association for Health Educationists (SAHAE) conference based on the project that FAIMER had helped me develop. I was invited back in 2008 and 2009 by the SAHAE conference organizers not only to conduct this workshop again but also to deliver a plenary lecture for two consecutive years.

Friendships with other FAIMER Fellows—Tara Jaffery (PHIL 2005) and Mobeen Iqbal (PHIL 2006)—led to another invitation, from Shifa College of Medicine in Islamabad, Pakistan, to run an assessment workshop in May 2009. Each of these events has given me the opportunity to share my medical education experiences and to apply what FAIMER has taught. I feel this would all not have been possible if I had not become part of the FAIMER family.

FAIMER has given me confidence in leadership and management skills and also provided personal and professional development. I was a timid FAIMER Fellow when I started in 2005. I came at a time when I had just been appointed Chair in Family Medicine in my institution. I was totally inexperienced and having to grapple with a lot of difficult issues and difficult people. FAIMER provided a lifeline and a very strong support mechanism, teaching me conflict and change management, among other things, which greatly helped me get through the rough times. I have grown in confidence and strength, and now I try to mentor others in the same way I have been mentored. It is now heartening to observe younger faculty beginning to develop an interest in medical education and to see that they are aware of the need to improve the quality of assessment as well as their teaching and learning practices.

FAIMER has shifted my focus in my institution from family medicine to medical education, and, in 2008, the Dean appointed me to lead the newly formed Medical Education and Research Development Unit (MERDU), as well as the Clinical Skills Unit. The medical education arm of this unit has had a long gestation, with the initial proposals being made by Azila in 2003, but it only really took shape with my appointment, which acted as a catalyst. Two other faculty colleagues, Debra Sim (PHIL 2007) and Jamuna Vadivelu (PHIL 2006), have recently joined me in the unit, and together we are planning to expand faculty development courses which are now recognized by the Dean and faculty as an essential part of training for all academic staff. One of the faculty development courses is based on my FAIMER project and deals with objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) examiner training, focusing on enabling faculty who are OSCE examiners to develop appropriate and consistent checklist rating skills and inter-rater reliability. The course received a 2010 University of Malaya Excellence Award in Teaching.
When I came to Mumbai for the first contact session of GSMC-FRI in June 2008, I was a little anxious about how those seven days would pass. I wondered if I would be able to cope with the tight schedule of the session and wondered how I would learn in such a hectic schedule. But on the first day all my anxiety disappeared. The major thing that appealed to me and by which I was impressed was the continuous engagement. I never had a feeling that I was sitting idle and just looking at the PowerPoint slides. This was my first exposure to active learning.

At the end of the contact session I was a changed person with a different outlook toward people. I understood the value and importance of sharing—the most important aspect of leadership. Everyone was very caring, helpful, and sharing.

My project on communication skills has helped me to internalize and practice effective communication skills in day-to-day life. I am a better listener now and use non-verbal communication extensively. I have understood the importance of teamwork and feedback. I presented a poster titled “Development of Communication and Attitudinal Skills Curriculum for Medical Interns” at the 7th Asia Pacific Medical Education Conference held in February 2010 in Singapore.

I was first introduced to adult learning principles at FAIMER. I use these principles in the sessions that I teach in the teachers training courses that my institution conducts. In the Department of Medical Education Technology of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nashik, we now plan to conduct courses on communication and attitudinal skills of medical students all over the state of Maharashtra, which is a dire need in India. We will also conduct Train the Trainer courses on communication skills and how to conduct an OSCE.

Because of my exposure to program evaluation during my project, I have now started evaluation of all the programs conducted by my organization. The Mentor and Learning Web (ML-Web) discussions helped me to learn and apply the knowledge learned in qualitative research, communication skills, and facilitating adult learning during our faculty development courses.
At my institution we had adopted a new curriculum that had more emphasis on student-centered learning. The planned curriculum and the modes of delivery were different from the conventional ones practiced so far. So it became a matter of necessity for the faculty to learn, understand, and implement strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. In this context, some of us who were already working with the medical education department decided to explore the field of medical education in a more organized manner. It was then I came across the invitation to CMCL-FRI. I tried to learn about the program, the philosophy behind it, and the people involved. To a great extent, I found that my priorities matched with them. I had no second thought. My journey with FAIMER began on the very first day I filed my application for the CMCL-FRI.

