

# THE RANGOON GENERAL HOSPITAL REINVIGORATION CHARITABLE TRUST 2015 UPDATE



## Making a Real Difference

Welcome to the Autumn 2015 update from The Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Charitable Trust. You are receiving this newsletter because you have chosen to make a difference: by a donation to our work, by your support in other ways.

So before anything else, we want to say thank you, for helping us to build hope. We are working to achieve the rebirth of Rangoon General Hospital into a facility fit to meet the needs of the people. As you will see from what follows, we are already making a real difference.

On my recent visit to Burma, I saw the changes - in the infrastructure, the buildings and above all the people.

You are helping to transform the lives of some of the poorest people in Asia. You are supporting Myanmar (Burma) at this time of perilous transition. Thank you for your help.

**Dr Michael Marett-Crosby, Managing Trustee**



## What is RGHR?

The Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Charitable Trust was created in Jersey at the request of the responsible committee of the Hluttaw, the Parliament of Myanmar.

The Trustees of the Charity work to meet the aims of the Trust according to the direction of this Committee. This ensures that everything we do is grounded on the needs of the Hospital and the people of the country, as identified by their Parliament.

Our activities are not "donor-driven." We work as and where our Burmese colleagues ask us.

This genuinely collaborative undertaking also includes the Ministry of Health in Myanmar, which governs the Hospital.

Much of our work has been made possible by the support of UK Aid and the Department for International Development.

**A message from  
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**



"This is a flagship of the reform of our whole national health service. Many hospitals throughout the country will benefit from this pioneering project. We need to make this work for all our people."

**A message from  
Lord Darzi  
of Denham KBE,  
Trustee of RGHR**



"This is an exciting programme of work. Reinvigorating this hospital and transforming the services it provides will improve care for all patients."

## Achievements in 2015

Expert advice on new lifts – installed and functional into all hospital areas.  
New roofing (continuing).  
Site-wide drainage (continuing).  
Site-wide health and safety (continuing).  
Site-wide maintenance manuals.  
Improvements to ventilation (continuing).  
Preparation of signage strategy.  
Reforming the medical records system in RGH.  
Capacity building – mentoring on site to all levels.  
Decanting of patients and operating theatre zones – expert advice for re-instatement.

## Works scheduled for 2016

Visiting Professorship Programme including initial oncology and nuclear medicine training.  
Freshwater supplies and utilities for the hospital and wider site.  
Seismic resistance assessment.  
Fire safety programme.  
Structural engineering – The main stairway structure has been identified by Article 25 as an area for concern.  
Cost consultant for site wide works.  
Healthcare space planner.  
Medical records related technical advice  
Masterplan development UK/exchange visit.

## The rain falls on, but the Hospital stays dry (-ish!)

Myanmar (Burma) is a monsoon country, and the months of June, July and August are dominated by water. Most of Yangon (Rangoon) is low-lying, the Irrawaddy River curling through its heart.

Pools of open water were common in the wet season right across the Hospital campus. Some of these were caused by drainage weakness, bringing foul water close to patients.

As requested by the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, RGHR's implementing partner Article 25 has been focusing a part of its work on sorting out this problem. We cannot stop the rain from falling, but Article 25 engineers have been working on (and in!) the drains to identify the problems and effect solutions.

So successful have they been that, for the first time in many years, the main Hospital building did not flood with water, fresh or foul.

It is impossible to overestimate the impact of this on disease control.

