

BO CHILDRENS HOSPITAL FOUNDATION REPORT ON VISIT JANUARY 2017

The Bo Children's Hospital (BCH) in Bo, Sierra Leone is the dream of Dr Nuli Lemoh, a Sydney Paediatrician born in Bo and who qualified as an international student in Sydney and the UK. Dr Lemoh practiced in Sierra Leone but moved to Sydney as a consequence of the civil war. Nuli wanted to support his home town of Bo as there was no specialist children's hospital there. The only children's hospital is in Freetown the capital, 300km (4 hours) away. The death rate of children under 5 in Sierra Leone is 165 per 1000 children. The Bo Children's Hospital since its inception in June 2012 has successfully treated over 18,000 children with a death rate of 5 per 1000 children. The main diseases treated at the hospital are Malaria, Typhoid, Anaemia and malnutrition.

The hospital could not have been achieved without the wonderful support of Rotary Clubs in Sydney, the UK, and Bo, The Sydney University International House Alumni Association, along with many private donors, schools and churches.



Bo Children's Hospital



Dr Nuli Lemoh outside his childhood home

The team that visited the hospital consisted of Bo Children's Hospital Foundation members, Dr Nuli Lemoh, Margaret Lemoh, Denise Curry Joint CEO, Philip Huon Joint CEO, Laurie Facer past CEO.

The team arrived in the capital Freetown and met with the Chief Medical Officer of Sierra Leone, Brima Kargbo, and Bo Children's Hospital Paediatrician, Dr Muctaru Jalloh. We discussed the ongoing financial viability of the hospital and discussed various ways the government could assist with supporting the hospital. The meeting was very useful and all parties discussed the benefit of the hospital to the community and the good work it is doing. It has a large support and acceptance from the surrounding areas and districts that the children come from to attend the hospital.

We also met with Dr Adonis A.M. Abboud (PHD) (Business Ambassador) he is also a member of Freetown Rotary and just this week visited the BCH with their Rotary District Governor, Aristide Tino Adediran and was very impressed with the hospital. He invited us to the Freetown Rotary Meeting the following day at 1.00pm for lunch. We met with District Governor Aristide Tino Adediran at the meeting who spoke of his visit to the BCH and the wonderful work being done there.



Freetown Rotary L to R: District Governor Aristide Tino Adediran, Dr Adonis Abboud, Assistant District Governor Emile Carr .



Street in Freetown near our hotel

We arrived in Bo and first went to the hospital where we had a great welcome by the staff, it was good to see Vandí Sombie again, the Hospital Medical Superintendent and to meet Dr Wusu Sannoh the Chairman of the Board. They had arranged a lovely dinner and had waited to eat with us.



Our team with the Medical Superintendent and Chairman of the Board



Some of the staff at BCH

We were amazed at the number of mothers and babies at the hospital. When we asked we were informed that each week it is vaccination day for the children. In excess of 50 children were vaccinated, this happens weekly and is a Community service with the vaccine paid for by the government.



Children waiting to be vaccinated



Child being vaccinated



Parents staying with their sick children at BCH

We were then taken on a tour of the hospital by the medical superintendent and he discussed with us the history and treatment of each child that had been admitted, they were at capacity filling 2 wards. All the children had a parent with them to feed and look after their child, we spoke to many of them and they were very pleased to come to BCH for specialised care for their children.

We also learnt whilst interviewing the nurses that some of them had adopted 2-3 children each who were orphaned during the Ebola crisis.

We then went on to have a number of meetings with various local dignitaries.

1. The District Medical Officer – Dr Seyni Turay
2. The Dean of Community Health Sciences Faculty, NJALA University – Professor G. Robert
3. The Paramount Chief – Hon P. C. Prince L. Boima

While each one of the above assist the hospital in various ways and continues to do so, they are very complimentary of the Bo Children's Hospital Foundation and all of its supporters to the project.



Matron of the Bo Children's Hospital



BCH Hospital Ward

We attended a meeting at the Bo Rotary Club (BRC) as they also have a part to play in supporting the hospital. There are many aspects that the BRC could assist the BCH. The BRC will be utilising the funds from the Grant that was initiated by the Warwick Rotary Club in the UK to extend the solar system and install of larger generator. The funds are with the BRC now and hopefully the installation will be completed in the next couple of months.



Child with Malaria



Child with Anaemia after blood transfusion

The property at BCH is large and unfenced and it is unlikely that we will ever have funds to complete one, it was suggested that we could plant trees around the boundary to make it clear to all where the boundary is so as we do not get any encroachment in the future.

We also discussed that Freetown Rotary are going to send some new mattresses to the hospital along with more mosquito nets. They will also use their best endeavours to get one of the ambulances that are left over from the Ebola outbreak as well as a 13 seater bus to help transport patients and staff to the hospital as there is no local bus.

In the morning we visited Dr Juray, the District Medical Officer for the Bo District. He spoke very highly of the hospital and its work with the children of Bo and surrounding districts. He is very keen to see it succeed as it is the first specialised children's hospital outside of Freetown and is serving the community well.

We also met with Dr Young, the Medical Superintendent of Bo Government Hospital. Dr Young fully supports the BCH and especially Vandi Sombie our Medical Superintendent. We often call on their support for blood supply for transfusions and drugs and in turn they refer children to the BCH for specialist attention.

The next meeting was with Professor Gregory Roberts the Dean of Community Health Sciences at Bo University. They are responsible for training nurses and paramedics. They use BCH as a work experience faculty for nurses and in the future will also use it for paramedics. He also spoke very highly of the staff at BCH and the great result they are having in the community.

We said our very sad goodbyes to the hospital staff and ensured them we would do our very best to continue to support the wonderful work they are doing.



The Bo Children's Hospital is doing wonderful work to help save children's lives and to educate a community and really make a difference for the betterment of healthcare for the people of Bo and surrounding districts, Sierra Leone, West Africa.

In conclusion this has been a wonderful visit and we have full support of the Health Department, all levels of Government and all local community leaders. They are all fully supportive of the hospital and are now aware of our concern that the hospital must be self-sustaining so the Bo Children's Hospital Foundation can concentrate on upgrading the equipment at the hospital. Each member of the team funded their own travel and living expenses to preserve the much needed Bo Children's Hospital Foundation funds for running the hospital.

The main requirements of the hospital are:

1. Continue with funding for the hospital by the Bo Children's Hospital Foundation (\$6,000US per month)
2. Prepare an MOU with the Ministry of Health to assist with running costs.
3. Provide a 13 seater bus for staff and patients to get to the hospital.
4. Provide an ambulance for child patients to get to the hospital.
5. Provide transport for the Medical Superintendent so he can access the hospital when required on a 24 hour basis and not have to hire a motorbike taxi to get there. Approx. cost \$7,000US.
6. Implement a computerized Patient Record System.
7. Upgrade laboratory equipment and fit a sink and drainage.

Once again we would like to thank all the many supporters and donors that have contributed to this life changing hospital and we look forward to your ongoing support so that we may continue this important work.

You can find us on facebook or www.bochildrenshospital.org.au