



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2015



## **From the Trustees**

This has been a very full year for Soapbox as we expand and strengthen our work to improve infection prevention and control (IPC) on maternity units and quality of care for mothers and newborns.

Our partnerships continue to flourish both in the UK and overseas. We are particularly fortunate for the support we receive from NHS Grampian for our work at the Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital (FHRH) in Ethiopia. We continue to work closely with the University of Aberdeen who host the Aberdeen-based office and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) where our London team is based.

The work with partners in Zimbabwe has now come to a close after Soapbox supported the development and delivery of training workshops on hand hygiene to strengthen IPC in KweKwe District of Central Zimbabwe. This is a fantastic development in an area where little training is provided on this potentially life-saving practise.

We were delighted to secure funding from the UK Medical Research Council (MRC), thus building on our earlier work in Zanzibar. The aim is to identify factors that influence good hand hygiene behaviour in maternity units and develop interventions to improve compliance.

Our work with WaterAid has expanded to Malawi thanks to funding from the Department for International Development

for the 3-year Deliver Life Project. Sixteen rural health centres have been selected for a programme of needs assessment and actions to improve water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and the quality of maternal health care. In Bangladesh and India the findings from the WASH & CLEAN study have been disseminated.

Finally, our partnership with Horizons Trust in the Gambia continues to grow under a Memorandum of Understanding to pilot training materials developed by Soapbox for low-literate cleaning staff.

Student visits have been a major feature of our work in Ethiopia with FHRH. The partnership was further strengthened by the arrival of Dr Ryan Ellis in early 2016 to act as our liaison officer at FHRH; we hope that by the end of his stay he will be replaced by a local staff member funded by Soapbox.

We have continued our advocacy and awareness raising role in the UK through activities with schools, community and student groups. Our activity on social media now attracts considerable following on Twitter and Facebook.

The review touches on a selection of our recent projects, more can be found on the website: [www.soapboxcollaborative.org](http://www.soapboxcollaborative.org).

**Mr Alec Cumming**  
**Trustee**

## Our partners



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## About Soapbox

The Soapbox Collaborative is a charitable trust, which focuses on reducing healthcare-associated infections (HCAs) at birth in low-income countries. Our work is evidence-based; we undertake research to strengthen understanding of HCAs and develop effective interventions to support quality improvement of hygiene standards in maternity units. Our vision is a world where all mothers and babies have access to clean safe care – a sensitive marker of quality care. Soapbox has UK bases at the University of Aberdeen and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Since its inception in 2012, Soapbox has been active in India, Bangladesh, Zanzibar, The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Ethiopia. We work in close partnership with in-country healthcare agencies and research groups, and national and international agencies including WaterAid, NHS Grampian, THET, and WHO.

## Communication and advocacy

We have been spreading our message through seminars and a series of public and student engagement events including hosting stands at this year's University of Aberdeen **May Festival**, Robert Gordon University's **International Day of the Midwife** conference and NHS Grampian's annual **Champions Challenged** conference. Soapbox also held a fantastic **Student Innovation Challenge** in September, supported by Aberdeen City Council, local businesses and higher and further education establishments. The Challenge – designed to cultivate the creativity of Aberdeen students to find novel, innovative and low-cost solutions to improving hygiene in maternity units in low-income countries – was a huge success and a real highlight for our student supporters.

## **Soapbox success at the WASH & CLEAN dissemination event in Bangladesh**

The WASH & CLEAN study in Bangladesh was concluded in April 2015 with a workshop to disseminate results. The study developed novel needs assessment tools for capturing evidence on cleanliness and the relationship to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions and infection prevention and control (IPC) in health facilities.

BRAC, that led the Bangladesh arm of the study, hosted the event which attracted a wide variety of stakeholders from public, private and NGO health facilities, government agencies, and organisations such as WaterAid, Engender Health, USAID, and ICDDR, B. The results met with much interest and enthusiasm from attendees. A workshop was held to discuss the striking findings of the study, one of which was the lack of formal training for cleaning staff, and identify key action points for moving forward.

### **Facility visits**

During the trip Soapbox staff visited health facilities where they were able to discuss environmental cleaning and current provision, if any, for training of cleaners. A visit to the BRAC-run Rayerbazar Maternity Clinic provided Soapbox with the opportunity to discuss with ayas (cleaners) their important role in maintaining the cleanliness of the clinic, the challenges they

face, and to observe them in their daily routine. Soapbox will use this information, combined with the results of the WASH & CLEAN study, to input in to the development of a training package for low-literate cleaning staff.

The trip was a huge success, generating much interest in the WASH & CLEAN findings and opportunities for future collaboration across sectors.



