

Published in *The Lion* in August 2006.

Dentaid/Lions partnership brings help across the world

Romania:

In 2004, Beni Seican, the pastor of Sibiu Christian Centre, a registered Romanian charity, visited Dentaid requesting help to upgrade the centre's very old and constantly failing dental equipment. The Centre provides dental care to many of the local population of 180,000; those who can afford to pay for treatment subsidise the free care for orphans, social cases and the very poor. There are two dental surgeries and a kindergarten, plus charitable projects helping pregnant mothers, children of poor and dysfunctional families, and girls leaving orphanages at the age of 18 needing guidance in social integration. The dental surgeries are vital for the financial support of the whole centre, but it had been very difficult to work effectively due to frequent breakdowns and the unavailability of spare parts.

One complete Dentaid surgery was requested, costing £2625 including refurbishment and transportation, which was fully funded by Yateley and District Lions Club. Their generosity in providing this new surgery will mean a massive boost to the quality and scope of the treatment which can be given, and in consequence a more secure financial footing for the entire charitable work.



The new surgery installed
and in use !

A fully refurbished surgery was designed specifically for its new destination, crated and transported to Romania by trailer, arriving last August. An email was received from Beni Seican: - *"We are delighted to announce to you that the dental unit has arrived here in Sibiu, was brought through the customs all right and is in our possession. Everything that was sent is very appropriate and of good quality. We were surprised to find the very detailed servicing manuals you enclosed, all with very clear information on*

how to install, operate and service the equipment. The compressor is so quiet compared with what we have here, which cannot sit in the same room with the dentist, as it is very noisy. Our dentists are very happy to receive such good equipment and cannot wait to have it installed and start using it. Please accept our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Also I would like to send a sign of thanks to the club that sponsored the surgery. We would not have imagined last October when we were with you in UK that in less than a year we will have a full surgery available in Sibiu.”

Nepal:

Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world with 42% of its population living below the poverty line. Dental disease is the most common disease of childhood there, and oral cancer the most common cancer in men.

Street dentistry is common practice with people going to drastic lengths to get relief from toothache. Such “Street Dentists” are untrained and do not use sterile instruments or anaesthetic, often leaving the patient in a worse state.

Dentaid was approached by the Nepalese Ministry of Health to provide dental surgeries for five zonal hospitals over the next couple of years. These will be the referral centres for more advanced treatment to be performed by qualified dentists.

105A Lions responded magnificently to this appeal and have fully funded the first two surgeries which have been safely received in Kathmandu. These surgeries are now in operation in the government hospital dental clinics in Kathmandu and Pokhara which serve a large population of needy people who often arrive after many days of travel by foot or by bus.

Bangladesh:

Despite international development efforts, **Bangladesh** remains extremely poor and overpopulated. 80% of its 141 million people live in rural areas with very little access to medical or dental care. 31% resort to self-treatment for dental problems, extracting their own teeth, and 42% seek help from unqualified people. In 1999, there was only one dental hospital for the entire country.

Dentaid, partnered by **Lions Clubs International**, is working with the health programme of **HEED** (Health, Education & Economic Development) **Bangladesh**, one of the most important non-government organisations in the country, to provide the first two surgeries of a possible six required for the “**Smiles For Life**” project.

This new programme was the vision of an Australian dentist, Dr Ross Dunn. Whilst in Bangladesh on a short-term visit, he was appalled to find that thousands of teeth that could be filled were being extracted either because there were no facilities for conservative treatment or because the patients could not afford it. He shared his concerns with Mr Elgin Saha, the Executive Director of HEED, and soon “Smiles For Life”, HEED’s first Oral Health project, was born.

The strategic plan of ‘Smiles for Life’ is based on the components of the World Health Organization’s Basic Package of Oral Care, supported by regional referral centres. The Basic Package includes:

- ❖ Oral Health Promotion
- ❖ Affordable fluoridation of the mouth
- ❖ Oral urgent treatment (emergency care)
- ❖ Basic curative treatment using the Atraumatic Restorative Treatment (ART) approach and Arrest of Caries Technique (ACT) (a cost-effective method of arresting decay in teeth by painting a solution of silver diamine fluoride and concentrated fluoride.)

The project involves preventative work as well as providing much needed treatment. Workers will target women and children through school based education and mothers clubs and existing professionals such as teachers and midwives will be trained in Oral Health Education.

The first stage was for one surgery for a slum area of the capital Dhaka and a second for a remote rural area serving a population of 750,000.

Thanks to Lions International sponsorship, Dentaïd has been able to provide these invaluable facilities which are now installed and serving the poor in these two communities.

Fifty dental surgeons participated in a training workshop in ART, ACT and Infection Control. A team of educators, dental technologist and hygienist and care workers received training for the school-based programme for children and teachers in oral health education and awareness which was implemented across eleven schools.



Dr Ross Dunn supervising treatment in the new surgery.



Oral health workers screening children

Thank you!

Thanks are due to all those in Lions Clubs throughout the country who have supported Dentaïd's work in various ways to bring the opportunity of safe dental treatment to so many people across the world who would otherwise have little or no chance of relief from dental disease