## RGHR in Jersey - welcome to the Digital Jersey Hub

by Kevin Stoddart, Director and Chief Operating Officer of the operating company, RGHR Ltd  
Residency in the Hub

During the set-up of the Charitable structure in 2014, we were introduced to the Digital Jersey Hub, a co-working zone established in Jersey as a partnership between local government and private enterprise to facilitate the digital sector, including start-ups and community enterprises. As a non-profit organisation, we were readily accepted as a "Community Member" and in a nil band for rental or other usage of the facilities. The staff administering this have been extremely accommodating and provided a great step forward, enabling donor's funds to be utilised for the Charity and not for office costs and administration. The Hub has been able to provide a secure and vibrant environment with 24/7 access. This has been important in terms of our operations in Burma with consultants based there and a 6.5 hour time gap. Also, a Trustee now based in the USA and consultants travelling. Confidential skype is very often required due to sensitivities, therefore, the room facilities at the Hub are of paramount

importance. IT facilities were considered when setting up. The structure operates "on the Cloud", ie no server or associated costs and infrastructure required. The Hub has excellent bandwidth and it is very rare any time is burnt due to IT systems being non operative.

This is of course very important in terms of the "Office" functioning efficiently. Printing and associated support is in place and is part of the overall package offered in the Hub. Again, this is appreciated in terms of admin costs being kept to a minimum.

From a digital perspective, the residents in the Hub have been extremely helpful and we have already procured a member for the Charity's website set up and ongoing support. This member is also assisting other parts of our wider "trusts & office" and will be integral to the structure. In addition, there are other Hub members who have provided some expertise on a pro bono basis.



## Contribution from UK AID (DfID)

Thanks to the support given by DfID to The Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Charitable Trust and its wholly owned operating company RGHR Limited together (“RGHR”), Rangoon General Hospital (“RGH”) has begun the long journey to becoming a hospital fit for the needs of the people of Burma.

DfID funding has enabled the provision of expert advice, support and information through consultants to facilitate the Burmese leadership of RGH to make decisions that have had a real impact on the patients and staff, thereby, improving the hospital and its facilities.

We are pleased to acknowledge the vital role of UK Aid when discussing RGH with other donors, in communications and with the Parliamentary Committee (“the Committee”) for the reinvigoration in Naypyidaw. We are very grateful to the DfID team for their support and advice to date.

A Grant totaling £250,000 from DfID has thus far delivered the achievements in 2015 and supported the first steps towards reforming the medical records system in RGH.

Many of these aspects of the reinvigoration programme are making further progress as we approach the end of the second phase of Article 25's deployment. A further similar amount of funding has now been provided for the end of the second phase and a new phase three to commence in January 2016.

This is one of the few genuinely cross-party initiatives in Burma at this time. RGHR trustees and employees work carefully to ensure that this remains the case.

## Human Rights Universal Declaration of *Right to an adequate standard of living*

### Article 25 reports from the field

#### *The Partnership Between RGHR and Article 25*

In December 2014 The Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Trust appointed Article 25 as its technical partner in the reinvigoration of Burma's primary hospital.

Article 25 is the UK's leading NGO specialising in construction skills for international development. For this challenge Article 25 brought together a team of consultants to provide the technical skills in building restoration, structural and services engineering, site inspections and fire safety. Here are Article 25's team reports from the work in Rangoon.



#### **Robin Cross, Article 25's Managing Director**

The reinvigoration of Rangoon General Hospital presents a unique challenge, requiring the 'hardware' skills in heritage building restoration and environmentally smart building design, with the 'soft' skills in organisational capacity building and empowering a management team to lead the reinvigoration process.

The hospital is an example of British Victorian architecture highly adapted to the climate of Burma. It has qualities in common with the Great Victorian institutions of the UK with its red brickwork and exuberant details, but also has the verandas and fenestration called for by the tropical heat, the humidity and the heavy downpours of Rangoon.

Its reinvigoration demands experience in the restoration of British Victorian era buildings. It also calls for an understanding of working across cultural boundaries and of partnering within hospital management that is taking on the bigger challenge of transforming its institution.

RGH is a national institution with great significance in the cultural history of Burma. It has been at the centre of the country's political events and is now at the top of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's priorities as she chairs the all-party Parliamentary Committee for the Reinvigoration of Rangoon General Hospital. For Article 25 it is the opportunity to use technical skills to make a difference to Burma's health service, while breathing new life into a building of cultural significance that provides the motivation to a dedicated team in Rangoon and London.

