

## **Interface Annual Report for 2012**

2012 saw the commencement of the post-graduate training programme in Plastic Surgery based at CoRSU. This came after many years of planning and Interface has been supportive of the endeavours to train African plastic surgeons. The department of Plastic Surgery also had its busiest year so there has been plenty of opportunity for Interface to be involved in the work.

### **Training programme**

CoRSU Hospital, supported by CBM, has developed the MMed training program in collaboration with Mbarara University. This is the second training program in existence in East Central and Southern Africa (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia being the other program). It is a 3 year program to train Plastic Surgeons and Interface has been able to assist in a number of ways with this program. Two trainees – Darius Balumuka, and Martin Tungotyo were accepted onto the program

***Purchase of equipment for the trainees*** – Interface bought the two trainees digital cameras to enable them to record their patients and to help with their preparation of tutorials.

***Purchase of a scanner for the Plastic Surgery office*** – again principally to enable the students to prepare power point presentations by scanning in images from Plastic surgery textbooks

***Facilitation of a burns course*** – two burns surgeons travelled to CoRSU to teach our trainees a course on acute burn management. We took the opportunity to invite doctors, nurses and physiotherapists from two other hospitals and Interface facilitated their attendance by paying for their transport and food during the week long course.

***Burns fellowship in India*** - as CoRSU does not manage large burns, we felt it was important for our trainees to gain exposure in another unit where large burns are treated. Interface therefore paid for the flight, living allowance, and other expenses during a one month visit to Indore, India during which they gained excellent experience in the management of major burns

### **Failed visa applications**

As well as supporting the training of doctors, Interface has in the past also supported the training of paramedics and nursing staff. We had planned to facilitate two excellent nurses from CoRSU to travel to Exeter for experience in a different setting but unfortunately obtaining visas to get into UK can be very difficult and Interface had to cover the rather costly process of visa rejections. In the future it may be better to consider going to other countries such as India to obtain such experience.

### **Other training involvement**

An enthusiastic general surgeon, Mohammed Abdelraiman from Khartoum, Sudan visited CoRSU in 2011, and was determined to train in Reconstructive surgery. Though we were unable to take him on in CoRSU as we are presently concentrating on building up the Ugandan surgeons, we were able to put him in contact with the excellent unit in Taiwan. He has been accepted there on a two year fellowship and Interface has enabled him to go by buying his flight and giving him a living allowance. He is doing well, and in 2013 Interface will purchase his operating loupes for him - essential equipment for a Plastic Surgeon.

## **Patient assistance**

By far the biggest expenditure of Interface remains the assistance to patients, and this reflects our commitment to assist the poor to access an increasingly costly service. In CoRSU, children are not charged for the operation, so most of the patients assisted have tended to be adults whom Interface has been able to cover the cost of the operation.

### **2013...**

As the training programme is now in full swing, there will be more opportunities to support it in 2013. We would like to send the trainees on another fellowship as we believe that they gain a lot from experiencing other systems of health care and expertise in areas which are not currently being treated at CoRSU.

There continues to be a great need to support the treatment of patients and the fees at CoRSU continue to rise so this will remain a large part of the expenditure.

There is less need to support the visit of experts to CoRSU through Interface as this is covered as part of the training programme, paid for by CBM.

Many patients are not able to access the services at CoRSU, and there is a great need to let people in need know about the hospital and help them to reach it – this could be an area where Interface is able to get involved and we will explore this possibilities with the hospital administration in the coming year.

The input of Interface along with all the other charities is a great example of the power of working together. With patient care much is covered or contributed by CoRSU, through CBM, however often a small amount such as that required to transport the patient to the hospital will prevent the patient getting treated. Interface is able to step in and bridge this gap where it is needed. The trainees are on the whole well funded – getting a living allowance, tuition fees etc, from CBM, but the extra assistance from Interface enables them to receive a really excellent training which I am rather envious of!

2012 saw a great shift with the commencement of the training programme and the support of a trainee from Sudan and I hope that this is just the beginning for Interface and that Interface will be able to support the development of plastic surgery initiatives over a wide area of East Africa.