The Ethiopian Ambassador Visits Leicester University

At the invitation of GENIE, the University of Leicester’s Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Genetics, Ethiopia’s Ambassador to the UK, Berhanu Kebede, visited the University to meet with members of staff involved in a link between the Universities of Leicester and Gondar (northern Ethiopia).

The Ambassador is delighted with the partnership that exists between the universities, which covers one of Ethiopia’s key priorities - health - but also other areas. The long-established Medical link between the University of Leicester and Gondar goes back more than 13 years, over which time over 100 reciprocal visits have taken place. Since 2004, there has also been a partnership between the University of Leicester and the new Gondar University.

The Medical link has had many notable successes which include the establishment of a Masters programme in Public Health in Gondar, the creation of a joint textbook of paediatrics, including a section on international child health, successful research projects leading to peer review publications and the establishment of an undergraduate course in community-based physiotherapy and rehabilitation in Gondar. In addition, Leicester has offered professional support for nursing staff, technical staff and library staff.

Pennies from Heaven Scheme Launched at UHL NHS Trust

The University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust have signed up to a payroll giving scheme for staff called Pennies From Heaven. Quite simply, staff’s Net Pay (take home pay) on each payslip would be rounded down to the nearest pound with the spare pennies donated to charity.

Health Action Leicester for Ethiopia (HALE) initially has been chosen to benefit from these donations, which is run by a panel of health professionals from Leicestershire and which includes staff from the UHL hospitals.

HALE’s next project is to completely refurbish the children’s ward at The Gondar Hospital, where there is only one working sink between the 40 plus children that are treated at any one time. It’s estimated that the team will need at least £25,000 to make this happen.

If you are a UHL member of staff and would like to help by donating your pennies each payday, please visit the InSite pages to sign up http://insite.uhl.nhs.uk/penniesfromheaven or call 0116 252 5321.
**GENIE CETL and University of Leicester help to develop research capacity in Ethiopia**

A party of academics from the University of Leicester has travelled to Gondar University in Ethiopia on a trip organized by the GENIE Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). The visit formed part of an innovative PhD programme designed to develop a sustainable research capacity in Gondar.

Three members of staff from Gondar are registered as PhD students at the University of Leicester. After three months at Leicester in late 2008 they returned to Ethiopia to continue their research under the joint supervision of senior academics from the University of Leicester and Ethiopian universities. This visit allowed the UK supervisors to see the progress of the work in Ethiopia, to improve their understanding of the local setting for the research, and to meet their Ethiopian counterparts in Gondar and their home institutions. The development of sustainable research into topics of local interest, supported by collaboration between UK and Ethiopian academics, will allow the participants to become research leaders within their disciplines in Ethiopia.

In addition to work with the students, the party looked around local agricultural sites and visited hospital and health facilities connected with two of the projects. The end of the visit was marked by an open meeting, hosted by Professor Teferra Abula of the University of Gondar, at which the students presented summaries of the work to an audience of staff and students.

Written by Dr Mark Goodwin

**Nursing Developments**

A partnership in Nursing has been running almost from the start. For the first few years the emphasis was on paediatrics, and in particular resuscitation training. Most of this training was led by Dr Elaine Carter and Sandra Kemp who modified a UK advanced life support course and taught both Doctors and Nurses together. Successful candidates received a certificate and a book.

There have been many visits in both directions to train nurses in a wide range of subjects but more recently the emphasis has been on training nurses locally and in other suitable places in Ethiopia. Nurses from Leicester continue to visit Gondar and give training as requested both in the School of Nursing and the School of Midwifery and on the wards.

Recently it became apparent that little attention had been taken to Nursing Leadership Matrons, Head Nurses and Head of Nursing / Midwifery were given the opportunity to participate in a tailor-made programme. This took the form of visits to other well respected hospitals, both in Wolisso and Addis Ababa with the expectation that the nurses would return to Gondar and make changes leading to improvements to their individual areas. Currently, with the help of De Montfort University an MSc programme in Advanced Clinical Practice is being developed and further nurse training will be needed as the WHO African Partnerships for Patient Safety project is developed (see below).

If any further information on the nursing link is required please contact sandrakemp@btinternet.com or claire.agnew@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Written by Sandra Kemp
Clinical Staff Development in Gondar
An MSc Programme in Advance Clinical and Laboratory Practice

The National Health Service in the UK has for many years ensured that its health professionals keep up to date by means of closely regulated Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programmes. Evidence of continued learning is necessary in order to renew professional registration, and with it the right to practice. In contrast, the only CPD available to health professionals in Ethiopia has been provided by HIV-related funded schemes, and attendance has been voluntary.

Responding to requests from staff and management in Gondar, and encouraged by the Ministries for Education and Health in Ethiopia, the Link is working towards an integrated set of Masters Degree programmes in Advanced Clinical and Laboratory Practice. This will be loosely based around the very successful Masters Degree in Public Health, which was created some six years ago by a joint Leicester-Gondar Link initiative. It will offer clinical laboratory staff as well as health professionals in the fields of physiotherapy, nursing, obstetrics, anaesthetics and pharmacy, the opportunity to work towards a Masters degree based very heavily on practical rather than theoretical aspects of their disciplines.

