



Welcome to our FIENS winter newsletter. I am pleased to share with you that 2023 is off to robust start for FIENS. We have already hosted our first Global Virtual Visiting Professor Program with an informative webinar led by Dr. Mubashir Mahmood Mahmood Qureshi and moderated by recent Clack Fellow, Dr. Nathalie Christelle Ghomsi.

FIENS has also started reviewing applications for the spring 2023 Clack Fellowships, and are preparing to recruit for the next FIENS Bassett Fellowship. You can read about some of the recent Clack and Bassett fellowships on our [website](#). The FIENS board has been very busy these last few months working on behalf of FIENS to lead bootcamps, increase surgical capacity in Bolivia, and continue our partnership with the G4 Alliance. You can read about all of their efforts below.

In October, we started a fundraising campaign to raise funds for programming in 2023. I personally want to thank you all for your support. Your belief in the FIENS mission enables aspiring neurosurgeons in developing countries to receive the education they need to improve the care of individuals with neurological disease. Thank you for your support.

Please enjoy the newsletter. I welcome feedback and/or suggestions for future newsletters.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Dempsey, MD
Chairman and Manucher J. Javid Professor of Neurological Surgery
Department of Neurological Surgery, University of Wisconsin SMPH
Chairman, Foundation for International Education in Neurological Surgery



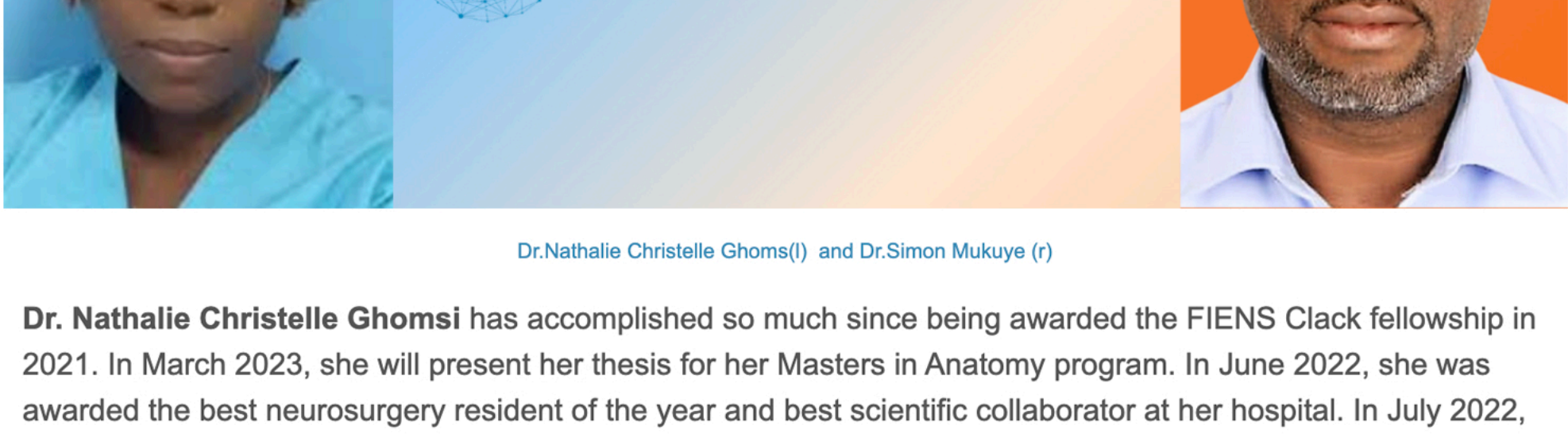
The Bassett and Clack Fellowships are core programs at FIENS. The opportunities they afford the fellows are extraordinary and would not be possible without the generous support of the Bassett and Clack families paired with the dedication and commitment of the FIENS board whom manage the fellowships ensuring excellence. All of us at FIENS are extremely pleased to be able to share these recent updates with you.



Dr. Peh Hueh Low (l) and Dr. Peh Hueh Low with Dr. Michael Levy at Rady Children's Hospital (r)

FIENS is proud to present their newest Bassett Fellow, Dr. Peh Hueh Low. Dr. Low is neurosurgeon from Malaysia, practicing at a remote center without pediatric neurosurgical service in her home country. Her sponsor was Professor Michael Levy, and her fellowship training hospital was Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego, California. The objectives of her fellowship were to 1) To observe the setup of pediatric neurosurgical service in an established pediatric center, 2) To observe how a pediatric center operates, and 3) To follow the surgical procedures that are not done in Malaysia, including patient selection, peri-operative care, and technical nuances.

