

A note from our Chief Executive...



THE combined effects of surging food prices and global economic recession could set the fight against poverty in the poorest developing countries back

by many years. This disaster makes it all the more important to do all we possibly can to help strengthen basic health services that are accessible to the poor.

There is never a simple, linear upward path of progress, especially in the development of the poorest countries. But the growth of the Links movement in recent years is surely irreversible and is a proper source of hope. There were only a handful of Links a few years ago, and they were barely mentioned in the Department of Health "toolkit" for health sector involvement in international development in 2003. Now there are at least 100, and the revised DH Framework will certainly feature them strongly (THET is part of the team contracted to lead its revision).

THET is proud to be the voice of the Links movement, seeking to represent and encourage all those who wish to get involved via Links in playing their part in strengthening health services and sharing skills, in solidarity with their colleagues in developing countries.

There are plenty of good practice lessons to be learned, but in the end this is not a technocratic exercise. It's a movement of people who believe in the benefits of true partnership and the possibility of a better life. Long may it flourish!

Andrew Purkis,
Chief Executive, THET

Tales from the frontline...

IN each edition of the newsletter we highlight the work of one Link making a real difference to the communities with which it works.

St Mary's Hospital, Isle of Wight – Juba Teaching Hospital Link

AFTER twenty three years of civil war, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 created a window of opportunity for Southern Sudan but the infrastructure, including healthcare, has been completely devastated.

The St Mary's Hospital-Juba Teaching Hospital (JTH) Link was set up in November 2007 by senior healthcare professionals at St Mary's Hospital on the Isle of Wight with the specific aim of supporting South Sudanese healthcare professionals to develop their skills. The key activity is to arrange for experienced trainers to go to Juba in order to undertake intensive training and provide continuing professional development, thereby building capacity and developing self-sufficiency.

A fact-finding visit in March 2008 identified skills shortages as the most important deficiency in Southern Sudan. Subsequently, the main programme started with a visit in October 2008 by a midwife, a surgeon, a psychiatrist and an educationalist. Among many educational activities undertaken during this visit was a three day workshop for hospital midwives, a week long course on applied physiology for doctors in training, a week long course in basic trauma management and an in-depth review of mental health care.



Visiting team October 2008 with their hosts

"The healthcare situation in Southern Sudan is dire and your support will help to make a very important contribution at this critical time."

Baroness Cox
(Patron of the Link)

Two Southampton medical students and two Wessex FY2 Doctors, working under the auspices of the Link, spent four months at the Juba Teaching hospital on clinical attachments.

The next team of senior trainers consists of two nurses, a physician and an anaesthetist who fly out to Juba for a three week training visit in March 2009.

In terms of the future, the Link is actively fundraising to send up to twenty senior trainers per year and also hopes to build a small bungalow in the grounds of Juba Teaching Hospital where trainers can stay. Accommodation is scarce and very expensive in Juba. Furthermore, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (Government of Southern Sudan), it is working to facilitate the reopening of the Nursing and Midwifery Schools in Juba which were closed during the civil war. The Link is also providing educational support to the senior doctors in their quest to develop a structured postgraduate medical training programme in Southern Sudan.

The Link is fully supported by the Ministry of Health (Government of Southern Sudan) and works closely with the Link team from Juba Teaching Hospital. Visit their website at www.iow.nhs.uk/juba

Links Case Study Competition Winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Dundee Medical School and Kamuzu Central Hospital, Malawi, who won **1st place** in our recent Links Case Study competition for their *Enhanced Electives in Developing Countries* entry. Their prize of £1,500 will go towards a two week study visit by their supervisor in Malawi to Dundee.

The judges were impressed with the ambition shown in developing the partnership. They felt that the students were learning a lot from the partnership and that a more strategic approach to electives could enhance learning for both partners.

THE **2nd place** £1,000 prize has been awarded to School of Medicine, Swansea and The College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria for

their *The Ibadan-Swansea Partnership (ISP): A Partnership in Global Health Education* entry.

THE **3rd place** £500 prize has been awarded to Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals and University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia, for their *The HIV Nurse Education Project – Nurses are part of the solution* entry.

Thank you to Baroness Lindsay Northover, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on International Development in the House of Lords and THET Trustee; Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor for the Independent Newspaper; and Dr Tony Jewell, Chief Medical Officer for Wales for judging the LINKS Case study competition.

An extract from the winning entry can be read below

Medicine in Malawi – Enhanced Electives in Developing Countries...

MEDICAL student electives are a memorable learning experience and approximately 40% are spent in a developing country. With around 8,000 students a year from the UK alone participating in medical electives this equates with 500 years of student time annually. Students often have laudable motivation but are rarely helped to learn or contribute most effectively whilst away.

