

Intense Vision

A radiology fellow forms a nonprofit with an ambitious goal.

In modern medicine, the naked eye will no longer do. Somewhere in the alphabet soup of 21st century imaging—MRI, CT, PET, and a host of other magnetic and molecular miracles—resides the answer to diagnoses from cancer to compound fractures. These have become essential technologies, vital for both critical and chronic care, yet virtually unavailable to Third World populations.

For radiology fellow Daniel Mollura, this lack of basic care is unacceptable. In August, Mollura formed Rad-Aid with the blessings of Jonathan Lewin, Radiology head, and Nuclear Medicine Director Richard Wahl, while collaborating closely with colleagues Som Javadi, Dan Durand and Muhammad Chaudhry. Rad-Aid International is a nonprofit with an audacious goal: To bring the power of medical imaging to nations often spending less than \$50 a year per person on medical care.

If the idea of pulling together radiologists, heads of state, philanthropists and social entrepreneurs to accomplish this task intimidates Mollura, it doesn't show. A former financial analyst at Goldman-Sachs, he left the



Unwilling to accept the status quo for underserved countries in need of medical imaging, Daniel Mollura launched a multifaceted organization.

financial world to pursue medicine, but it's clear Mollura hasn't lost his ability to formulate a successful business plan. His initial start-up, an educational audio firm called "Now You Know Media," has fared well, and he's parlaying that experience into Rad-Aid. Mollura, a molecular imaging specialist, says the need is obvious. "Take Liberia," he says. "They have 3.5 million people and they have six X-ray technicians in the *whole country*."

What sets Mollura apart is the scope of his vision. He sees Rad-Aid as a freestanding network of experts systematically attacking the lack of accessible worldwide imaging. This means investigating everything from teleradiology—on-the-ground trained techs sending Internet images to central "reading" stations—to transporting patients to

radiology sites.

Mollura says well-meaning radiologists often bring their skills and science to the Third World for short-term missions, but when they leave—and they always do—the status quo returns. His solution is to integrate radiology into the existing infrastructure or build a new one. "The idea," he says, "is what we call 'radiology readiness.' We have to focus our effort on studying where radiology can best be optimized; otherwise you're just wasting dollars."

This isn't just talk. A survey Mollura commissioned found 63 radiologists and other health personnel expressing a desire to join Rad-Aid.

A planned fall conference at Hopkins will bring together local and international health experts to formulate strategies and create alliances. To that end, Mollura is collaborating with the State Department to identify interested countries.

He's also working with Project HOPE, which delivers health care and medical training to 36 developing and emerging countries, to improve radiology services and choose Rad-Aid's first test country, possibly this fall. "That's a critical piece of this," he says, "partnering with someone who's already on the ground in these places and understands them well."

—Mat Edelson

Info: www.RAD-AID.org.