This scheme has many advantages. Not only will it provide much-needed professional development for individuals, but it will also give them a higher degree. At the same time, because it is a part-time modular programme over 2 years, it will introduce into clinical practice in Gondar the knowledge and skills gained during the programme. By encouraging health professionals to teach as well as to learn, it will break down the barriers which have developed in Gondar between those who teach and those who practice. Everyone gains!

The Link has applied for funding for this project by the end of November, through a new scheme which has just been announced by the British Council. The main partners in the scheme, as well as Gondar University and the Leicester members of the Link, will be: De Montfort University, Jimma University, Ethiopia (for the Laboratory Practice degree) and others. Wish us Luck!

Written by Professor Mike Silverman

Gondar Children’s Ward Update

When the Link first began in 1997, we made friends with 12 children who had been orphaned or abandoned lived on the Children’s Ward. They had been admitted with acute illnesses, (5 had diabetes), and although recovered, they had no family to return to. In 1999, the Link was able to arrange their sponsorship under the Kindu Trust. This enabled them to move into a house or to live with a family and to attend school regularly. 10 years later, 2 of the children have sadly died of illness, but the remaining 10 are doing well. One is studying agriculture at university, 2 are studying nursing, one is a self-employed tailor, and others are about to enter higher education.

The ward has now acquired a further 17 abandoned children. The Link is again helping them find homes via the Kindu Trust, and sponsors from among Leicester Hospital and University staff.

If you would like to consider being a sponsor for one of these children, please contact Nichole Bruce, Tel 0116 2525321 email nb50@le.ac.uk for more information without any commitment at this stage.

Written by Dr Elaine Carter

President’s Office, University of Gondar, Ethiopia.

Some graduates of the extremely successful Link collaborative project—the Masters in Public Health which is now fully self-sustaining.

Dr Elaine Carter, Consultant Paediatrician LRI with 2 Children from of the original abandoned Children.
The Leicester-Gondar PhD programme

The Leicester-Gondar PhD programme is designed to develop a sustainable research capacity at Gondar University and promote collaborative research involving the University of Leicester, Gondar University and other universities in Ethiopia.

The PhD programme - supported by the GENIE CETL, the University of Leicester and Gondar University - evolved from a long-standing link between health professionals in Leicester and Gondar established by Professor Mike Silverman. Three members of staff from Gondar are currently registered as PhD students at the University of Leicester. They spend three months every year at Leicester and then return to Ethiopia to continue their research under the joint supervision of academics from the University of Leicester and academics from Ethiopian universities. The topics include the genetics of important agricultural crops, drug-resistant tuberculosis and aspects of maternal health.

It is hoped that the development of sustainable research into topics of local interest, supported by collaboration between UK and Ethiopian institutions, will allow the participants to become research leaders in their disciplines in Ethiopia. If you would like to know more about the PhD programme, please contact Dr Mark Goodwin in the GENIE CETL (telephone 0116 252 3489, email majg1@le.ac.uk) or visit the GENIE website at http://www.le.ac.uk/genetics/genie/

Written by
Dr Mark Goodwin

Clinical Audit in Gondar 2004-2009

Clinical audit is the way health professionals measure their performance and effectiveness, to be sure patients get exactly the right treatment. It checks patients receive the best care possible. It is a relatively new initiative in Africa. The Leicester-Gondar Link has set up audit in Gondar hospital over the past 5 years, with considerable success.

Audit has been carried out in many clinical areas, on a wide range of topics including: vaccination status of children admitted to the ward; management of common childhood illnesses including pneumonia, malaria and diarrhoea; management of malaria in adults; laboratory diagnosis of malaria; infection control; admissions and discharge; patient satisfaction; documentation, and many more. All departments have taken part, and a variety of health professionals have been involved. Good practice has been recorded in many instances, while areas for improvement have been identified. This has caused change for the better to take place, for example changing the type of stain used for malaria staining to improve diagnostic quality, and vaccinating children opportunistically on discharge from the ward.

There is a proper audit structure, with the Dean at the head, and a clerk, who have been trained in necessary computer skills. Our results have been published in the Ethiopian Medical Journal, (1).

The next exciting step is to hold a workshop in Gondar, in February, 2010, to invite doctors and nurses from the other 5 major Ethiopian hospitals, to spread the idea of audit to the rest of the country.


Written by
Dr Elaine Carter

One of the Leicester-Gondar PhD students, Worku Negash (right), at a seedling nursery that forms part of his research into the genetics of Ethiopian varieties of flax.