We have sought to create an ethical trade elective experience specifically to challenge the existing 'health tourism' norm. Academic publication is pending and we are now seeking publicity for the concept to encourage dissemination. Start up funding from the Scottish Government International Development Fund and NHS Education for Scotland has been secured along with support from Dundee Medical School.

The aim is to provide an exceptional learning opportunity for students but, crucially, also clear benefits for their Malawian counterparts and host hospital. Overall the approach aims to be sustainable as a form of 'educational trade'. Hence:

- Student contribution to patient care is improved by arranging extended placements, throughout the year, based in one clinical area.
- Learning and supervision is coordinated by a senior clinical tutor for both elective and local health care students together.
- Practical support with educational resources and medical equipment is provided by project/student fundraising.

To establish a sustainable trade we must prove there is sufficient educational benefit to persuade those funding medical education that resources should follow students to centres overseas which demonstrate an enthusiasm and ability to provide excellent clinical education for UK students. To make a significant difference this process requires publicity. There is a clear demand from UK students for more 'ethical electives'. An alternative model may well help this process.

To read the full story and other entries submitted, keep an eye out for a compilation of stories at www.thet.org.uk.

Ethiopia Links Meeting, March 2009

ON 12th and 13th March THET held our first meeting of UK and Ethiopia Links partners in Ethiopia. The event, held near Addis Ababa, included around 30 people representing all of the well-established Links as well as some more recently formed Links. Starting by presenting the background, key achievements, and lessons learned by each Link, the first day provided an opportunity for much productive discussion and the sharing of experiences of maximising the successes and overcoming the challenges commonly faced by Ethiopian Links. On the second day working groups focused on the main issues raised by the Links – how to improve communication; how to ensure a Link is not reliant on individuals; and how to identify priorities. Methods of fundraising were shared and the elements of a successful funding proposal were discussed. By the end of the meeting plans for the future had been proposed, relationships between partners had evolved, and new friendships had been formed.

The difference a doctor can make

THE Kings College Hospital/THET – Somaliland Link helped the first ever medical students in Somaliland to graduate in 2007. These doctors, with support from DFID, are now working as interns in the public hospitals, delivering life-saving care to the people of Somaliland as captured by the following story.

A nine month old boy arrived at Hargeisa Group Hospital in a coma. His parents were frantic having taken him to two separate clinics, where the prescribed treatments had not led to any visible improvement. Arriving at the hospital, the child showed signs of pneumonia, septicaemia and severe dehydration. The newly qualified medical students, working as Interns on the paediatric ward, admitted and examined him. The initial investigations revealed that, in addition to the problems listed above, the child was in renal failure and hours away from death.

A swift and accurate diagnosis was made and immediate treatment was started with intravenous fluid replacement, oxygen and a dopamine infusion. Appropriate intravenous broad spectrum antibiotics were given, and within 24 hours the child had regained consciousness. He went on to make a rapid and full recovery. His parents were extremely grateful to the interns for saving the life of their youngest child and only son and in the weeks that followed, they visited the interns several times to express their heartfelt thanks.

Seedcorn Funding

Winners of the 2008 Awards

FOR the past three years THET has awarded Seedcorn grants of up to £3,000 each to help fledging Health Links develop their activities. The following lists the 2008 competition winners.

Name of link	Where they're working	Country	What they're working on
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Hospitals Trust	Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Care Centre	Gambia	Ophthalmology
Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust	Queen Elizabeth 11 Hospital	Lesotho	Educational and Clinical training
NHS Highland and University of Stirling	Regional Hospital, Upper West Region	Ghana	Building healthcare capacity
Leicester Partnerships Trust	Father Muller Charitable Institutions	India	Learning Disability
Powys Local Health Board	Molo District Hospital and District Community Health Service	Kenya	Improving access to quality healthcare
Royal Liverpool University Hospital	Malawi College of Medicine	Malawi	Endoscopy training
Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	Mnazi Mmoja Hospital	Zanzibar	Mental Health



Dates for your diary

● THET / Royal College of Nursing Conference

Friday 17th July, RCN Head Office, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

● Local Leadership: a national service

The NHS Confederation's annual conference and exhibition 2009

Wednesday 10th –Friday 12th June, ACC, Liverpool

● Working Overseas, Changing Lives: Are you ready for the challenge?

A study day for nurses and midwives interested in international work organised by the Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives, Medecins Sans Frontieres and Voluntary Service Overseas.

Friday 25th September, RCN Head Office, London

Spotlight on BUILD by Dr Nick Maurice

BUILD is a coalition of 47 international agencies, of which THET is a vital member, committed to the development of twinning partnerships between towns, schools, health care institutions, faith groups, local authorities, ethnic minority, social, sporting and cultural groups in the UK with counterparts in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Latin America in particular. Lessons are there to be shared across these boundaries.