Once I was in the program, I realized that passion alone would not suffice and there was a need to blend this with scientific reasoning. The methodical approach and the firm focus on tangible outcomes inspired me. Though initially skeptical about its utility, the listerv grew gradually became a part of my daily routine. The overall feeling was that “You are not all alone; but along with a group of people who would help you bring about that much talked about change.” I was overwhelmed with the support I have received and deeply indebted to the people who made things possible.

Most of the curricular interventions that have happened at my institution, Melaka Manipal Medical College (MMMC), had FAIMER support. It was partly because of a well-informed and consistent leadership and the large contingent of FAIMER Fellows (n=6) who are now a part of my institution.

As one of the initial Fellows selected for CMCL-FRI, my role was to study the effect of problems-based learning (PBL) in our curriculum. Based on this study, recommendations were made to make PBL practice a more effective educational strategy at MMMC. The projects taken up by FAIMER Fellows at my medical school had a lot to do with our curriculum. They focused on vital elements of teaching, learning, and assessment and studied aspects like clinical correlation of basic sciences, educational environment, standard setting, mentored student projects, and outcome-based education.

The impact of CMCL-FRI on me takes the form of a biological cascade (coagulation or complement pathway) where the preceding components act as catalysts for succeeding events:

- I was selected to CMCL-FRI.
- Impact: I realized that learning is a life-long process (though I used to preach about this earlier).
- As one of the initial Fellows selected for CMCL-FRI, my role was to study the effect of problems-based learning (PBL) in our curriculum.
- Impact: This gave me more chances to interact and more avenues to experiment.
- Impact: I started communicating my stories and started working with new people and new projects.
- Impact: I did fairly well in my Regional Institute.
- Impact: I was selected as faculty at the Regional Institute.
- Impact: This gave me more chances to interact and more avenues to experiment.
- Impact: I started communicating my stories and started working with new people and new projects.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

FAIMER Facts | Websites
The FAIMER on-line family includes seven websites:
- Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute: brazil.faimerfri.org
- CMCL-FAIMER Regional Institute: cmcl.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Home Site: faimer.org
- GSRC-FAIMER Regional Institute: gsmc.faimerfri.org
- PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute: psf.faimerfri.org
- Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute: safri.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America: flila.faimerfri.org

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

FAIMER Facts | Websites
The FAIMER on-line family includes seven websites:
- Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute: brazil.faimerfri.org
- CMCL-FAIMER Regional Institute: cmcl.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Home Site: faimer.org
- GSRC-FAIMER Regional Institute: gsmc.faimerfri.org
- PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute: psf.faimerfri.org
- Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute: safri.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America: flila.faimerfri.org

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

FAIMER Facts | Websites
The FAIMER on-line family includes seven websites:
- Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute: brazil.faimerfri.org
- CMCL-FAIMER Regional Institute: cmcl.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Home Site: faimer.org
- GSRC-FAIMER Regional Institute: gsmc.faimerfri.org
- PSG-FAIMER Regional Institute: psf.faimerfri.org
- Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute: safri.faimerfri.org
- FAIMER Regional Initiative in Latin America: flila.faimerfri.org

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.

Impact: I was selected for the 2010 FAIMER Institute.

In addition, I have learned lessons in effective time management. Now I use the program theory and modified logic model in most of my projects (even in projects not related to education). I am well aware about conflict management strategies and try to manage conflicts in the best possible manner. I am more serious about medical education research, trying to analyze and understand the intricacies involved with educational interventions.