## Hand hygiene improvements in Zimbabwe

January 2016 saw the completion of our project in Zimbabwe, funded by Soapbox and developed in partnership with ZimHealth. The project was based in Kwekwe City, a mining and industrialised area which has been facing significant challenges in health care delivery due to negative economic growth.

The Kwekwe General Hospital and Kwekwe's four council clinics serve a population of 104,000. In 2014 they applied to Soapbox for funds and technical support to improve infection prevention and control (IPC) activities. Following an exploratory visit to conduct a needs assessment of facilities, Soapbox agreed to fund IPC improvements from January 2015.

Over the year the teams at the clinics made an outstanding commitment to improving IPC. A multi-disciplinary IPC Committee established in the early stages of the project was able to support the ongoing policy development, audit and training initiatives. With Soapbox's support, an observational hand hygiene audit tool and hand hygiene training workshops for skilled and non-skilled workers were developed.

Ninety members of staff were trained and plans have been made to embed both the hand hygiene audit and regular hand hygiene training in to routine practice. The hands-on, participatory-based training was well received by all staff with evidence of changes made to knowledge and practice. Phyllis

Gochera, Director of Health Services, who led the project in Zimbabwe reported, **'I really learnt a lot and it was a pleasure making a difference in Kwekwe City clinics. I hope the standards will be maintained'.**



## Partnership with WaterAid

An exciting new collaboration between Soapbox and the international NGO WaterAid was announced in early 2016. This was made possible following a UK Aid Match award from the Department for International Development. This government funding matches the total raised by donations following public appeals. As part of its ambition to achieve universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene, WaterAid has chosen to work again with Soapbox following a successful collaboration in Zanzibar.



Sandra Virgo from the Soapbox team at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine will be working closely with WaterAid country partners and local stakeholders in Malawi to

learn how our expertise and their needs might fit together. It is anticipated that this will include a focus on hygiene training in some of the larger health facilities. We look forward to a productive partnership with WaterAid resulting in clean safe care at birth for mothers in Malawi.

**99% of life threatening infections acquired during childbirth are preventable.**

The Soapbox Collaborative is committed to ensuring mothers and babies avoid these infections. Working with our overseas and UK partners we aim to improve hygiene practices in maternity units with low cost simple interventions.

ACTION



Supporting training of healthcare workers in infection prevention



Responding to requests for advice and support



Strengthening infrastructure of healthcare facilities



Advocating clean safe birth for mothers and babies



KNOW-HOW



Strengthening knowledge through research



Developing resources to support improvements



Sharing lessons and progress made to shape further action

## Strengthening partnerships with Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital, Ethiopia

Three members of the NHS Grampian (NHSG) Facilities and Estates team visited the Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital (FHRH) in Bahir Dar, Northern Ethiopia in May 2015. Soapbox had been working in partnership with the staff at the hospital for over a year assisting the strengthening of infection prevention and control. The primary focus of the NHSG team was to repair faulty equipment, provide training to the local maintenance team and support the development of basic policies and operating procedures to establish an on-going maintenance process.

It was a busy and very productive week, training maintenance staff and increasing the number of functioning taps by almost 70% in the three floored Maternity and Child Health Building. Solutions were also found for problems with oxygen concentrators, emergency generators and operating lights. Upon their return the maintenance team reported what an incredibly rewarding and humbling experience they had and captured their trip in a video called - 'The Quest'!

Our support of the hospital continued throughout the year and we were delighted when the FHRH CEO, Mr Bazuayehu Gashaw and Medical Director, Dr Siyoum Enkubahir made a visit to Aberdeen in March 2016. The primary aim was to meet with colleagues at The Soapbox Collaborative, NHS Grampian and

the University of Aberdeen to further our on-going partnership to improve quality of care at the hospital. Mr Gashaw and Dr Enkubahir made visits to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and the Maternity Hospital including the Infection Prevention Unit and the Quality Improvement and Health Intelligence & Research teams.

Our partnership with the FHRH continues to go from strength to strength with further capacity building visits, along with several student projects based at the hospital, planned for later in 2016.



## Financial statement

<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations	15,375
Investment income	23,381
<b>Total income</b>	<b>38,756</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Project support to countries	100,736
Travel to countries	10,152
Salaries	104,007
Grants and bursaries	5,311
Other costs	18,078
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>238,284</b>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>199,528</b>

## New trustees

Soapbox was delighted to announce the appointment of two new trustees to our Board, former NHS Grampian Medical Director, Roelf Dijkuizen and Head of Service Improvement at NHS Grampian, Jenny Ingram. Prior to becoming trustees, both Jenny and Roelf had been involved in supporting Soapbox for some time. Their assistance in the strategic leadership and governance of the organisation is of great value and we look forward to their continued input next year.



**Saving lives with clean safe care at birth**

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