



**Lions Clubs
International**
www.lions.org.uk

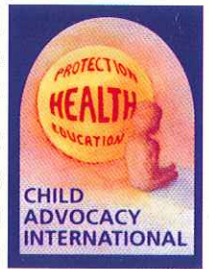
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'A Gift for Living'

A joint project of the Lions of the British Isles and Ireland with Child Advocacy International

CAI Child Advocacy International
Working to improve the healthcare of children worldwide

Proposal to upgrade the Treatment Facilities in Banja Luka to ensure newborn and critically ill infants and children have effective medical care.

Key Goal: to equip the hospital with the minimum necessary medical equipment to treat newborn and older children who need intensive care, and to train the staff in the use of this equipment.

The Role of the Lions of the British Isles and Ireland - 'A Gift for Living'
(Lions MD 105 registered charity) with Child Advocacy International

CAI and Lions Clubs International have a long standing partnership in Bosnia, with CAI developing projects which have been principally financed and supported by Lions Clubs International through the Gift for Living Committee.

This partnership has a long track record of success in Bosnia which has principally been in funding and supporting paediatric departments destroyed or disrupted by the war of 1992-1995.

Examples include:

The Neonatal and Paediatric Intensive Care Units at Kosevo University Hospital

These units now give high class care to seriously ill and injured infants and children in the Sarajevo Canton and in the surrounding area.

Paediatric Units in Mostar, Bihac and Gorazde

Departments which had been destroyed by the war now function as modern efficient paediatric departments.

Casualty Department Sarajevo

The department was equipped for adults but not for children. An ambulance and the emergency paediatric clinic have been given up to date emergency equipment. The teaching room of the department has been utilised to set up teaching programmes in paediatric emergency life support.

The partnership's work in Bosnia has followed the principle of giving equipment and at the same time arranging for UK experts to visit the supported department to ensure that staff can raise their standards as they have learned to use their new equipment.

The partnership now has a high reputation in Bosnia, and paediatric departments which want to raise their standards relish the opportunity of collaboration. This increases the effectiveness of the aid which the partnership can give.

Introduction

The economic life of Bosnia was seriously disrupted by the civil war 1992-1995. After the Dayton peace accord of 1995 the country was divided administratively into separate parts which had their own budgets. Banja Luka is the principal town of the Republica Srpska in the north of the country, and is mostly populated by Bosnians who belong to the Orthodox Church and whose political affiliations are Serbian. The war caused little physical damage, but economic deprivation has been severe and continues. It is obvious when driving north from Sarajevo that conditions are much simpler. Though there is some evidence of building activity, carts are still pulled by bullocks rather than tractors. The conditions of the towns and villages are clearly less prosperous than near Sarajevo.

The state of the hospital and paediatric department mirrors these observations. Though the buildings are sound, the equipment is woeful. The surviving neonatal ventilator is 20 years old. Oxygen flow meters no longer function. Resuscitation equipment is basic. The supply of medicines is meagre.

Before the war, the work of paediatric department in Banja Luka was comparable to standards obtaining in Western Europe. Highly trained staff were giving intensive care to children and newborn infants and outcomes were comparable to those in other European university cities. Over the last fifteen years no new equipment has been bought, and there has been little help from aid agencies.

Small, seriously ill, and seriously injured children and infants have little chance of survival in such circumstances. With better equipment and a little training, the present staff already in post would be able to provide modern efficient care as has happened in other areas of Bosnia.

Dr Kim Cheetham, CAI's honorary country director for Bosnia has visited the principal paediatric departments in Bosnia, and has an appreciation of those departments which are in greatest need, and which have the skills to be able to use an upgrade in equipment and training. Banja Luka is a university town in the north of the country. It is geographically separated from the rest of Bosnia and therefore has to provide an independent medical service. With a birth rate in excess of 5000 a year, there is need of medical facilities which can support seriously ill or injured children. The hospital was soundly built before the war, but is now very ill equipped. Medical equipment in the paediatric department is 15-20 years old, and has become unreliable. The doctors are, however well trained. In the recent APLS courses in Sarajevo one Banja Luka doctor was trained as an instructor and performed to a high standard. Another who attended the training course proved himself very competent in the techniques of intensive care. Despite its poor equipment levels, the paediatric department is well enough staffed to support a more intensive level of activity.

