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Edinburgh hospitality funds next generation of Rwandan surgeons

AN ORGANISATION that puts its profits into advancing surgical standards worldwide has partnered with the Rwandan Surgical Society (RSS) and **Harvard University** to put an end to the country's surgical crisis.

In Rwanda, there is an urgent need for more trained surgeons with just 150 specialist surgeons, physicians, anaesthetists and obstetricians serving a population of more than 12 million.

But, thanks to hotel stays, weddings and coffees and lunches, money is being raised by Surgeons Quarter – the enterprising arm of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) – to support the training of the country's future surgeons.

Over the next year the RCSEd is training operating theatre teams in non-technical surgical skills as it works to improve surgical safety at every Rwandan district hospital and is working alongside the RSS, Brigham and Women's Center for Surgery and Public Health at Harvard University and Johnson & Johnson to make this happen.

80% of surgery in Rwanda, as with most of sub-Saharan Africa is performed at the district hospital by these teams.

The project will teach these skills to non-specialist surgical teams, for example general practitioners, anaesthesia technicians, and theatre nurses, focusing on matters such as situation awareness, decision-making, communication and teamwork, and leadership.

The curriculum has been taught to over 200 post-graduate trainees in surgery, anaesthesia, obstetrics, and nursing so far.

The initiative will train 112 clinicians, and RCSEd's contributions will have impact on many thousands of patients across Rwanda.

Funding this project has been possible thanks to Surgeons Quarter – the organisation which manages and makes money from the RCSEd's historic campus as well as American biotech company Johnson & Johnson.

Surgeons Quarter, runs Edinburgh's largest independent hotel, Ten Hill Place, and also hosts weddings and conferences in College-owned Old Town buildings.

Scott Mitchell, Managing Director of Surgeons Quarter, said: "As tourists pay for their stay at Ten Hill Place, and as local residents buy their coffees and lunches in Café 1505, they're helping us to fund causes that advance surgical care across the world.

"We're very proud to have built a strong reputation for ourselves in the hospitality sector and seeing our profits go towards worthwhile initiatives such as these as a result of that success is very rewarding."

The RCSEd's collaborative training will achieve scale, reaching every district hospital in the country, by incorporating itself into a pre-existing RSS outreach training programme - Rwanda Essential Surgery Training - which is working to strengthen the technical skills of general practitioners at district hospitals.

Professor Mike Griffin, President of the RCSEd, said: "Building surgical capacity in Rwanda, for Rwanda, is all part of the College's commitment to improving its access to surgery worldwide.

"Training and providing practical experience in-country is vital in making this happen, and our exciting partnership with the Rwandan Surgical Society is a significant step in the College's aims of developing global surgery."

Surgeons Quarter promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the RCSEd campus, which includes the Playfair Building. All profits support the charitable aims of the College which are education, assessment and advancement in surgery.

Surgeons Quarter and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh recently launched its partnership with Bowel Cancer UK, pledging a yearlong calendar of fundraising events by staff to enable the charity to appoint its first Scottish surgical research chair.

The RCSEd has members in 102 countries, training and assessing surgeons to take their life-saving and life-changing skills all over the world.

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Notes to Editors

About Surgeons Quarter

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About The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

The RCSEd (www.rcsed.ac.uk) is one of the oldest surgical corporations in the world and is dedicated to improving safety and outcomes in the delivery of surgical treatment and patient care. Established as the Barber Surgeons of Edinburgh in 1505, and with a membership of over 25,000 in over 100 countries worldwide, it is home to the UK's only Faculty of Surgical Trainers, open to all those with an interest in surgical training regardless of College affiliation. Other faculties include the Faculty of Dental Surgery, Faculty of Dental Trainers, Faculty of Perioperative Care, Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care and Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine.

As the professional home of surgery and dentistry, the College leads and supports the highest standards of clinical practice through education, training and examinations, partnerships with external medical bodies, and representation of the modern surgical and dental workforce. With 80% of the College's UK membership based in England and Wales, a new UK office opened in Birmingham in 2014, followed by a third in Malaysia in 2018 to enhance its international activities.

The College is based at Nicolson Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9DW and can be reached on 0131 527 1600 or mail@rcsed.ac.uk

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