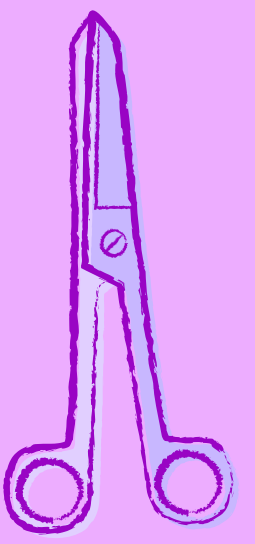


the International Cancer Corps

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The **International Cancer Corps (ICC)** was founded in 2009 as a branch of the **American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)**. Indeed, while oncologists recognised the changing landscape of healthcare in the United States and the hardship that this comes with, they were also aware of the fact that they were in a better position than those fighting the disease in low and middle income countries (1).

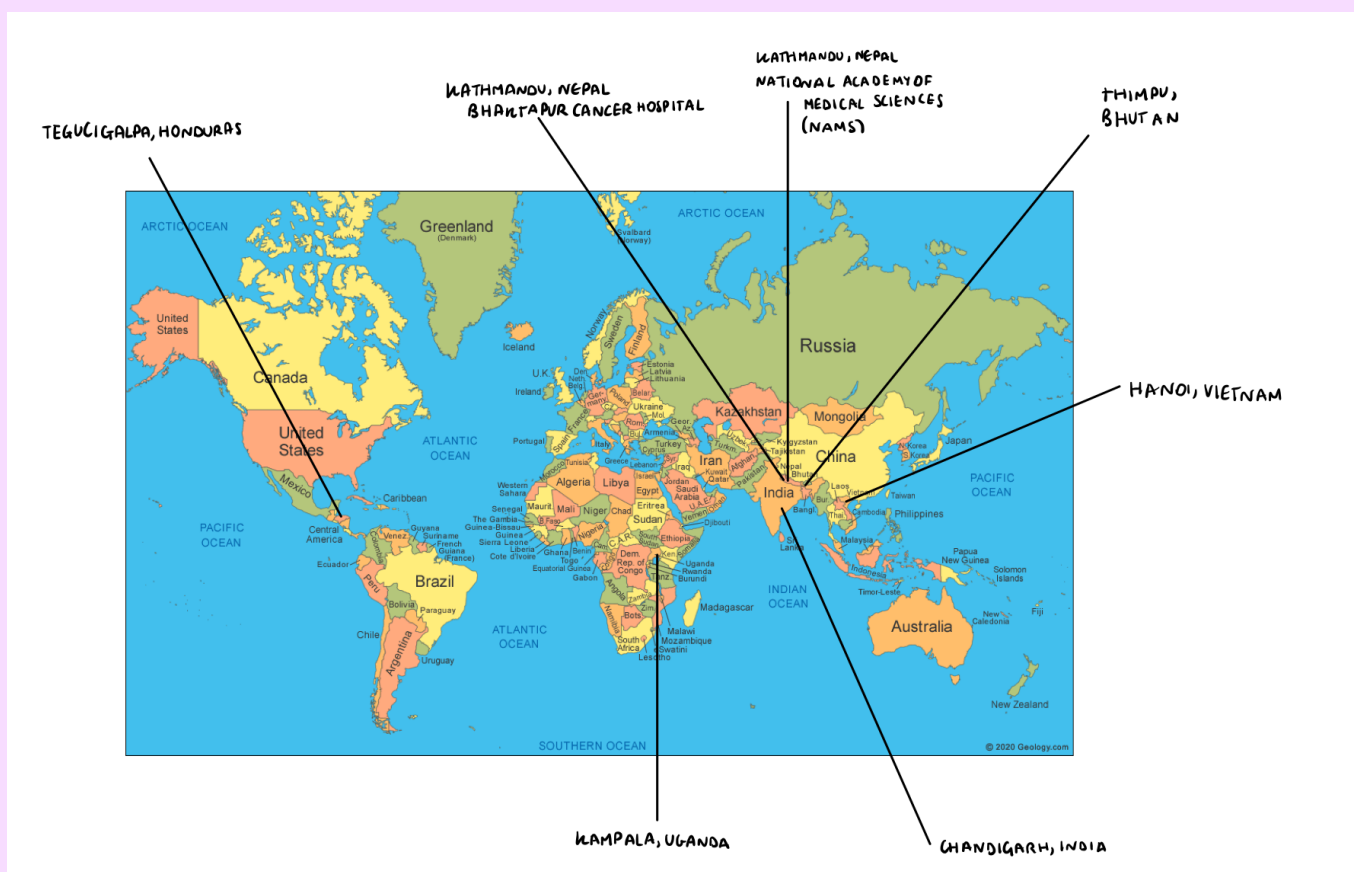
While these differences are caused by budgets, equipment and training, the American Society of Clinical Oncology believed they could make a difference to patients and healthcare systems abroad by providing training, with the purpose of is improving the quality of cancer care at hospitals in low- and middle-income countries. This training is aimed at local clinical staff and delivered by ASCO member volunteers. The trainees follow a standard curriculum which is adapted to the needs of their institutions and countries, addressing three fundamental areas:

- multidisciplinary management of common cancers,
- the integration of palliative care into cancer care,
- the improvement of quality of care using evidence-based quality measures• .

ASCO works with the Host Institution- which commits to deliver training to its employees- to organize up to two live courses per year to develop multidisciplinary care approaches and improve palliative care for patients with cancer. Visits by ASCO volunteers up to four times a year will provide the Host Institution with additional training.

The different workshops and events to promote continuous professional development are:

1. Multidisciplinary Cancer Management Course, where by promoting collaboration between specialists, surgeons, pathologists, and members of the oncology caregiving team, the International Cancer Corps promotes improvements in surgical care.
2. International Palliative Care Workshop, covering topics including medical communication skills, pain assessment and symptom management.
3. Volunteer Visits, where members with expertise in MDT care, palliative care and its integration to cancer care visit the partner institutions providing extra training to the healthcare professionals in the host countries. (2)



Past and Current Partner Institutions

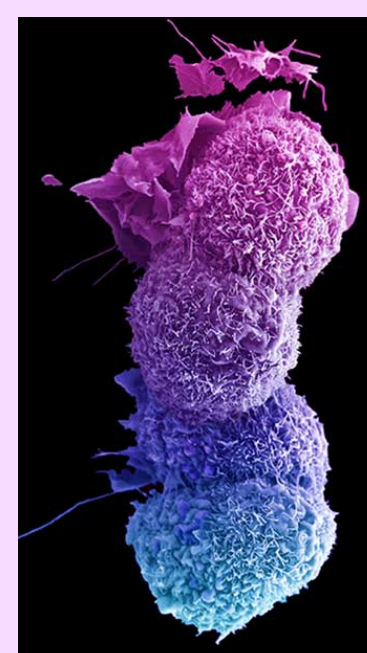
The World Health Organization currently estimates that low- and middle-income countries bear the burden of more than half of the estimated 12.7 million new cancer cases and 7.6 million cancers deaths occurring each year. The ICC originally organised three training bases in Honduras, Ethiopia and Vietnam to face this issue and contribute to alleviating this burden. Due to their successes, they expanded to Costa rica, Paraguay and Bhutan by 2013.

However, what makes the International Cancer Corps different from other programs is that, after they have contributed to the training of healthcare professionals in one of their partner countries- generally for three years- they find another partner institution in a low or middle income country that can benefit from their help.

Often, the International Cancer Corps picks a country with a lack of a national screening program like Vietnam, where due to the issue most patients present with an advanced form of disease, most likely not treatable, therefore moving to palliative care. Other times, countries like Ethiopia are chosen, where there is a huge shortage of oncologists (3).

The current institutions that are paired with the International Cancer Corps are:

- National Referral Hospital, Thimphu, Bhutan
- Hospital San Felipe, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India
- Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal
- National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS), Kathmandu, Nepal
- Uganda Cancer Institute, Kampala, Uganda
- National Cancer Hospital, Hanoi, Vietnam



How can you help?

- Educate yourself on the burden o cancer worldwide; good resources are the Cancer section of WHO (World Health Organisation) and The Cancer Atlas <https://canceratlas.cancer.org/the-burden/the-burden-of-cancer/> <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>
- Raise awareness in your community about the risk factors for cancer, the important of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of screening.
- Donate to charities including Cancer Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, World Cancer Research Fund or to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) to support the International Cancer Corps.



Vietnam: Quyen Chu, MD, right, performing a mastectomy at Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy in Vietnam.

Sources