As the Secretary of our Medical Education Department I am responsible for organizing faculty development workshops for health educators at my university. These workshops will provide me a platform to disseminate the knowledge and skills that I have gained from FAIMER.
Before becoming a FAIMER Fellow, I made a lot of mistakes in my life, but FAIMER changed me and changed my life. In Mongolia, many changes happened over the last 20 years following the democratic revolution, and it was a difficult period for honest and principled people. My father was a famous lawyer, so honest and so principled. I copied all the characteristics from my dad and tried to change situations at my school. Unfortunately it didn’t work, and in 2001 I was fired from my job for working honestly.

One day in 2005, Dr. Togoo Altantsetseg (PHIL 2001), Head of the Department of Medical Education at Health Sciences University of Mongolia (the new school where I worked), made an announcement about the FAIMER training program to the heads of faculty departments. After the meeting, I found the website about FAIMER and felt that I had a chance of studying in the USA again. But my application wasn’t accepted that year. The next year I again received information from FAIMER. My husband supported me a lot and suggested that I should apply again, because I had been doing a lot of things in nursing education in Mongolia. I will never forget that day when I received the invitation letter for studying in the USA from FAIMER.

I had been on my way to much success and happiness. Or so I thought. But after practicing medical education for a few years, I realized I wasn’t happy at all. Sure, there were some things I liked about being a medical educator, but most teachers didn’t like to listen to me nor did they wish to understand me. After completing my two-year FAIMER program, I realized that my work must focus on the younger generation and helping them change by themselves.

I was fascinated and excited to begin learning how medical education and research work determine the quality of a health care system. In 2008, I was invited to open a problem-based learning (PBL) tutor program for all faculty members. PBL in my medical school was introduced in 1998, but although most teachers knew the mechanics of using PBL in their class, nobody understood the meaning and spirit of it. Better health care delivery starts with better medical education, better medical education reform starts with PBL, and better PBL approach starts with proper attitudes. Materials and discussions on the FAIMER listserv helped me prepare for this course. After these PBL tutor courses, all teachers who participated in this course could change by themselves. At the end of this course, all teachers understood that future doctors’ competence depended on faculty role modeling. I was proud of myself, because I could change future generations in a positive way.

In 2009, I introduced my FAIMER project to the Minister of Health, and he supported me to establish the Professional Attitude and Communication Skills Committee for health workers under the Ministry of Health. In addition, I initiated the opening of a new non-governmental organization called the Problem Based Center.

During the last several years at our university, a lot of good changes have happened, but we also have made a lot of mistakes by incorrectly translating some English words into Mongolian. For example: objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) was implemented at my medical school in 1998, but we couldn’t translate the word “objective” right and the meaning of this exam was not achieved. Due to educational law and policy, the word “attitude” was not included. Instead, this word was translated into Mongolian as “practice.” I subsequently wrote a Medical and Nursing English-Mongolian, Mongolian-English dictionary in 2010 to correct these mistakes.

Thank you very much FAIMER family for your supportive guidance, the knowledge you have bestowed upon me, your enthusiastic support of my work, and for the code of ethics you taught me. Thank you also to the faculty members of FAIMER who have given so generously of their knowledge and experience, and who have helped me to develop my skills as a speaker and writer.
Jose Cueto | FAIMER Institute 2002 Philippines

I learned about the FAIMER fellowships from a letter sent to our medical school. The Dean asked me if I was interested, since I was the Chairman of the Curriculum Committee during that time, and I readily agreed to apply. I felt confident that I would be given a chance, because during that time I was leading the change of our curriculum from the traditional to the integrated system. So it was right timing on my part. I was accepted as one of the 2002 Fellows.

Right from the start, I knew that it would be a great learning experience for me, because we had excellent faculty, and very knowledgeable and expert participants from different parts of the world. The first session on getting to know each other was very enlightening and we connected with others immediately. All sessions were professionally conducted, were very challenging, and brought out the best in us. Group work made us more familiar with each other and we had to focus on our goal, that is, to learn the skills to implement the needed changes in our own medical schools. Although I had been extensively exposed to the different topics during my master’s course in Health Professions Education, I found the different perspectives utilized by the faculty and provided by my co-Fellows very interesting. They reinforced and added to my knowledge and understanding. The fact that we came from different disciplines contributed a lot to our interactions. I gained a lot from the reports we made, the poster sessions, the games we played, and all of the well-planned activities.