Mistir, Clinical Audit Clerk, Gondar University Hospital, Ethiopia
The Gonjo (Amharic = beautiful) Experience of Gondar

Our previous ideas of poverty and developing countries made us feel sceptical about travelling to Gondar, Ethiopia. However, we chose to spend 4 weeks there during summer 2009 where our encounters revealed a face of beauty behind the poverty. Being 2,300 meters above sea level, below the foothills of Simien Mountains, the picturesque scenery and ancient castles were sensational. We found Ethiopians very friendly - whether you were on a minibus or on top of a mountain, someone would want to converse with you, and their love for coffee was contagious. Being regular customers of a local coffee shop, we met a variety of people. We were lucky enough to meet a radio broadcaster who invited us to his studio to talk about our experiences on his radio show.

We spent the majority of our time attached to the surgical and paediatric departments at Gondar Hospital. Assisting in minor surgery was particularly memorable - large defects, such as 10cm diameter hydrocoele, were operated under local anaesthetic. We were particularly privileged to conduct Gondar’s first patient satisfaction audit with the help of the audit clerk, Mistir. As many staff are still unaware of clinical audit, we felt that our project was useful, promoting awareness both in the audit process and patient centred care.

During our time in Gondar, we were amazed to see children happily playing with just a rock outside their mud homes and patients thanking their doctors, without moaning, after waiting 6-8 hours for a 10 minute procedure. With the erratic water and electric supply, we learnt to realise that showering in collected rain water was, in fact, a luxury. Ethiopians are so grateful and happy with simple things in life which, definitely, made us learn to appreciate our lives in England. Learning in theory about developing countries is never the same as a personal experience. We fell in love with Ethiopia and would recommend anyone to go there for an elective, volunteering or even just a holiday.

A comment from an Ethiopian journalist: “you have created a link with people with your heart, you make your history from Gondar... and you can make another history in Gondar in your lifetime”

Written by Conrad Lee (5th year) and Melinda Hau (4th year) Leicester Medical students

Ethiopian Benchmarking Group Visit Leicester University

During the last two weeks of June the University of Leicester played host to an Ethiopian Ministry of Education funded visit of 16 Ethiopian academics, representing 6 of the Ethiopian Universities.

The Higher Education institutions within Ethiopia are undertaking Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and part of this process involves evaluating a UK University in order to benchmark standards.

The Group were welcomed to the University by both the Vice Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess and Registrar Dave Hall and visited vast array of academic and central service departments, looking at: research, the student experience as well as teaching and learning.

A small group of the 16 were primarily looking at clinical teaching, research and medical services and they were hosted by the University Hospitals of Leicester Trust (UHL) and the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

During this time the Group also visited Nottingham University to get a brief view of an alternative UK university.

The feedback from the group since their return to Ethiopia is that the exercise was extremely useful and valuable and the implementation stage of the process has begun.

Members of the Ethiopian Benchmarking Group during a campus tour given by Paul Goffin, Director of Estates and accompanied by Nichole Bruce Leicester-Gondar Link Administrator.
“Phones for Africa” Launched at University of Leicester

On Monday 12th October during the University’s “Little Green Week” the “Phones for Africa” scheme was launched at the University of Leicester. This scheme is being run with the help of the Leicester University Student’s Union. Collecting receptacles have been placed around the University Campus. It’s also possible to simply place the unwanted phones in recycled envelopes and into the internal mail.

Please help us by collecting together old working or non-working mobile phones from friends, family and colleagues to help us achieve success with this scheme.

Look out for our bins identified with the label below:

Phones can also be sent in the internal mail:
Post to: “Phones for Africa” C/O LUSU, Percy Gee Building, University of Leicester.

WHO Project: African Partnerships for Patient Safety (APPS)

This is a World Health Organisation Patient Safety Initiative and forms part of the UK Department of Health and DFID global health agenda. The Department of Health provides the core funding and the UK National Patient Safety Agency is acting as Co-ordinator.

Three England-Africa Health Links have been selected to participate in the first wave. This follows a proposal submitted by Sandra Kemp in January 2009. One of the reasons we were successful is because of the well established partnership between Leicester and Gondar. The project will last for 2 years. Further hospitals in the UK and Africa will be recruited during 2010-2013.

Dr Gashaw, Hospital Director, Gondar is leading the Gondar team and Sandra Kemp leads the team in Leicester.

The project started with a workshop in Geneva in May followed by a lot of work being done in Gondar and Leicester. This culminated in a workshop in Uganda in October, where the University Hospitals of Leicester and the University Hospital of Gondar agreed a plan of working together over the next 2 years. This plan will involve bi directional visits working on projects such as Healthcare associated infections; Safe Surgery; Waste Management and Health Worker protection. An African Partnerships for Patient Safety Advisory Board has been established in Leicester and meets every 2-3 months.

For further information please see contacts below.

Written by: Sandra Kemp

Contact Us:

Nichole Bruce
Leicester Based Administrator
E-mail: nb50@le.ac.uk
Website: www.le.ac.uk/gondar
If you would like to join our email circulation list and receive regular updates from the Leicester-Gondar Link, please email nb50@le.ac.uk if you are in the UK or solomonazezo@gmail.com if you are based in Ethiopia.

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