

The importance of giving something back

By Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, AIM Group International

Social responsibility is an integral part of IAPCO's philosophy, and it is the association's intention to always do more. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the progress made in Burundi on a project that we, as IAPCO members, have been involved with since 2013. Through FIMAC, the International Foundation of Doctors for Central Africa, we continue to provide help to a village in the north of Burundi called Bubanza. Burundi is a small country in Central Africa with a population of more than 7 million that is growing sharply. There are many severe health problems in this area – there is a high mortality rate from malaria, HIV, tuberculosis and malnutrition, while in the field of orthopaedics, the population faces congenital and acquired malformations. IAPCO members provided contributions through their membership fees to help the population as well as the hospital of Bubanza, and, during 2014, 40 members contributed €1495.

I go to Burundi every year on behalf of FIMAC and can personally assure members that these donations and funds are used to help and support the hospital and the whole community, including the children. I have just returned from one such visit during which we distributed 100 kg of clothes, toys and school supplies, including pens and notebooks, to the delight of the children in the school and orphanage. You can imagine how touched I was by the children's gratitude and excitement. It was certainly a situation



in which I gained as much as the people we helped. Through the donations from IAPCO members we are also able to support the expenses involved in the post-surgical stays of patients following operations carried out by FIMAC surgeons. FIMAC relies on a team of volunteer doctors who make six missions a year to operate on the most difficult orthopaedic cases. With an average of 40 operations per mission, they operate on approximately 240 people each year who otherwise would not have a normal life due to their malformations, tropical ulcers that erode muscles, tendons and sometimes bones, infantile clubfoot and other congenital diseases.

We now are working on a 'Brighten the life of a child' project that is contributing to the construction of an IAPCO basketball court in Bubanza. Sport can be a powerful tool to promote child and youth development. Physical education plays an important role in the lives of

children, increasing school enrolment, retention and access to education, and fostering academic achievement. To create a sports infrastructure in this rural area will not be easy. The terrain in Bubanza is very difficult to work with, there are many hills and they will need to flatten the area and

build retaining walls. The sum we need to raise is €8000! It is a challenging goal but we feel it is money that will be well spent.

So far this year we have raised more than €6200 but we need more to reach our goal. This work resonates with our hope for a better world, and our wish is that you would like get involved. Please be generous, and let's see the creation of an IAPCO basketball court in Bubanza!

Our daily lives pull us in so many different directions, and we sometimes think we don't have the time to make a difference. Yet we are surprised to see how simple acts can have a big impact on other people's lives as they touch our own.

If you would like to donate please contact the IAPCO Secretariat (Bubanza basketball court): info@iapco.org