

Welcome to the Footscape June newsletter. As many Footscape members would be aware I maintain a passion for developing Podiatry services abroad following previous volunteer experiences in Asia and the Pacific Islands. The implementation of Podiatric principles and practices in developing countries is crucial towards addressing global health issues such as diabetes, leprosy, landmine induced trauma and congenital deformities.



From the
President

Unfortunately the current governance structure of Footscape limits our capacity to initiate sustainable foot care projects overseas. In order to maintain endorsement as a charitable organisation with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission* the vast majority of Footscape funds need to be utilised within Australia. Notwithstanding there are many nationally based project opportunities serving the mission and vision of Footscape. However this arrangement necessitates Footscape to be a minor stakeholder for any project delivered outside Australia. To date our international focus has involved supporting the work of Equatorial Opportunities in promoting diabetic foot care practices in Nauru. In so doing we have been able to fund essential clinical instruments and prepare educational resources for local medical staff.

During the recent Australian Podiatry Association (Victoria) state conference Doctor Angela Evans provided attendees with an update of the *Walk For Life* program which endeavours to provide life changing treatment for children in Bangladesh encountering clubfoot. I acknowledge Angela for contributing a further article in this newsletter outlining program parameters. The Footscape committee recognise the amazing work of Walk For Life in addressing the burden of this terrible congenital abnormality...

From the President

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and have therefore decided to begin supporting this program during the 2016/17 Financial Year. An initial contribution of \$480 for the year will enable four Bangladeshi children with clubfoot to receive free treatment and eradicate this lifelong deformity. Footscape concurrently encourages members to visit the Walk For Life website (www.walkforlifecubfoot.org) and learn more about the valuable work being undertaken.

*Anthony Lewis
President*



Walk for Life – the National Clubfoot Project in Bangladesh

Every year, at least five thousand children are born with a clubfoot deformity in Bangladesh. Until Walk for Life (WFL) began in 2009, most children were untreated. Without treatment children cannot walk properly, cannot get to school, and so employment prospects are limited, and life is bleak.

The Glencoe Foundation (NGO) has taken on the challenge of training local physiotherapy and medical practitioners to treat these children using the Ponseti method. Developed by Dr Ignacio Ponseti in Iowa during the 1950's, and re-popularised since 2000, the Ponseti technique is painless, inexpensive and effective in most cases of congenital clubfoot. The Ponseti method involves gradual manipulative and serial plaster technique that corrects clubfeet without invasive surgery. It is now the world's 'gold standard' for treatment of clubfeet.

'Walk For Life' (WFL) is the tag line for the sustainable clubfoot project in Bangladesh. WFL provides FREE treatment to children under the age of three years by the Ponseti method. Treatment of clubfoot eradicates lifelong deformity and disability – a huge toll for all concerned. These children would otherwise grow up to be a burden on their family and ultimately live in significant poverty. This is indicated by the fact that many of the beggars in Bangladesh have visible clubfeet.

Besides providing free treatment, WFL are focused on supporting various important government medical facilities in Bangladesh, by providing appropriate training with an international team of trainers (volunteers). WFL also provide materials and staffing for running the clubfoot clinics.



Four years and just \$120, and Walk for Life enable Rabbi to run off to school! This little guy now has a future!

WFL is a project of the Glencoe Foundation and supported by the Rotary Club and Bangladesh Australia Association Canberra through the wonderful leadership and vision of Colin McFarlane AM. Colin is the founder of the Glencoe Foundation, which assists young people to realise their potential through education and medical assistance. The Glencoe Foundation has been involved in projects in East Timor, Zambia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Australia.

The overall aim of WFL is to make Ponseti treatment available to all infants born with a clubfoot in Bangladesh in a safe, effective and sustainable manner. **So far, over seventeen thousand children have commenced corrective treatment.**

WFL have developed specific assessment tools and set up evaluation audits to ensure the best results are achieved, and that our sparse resources are best utilised. An audit of four hundred children two years after their treatment found that 99% were walking. A more recent review of a large WFL clinic found similar results after four years – fantastic outcomes!

With your financial help, together with other donors, the Podiatry LINK, and the dedicated Ponseti practitioners in Bangladesh, we can enable more and more affected children to walk, to get to school and gain an education, then a job and an enjoyable and able life.

Have a look at our website, and please donate at: www.walkforlifeclubfoot.org. **The cost to treat a child and enable them to walk is just \$120** (tax deductible). Please help the many similarly affected children like Rabbi – sign up as an ongoing donor, and select the frequency at which you want to enable a child to receive your gift of FREE treatment and walk!

*Dr Angela Evans
WFL Volunteer / Ambassador / Research Leader*