I also gained a lot from the educational visits we participated in, like the Program for Integrated Learning of Drexel University, the visit to the medical school in New Jersey, and the observation tour we had during the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®) at the offices of ECFMG in Philadelphia. Of course, we also enjoyed the journeys we made to the city on our own by riding the train. There was also one weekend when my uncle, who was a retired physician, fetched me and drove me to see Atlantic City and New York. I also took advantage of the time I was in Philadelphia by becoming an official observer of the American Board of Surgery Oral Exams after we ended our sessions.

I have to admit that we had excellent food served all throughout the fellowship periods. Breakfasts, lunch, and dinners brought us closer together, and we got to talk about our families, our countries, and about our schools. We also got to converse with our faculty, especially with Page and Bill. We also appreciated the dinner we had at Bill’s house, and that we had a singing and jamming session with Gerry. I also will not forget the songs we had as a group with Rima teaching us a number of songs from Georgia, and our performances before the faculty with myself providing the guitar accompaniment.

I am very satisfied with all my experiences, especially since the project that I had was fully accepted by my institution, and the integrated curriculum that I proposed as the primary proponent is still being used up to this day. I also am pleased to have participated in writing our article on accreditation practices that was published in Education for Health in 2006. That really involved a lot of work among the Fellows.

I envy the Fellows from other regions who have put up and established their own FAIMER Regional Institutes because they have put to actual use the leadership skills that we extensively discussed during our stay there.

I thank ECFMG and FAIMER for establishing this fellowship program, and for supporting the network where we can communicate with each other. I thank the dedicated faculty members who took care of us, and who continue giving advice to all of us. More power to all of you!

Veena Singaram | Southern Africa-FAIMER Regional Institute 2008 South Africa

Once I started, I realized there is no need for a destination because the ride is so extraordinary—fun and filled with personal and professional learning moments that are constantly challenging me to become a better educator, leader, researcher, teacher, and student. I am most grateful that, not only does the fellowship create learning experiences, but it also exposes one to wonderful professionals who share, teach, role model, and champion you along to achieve your learning outcomes and deal with challenges as you progress with your research.

I first heard about FAIMER in October 2004 from a colleague who was travelling on the same flight with me from London to New York. The discussion we had about FAIMER led me to develop immense interest in the foundation, culminating in my being admitted into the 2006 class. I must say that being a member of the FAIMER family has really taught me a lot about life in general, particularly as it relates to carrying along other peers in what I passionately believe is worthy of execution.

Unlike many colleagues in my class, I believe in time that the seed sown will germinate, because change is inevitable, especially as the body of Fellows in my institution increases and our desire for higher educational and leadership standards increases.

Although the effect of FAIMER as a catalyst for change is not yet evident in my school, I believe in time that the seed sown will germinate, because change is inevitable, especially as the body of Fellows in my institution increases and our desire for higher educational and leadership standards increases.

Efosa Oviasu | FAIMER Institute 2006 Nigeria

Being admitted into the 2006 class of SAFRI Fellow has changed me in that I learned more about myself, my weaknesses, my strengths, and my responsibilities as a health science educator. Sharing the journey with my class of 16 and then Fellows from the following year, and continuing to do so, sets this journey apart from other similar programs. The fellowship is structured in such a way that we act as each other’s students and teachers as we constantly grow and learn personally and professionally together.

I know of no other group with a bond as strong and as altruistic as you find among FAIMER Fellows. I am really so proud to be part of the FAIMER family.
Two coincidences led me to FAIMER. First, when I was attending a medical education conference in Temuco, Chile, in January 2003, I heard a 2001 Fellow, Carlos Carvajal Hafemann, speaking about his extraordinary experience in Philadelphia and recommending application to the FAIMER Institute for the opportunity to learn about medical education internationally. I remember him showing wonderful pictures of the Sugarloaf Conference Center in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, where the Institute was held at that time.