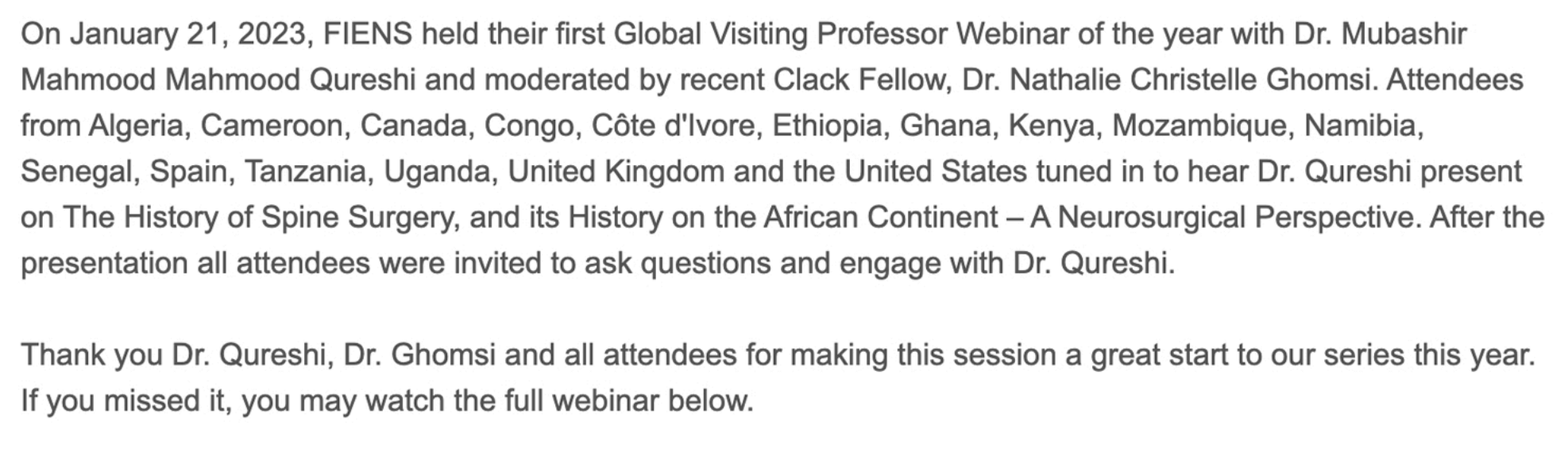
When asked about her fellowship Dr. Peh Hugh Low said "The fellowship supported me in widening the scope of service by introducing and initiating surgeries unavailable or not widely completed in Malaysia. This knowledge will help me improve patient outcomes by escalating my skill set. The fellowship also supported me in establishing collaboration for training to attain self-sustainability in providing pediatric neurosurgical service in the long run." You can read the full article [here](#).



Dr. Nathalie Christelle Ghomsi (l) and Dr. Simon Mukuye (r)

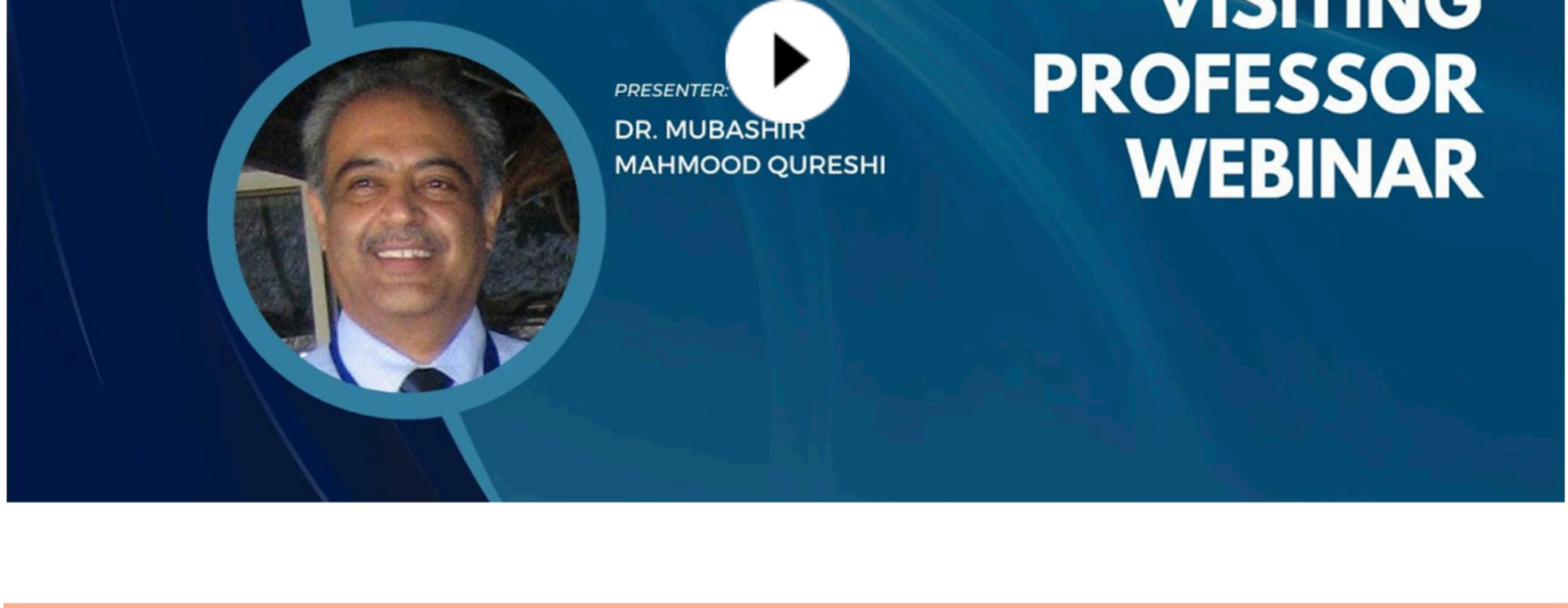
Dr. Nathalie Christelle Ghomsi has accomplished so much since being awarded the FIENS Clack fellowship in 2021. In March 2023, she will present her thesis for her Masters in Anatomy program. In June 2022, she was awarded the best neurosurgery resident of the year and best scientific collaborator at her hospital. In July 2022, she published a paper on establishing a neurosurgical skill laboratory in West Africa; you can read the abstract [here](#). In addition, she was recently awarded multiple scholarships to attend the SNOSSA annual conference in Accra, Ghana, and the SNO yearly conference in Tampa, Florida. Dr. Ghomsi was awarded a scholarship from the Continental Association of African Neurological Societies (CAANS) annual congress for a scientific abstract. You can read the full article about Dr. Ghomsi [here](#).

