



2021 ACG NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL GI TRAINING GRANT



Giselle Mahoro, MD, Gastroenterology Fellow,
Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

In 2021, Giselle Mahoro, MD, was selected as the recipient of the ACG North American International GI Training Grant, which provides financial support to early career U.S. and Canadian fellows or physicians to receive training in GI and hepatology outside of North America to gain new knowledge or technical skills. Dr. Mahoro’s background as a refugee immigrant from Rwanda and experience at a teaching hospital in Uganda during her medical residency inspired a lifelong commitment to global health and advancing access to GI care. Dr. Mahoro, a GI fellow at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, reflects on her experience training internationally in Rwanda at University Teaching Hospital of Kigali.

I had the honor of being awarded the 2021 ACG North American International GI Training Grant. This grant allowed me to spend six weeks at University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK). Access to endoscopy services is very limited in Rwanda. Endoscopy is performed by general medicine providers, some of whom were taught

by visiting GI faculty. I spent my time in the endoscopy suite working alongside an amazing team of dedicated physicians who run the unit, including Dr. Eric Rutanganda, Dr. Francois Ngabonziza, Dr. Vincent Dusabijambo, and Dr. Benoit Seminega, who also served as my teachers and mentors.

My days were very busy, with 20 to 25 procedures per day — mostly diagnostic upper endoscopy. The majority of patients had complications from *H. pylori*-related peptic ulcer disease. I saw a lot of gastric cancer, with most patients presenting at late stage with gastric outlet obstruction and gastrointestinal bleeding. I have since developed a special interest in gastric cancer and I plan to pursue clinical research in the near future. Anesthesia was available on most days, but not every day. With help from my mentors, I learned how to perform upper endoscopy without sedation.

My favorite part of the trip was the relationships and connections I made with the faculty and staff at CHUK. I spent countless hours with endoscopy nurses, many of whom became dear friends. I also had the opportunity to teach and interact with medical students and residents who were rotating on endoscopy. I am hoping to return to CHUK this fall, and I am excited to continue building relationships and collaborating with the team at CHUK.

I am so grateful to the American College of Gastroenterology for providing support for this trip; my mentors and program leadership at Thomas Jefferson University for allowing me to pursue this non-traditional path during fellowship training; Dr. Damascene Kabakambira, the head of Internal Medicine at CHUK, for coordinating and connecting me with the right people to figure out logistics; Dr. Akwi Asombang, my mentor in global health; and my co-fellows for being flexible so that I could pursue this unique opportunity.

“My days were very busy, with 20 to 25 procedures per day — mostly diagnostic upper endoscopy. The majority of patients had complications from *H. pylori*-related peptic ulcer disease.”

Top photo: Dr. Mahoro and endoscopy nurse Francine

Bottom photo: (L-R) Dr. Steve Bensen, Dr. Vincent Dusabijambo, Dr. Giselle Mahoro

