

Edinburgh College team up with Cambodian students

✘ A group of dental nursing students from Edinburgh College have developed a unique partnership with trainee dental assistants in Cambodia, who work with orphans to ensure they are “dentally fit”.

Through two charities, One to One, which was set up to provide dental equipment and instruments, and Dentaaid, which aims to carry out desperately needed dental care to those most in need, the Cambodian students learn essential dental skills in makeshift dental clinics in both cities and poorer rural areas of the country.

The group of students met for the first time using Skype in their own classrooms, and although neither group could speak each other’s languages, they could connect and communicate through their common understanding of dentistry and learn from each other.

Gillian Spence, 49-year-old full-time dental nursing student from Livingston, said:-“It was really inspiring to speak to the Cambodian students today. They work with over 100 children in the orphanage who are all HIV positive. This really opened my eyes and motivated me to do something to help.”

Gillian added:- “I’m really glad we get the opportunity to speak to students in Cambodia. It’s not just about getting the skills to become a dental nurse in Scotland but actually shows

you what's going on all over the world and how we can use our skills to help."



The average person survives on less than 80 pence a day in the capital Phnom Penh, which means that the Dentaaid service is vital for many who cannot afford dental care. As well as orphans, the charity also provides check-ups for homeless people, prisoners and the many vulnerable families in rural areas in Cambodia.

28-year-old full-time dental nursing student, Hayley Davies originally from Inverness but living in Edinburgh, said: -"It really was a breath of fresh air to see how they work and how much time and effort they spend helping people in their country. I'm really keen to get involved with this and use the skills I've gained to help children like these to try to change their lives for the better."

Edinburgh College is already a major provider of dental equipment through various fundraising initiatives for the One to One charity in Cambodia thanks to the huge efforts of Edinburgh College Dental Nursing Lecturer, Ann Lyon, who established the relationship with the charity.

Ann said: "It's a real privilege to have this link with the students in Cambodia. Our students and staff are really keen to help such a worthwhile charity and already support One to One through various fundraisers at the College with our students."

“The money we’ve raised not only supports students in Cambodia to get the training they need to become dental assistants, but the funds also go towards manufacturing dental equipment within the country.”

“We can’t wait to speak to the students again when they are out in the rural areas in Cambodia in their mobile clinic, and will continue this unique partnership and friendship in the future, to benefit our students in Scotland and those in Cambodia.”