



RECONSTRUCTING LIVES. REBUILDING FUTURES.

WELCOME TO OUR SECOND BULLETIN!



BFIRST is a new charity, founded in late 2013 and launched in 2014.

I am delighted and proud to say that the charity BFIRST was launched at the Royal College of Surgeons in November 2014.

Reconstructive plastic surgery can change lives around the world.

I am delighted to tell you that BFIRST has already begun to release some of the world's most vulnerable children in need and adults from a state of poverty caused by deformity or disability.

We send expert surgeons to countries where they are urgently needed, delivering specialist training so that local surgeons can perform reconstructive plastic surgery.

And I am proud because, having been involved in similar work for many years, establishing the charity was a long term ambition. I would like to thank

everyone who shared this vision, and turned it into reality, particularly BAPRAS.

With your help, BFIRST will bring together the excellent work of lots of individuals and turns it into a coherent and strategic organisation capable of embedding real change. **Please support our work.**

In this bulletin you will find out more about:

- **why we were set up**
.....
- **what we are currently doing**
.....
- **how you can support us**

Barbara Jemec

Barbara Jemec,
Founding Chair
May 2015



BFIRST

BRITISH FOUNDATION FOR
INTERNATIONAL RECONSTRUCTIVE
SURGERY AND TRAINING



BFIRST LAUNCHES AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Over 100 invited guests attended our official launch in the prestigious surroundings of the Royal College of Surgeons, in London on Wednesday, 26 November 2014.

Our founding Chair, and consultant plastic surgeon, Barbara Jemec, opened proceedings with an inspiring talk.

“British plastic surgeons have a long successful history of training doctors abroad and the long-term vision of BFIRST is to have every UK plastic surgical unit involved and twinned with a unit in a resource poor country.”

This was followed by talks from Wee Lam and Tim Goodacre, both consultant plastic surgeons. Wee

recounted his experience training local plastic surgeons in Cambodia, and Tim spoke about how to get involved and support BFIRST.

We were delighted that Lord Ribeiro, BFIRST’s patron, gave the closing remarks, before guests were invited to a drinks reception in the Hunterian Museum.

“British plastic surgeons have a long successful history of training doctors abroad and the long-term vision of BFIRST is to have every UK plastic surgical unit involved and twinned with a unit in a resource poor country.”

THANKS TO BAPRAS



The launch of BFIRST would not have been possible without the support of the parent Association for appropriately trained and accredited Consultants, BAPRAS.

BAPRAS is our largest and founding donor. By working closely with the Association and its members, we can draw on the diverse skills and experience of its membership, providing an excellent source of contacts and advice, as well as a pool of consultants who can train overseas on our behalf.

But why are we doing this? And how?

You know the saying "give a man a fish, you will feed him for a day, but if you teach him how to fish you will feed him for a lifetime"?

Well, the same applies to reconstructive surgery training. We want to train enough surgeons in poor countries to an independent level, so they can train their own. Our aim is to develop enough local capacity for reconstructive surgery in countries where such provision is largely unknown.

Having a physical deformity can make all the difference between being accepted in a community and being ostracised and reduced to begging.

BFIRST can make a difference.

We can help to develop expertise in reconstructive surgery, so it is provided by local doctors, local nurses and local therapists, independent of visiting teams from other countries.

Reconstructive surgery restores both form and function: and this is why it matters.

- If a young girl's cleft lip and palate is not repaired, she will not be able to eat or speak properly.
- Burns affect 11 million people a year worldwide, but almost all fatal burns in the world occur in low- or middle-income countries. We can save many of these lives.

And if a burns victim survives, he may be left with lifelong disabilities and disfigurements, with all the resulting stigma and rejection. We can restore form and function, and we can also teach local doctors to do it in future.

How can we do this?

We can do this through sustained and targeted training. It takes seven years to train a plastic surgeon in the UK full time. And it will take around 10 years to train a group of reconstructive surgeons abroad. It will need repeated visits by volunteer surgeons, nurses and therapists from the UK. It will need hands-on training. It will need work-shops.

It is a big undertaking. It is a long term commitment to do it right. But it isn't forever. That's the point. It is a sustained but finite process to train local staff.

In the longer term, thanks to the work of BFIRST, local reconstructive surgeons will be able to save and to transform lives.

BFIRST news from the field

Introducing Dr Ekanayake, one of the BFIRST fellows visiting the UK this autumn

- Dr Ekanayake will be coming from Sri Lanka, where he chairs the disaster management committee in the Kurunegala District



- We have agreed a curriculum for training on burns surgery in Bangladesh
- We have drafted one burn surgeon and two hand surgeons from Bangladesh
- We have begun filming reconstructive surgery operations in Cambodia to use for training, partly narrated in their local language
- We are writing a training curriculum focusing on vascular malformation for Bangladesh
- Wee Lam's work in Cambodia was recently featured in an article in the Scottish press

FUNDRAISING - A BIG THANK YOU...

- Thank you to those who have signed up to raise money for BFIRST at the Edinburgh marathon on 31 May. Visit: edinburgh-marathon.com
- Thank you to artist/designer Camilla Jay Stewart, who is donating 10% of her income from the sale of her fantastic glassware to BFIRST – visit: opal-fire.com
- Thank you to everyone who has donated so far. We really appreciate your support. Details on how to support BFIRST can be found overleaf.



Gregg O'Toole was supported by BFIRST to work in Cambodia. Here is an excerpt from his piece about the Children's Surgical Centre in Phnom Penh



The waiting area was filled with patients and relatives long before the clinic opened on Monday morning.

Some had been brought from remote rural communities by charities, others had travelled long and arduous journeys with family members, but all would be seen and a treatment plan determined.

One by one the patients were presented to the assembled doctors. There were patients with life threatening conditions that could be treated. The operating room, where four procedures are performed side by side, was busy by 9am sharp and there the local surgeons and volunteers from abroad would remain until dusk.

The enormity of the workload before us allowed little opportunity to reflect on things and I was pleased to be able to start helping in some small way. First for a lady who had suffered severe hand trauma and lost her thumb, then for an old man who had presented with a cancer invading into the sternum.

The third case was of a young man who had sustained a severe burn to both arms as a result of a huge electric shock. Excising this tissue saved his life. His paralysed hands could be treated later.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT US?

We are so grateful to everyone who has supported our activity. Will you help us to rebuild the futures of more vulnerable people around the world?

If you would like to support us, or for more information, please visit our website or contact us:



DONATE

www.bfirst.org.uk



@BFIRSTtraining



Helen Roberts or Shreena Dholakia
BFIRST

c/o BAPRAS: 020 7831 5161

Email: info@bfirst.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1154315