The Mundus ACP Program: aiming for a brighter future

Author_Prof Dr Norbert Gutknecht, Germany

_Under the auspices of the Mundus ACP Program, the Portuguese representative of the World Federation of Laser Dentistry, and the MSc from RWTH Aachen University, Dr Miguel Rodrigues Martins from the Endodontic Department of Oporto University, Portugal, was recently selected to spend one month as an international lecturer at the School of Dental Sciences of the Nairobi University in Kenya.

The Mundus ACP Program belongs to the larger framework of the Erasmus Mundus Programme "Action 2" and consists of a partnership of 20 Higher Education Institutions from the European Union and several ACP Countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific). Its main goal is to enhance the cooperation in the area of higher education between the European Union and the ACP Countries, by supporting master and doctorate students' mobility (from the ACP Countries to Europe) as well as teaching and administrative staff mobility (in both directions).

"These thirty days of lecturing in a completely different environment and an institution which has had several budget containments was definitely a magnificent experience: what might be considered a lack of material at first turns out to be easily made up for by human capabilities, personal interest and professional dedication."

In fact, the Kenyan experience has overcome initial suspects which mainly regarded the past requests for laser education to be part of the technological developments in Dentistry.

Fig. 1 & 2_Kenyan Association Congress Annual Conference and Exhibition. Nairobi, October 2011.


Fig. 1


Fig. 2



"It was truly a coincidence, but during this teaching period, the opportunity emerged to lecture at the Kenyan Dental Association Congress, Nairobi, through the invitation of the Conservative Dentistry Department. Initially, the conference was meant to have a duration of 30 min, but the enthusiasm of the audience and the support from the chairman was so intense that the presentation finally took more than two hours of lecturing about vast applications of lasers."

The interest from the congress participants and the pre- and postgraduate students in the university was another reference point, "In most of the European countries, we give higher education a granted value. Students commonly associate university with something regular and given. In Kenya, university education is hard to achieve and just a small part of the population can afford to attend it. They know that proper education can lead to an improved lifestyle for both themselves and their families. Therefore, the commitment to learn and the respect for the institution are elevated to an uncommonly high level."

The School of Dental Sciences received the lecturer with enthusiasm and on a friendly basis. They had gathered all the necessary resources to not only provide the opportunity to perform theoretical lectures for undergraduates, but they also organized a full-day "Laser's in Dentistry" Symposium for postgraduate students and general practitioners, "Despite the short notice, the participation and the interest for the topic itself were unexpectedly high. Everyone was thrilled by the therapeutic possibilities and the advantages for laser applications in dentistry."

The question, "How much does it cost?" emerged more than once in the course of the presentations. To this simple question, Dr Miguel R. Martins offered a simple answer, "Laser technology may sometimes seem to cost too much, but knowledge can always be shared and taken for free."

In conclusion, the following remark can be seen as the predominant lesson of this lecture, "No matter if we are able to apply the knowledge immediately, learning and understanding other concepts and ideas are properties of a wise clinician. To be aware of new treatment strategies can push people forward, guide them on a quest for education and, finally, aim for a brighter future."_

_contact laser

Prof Dr Norbert Gutknecht
Aachen Dental Laser Center
Pauwelsstr. 17
52074 Aachen, Germany

Tel.: +49 241 47571314



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3_Final meeting and balance of activities (from left to right): Dr Tom Dienya (Chief of Endodontic Department), Dr Miguel R. Martins, Prof Dr Wagaiu (Dean of School of Dental Sciences, Nairobi University), Prof Dr Eric Mitema (Mundus ACP Program and International Relationships Office Director), Dr Kisumbi (Department of Conservative Dentistry Chairman).
Fig. 4_Undergraduate Students at School of Dental Sciences, Nairobi University.