The second coincidence was the suggestion of the bioethics professor at my school; he saw the FAIMER advertisement somewhere and told me about the opportunity, knowing that I was designing a project to integrate the Biomedical Department disciplines in a module.

After being a Philadelphia Fellow, I became a Faculty Advisor, a Faculty Discussant, and I am currently part of the faculty team at Brazil-FRI. Every time I participate as faculty at Brazil-FRI, I learn more and more, not only as a teacher, but also as a student by attending the other faculty members' activities and interactive lectures. It is a real community of practice and learning. The appreciative leadership, adult learning principles, faculty development strategies, and on-line communication, and positive deviance. The program evaluation tools are very important for the management of my project and for all aspects of my work. These features have been incorporated not only in my work, but in my way of living and personality traits, and have really changed my view of life! I am also applying, as a teacher in my courses, the student assessment methods and books I got at FAIMER, to assess the students in my course and to teach assessment in the faculty development program. The degrees and experience acquired in the field of medical education allowed me to be included in the list of Expert Peer Reviewers of the National Accreditation Committee for Schools of Medicine in Argentina and to participate in several national accreditation processes. I also participated in the construction of a pilot of the National Global Examination (ACCEDE) for the end of the medical career at the national level.

We developed strong friendships with our classmates at FAIMER. We now collaborate on studies and projects, and are planning to publish together and do some research together. As is apparent from this, the on-site community building at the Institute works very well and makes a difference in network- and community-building between the Fellows. I would like to highlight that the face-to-face session is essential to create this sense of belonging in the group. This feeling is very difficult to create between people who do not know each other or have never met in person.

All this background helped me to change the path of my career and to be now in a leadership position where I am able to design health professions in an innovative way, and where I can apply all the knowledge acquired through my FAIMER experience. This is a very important opportunity in my career, because I am in a position now where I can produce a sustainable change where I work, as well as at the public universities in neighbor states, Neuquén and Río Negro, where I have two careers in health professions education, one at a medical school and one at a dental school.
My journey of FAIMER fellowship has been adventurous, smooth, and highly productive. I joined the “FAIMERly” with slight hesitation in view of its demanding academic commitment and with my Ph.D. examination coming up! But, having shouldered the responsibility of Secretary of our Medical Education Department, my strong sense of commitment to the field of medical education would not let me forego this venture. Once I was into the course, I enjoyed the whole process of learning, which was rather fun! Although I had prior experience—having completed a short-term learning, which was rather fun! Although I had no clue of what it was all about. I was more into academics and surgeries: writing publications, chapters for textbooks and several whole textbooks, as well as honing my surgical skills. I enjoyed teaching but did not think beyond that. I soon was appointed for the 2007 batch at the GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute and from then onwards life has been more. It was like having a brand new family of people who had decided to love you and help you even before they met you! Debby, Bill, Ray, Avinash, and the rest of the faculty at the GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute are probably the best of the best. So very kind, patient, and encouraging. They never laughed at the silliest of queries, but helped us all along.

Unbelievable to see such team spirit in this day and age of cut-throat competitiveness! I learned that teaching does not only mean explaining, but also evaluation to make sure what has been taught has been understood (or not) and to what extent. There are various modes of teaching the same thing more effectively. And most important was the FAIMER project, which helped not only my resident doctors and colleagues, but also my patients. It is still in use in my department.

I love to interact. But FAIMER was this and much more. It was like having a brand new family of people who had decided to love you and help you even before they met you! Debby, Bill, Ray, Avinash, and the rest of the faculty at the GSMC-FAIMER Regional Institute are probably the best of the best. So very kind, patient, and encouraging. They never laughed at the silliest of queries, but helped us all along.

