

# **Charity's breakthrough learning platform launched**

**A charity transforming the training of children's surgery in Africa through a major new learning platform, is launching throughout much of the continent.**

Created by more than 70 African surgeons, the Kids Operating Room (KidsOR) project will go live in 26 nations in west, central, east and southern Africa, and has been built for the charity by the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI).

It is the continent's first comprehensive paediatric surgery e-learning platform, aligning curriculums and helping drive up the quality and skill-set of new graduates able to specialise in paediatric surgery, which faces a drastic skills shortage and huge unmet demand.

Its launch coincides with the World Health Assembly, raising awareness that more children in Africa die of surgically treatable injuries than HIV, TB and Malaria combined.

The e-learning programme is unique for two key reasons. Firstly, because it unites the training programmes of the continent's two main surgical colleges, something that has never happened before. Secondly, by enrolling local surgeons to write the content, the first time an e-learning programme for children's surgery in Africa has been written by African surgeons, it is hoped that there will be an increase in the number of trainees who graduate and that all of them will be of an even higher standard thanks to regular access to the

platform.

The free to use service seeks to enable trainees enrolled in surgical college training programmes to have direct access to online lectures and tutorials, creating a space for trainees to learn surgical techniques, pathologies and equipment tips.

As well as KidsOR co-founder Garreth Wood, the webinar launch event will feature talks from Africa's two most senior surgeons, Professor Godfrey Muguti and Professor Serigne Magueye Gueye, Presidents of College of Surgeons for East, Central and South Africa (COSECSA) and West Africa College of Surgeons (WACS), as well as Professor Ronan O'Connell, the President of RCSI.

Garreth Wood, Chair of KidsOR, said: "We committed to deliver this project after listening to the wishes of trainees across the continent. The mentor-based training regime of surgeons is excellent, but no one mentor can be the best at everything. This platform gives trainees access to the continent's leading surgeons for each subject.

"We are so grateful to have had such a great team work on this project, collaborating alongside COSECSA and WACS – who were able to make the platform as comprehensive – and relevant – as possible. It's the first platform that's fundamentally created by African surgeons for African surgeons, which we hope will support and enhance existing mentor-based training systems.

"Ultimately our ambition is to find the gaps and find the best ways to support junior doctors through their studies with resources to help drive the quality, skill-sets and confidence of new graduates. We want to help scale the workforce and this platform will allow recent and updated research and techniques to be shared by professionals to support trainees."

Prof Godfrey Muguti, President of COSECSA said: "When the online training platform for children's surgery in Africa was first announced by KidsOR we did not know about Covid 19. We

knew an online programme would benefit our trainees, that it would be much more valuable if it was written by African surgeons for African trainees, and we knew that by working with our friends and partners at WACS we would help ensure the highest quality graduates across Africa but we could not have imagined the world where online learning would be so urgent as it is now. I am therefore very proud to launch this resource.”

Professor Emmanuel Ameh- Professor and Chief Consultant Paediatric Surgeon, National Hospital, Abuja, Nigeria said: “The E-learning platform is coming at a time of increased momentum in efforts to scale up access to safe, affordable and timely surgical care for children. It is unique in that it’s more than a textbook, it leverages technology to provide an engaging and rewarding learning experience. Trainees can access high quality information, interact and learn from a wide range of experienced trainers in Africa and create network of friendships with other trainees across Africa”

Dr Olga Bell, third year paediatric surgical trainee in Cote d’ Ivorie said: “The E-learning platform is interesting because it connects West Africa and East Africa in the paediatric surgery programme. We can interact, talk together, exchange all of our experiences. We really appreciate the platform and are very thankful to KidsOR”

Set to launch May 24, the e-learning platform built by the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) for KidsOR will be available across multiple devices to further promote accessibility.

Prof Ronan O’Connell, the President of RCSI said: “The RCSI Institute of Global Surgery supported by the RCSI IT department have contributed project management, educational design and IT technical expertise. I commend KidsOR in their leadership in bringing all the elements together.

[www.KidsOR.org](http://www.KidsOR.org)