

Dentaid appoints new Director of Oral Health

Robert Yee, a well-respected figure in the oral health world, has joined Dentaid, the specialist charity devoted to improving the oral health of disadvantaged communities around the world, as its new Director of Oral Health.

Robert, who has spent most of the last ten years living and working in Nepal, joined Dentaid in August. Over the last year, the charity has massively broadened its remit, adopting new strategic priorities in oral health promotion, advocacy, capacity building and forming strategic alliances, along with its traditional work of supplying physical resources to partners around the world. Robert brings enormous skills and experience, particularly in advocacy and training initiatives. During his work with United Missions to Nepal (latterly as Director), his team were responsible for researching and successfully lobbying toothpaste manufacturers to introduce fluoride into toothpaste, which previously they had not contained. This five-year mission involved sampling water supplies all over Nepal to disprove the myth that naturally occurring fluoride was present in the water. Armed with this evidence, UMN successfully lobbied government and manufacturers to insist upon fluoride being introduced to toothpaste across Nepal. Since this was implemented, dramatic falls have been recorded in DMFT levels for 12 years old in Nepal to a level less than that in the UK, despite dental provision being extremely poor.

Since then, Robert was integral in helping the Nepalese Government develop its first ever national oral health strategy, and designed and implemented techniques and training courses to provide rural health workers to provide basic and safe dental care to remote communities un-served by dentists. Finally, Robert's team were also responsible for developing exceptional oral health education resources, which have been widely used in Nepal and adopted as blueprints around the world.

With the experience he has built up in Nepal, Robert has provided training and consultancy to many oral health projects around the world, and this role will be

continued and expanded as Dentaids Director of Oral Health. Indeed, he has hit the ground running!

Last week, Robert was in Myanmar (Burma) leading a symposium to share information, strategies and ideas for making affordable fluoride toothpaste more readily available for poorer communities around the world. From there, he has travelled to China to train trainers responsible for teaching village doctors to deliver basic oral health care to remote communities. Next month, he will be travelling to Uganda to observe and evaluate Dentaids existing school oral health programme and train the project leaders in the potential use of fluoride gel in the school environment. In November, after he has made a presentation at the AFFA (Affordable Fluoride for All) Conference co-hosted by the FDI World Dental Federation and the World Health Organisation, he will be travelling to Nepal and the Philippines to equip indigenous oral health charities to effectively evaluate their own programmes!

Robert added:- *"I am very excited to be joining Dentaids at a very exciting point in its development. In partnership with other international oral health charities, interest groups and governments, I am very excited about what we can achieve together, potentially improving oral health for many millions of people around the world."*

Dentaids is one of the leading oral health charities in the world, supporting oral health programmes in almost 50 countries. Resourcing regional treatment centres, school prevention programmes and training key workers are just a few of the ways Dentaids is improving the oral health of millions of people.

For further information on Dentaids, or to make a donation, visit www.dentaids.org or contact the fundraising team on 01794 324249.