Unbelievable to see such team spirit in this day and age of cut-throat competitiveness! I learned that teaching does not only mean explaining, but also evaluation to make sure what has been taught has been understood (or not) and to what extent. There are various modes of teaching the same thing more effectively. And most important was the FAIMER project, which helped not only my resident doctors and colleagues, but also my patients. It is still in use in my department.

I am indeed lucky to have come into contact with this elite group.

In 2004, I was appointed dean of my school and suddenly realized that I needed much more knowledge about medical education than I had at that time to face all the challenges of the position. I went to FAIMER to learn about medical education, and I got much more than that. I learned about life, diversity, management, leadership, and limitations (our own and those of others) and about how to deal with and respect people. Once, I heard from my colleague Eliana Amaral (PHIL 2003, Co-Director of the Brazil-FAIMER Regional Institute) that her life as an educator could be divided into two moments: before and after the FAIMER experience. It happened to me, too. It’s impossible to describe.

The FAIMER experience had (and still has) a huge impact on my way of dealing with all the demands and challenges we face every day in the workplace and in our personal lives. After Session I (October 2006), I had a terrible problem in my institution and decided to leave the school and look for another place to work. The university that accepted me and my FAIMER project has seen it implemented, and the story of the project written in a book. I have also had some publications in medical education journals about our curriculum. The scholarship module of the FAIMER Institute was decisive in helping me to achieve that.

My success story includes Best Teacher Award, completion of my Ph.D. in medical microbiology, and presentation of many educational workshops organized by my university’s Department of Education for Health Professionals. Soon after that I was appointed Director of this department.

I have organized and conducted more than 45 educational workshops in the past several years. I was the organizing secretary for a national workshop on “Strengthening Medical Education through Information Technology,” and delivered guest lectures on “Microteaching” and “How to Train Our Doctors for Tomorrow’s Needs” for the Medical Council of India (MCI). I was an abstract reviewer for the National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education, held December 2009 in Pune. Recently our university has been accredited with Grade “A” by the National Assessment and Accreditation Committee (NAAC), the only private, Deemed university in India to receive this accreditation.

After successful completion of the FAIMER fellowship, I was selected as FAIMER faculty and had the opportunity to conduct a session as a resource person in April 2009 at PSG-FRI.

The FAIMER fellowship has added spice to my professional career. It has enabled me with certain fine professional skills, which have groomed me into a committed person and a popular teacher.

The FAIMER fellowship has added spice to my professional career. It has enabled me with certain fine professional skills, which have groomed me into a committed person and a popular teacher.

My success story includes Best Teacher Award, completion of my Ph.D. in medical microbiology, and presentation of many educational workshops organized by my university’s Department of Education for Health Professionals. Soon after that I was appointed Director of this department.

I have organized and conducted more than 45 educational workshops in the past several years. I was the organizing secretary for a national workshop on “Strengthening Medical Education through Information Technology,” and delivered guest lectures on “Microteaching” and “How to Train Our Doctors for Tomorrow’s Needs” for the Medical Council of India (MCI). I was an abstract reviewer for the National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education, held December 2009 in Pune. Recently our university has been accredited with Grade “A” by the National Assessment and Accreditation Committee (NAAC), the only private, Deemed university in India to receive this accreditation.

After successful completion of the FAIMER fellowship, I was selected as FAIMER faculty and had the opportunity to conduct a session as a resource person in April 2009 at PSG-FRI.

The FAIMER fellowship has added spice to my professional career. It has enabled me with certain fine professional skills, which have groomed me into a committed person and a popular teacher.

My success story includes Best Teacher Award, completion of my Ph.D. in medical microbiology, and presentation of many educational workshops organized by my university’s Department of Education for Health Professionals. Soon after that I was appointed Director of this department.

I have organized and conducted more than 45 educational workshops in the past several years. I was the organizing secretary for a national workshop on “Strengthening Medical Education through Information Technology,” and delivered guest lectures on “Microteaching” and “How to Train Our Doctors for Tomorrow’s Needs” for the Medical Council of India (MCI). I was an abstract reviewer for the National Conference on Health Professionals’ Education, held December 2009 in Pune. Recently our university has been accredited with Grade “A” by the National Assessment and Accreditation Committee (NAAC), the only private, Deemed university in India to receive this accreditation.

