

Briefing paper Autumn 2008

Cairdeas International Palliative care Trust

Palliative care as a human right; seeking justice for end of life care

Let the flame burn brighter.....

'I still feel that the palliative care service we have here is like a flickering candle, easy to snuff out but for the patients that we care for, it shines brightly.' says a colleague in Sierra Leone

Imagine pain so constant you struggle to talk, have not smiled for weeks and only eat when hunger is stronger than the fear of pain. Add to that loneliness and isolation as you struggle to live with the mouth cancer that is causing your pain, you feel too ill to leave your house and there is no family able to help you. For many across the developing world there would be little prospect of escaping from this nightmare. For one lady living in the heat of the city of Kampala there was hope when her neighbor, nicknamed her good Samaritan, took her to the local hospice clinic. (Hospice Africa Uganda) She found someone to listen, morphine to ease her pain and others who know the reality of living with cancer and HIV/AIDS. Better still the team can visit her at home with trained nurses who can prescribe pain killers including morphine and ensure her medicines are given free when she is unable to go to the clinic. At last she can smile! Dignity, freedom from pain, affordable health, care someone to listen and understand – all basic needs and even human rights. Cairdeas seeks to support education and training working in partnership in places such as Uganda and India. Helping to ensure that many more have the help and support they need particularly at the end of their lives; ensuring many more like can smile again through the pain. Adding life to days not days to life – the heart of hospice and palliative care.



Why is it that only a tiny proportion of the one million who need end of life care in our world each week receive the help and care they need? Why in our world of modern medicines and advances do so few have access to pain control? Less than 0.4% of the one billion population of India have access to oral morphine; in most countries in Africa NO-ONE can be given oral morphine; no matter how bad the pain.

This global humanitarian problem is the focus of World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 12th October 2008. In this year when we mark the 60th anniversary of the bill of rights we are highlighting that to deny pain control and end of life care is to deny the right to health and to abandon millions to degrading treatment.

Seeking to make a difference to these massive inequalities is not to seek offer charity but claim justice. Palliative care and hospice services across the world are seeking justice for those in need; reaching out with skill, compassion, courage and innovation.

Cairdeas International Palliative Care Trust; a Scottish registered charity was founded in 2005 and based on Christian values. We offer expert support to colleagues wanting to develop education and training in hospice and palliative care. Most of our partners are in India and Africa; from areas as diverse as Malawi to Mizoram. We have supported 'training the trainers' programmes, offered specific skills training, engaged in curriculum development, provided mentorship and offered strategic advice. This year we will be working on two major projects; the development of the first palliative care unit in Uganda and one of very few in Africa to be based in a University and teaching hospital.



We reach out in the love of God and by his grace to share with those in need, to respond to God's mandate and heart of justice to bring the light of hope to the dark places of despair and suffering. We are seeking to shelter those flickering candles and to take part in this global palliative care movement to see 'the flame burn brighter'

How can you be involved?

- Host an event
 - Fair-trade coffee morning / meal
 - Prayers for World Hospice Day on Oct 11th
 - Cairdeas fair-trade party
 - book Dr Mhoira Leng or another Cairdeas partner to hear more
 - School links up with Uganda
- Find out more
 - www.cairdeas.org.uk
 - www.mhoiraleng.blogspot.com
 - info@cairdeas.org.uk
- Help raise funds
 - arrange sponsored event such as 10 km run, or even a marathon!!
 - become a core supporter by signing up to the Cairdeas 200 (see website)
 - one-off donations (look for our gift options in time for Christmas)
- offer skills
 - professional consultancy visits
 - administrative support
 - journalistic or media skills
 - prayer partners

Mhoira Leng 19/08/08