Dr. Simon Mukuye recently shared "I am a 2020 FIENS/CLACK FAMILY scholarship recipient from Uganda. I recently graduated as a Neurosurgeon from the College of Surgeons of East, Central, and Southern Africa. I must say that my training in Neurosurgery was only made possible by the FIENS scholarship. The financial support from the FIENS scholarship enabled me to spend time on the neurosurgical wards, attend clinical lectures and a neurosurgical clinical fellowship at an institution outside Uganda. The funding provided the financial support I needed to attend a neurosurgical clinical fellowship at Yashoda Hospital in Hyderabad, India." Read Dr. Mukuye's full story [here](#).



On January 21, 2023, FIENS held their first Global Visiting Professor Webinar of the year with Dr. Mubashir Mahmood Mahmood Qureshi and moderated by recent Clack Fellow, Dr. Nathalie Christelle Ghomsi. Attendees from Algeria, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Spain, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom and the United States tuned in to hear Dr. Qureshi present on The History of Spine Surgery, and its History on the African Continent – A Neurosurgical Perspective. After the presentation all attendees were invited to ask questions and engage with Dr. Qureshi.

Thank you Dr. Qureshi, Dr. Ghomsi and all attendees for making this session a great start to our series this year. If you missed it, you may watch the full webinar below.



The FIENS Board of Directors is a dedicated group of individuals who work to further the FIENS missions which is to improve care of individuals with neurological disease throughout the world by support of education in neurosurgery, particularly via partnerships between established and emerging neurosurgical programs. We are pleased to share these updates from a few of our amazing board members.



G4 Alliance News - by Dr. Sarah Woodrow, FIENS Board Member and FIENS G4 Permanent Council Representative

As neurosurgeons, we all recognize the importance of "teamwork" when taking care of our patients. In today's world this role often expands beyond simply clinical care to include areas such as research and advocacy. These roles are arguably even more important in LMICs where healthcare resources are scarce and voices struggle to be heard.

For the last several years FIENS has been a proud member of the G4 Alliance in an effort to amplify this voice. Comprised of nearly 80 healthcare-affiliated associations and organizations, the vision of the G4 Alliance is simple: to advocate for universal access to quality SOTA (surgical, obstetrical, trauma and anesthesia) care for all. It brings its coalition of members together to promote awareness, mobilize resources and influence local, national and international policies. For example, the G4 Alliance Resource Mobilization Working Group co-ordinated a unified effort that resulted in the US Congress mandating USAID commit a portion of its budget towards global SOTA care. Currently, this same group is preparing a letter writing campaign asking congressional members to endorse a \$100M allocation of USAID funding to SOTA care in 2024.

The G4 Alliance along with its member organization, the International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons, has created the Global Alliance for the Prevention of Spina Bifida- F(GAPSBIF). This coalition is working with Ministries of Health to present a Resolution on Folic Acid fortification in the prevention of spina bifida at the 2023 World Health Assembly (WHA). FIENS board member, Dr. Gail Rosseau, co-founded this initiative with Dr. Jeffrey Blount, from G4 Alliance member institution University of Alabama-Birmingham. It is an excellent example of how collaborations fostered by the G4 Alliance brings a larger voice to neurosurgical issues in the world. The passage of the resolution will have critical international implications in addressing a largely preventable condition.

