

Press Release

Dentaid launches schools oral health programme in Cameroon

Oral health charity Dentaid is launching a school oral health programme in Cameroon following on from the huge success of its initial pilot schools oral health programme in Uganda. The aim of the programme is to educate children in oral health care with the end goal of combating poor oral health in the schools and ultimately in the general population.

An initial pilot will be run for a year involving five primary schools for children aged between five and twelve. The programme will start in mid September 2008, the start of the new academic year. Following this Dentaid hopes to extend the programme to significantly more schools in the area.

For this new venture Dentaid is partnering with The Cameroon Baptist Convention, (CBC) a missionary organisation providing health services in Cameroon. The CBC dental service is now the biggest dental health provider in the Cameroon.

Dentaid has a long established relationship with the CBC and Dr Leo, who will be directing the new brushing programme. The convention has seven dental clinics spread across the country in urban and semi urban areas. Dentaid provided surgeries for these clinics in 2007. These will be used as referral centres for the children from the schools in the programme.

This existing relationship with the CBC and the fact that it has a well respected and established presence in the area will help to ensure the success of this new initiative. It will be run entirely by indigenous staff and will be fully self sustainable.

The five initial schools in the programme are in a mix of urban and rural settings. The pupils come from poor backgrounds and most will never have seen a dentist in their lives. The concept of oral care is not well understood and low income families simply cannot afford dental treatment should they need it.

One of the key aspects of the school programme will be to raise awareness of the importance of oral health to help to combat this widespread ignorance. There will be supervised daily tooth brushing, regular oral health education, basic dental care such as filling teeth using the ART technique and minor extractions. Oral health education lessons will be given to large groups of about 100 pupils.

There will also be regular screening for each child. Any child needing treatment will either receive attention in the portable clinic in the school or if they are in need of something more complicated they will be referred to the local treatment centre.

The Lions club Multiple District 105 have kindly agreed to sponsor the start up costs for the programme. This follows on from their invaluable support for the start up of the Ugandan schools programme. Dentaid already has sponsors for two of the schools in the programme but sponsorship is needed for three more schools.

David Bishop of the Rose Lane Dental Practice, the first sponsor of the programme, commented, "This schools programme is something that all the staff in the practice have really felt that they can get behind. It is good to feel that we can make such a

huge difference to the wellbeing of these children and it will be great to be able to follow the progress of the project through the letters from the schools and from the regular pictures of the programme in action.”

If you are interested in sponsoring a school please contact Nicky Triance on 01794 324249 or e – mail nicky@dentaid.org. We will be able to provide you with illustrated profiles from which you can choose your school. Detailed information can also be found at www.dentaid.org.