We have pulled together a team from British and Burmese professions to provide the unusual skills needed to make this challenging project a success.

#### **Nora Wuttke, Article 25's Project Architect based in Rangoon**

Joining the team in Rangoon was an exciting change after working in Shanghai and London.

Working with the doctors and nurses of the hospital is the greatest pleasure. They are the most committed people, and despite having limited resources manage to save lives every day.

#### **Julia May Thandar Soe, Article 25's Local Architect based in Rangoon**

RGH is the oldest and biggest hospital in Yangon, since 1911. I feel so proud to take part in this project as the local architect. I work together with Article 25's International designers, and I have received a lot of good training from them.

I feel working on this project is really helping the people of Myanmar, especially low income people

that the hospital cares for more than any other hospital does.

This is also a great heritage conservation project in a heritage compound, protecting a building that is part of the country's built heritage and a big piece of the Burmese peoples' history.

#### **The Article 25 Design Team**

Article 25 has provided its own architects and invited engineers from Max Fordham and Michael Hadi Associates in this collaboration with RGHR.

**Article 25 (Architects):** Robin Cross, Ian Goodfellow, Louise Hansen, Julia May Thandar Soe, Anna Schulenburg, Nora Wuttke.

**Max Fordham (Environmental & Services Engineering):** Jasper Rea, Christine Wiech.

**Michael Hadi Associates (Structural Engineers):** Michael Hadi, Nick Cheek, Christian Knight.

## A Healthy Election

The result of Burma's general election, the first in which all parties have participated since 1990, produced a landslide victory for the National League for Democracy and its leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Between now and April, when the new government will be formed, Burma is in a period of transition. This presents many challenges and perhaps dangers, but all sides are reassured by the promises of President U Thein Sein and Commander in Chief U Min Aung Hlaing that they will respect the choice made by the people.

In an election that was all about the hope of change, healthcare was one of the key issues raised by the NLD. The party promised to work towards the emergence of a universal healthcare system.

Burma has a strong tradition of medical education in its medical universities - a new one has just opened its doors to students in Taunggyi, the capital of the Shan State. Medicine has long held a privileged position amongst students and families wishing for the best education on offer. Although many specialisms are not taught, and other subjects remain in their infancy, I have been impressed with the willingness of senior practitioners to learn more.

Our Visiting Professorship Programme is an essential component in this. With your help, we will be at the forefront of new medical education.

Finally, I am struck time and again on my visits to Rangoon General Hospital by the dedication of medical staff; doctors at the Emergency Unit or on the wards, nurses, Hospital Leaders, architects and others. This is a change that is eagerly sought by those who work in the health sector. Many of them are very poorly paid, but they work hard, often in dire circumstances, to save lives. When a country has that fundamental strength, then I believe much, if not everything, is possible.

**Dr Michael Marett-Crosby**

### A New Year message from our Trustees

2015 has been a challenging and eventful year for the Charity. We have been reflecting on what we have achieved over the past twelve months, which has been life changing for the people of Burma. We have achieved real change in the Hospital and are being asked to do much more.

We have worked with a committed team of people whose determination to make a difference, continues to grow in line with the call on our resources for help.

In closing, we thank you for your help and ask that over the coming year you continue to support our endeavours.

From the Trustees and all the staff here at the Charity, a very happy New Year to you all.

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### The Rangoon General Hospital Reinvigoration Charitable Trust & RGHR Limited

Trustees and Officers

Dr Michael Marett-Crosby – Trustee and Chief Executive Officer

Lord Ara Darzi of Denham KBE – Trustee

Jurat Suzanne Marett-Crosby - Trustee

Jurat Paul Liddiard MBE – Trustee

Matthew Tagney – Trustee

Dr Thinn Hlaing - Trustee

Thomas Kibasi – Trustee

Kevin Stoddart – Director & Chief Operating Officer

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