And, this year, neurosurgery has an even stronger voice as Dr. Rosseau, was recently elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the G4 Alliance. Please visit the [G4 Alliance website](#) to learn more about the different working groups and projects being supported through the G4 Alliance.



FIENS Vietnam Bootcamp

FIENS was able to participate as a co-sponsor in the 2022 Vietnam Neurosurgery Boot Camp along with the Danang University Medical school and Henry Ford Health Team, with generous sponsorship from Medtronic and Storz. Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Ba, Dr. Tra Tan Hoanh and Dr. Le Quang Huy partnered with us for the boot camp and were instrumental all along the way during the planning phases beginning nine months prior and the running of the boot camp.

Dr. Dempsey joined several FIENS members, including Dr. Jack Rock, who was the primary organizer of the Boot Camp.

The Boot Camp served approximately 80 students, including faculty and residents, and medical students, and was supported by nine international faculty and approximately 20 Vietnamese faculty representing the major medical centers in Hanoi, Danang, and Ho Chi Minh City. The support of the Danang Medical School was invaluable, and an extremely high-level Boot Camp took place with discussions by international and local faculty and hands-on experience in craniotomy, microsurgery, endoscopy, as well as standard positioning, ICP, and lumbar puncture.

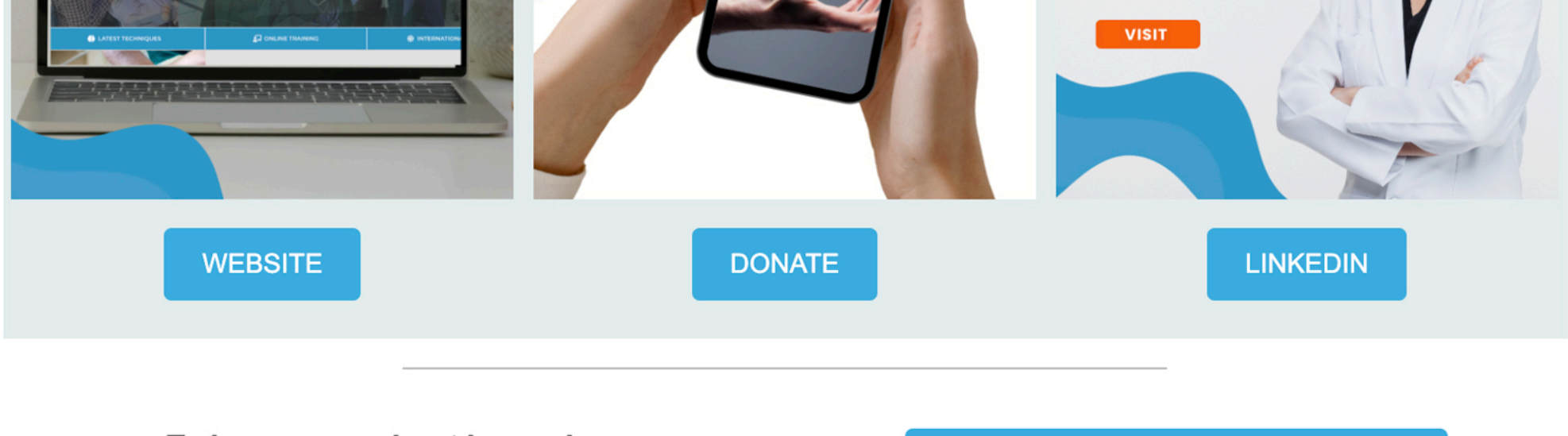
Read the full story [here](#).

Neurosurgical Education System - Bolivia

FIENS and the University of Wisconsin in Madison (UW-Madison) faculty and alumni of the Department of Neurological Surgery and the Bolivian Neurosurgical Society, in partnership with Solidarity Bridge, are developing a neurosurgical education system to enhance the training of Bolivian neurosurgical residents.

The planning for this program began back in 2019 but political upheaval and COVID-19 slowed the progress in 2020-2021. The program is incremental, starting with 2 sub-specialties (pediatric and spine), later extending to the other neurosurgical fields (tumor, vascular & skull base, functional, and peripheral nerve). The educational sessions are virtual, taking place monthly or bimonthly over a period of a year, culminating in an in-person hands-on session in Bolivia for the participants.

The program aims to increase surgical capacity in Bolivia through resource mobilization, education and assessment for 3rd and 4th year neurosurgery residents in La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Sucre, Bolivia. The curriculum includes a didactic program, an in-person bootcamp, educational conferences, observational visits, mentor-mentee assignments and assessments. To learn more about this curriculum please click [here](#).



To learn more about becoming a FIENS volunteer click [here](#)

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