After successful completion of the FAIMER fellowship, I was selected as FAIMER faculty and had the opportunity to conduct a session as a resource person in April 2009 at PSG-FRI.

The FAIMER fellowship has added spice to my professional career. It has enabled me with certain fine professional skills, which have groomed me into a committed person and a popular teacher.
The FAIMER experience provided me with knowledge and skills important in curricular improvements in medical education. As a nutritionist lecturer, under the Community Health thematic section of my school, I enhanced my understanding from the FAIMER experience of a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to teaching in medical schools. A medical curriculum that is country-specific and employs a multidisciplinary approach can have a far-reaching effect that can lead to improved health care delivery to the people. The FAIMER experience facilitated meeting and interacting with other international faculty from various institutions. Although the medical institutions were separated by geography, I realized the goals of providing better health care were the same and the challenges of producing competent medical personnel are the same.

The FAIMER experience emphasized teaching methodologies, assessment tools, personal and professional development, leadership, and program planning, which are all essential components for successful, dynamic medical institutions. Team building was emphasized as an essential element for aligning personal and institutional goals. A positive approach toward problem solving as well as inclusiveness was emphasized.

The FAIMER fellowship experience also facilitated my desire to achieve a higher degree as an on-line student. With the FAIMER on-line learning experience of two years, I became convinced that on-line learning can be achieved successfully.

The FAIMER project strengthened my ability to include other faculty members in planning my project. The project was discussed at various committees and also with medical students. I am in the process of trying to publish the outcome of that project. The recommendations made can still be implemented to complement what is already in the nutrition curriculum. I have been away from my institution since the FAIMER experience and have just come back. My knowledge and skills obtained from the experience will help me going forward.
I learned of FAIMER following from my International Fellowship in Medical Education (IFME) of 2000–2001 at Dartmouth College. I was not quite sure what the FAIMER experience would entail. I did not even know what medical education really meant, though I had been involved in medical school teaching for well over 10 years. Once in Philadelphia and following the first two days of the residential session, it became clear how many things I could do much better, and these got even bigger as my experience in Philly grew. There were things I had wanted to do in my institution, but was not sure how to begin or even what to call the process. I conveyed my intentions in Philly and the FAIMER Institute converted the intentions to definitive and feasible plans with clear guidance of how to proceed.

My project was on horizontally integrated neuroscience for preclinical students. I had gone ahead to complete and approve the curriculum. I learned things about leadership, management, and planning at FAIMER. Once I was back in my institution, I was challenged to share my experience by facilitating the first residential out-of-station, faculty-wide medical education workshop. I had to lean solely on my newly acquired FAIMER skills to lead this process from program development to evaluation. My FAIMER guides were on hand to support me, especially in program development.

My interpersonal communication has been changed forever from saying “wrong” to saying “even better!” My leadership style has been changed to an appreciative approach. Many colleagues wanted to know what medical education was all about. I had enough materials from Philly to share, and my new standing and skills saw me into the position of chair or as a member of many committees of importance in the college, including Curriculum, ICT, and Protocol, as well as the college orator. For once, the college started to review curriculums. I was appointed as a Consultant to the UK’s Department for International Development programs in Nigeria, where appreciative inquiry became my powerful tool of leading many of the consultancy tasks I was assigned. I recorded the highest number of consultancy days of all the national consultants in Nigeria for the PATHS 1 program. I now deliver lectures using a variety of teaching methods and media, and my student assessments are a variety of all that I learned through the FAIMER fellowship. The visibility I acquired in my institution and country accelerated my professorship and early appointment as Dean of the Faculty.

I hope to facilitate the development of a regional institute in Nigeria, which is aligned to the FAIMER Institute and hope that medical education training can be a prerequisite for appointment into academic positions in Nigerian medical schools.
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS