

GIVE recipient reflects on global surgical experience

By Vickas Agarwal, DDS, MD



Traveling to Dhaka, Bangladesh, with the Smile Bangladesh team was a milestone for me, made possible through a Global Initiative for Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) grant from the OMS Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of the Foundation’s donors, I was able to fulfill my longstanding aspiration to engage in global surgery by participating in a mission trip.

I have long been drawn to the idea of contributing to surgical care in underserved communities worldwide. However, financial constraints often hindered such endeavors, especially during residency. The grant from the OMS Foundation alleviated this burden, providing for my travel expenses and essential support for accommodation, meals and supplies. Without this assistance, joining Smile Bangladesh in Dhaka would have been nearly impossible.

The funds not only facilitated my travel but also allowed me to actively participate in the mission of providing vital surgical care to those in need. Every patient we treated

underscored the impact of our presence and the importance of our work.

Equally valuable was the opportunity to work alongside mentors with diverse backgrounds from outside my program. Gaining exposure to different techniques to accomplish the same goals gave me new perspectives, and collaborating with the dedicated professionals of Smile Bangladesh provided insights beyond just surgical techniques. Their commitment to their community and resilience in challenging circumstances left a lasting impression on me.

Reflecting on my time in Dhaka, I am filled with gratitude – for the opportunity to serve, for the lessons learned and for my generous colleagues who helped make this experience possible. It has reinforced my commitment to global surgery and deepened my understanding of the profound impact we can make when we come together to serve those in need.

*“I am filled
with gratitude”*

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