

Dr. Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Juba, South Sudan: Vision and mission

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The Sudanese American Medical Association and Project ECHO

The Sudanese American Medical Association (SAMA)^[1] is a nonprofit organization with offices in the United States (since 2008) and Sudan (since 2017). The organization's mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities through services, capacity building, and education/research. In line with this goal, in 2021, SAMA's Sudan office became a hub for the University of New Mexico's Project ECHO Model.

In 2003, The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA established an E-learning method called Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes)^[2] for education and exchanging knowledge by connecting learners with subject matter experts (SMEs) in a weekly or biweekly 60 to 90 minutes session over Zoom®. Unlike other

forms of virtual learning, the ECHO model emphasizes learner engagement through an interactive "All Teach, All Learn" approach. All sessions require a case presentation by a learner from their customary day to day clinical practice. The duration of the session is equally divided between SME didactic, learner case presentation and an interactive discussion.

From August 2021 to April 2023, SAMA established learning sites in Khartoum, Northern, and Gadarif states

and launched "ECHOs" in Cardiology (Frontline ECHO), Dialysis Care (Dialysis ECHO),^[3] Internal Medicine in partnership with the University of Khartoum (UoK ECHO), oral maxillofacial surgery (OMFS ECHO) and general surgery (Surgery ECHO). SAMA's ECHOs reached 3,114 learners in more than 60 countries, predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa in 85 sessions delivered by 114 subject matter experts from across the globe.

War and the establishing of the Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Port Sudan, Sudan

On April 25th 2023, shortly after the war broke out, SAMA's Sudan office director and one of its co-founders, Dr Bushra Ibnauf Sulieman, was killed in Khartoum in the breakdown of the rule of law that followed.^[4] In July 2023, the SAMA Sudan office team regrouped in



Faculty and learners from an anesthesiology workshop held in Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Port Sudan, February 2024 (credit: Mohamed Abdelazim)

Port Sudan and launched the Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning to commemorate his legacy. From July 2023 to December 2023, we completed two ECHOs, (Trauma ECHO) connecting trauma surgeons in Sudan with global subject matter experts in trauma surgery and (Dental School ECHO) connecting dental students whose education was interrupted by the war and their faculty. Two hundred and fifty learners were reached in 22 sessions delivered by 36 subject matter experts from across the globe.

Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Juba, South Sudan

Before the war, following its successful track record, SAMA had set its eyes on becoming a Project ECHO Superhub, i.e. supporting and training prospective Project ECHO hubs in sub-Saharan Africa. Given the historic ties between the peoples of Sudan and South Sudan, Juba was the natural home for SAMA's Superhub. In partnership with the South Sudan Ministry of Health, SAMA is working towards launching Infectious Disease ECHO in July 2024 that will connect medical professionals in South Sudan and Sudan with experts in Hepatitis B, HIV and TB, sharing experiences in an interactive "All Teach, All Learn" approach. Learners will attend the teachings at the planned Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Juba as well as the Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Port Sudan.

The shared experiences of South Sudan and Sudan in war can be a force to bring people together to work towards a better future free of war and disease.



*Anesthesiology and critical care residents attending a workshop in the Bushra Ibnauf Center for Learning in Port Sudan, February 2024
(credit: Mohamed Abdelazim)*

References

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2. Project ECHO: University of New Mexico; 2024 <https://projectecho.unm.edu/>.
3. Abdalla A AA, Warrag A, Farah A, Mahmoud D, Abusin S, Elhassan E, Pecoits-Filho R,. Dialysis ECHO: An Educational Solution to Improve Dialysis Care in Low-Resource and High-Demand Settings. *Kidney International Reports*, 2024;9(4):733 - 6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ekir.2024.01.062>
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