

Edinburgh hospitality funding next generation of Rwandan surgeons

AN ORGANISATION that puts its profits into advancing surgical standards worldwide has partnered with the Rwandan Surgical Society (RSS) and Harvard University to put an end to the country's surgical crisis.

In Rwanda, there is an urgent need for more trained surgeons with just 150 specialist surgeons, physicians, anaesthetists and obstetricians serving a population of more than 12 million.

But, thanks to hotel stays, weddings and coffees and lunches, money is being raised by Surgeons Quarter – the enterprising arm of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) – to support the training of the country's future surgeons.

Over the next year the RCSEd is training operating theatre teams in non-technical surgical skills as it works to improve surgical safety at every Rwandan district hospital and is working alongside the RSS, Brigham and Women's Center for Surgery and Public Health at Harvard University and Johnson & Johnson to make this happen.

80% of surgery in Rwanda, as with most of sub-Saharan Africa is performed at the district hospital by these teams.

The project will teach these skills to non-specialist surgical teams, for example general practitioners, anaesthesia technicians, and theatre nurses, focusing on matters such as situation awareness, decision-making, communication and teamwork, and leadership.



The curriculum has been taught to over 200 post-graduate trainees in surgery, anaesthesia, obstetrics, and nursing so far.

The initiative will train 112 clinicians, and RCSEd's contributions will have impact on many thousands of patients across Rwanda.

Funding this project has been possible thanks to Surgeons Quarter – the organisation which manages and makes money from the RCSEd's historic campus as well as American biotech company Johnson & Johnson.

Surgeons Quarter, runs Edinburgh's largest independent hotel, Ten Hill Place, and also hosts weddings and conferences in College-owned Old Town buildings.

Scott Mitchell, Managing Director of Surgeons Quarter, said: "As tourists pay for their stay at Ten Hill Place, and as

local residents buy their coffees and lunches in Café 1505, they're helping us to fund causes that advance surgical care across the world.

"We're very proud to have built a strong reputation for ourselves in the hospitality sector and seeing our profits go towards worthwhile initiatives such as these as a result of that success is very rewarding."

The RCSEd's collaborative training will achieve scale, reaching every district hospital in the country, by incorporating itself into a pre-existing RSS outreach training programme – Rwanda Essential Surgery Training – which is working to strengthen the technical skills of general practitioners at district hospitals.

Professor Mike Griffin, President of the RCSEd, said: "Building surgical capacity in Rwanda, for Rwanda, is all part of the College's commitment to improving its access to surgery worldwide.

"Training and providing practical experience in-country is vital in making this happen, and our exciting partnership with the Rwandan Surgical Society is a significant step in the College's aims of developing global surgery."

Surgeons Quarter promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the RCSEd campus, which includes the Playfair Building. All profits support the charitable aims of the College which are education, assessment and advancement in surgery.

Surgeons Quarter and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh recently launched its partnership with Bowel Cancer UK, pledging a yearlong calendar of fundraising events by staff to enable the charity to appoint its first Scottish surgical research chair.

The RCSEd has members in 102 countries, training and assessing

surgeons to take their life-saving and life-changing skills all over the world.