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Alum talks deforestation



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Ecological conservation and medical care, two things people tend to separate, are dependent on each other, Kinari Webb MED '02 said at a talk Monday.

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In front of about 200 students and faculty at the Anlyan Center, Webb spoke about Health in Harmony, a program she designed and founded to integrate high quality, affordable health care with conservation of the rain forest in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The program, which has been named one of Oprah's new Eco Role Models, has found that high costs and inefficiency in the Indonesian healthcare system is causing cash-strapped locals to turn to deforestation and logging. Webb's clinic, she said, tries to close this gap.

"You can be poor and live a good life," Webb said. "But you cannot be sick and lead a good life."

Health in Harmony provides health services to people in the small Indonesian town in exchange for goods and services, rather than cash, Webb said. For many community members, this means that they no longer have to make the two hour canoe journey to the closest city for medical attention, she said. The program also saves the town's forests, as the unconventional payment method prevents the townsfolk from relying on logging as a way of paying for exorbitant medical costs in the city.

"These are really poor people who make barely \$13 per month," Webb said. "They have to pay more than \$1000 just to see a doctor."

Webb told the audience the story of Ms. Atut, a young woman from the village who arrived at the clinic with an inflamed spleen. Webb and her team were unable to provide the woman with proper medical care as they lacked the appropriate equipment, so they sent Ms. Atut to the nearest city. After two hours in a canoe and after her family sold everything of value in their possession, a city doctor examined Ms. Atut. He sent her back home with painkillers, Webb said.

HEALTH IN HARMONY

More than 18,000 patients have been treated in Kinari Webb's Health in Harmony clinic

The Health in Harmony program aims to provide high-quality healthcare in exchange of community commitment to environment

The Global Health seminar in which Kinari Webb spoke meets Mondays 5:30-7:30 pm. It is open to students interested in global health

Future speakers will include the co-director of AIDS-Free World, the cardiology director of Partners in Health, the director of the Office of Global Health, and professors from other universities

Mariana Lopez-Rosas

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After Webb consulted with her colleagues in the United States and performed more tests, Webb said she diagnosed Ms. Atut with chronic malaria, a condition that kills 1 million people every day.

The Health in Harmony program, Webb said, should be used as a model for clinical work in other developing countries. Using the program as a guide, Yale health professionals can develop international development initiatives that address both healthcare and environmental issues.

"I encourage you as a healthcare professional to think outside this world," Webb said.

Mei Elansary MED '12, who worked in Webb's clinic in the summers of 2008 and 2011, said that working in Webb's clinic was very enlightening. A typical day included seeing patients, planting in the farm, and fighting cobras in Webb's kitchen, Elansary said.

"Her program is incredible, innovative, and unique," Elansary said. "And she is a fantastic role model."

Audience members said they found Webb's talk encouraging and inspiring.

Kelsey Schuder PH '13 said she plans to set up a clinic of her own abroad so hearing more about Webb's model was helpful.

Angel Hertslet FES '12 said she also learned a lot from the talk, and related the program with her experiences interning at a non-governmental organization in Rwanda.

"Rwanda has a similar problem: malnutrition," Hertslet said. "The Health in Harmony program could definitely be replicated there."

The talk is part of a series of yearlong weekly seminars intended for students in the health professions to develop an understanding of the key aspects of global health research and practice. The Global Health Initiative, which organized the seminar, provides students with fellowships, clinical practice and courses in the United States and 60 other countries.

The course meets once a week from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm and welcomes all students interested in global health.

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