

The Botswana-Baylor Children's Centre of Excellence

The Centre of Excellence is the principal treatment centre for children living with HIV in Botswana and the first of its kind on the African continent. Located on the Princess Marina Hospital site in Gaborone, the Centre is a partnership between the Government of Botswana and the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Since it opened in July 2003, the number of children receiving treatment grows daily and currently exceeds 1,400. The Centre's main activities include provision of highly active antiretroviral therapy (ART) to over 1,200 children as part of the National ARV programme, an HIV screening clinic that sees up to 30-40 children a day, clinical studies aimed at optimising the care and treatment of HIV-infected children and community outreach and social programmes initially targeting approximately 1,000 orphans and vulnerable children in three disadvantaged areas close to Gaborone.

The Baylor International Paediatric AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) Network

The Centre of Excellence in Botswana is part of the BIPAI Network of similar centres in Africa (6), Eastern Europe and Asia, providing antiretroviral therapy to almost 3,500 HIV-infected children and families. Other centres in Southern Africa have been established in Lesotho and Swaziland, with a further centre due to open later this year in Malawi.

Partnership with Skillshare

BIPAI and Skillshare International have been working together since March 2005. Funded through our PPA with DFID, Skillshare International development worker Alan Pattison was placed as Fundraising Co-ordinator at the Centre in Gaborone and for the BIPAI network in Southern Africa, concentrating initially on Botswana and then subsequently on Lesotho and Swaziland as those centres opened later in 2005.



Alan and his wife Robyn work with village communities affected by HIV/AIDS.

The Centre's main challenge has been to find donors to support new projects and to replace existing core funding that will diminish over time. Funding enables children living with HIV to continue receiving support. Within one year of arriving at Baylor, Alan Pattison has secured several new sources of funding from both local and international sources, including UNICEF and the WK Kellogg Foundation. He has prepared and submitted other major funding proposals at a regional level which are in the final stages of decision-making and has helped to establish sound relationships with existing and potential new funders in Southern Africa for national and regional initiatives. By initiating and facilitating strategic business planning, Alan has also established a firm basis for a funding strategy the Centre in Botswana, with similar exercises planned for other Southern African centres later in 2006.