

Chairman's report for Interface Uganda 2008

Summary

During 2008, much of the activity of the charity in the UK was focused on supporting the development of the new disability hospital in Kampala – CoRSU Rehabilitation Hospital (Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services for Uganda). The building has been financed by CBM (Christian Blind Mission) but equipped by a range of other organisations, including Interface. During 2008 we organised the shipment of 3 containers of equipment. This has been very time consuming for the team in Exeter but has provided a significant amount of the equipment which will be required for the opening of the hospital.

More teams visited Uganda than ever before with a combination of support from Interface, Smile Train and personal contributions

Within Uganda, funds have been used to help pay the bills of many of our poorest patients. These patients could otherwise not afford to stay in Kampala for their treatment.

Finally in 2008, the successful partnership between Smile Train and Interface came to an end as Smile Train established links with the new NGO - CoRSU (Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services for Uganda) based in Kampala.

Activities in 2008

- **Equipment and containers for CoRSU** – the first of 3 containers was filled and sent in January 2008. This container contained a huge and diverse amount of invaluable medical equipment such as XR processors, operating tables, computers, and consumables. From this container, we learnt a valuable lesson; some consumables which are out of date should not be put in the container as they can cause problems with customs and may be required to be incinerated. Containers 2 and 3 containing hospital beds and many mattresses were sent later in the year and progressed through customs without any problems. Much of the equipment is now in use in the new hospital and proving invaluable.
- **Purchase of equipment** – Interface continues to support reconstructive surgery by purchasing surgical and anaesthetic equipment such as surgical blades and instruments, anaesthetic monitors and oxygen concentrators, surgical equipment etc.
- **Web site** – the web site for the charity is now functioning again after being down for much of 2007. It still needs to be updated and this project is underway.

- **Information Evening** – Another successful Annual Information Evening was held in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital in June. The event was very well attended and, as ever, generated lots of interest and positive comments from all present.
- **Doctor support** – Interface has supported the training of doctors and in 2008 paid for a new laptop and loopes for Dr George Galiwango.
- **Surgical visits** – more teams visited in 2008 than ever before. The funding for these teams was a mixture of funding from Interface, Smile Train and personal fund raising. The following individuals and teams visited
 - Tony Giles maxillofacial surgeon
 - Tim Goodacre with team
 - Hubert Vermeesch, head and neck surgery X2
 - Brian Sommerlad and team
 - Isabeau Walker and colleague
 - Patrick Duffy, Urologist
 - Paul Townsend, Plastic Surgeon

This was Paul's 4th visit to Uganda and possibly his last – as he heads towards his well deserved retirement. On each visit, he has contributed a huge amount –helping resource equipment and teaching trainees as well as taking on complex and difficult cases. We wish to extend our grateful thanks for all of Paul's valuable contributions.

- **Staff exchange** - A visit to the Department of Hand Surgery and Therapy in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, by Gordon, an occupational therapist from Katalemwa Cheshire Home, was funded by Interface. He found this an invaluable experience; such exchanges have proved to be very positive for the exchange student and also for the receiving department. We wish to extend our thanks to all members of the department who were so generous in their hospitality and warm welcome.
- **Patient support** – though many operations are performed for free, funded by CBM, patients are expected to contribute to their stay in the the rehab centre. Many patients cannot afford this and so Interface has stepped in where necessary to pay this bill and also provide transport money to return home if needed. This has enabled many patients to receive the care they need.
- **Smile Train** – The partnership between Interface and Smile Train came to an end. The partnership has worked well and effectively but the time is ready for a new partnership to be put in place with CoRSU.
- **Interface car** - Interface continued to provide the funding to run a car which has been serviced and maintained by Smile Train funding. This is now discontinued and the car is no longer in use.

- **Anaesthesia** – Interface has assisted in the running of the anaesthesia course which Sarah Hodges again organised this year. Interface has also worked with the AAGBI to support trainees in Uganda.

Fund raising activities in 2008

Once again this year we have been superbly fortunate that so many good and generous people and organisations have taken on wide ranging and interesting activities to raise funds on behalf of the charity. Garden fetes, pub quizzes, and car boot sales have been held. Different individuals have run the Great West run, the Tewksbury half marathon and the Belfast Marathon. Individuals have entered boules competitions on our behalf (and won), Wyndham House Surgery in Silverton, Devon held a raffle, one individual joined weight watchers and had a successful slim-a-thon as a fund raiser! We also received very generous donations from the Soroptimist International Tiverton and District Group. Two members of the congregation of the Sidmouth Methodist Church, Devon will be walking parts of the South West Coastal Path as a fund raiser for us over the coming months.

Many churches and their congregations continue to support our work by holding events or collections on our behalf – Chudleigh Parish Church in Devon have held a range of fund raising activities, Primley United Reform church continue to support us, Castle Cary Parish Church continue to make regular donations, St Margaret's Church Warwickshire have also remained supportive.

We received our final grants from Smile Train prior to their new partnership with CoRSU. We have also received grants from the Midland Anaesthetic Society, The Persula Foundation (to help us with costs incurred in shipping the containers), The Millward Trust have also provided funding to help support the costs incurred with the purchase, shipment and transportation of the containers. The University of Oxford and The AAGBI have provided funds to support ongoing training and development of anaesthesia in Uganda.

We also have individuals who support us financially on a regular basis or one off basis and we are of course extremely grateful for their donations.

We would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to everyone involved with our charity.