



Hassan Akmal, MPH '04, Provides Support to Underserved Populations in India

Hassan Akmal, a former tennis pro and 2004 graduate of the Mailman School, is spearheading relief and global assessment efforts for vulnerable populations through Invitation Relief, the NGO he founded following a trip to India in 2006.

While in India, Mr. Akmal noticed the limited resources available to local communities, such as food, shelter, and medical supplies, as well as basic education. Following his visit, he founded Invitation Relief and immediately teamed with SANGHA (Sanskrit for "community with a common goal, vision, or purpose"), another non-profit focused on helping neglected populations.

Together, with the support of Baptist Health Systems, the two organizations were able to assist the Nicobar Rehabilitation Center for Handicapped Children, where it is now possible for Center participants to receive certificates and diplomas through the collaboration of the University of Miami, Florida International University, and Columbia University. Additionally, Mr. Akmal worked with children at the Center using sign language to communicate during the three week post-tsunami intervention training for local health professionals and aspiring students.

By building a strong foundation for education at the center and providing sustainable strategies, Mr. Akmal hopes to build on local medical care through continuing medical education of physicians and by improving the public health of local communities-what he has termed "micro-macro enterprise." Noted Mr. Akmal, "You design the bridge before you build it, so it's appropriate and sustainable."