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YEARS OF THET!**
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Afua Akuffo
Public Health Nurse, Lekma Hospital, Ghana

In Ghana 40% of outpatient prescriptions contain antibiotics. The misuse and overuse of antibiotics has encouraged the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance, threatening our ability to combat common infectious diseases. That is why THET is training a new generation of Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Champions to help ensure the safe and effective use of antibiotics.

'My name is Afua, I work as a public health nurse and I am in charge of health promotion. I am also an IPC champion at my hospital. My choice to become a nurse was originally born less out of a love of nursing and more because I had my first child quite early and my parents felt that going to the nursing school would allow me to look after my child. Since my training, I have come to really love what I do.'

I was involved in the antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) training which was provided as part of our partnership with the UK Faculty of Public Health. Learning through a partnership is a two way thing; we learn from our partners and they learn from us. One particular topic that was covered in the training – multi-drug resistance – made me aware of the importance of AMS due to the high rates of resistance in this area. It improved my knowledge on worldwide trends in drug resistant microorganisms and taught me that not every ailment needs an antibiotic. This mindset is gradually catching on amongst my colleagues. The challenge is that until now, there has been an expectation among the patients that since they are unwell and have come to the hospital, they will go home with some sort of medication or treatment.'

My hope for the next five years is that the antimicrobial stewardship programme will be here to stay and that everybody will understand its importance to help make this hospital a better one.'

Dear supporters,

Thirty years ago, THET was founded by a family and a collection of their friends who believed that everyone, everywhere, should be able to access quality healthcare. A right that is currently denied to one billion people around the world.

I am delighted to be writing to you in this special year for THET to share why I support their work. The organisation has changed a lot since I was first persuaded by Professor Sir Eldryd many years ago to work with them; the team has now grown to over thirty across seven countries, and in the last ten years has trained over 100,000 health workers through their Health Partnership model. While the scope of its activities has expanded significantly, the values at the heart of the organisation remain the same: if there is mutual trust and a willingness on both sides to learn from each other then good work will happen.

We have come a long way in improving health, further than most people recognise, but we know we can and must do more, because the job is far from done. There remains a 40-year gap in the life expectancy between a woman born in Sierra Leone compared to one born in Singapore and 10 million people newly diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) every year, of whom 35,000 will have a form of TB that is resistant to all drugs.

Many years ago I trained in medicine because I was fascinated by the double helix but more importantly I liked working with people. Over the years my role has changed many-fold but most recently I have been England's Chief Medical Officer, a position which has been challenging and rewarding in equal measure. In this role I have witnessed first-hand the catastrophic threat antimicrobial resistance poses.

The problem is a universal one, affecting us all. Hence the solution must be a global and collaborative one. The Fleming Fund, set up by the UK Department for Health and Social Care, is one example of such an approach. Set up to support low income countries developing their laboratories and surveillance of antimicrobial resistance, it is a reaffirmation of the scale and urgency of this issue. The new Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship Programme (CwPAMs), managed by THET, is a key part of the UK's response to the difficulties of stewardship in these countries. I know from my own experience that our pharmacists can help these countries through their visits, but they too are coming back enriched by the learning and experience.

CwPAMS is just one of many examples of how THET works to improve the quality of LMIC health workforces and health systems. I believe THET and Health Partnerships can play a major role in the UK's contribution to improving global health.

I will continue to champion the charity and I am hoping that you will join me by also becoming a supporter today.

Any amount you donate will be put to good use, so please support THET's Christmas appeal today.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dame Sally Davies,
Master at Trinity College, Cambridge and Former Chief Medical Officer for England

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