The Project

There is an immediate and urgent need to provide enough equipment so that every new born infant in Banja Luka who is ill at birth can have *special care*, which implies:

- *Prompt efficient resuscitation,*
- *Adequate warmth,*
- *Enough food in a properly controlled amount,*
- *Facilities for giving accurately controlled quantities of intravenous fluid,*
- *Oxygen which must be precisely given and accurately measured.*

The hospital has staff to provide effective *intensive care* for newborn and older children. This requires major re-equipment with:

- *Modern incubators,*
- *Resuscitaires,*
- *Ventilators.*

It is envisaged that the special care programme can be completed in nine months. Intensive care is a more ambitious project which will depend upon the availability of funds, and which would take longer.

The proposal envisages experienced professionals from the UK visiting the hospital to train medical and nursing staff in techniques of special and intensive care of the newborn. This programme of work has been undertaken with great success in other parts of Bosnia, as detailed above.

Who will be involved in the Project?

Chairman of "Lions Clubs International a Gift for Living" Phil Nathan, along with the committee have continuously supported the partnership between Lions and CAI. This partnership has enabled paediatric departments to have been revitalised in many areas of Bosnia. As Lions Clubs International grant administrator, Phil would continue, with the support of project treasurer Stefan Erentraut and the rest of the committee and trustees, to oversee any new programmes undertaken. He would continue to receive regular updates as the agreed project develops, consequently checking that the proposed budget is adhered to. None of the projects completed to-date would have been possible without the generous humanitarian support of the Lions of the British Isles and Ireland and the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Dr Kim Cheetham, retired consultant paediatrician, has regularly visited Bosnia for more than two years. He has 40 years medical experience in the UK, including 35 years of paediatrics. In addition he worked as honorary visiting consultant paediatrician in Quetta, Pakistan after his retirement. He is now honorary country director for Bosnia. He has proposed the project and will oversee it. He will decide (after consultation) the equipment which will be purchased, negotiate the UK professional(s) who will teach in Banja Luka and will visit Banja Luka during the project.

The logistics of the project will be managed by Armin Alagic, CAI's manager in Sarajevo. He has worked for CAI for ten years and has managed CAI's previous successful projects. He is an economist by training, speaks both Bosnian and English, and has numerous contacts both medical and political in Bosnia.

Professor Jelica Samardzic-Predojevic M.D., Ph.D., is head of the paediatric department and is currently chairperson of the Steering Board of the Clinical Centre Banja Luka. She is a consultant haematologist, well known in Bosnia, who has travelled widely. She will be responsible for agreeing the project, and will delegate the day to day details of the project to the neonatal specialists in the hospital.

Outcome

The provision of effective care of newborn and older children has resulted in a dramatic improvement in survival of the infants and children throughout the western world. The hospital at Banja Luka was part of this improvement before the war. The quality of the hospital's staff is such that given modern equipment and a little training, they will be able to lift their standards to those obtained in other parts of Bosnia and western Europe.

At present, newborn babies in Banja Luka do **not** have:

- Adequate resuscitation at birth
- Reliable oxygen delivery
- Adequate temperature support
- Reliable fluid or nutrition
- Any hope of modern intensive care

58 infants and children died in hospital last year and most of these deaths were preventable with modern care.

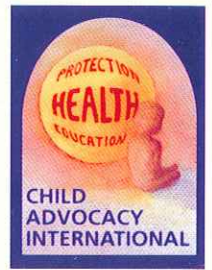
One in five of the newborn babies who go to the baby unit suffer brain damage. This dreadful statistic should be decimated.

The above project will raise standards in Banja Luka to those obtained in western Europe and will make the present provisions a matter for history.



Lions Clubs International

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Subject: Banja Luka new 105MD project

Dear Phil

September 2005

As you know I have just come back from Banja Luka! Dr Kim and myself have had meetings with local doctors and have been shown around all departments.

We told them that 105MD will try their best to help this hospital out but we cannot promise anything except our joint commitments to do something and cut down the horrible mortality rate among new born children in Banja Luka.

We asked the head of the paediatric department what is most urgently needed at this moment and she said incubators.

She then showed us what she has now and we were very very surprised, they have almost nothing functional except an old German manufactured Dragger Incubator, over 40 years old! (see enclosed photograph of Dr. Kim Cheetham).

It is still operational and perfectly functional! It is a miracle that this machine still works and that they never have had money to buy a new one!?? What is even more bizarre – there are two babies in it!

We asked why, and they said they did not have any more incubator spaces (they have two more operational incubators, i.e. 2 spaces), so they needed to keep the babies warm, and this was the only way!

Whatever it is quite unbelievable

Please help if you can

Love Armin