BUILD sees these partnerships at community level as in everybody's mutual interest for peace, prosperity and justice. True partnership is not about the transfer of resources from the "rich" North to the "poor" South but about recognising the value and the contribution that all can make to enriching the lives of others. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said at a meeting with BUILD members last June "Humans can be human only by learning from other humans. I need you to be all that you can be in order for me to be all that I can be". THET's partnerships help to meet the health needs of people in developing countries and build the capacity of



Dr Nick Maurice, Director, BUILD

'True partnership is not about the transfer of resources from the "rich" North to the "poor" South but about recognising the value and the contribution that all can make to enriching the lives of others.'

their institutions, but they also recognise the important contribution that people in those countries can make to the personal and professional development of health care workers in the UK. It's win/win. We have been able to work with THET to bring this agenda to Government through our all-party parliamentary group "Connecting Communities" and through meetings with key Government Ministers.

The present Government's keen commitment to health partnerships is largely due to the advocacy work of THET. North / South linking is not without its challenges and is not an 'easy ride' but with the support of organisations such as THET and by bringing involvement of the wider community into the partnership they can be hugely enriching and great fun! Let's continue to work together.

THET's 20th Anniversary Celebrations at the House of Lords

ON Thursday 11th December 2008, THET was proud to host a reception at the House of Lords to mark its first 20 years. 200 guests gathered to celebrate the work that has been done with our partners and supporters to support Health Links over this time. Professor Tony Wilson spoke about his experiences of working at Mbarara University, Uganda, and a variety of Links put on displays of their projects and programmes in the UK and abroad. The reception, hosted by THET Trustee Baroness Northover, brought together THET supporters new and old, government officials, health professionals, overseas visitors and many more. THET believes that the work to strengthen the healthcare systems of developing countries is as vital now as ever before, and would like to thank all of our friends and collaborators for their ongoing support as we commit ourselves to continuing our efforts in the years to come.



Guests at the 20th Anniversary reception

Latest news from Phi: Kenya Partnership visit and training workshop

PARTNERSHIPS in Health Information (Phi), is a UK based charity that works closely with THET. It enables improved access to health information in various ways; especially through facilitating and supporting partnerships between health libraries in the UK and their counterparts in developing countries. These partnerships work to support librarians and information workers to develop health information services in public, hospital and university settings that increase the flow of timely, reliable and appropriate health information.



Students participating in one of the workshops

In November 2008 Emma Farrow from Phi and Pam White from the Kenya Partnership Development Group visited Kenya as part of the Kenya Health Information Partnership between a consortium of libraries from across the South West Strategic Health Authority and the Kenyan Chapter of the Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa (Ken-AHILA).

During the week long visit Emma and Pam met Mr Alfred Mogere, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Medical Services, and visited six libraries in both rural and urban locations. They also facilitated a two-day workshop for over 20 participants invited from Ken-AHILA and from the wider health information network in Kenya on the topic of Building Information Literacy Skills and Competencies of Health Information Professionals in the Electronic Era. Participants were introduced to concepts of evidence based medicine, website evaluation, quality health information resources, marketing library resources and services, and website design.

Newly released!

Latest publications from THET...

■ The second edition of the THET Links Manual

ARE you seeking advice on how to determine the objectives of your Link? Perhaps you need some ideas for scaling up your work? The THET Links Manual provides practical guidance for Links at all stages, whether just starting out or firmly established. Aimed at both UK and overseas partners it is a vital resource for any who want to ensure that their link will make a difference.

"An invaluable resource... comprehensive, yet user friendly manual"

Sally Venn, Lead for International Health, National Public Health Service for Wales, UK

"A vital piece of reading for all those engaged in Links"

Morag Reynolds, Public Health Development Lead for Primary Care/Health Links Co-ordinator, Sefton PCT, UK

■ What difference are we making?

THIS new **M&E toolkit** complements the Links Manual and helps you to understand how you can assess if the Link is achieving what it set out to do.

"A valuable resource...ensuring that Links are effective and meet the needs of those involved"

Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, England

Make sure that both you and your Link partners have access to both these resources and read them.

Hardcopies are available from www.cpibookdelivery.com and pdf versions can be downloaded from www.thet.org.uk

■ Technical Assistance

ON 18th March, at a seminar in the House of Lords, THET, together with the Development Studies Association, launched a new report on Technical Assistance, investigating current debate about the topic and looking at how it is relevant to the work of THET and Health Links. The report begins with a handy overview of the history of TA, followed by 11 brief sections that cover key issues in current TA discussion. Researched and written by former THET intern, Brede Eschliman, the Report is now available to download from our website at www.thet.org.uk

■ Taking photographs for Links

NOW available on our website! THET volunteer Harriet Jones looks at some of the some of the ethical considerations that need to be addressed when planning to take photographs of your Links programmes. THET welcomes comments on these guidelines from Links in the light of their own experiences of taking photographs of their work.