

# Newsletter



*“Congratulations once again on a fabulous project! When completed, this will be such a wonderful addition to the city and to the entire country”*

*The words of then International 1st Vice President Lion Bob Corlew in an email to PID Lion Howard Lee after a recent visit to the Lions International Eye Centre, Korle Bu, Ghana.*



## We are almost there!

### But we need your help one more time!

MD105 is now just £30,000 short of our goal to complete the MD's Funding commitment. With your help, we can accomplish the first phase of this wonderful project – to provide the building and equipment in which to create a centre of excellence in the provision of eye care services and ophthalmological surgical training. Once we have done this, we can start the training in earnest, and bring real relief to those suffering from potentially blinding conditions across the whole of the West Africa region.

### Please give generously!

Donations to MD Charities Treasurer Tom Berry.  
27 Pritchard Drive, Hawkinge, CT18 7QH  
(01303 892064)

## Lions International Eye Centre, Korle Bu



## Training ophthalmologists for the West Africa region





# Progress at last!

The Korle Bu Department of Ophthalmology has now moved most of its activities into the LIONS INTERNATIONAL EYE CENTRE, and a recent visit by personnel from Moorfields has confirmed that already there is a significant improvement in volume and quality of sight services offered.

Already, up to 200 patients per day are being seen in the new unit, and many more will be treated once the facility is fully operational.

As always with a building of this size and complexity, there is a "snagging schedule" to bring all areas up to full standard, and work on this schedule is progressing well.

We cannot start the ophthalmological specialist surgical training courses until the operating theatres are fully functional, which should be later this year. From then on, we will run regular courses in various sub-specialities, building up to the training of 32 ophthalmologists per year.

## Our Aims

West Africa has a high incidence of eye disease: but, whilst in UK we have one ophthalmologist for 40,000 people, in Ghana there is one ophthalmologist for around one million people. So the most important part of our project is to provide training for ophthalmologists from all over West Africa. This will vastly improve both the quality and the quantity of eye services throughout the region.

In order to retain ophthalmologists in West Africa, Ian Murdoch (senior ophthalmologist at Moorfields, and research fellow at the Institute of Ophthalmology) has developed a modular training system. Two-week courses will be run in different sub-specialities over a number of years. Each student must attend one course, then go home and use the new skills for a period of up to a year, making full reports, before being certified in that skill by the West Africa College of Surgeons. Then they can attend another course in another skill, and so on. In this way, it will take each one quite some time to become fully qualified, during which time they are serving the West Africa region.

And to do this we are developing new, state-of-the-art training techniques using smart 'phones. The students do their theoretical training online before coming to Korle Bu for the practical work, which is then done via smart 'phones. The student and a supervisor work in Korle Bu, and the specialist trainer sits in London, New York or where-ever, but is able to see via smart phone exactly what the student is doing, and gives advice/instruction as appropriate.

## Time to Celebrate

Plans for an official opening ceremony are in hand, pending certainty over the snagging schedule. It is intended to invite many dignitaries, particularly those who have been helpful in bringing the project to fruition, including the President of Ghana, His Excellency Mr John Mahama, and the Chairman of LCIF.

## The Future

In a few months' time, the Lions International Eye Centre will be fully operational, and just inside the entrance is a "donor wall" thanking all the major donors to the project. This wall is headed with a message of thanks from Moorfields, LCIF and Lions of MD105, with the logos of all three organisations in prominent display. This is a fitting accolade to our position in bringing about this wonderful project.

The Lions members of the Board of Trustees of Moorfields Lions Korle Bu Trust, PID Howard Lee (Chairman), PCC Chris Iles and PDG Max Mongia, will continue to play an active part in the governance of the Centre, and represent the interests of LCIF and MD105 therein. The Council of Governors has set up a steering committee to enable a wider consultation on the interests of MD105, and to head up the specific aspects which MD105 wishes to address.

In the words of Dr Stephen Akafo, past head of the Ophthalmology Department at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Accra, Ghana, who explained a few years ago, "People are needlessly going blind in Ghana and across West Africa because there are not enough eye specialists who are able to perform safe and sight-restoring operations when needed, and the facilities and expertise are not available here to address complex problems. Currently there are no real opportunities to develop skills through continuing medical education or training in specific aspects of eye care here in West Africa."

**We can be hugely proud that our project will very soon start making huge headway in addressing these shortcomings, and in improving eye care facilities for the whole of the West Africa region.**