

Rita Feinberg

Happy 25th birthday, HVO, and congratulations on reaching another milestone.

You've grown and matured since your founding in 1986, and are today a recognized, global leader in creating and implementing education and training programs for members of medical communities in some of the neediest countries in the world. You have contributed much over the years to improve global health and now with the strongest ever network of sponsoring organizations, collaborating institutions, and cadres of specialized volunteers, you are well-positioned to have an even greater impact.

I've been working in international development for a long time, and when people ask me what's so special about HVO, it's a straight forward answer – **sustainability**. That reply invariably leads to another question and another. To the inquisitive, it's a catalyst for a conversation about how HVO – its staff and volunteers – go about working with developing country medical institutions and health care providers to enable them to be better equipped to serve the health needs of their people. Developing in-country capacity is key to sustainability, and HVO is expert at developing capacity.

I cheer the fact that HVO volunteers educate and train their health care counterparts and leave behind knowledge and skills that will be applied and shared long after the volunteer has returned home. HVO also understands another critical element of sustainability – keeping health care providers practicing in their own countries – routinely establishing mentoring and other ongoing professional support activities to enhance that objective.

HVO is a powerful mechanism that is positively and sustainably impacting the health of millions in resource poor countries around the globe. As we celebrate this 25 year anniversary, hats off to the dedicated staff, supporters, and life-sustaining volunteers who make this happen!

Rita Feinberg is an international development consultant with over 30 years of experience designing, implementing, and evaluating programs to advance the physical, social, and economic well-being of organizations and communities around the world. She has lived and worked in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. Ms. Feinberg received her M.A. in International Administration from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. Ms. Feinberg is a member of the HVO Board of Directors.

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