

# 4earlylife

Improving survival and quality 4earlylife in emerging countries

Thank you!

Geneva 31 December 2015

Dear Friends,

**2014** two years after the inception of its Kangaroo Care (KC) Centre, Bonassama was **officially accredited by the Fundacion Canguro** (Bogota) through a four-day visitation by Dr. Guifo from 24-27.2.2014. By the end 2014, more than 80 babies had benefitted from skin-to-skin at Bonassama and the neonatal mortality turned out to be considerably lower than before this care was introduced.

The reduced mortality was reported at the Geneva Health Forum (GHF). Our poster won the **GHF 2014 Award for the best poster** with 1000 CHF prize money. Riccardo Pfister and Cristina Exhenry received the GHF award in person and presented it to Dr. D. Kedy Koum for her great local effort in supporting KC in Bonassama.

Following the GHF 2014, two companies sponsored neonatal equipment for Africa: **MK-Med a modern phototherapy unit** and **GE two open incubators** suited for neonatal resuscitation. Whilst the smaller phototherapy unit was already shipped to Bonassama and currently is in use, the two incubators are waiting for a container transfer in early 2016.

Although not all our fundraising efforts in 2014 were successful, our thanks go to **many of you for your great support**. In particular we thank **Serena Dignola (La Lumière du Temps)** who dedicated a percentage of her artistic candle exhibition sale to the association and the **Pfister Baubüro in St.Gallen** for a very generous donation.

In October 2014, C. Exhenry and R. Pfister visited a teaching hospital in **Dharan, Nepal** where colleagues of the University Hospitals of Geneva support several projects in adult medicine. During 4 days, they participated to **neonatal teaching with specific focus on thermoregulation and Kangaroo Care** and documented possible improvement strategies in an extensive mission report.

Finally, at the very end of 2014, C. Exhenry, R. Pfister with **architects Nicola Pfister and Belem Alves Ferreira Pfister** worked between Christmas and New Year to optimize plans for a **new maternity hospital in Ouahigouya, Burkina Faso**. The project was launched and funded by the Foundations Persis Vallais, Bilifou and Wings of Hope. 4earlylife contributes to the project through its know-how in the field of neonatology and Kangaroo Care and this architectural rearrangement to optimize structural and functional aspects. The construction has started.

**2015** in January, R. Pfister, as president of the Swiss Society of Neonatology organized the **annual congress** in Geneva, selecting as the general topic **humanitarian neonatology**. Prof. Susan Ludington, a world expert on Kangaroo Care, was invited as speaker at this occasion. Within the field of humanitarian neonatology, the meeting facilitated exchanges between Swiss projects involving all continents. Colleagues from Romania, Moldavia, Lithuania and Ukraine, who work in collaboration with the Geneva Neonatology unit in a Swiss-Eastern bloc perinatology project managed by the Swiss Tropical Institute, were invited.

The logo for 4earlylife, featuring the word '4earlylife' in a stylized, handwritten font. The '4' is a simple outline, and the 'e' is a solid shape. The 'y' and 'l' are also simple outlines, and the 'i' and 'f' are solid shapes. The 'e' and 'y' are connected to the 'l' and 'i' respectively.

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They participated at an **after- congress course in the Geneva Neonatology unit with Susan Ludington on Kangaroo Care**, followed by a **neonatal resuscitation course** by R. Pfister.

In terms of fundraising, the association received large support from very dedicated friends and family. In February, a group of friends and patients of Cristina Exhenry organized a **very successful fundraising evening in Geneva** to specifically support Kangaroo Care and in June another group **fundraised for 4earlylife through a Gospel Choir**.

Thanks to a specific donation from a family member, we have been able to improve comfort and hygiene for our small paediatric patients in Bonassama by **installing ceiling fans throughout the paediatric unit**.

In June, R. Pfister and C. Exhenry gave a **two-day 'train the trainer' neonatal resuscitation course in Libreville (Gabon)** based on the start4neo course of the Swiss Society of Neonatology. Professor of Paediatrics Simon Ategbu invited them, and trip and logistics were supported by Nestle Nutrition Institute Africa.

On the return trip, a stop in Douala allowed visits of Bonassama to greet our Kangaroo Community and the new **Hôpital Gynécologique-Obstétrique et Pédiatrique (HGOPED)** structure before its opening.

On September 14th, our first Kangaroo care baby celebrated her third birthday together with **the third anniversary of our Kangaroo Care unit. 108 low birth weight babies** (below 2.5 kg) are part of this program and we are analysing those three years in detail. The average weight was 1900g and babies remained in Kangaroo Care during 11 days, mostly after some initial days of standard care. Only 20% of Kangaroo Care babies leave hospital against medical advices in contrast to nearly 60% of non-Kangaroo Care Babies. We believe this is because Kangaroo Care is much cheaper compared to standard care, and well accepted once started. Early dismissal against medical advice generally leads to far higher out-of-hospital mortality.

A very important recognition of all our efforts was the invitation of Dr. D. Kedy Koum, educated in Neonatology at the Geneva University Hospital (R. Pfister), in the **newborn care group of the Cameroon ministry of health**. This group has now introduced **Kangaroo Care in the basic care package for newborns in Cameroon**, a very significant step forward to improve neonatal care.

Very importantly, **Dr. D. Kedy Koum was also promoted medical director of the paediatrics department of the brand new Hôpital Gynécologique-Obstétrique et Pédiatrique (HGOPED)** of Douala. This promotion is excellent news in terms of spreading Kangaroo Care and improving neonatal care in Cameroon; it also bring new challenges for the Bonassama project where 4earlylife plans a consolidation of Kangaroo Care despite the transition. The program remains largely carried by the Bonassama nursing staff supported by 4earlylife.

Thanks to the **ProREA support**, a young doctor, Ghislaine Kabengele, working already in the paediatrics section of Bonassama will be invited to the Geneva University Hospital for a **3-week internship in April 2016 to improve neonatal resuscitation skills** and her neonatology knowledge. Thus we also back the medical transition of KC at Bonassama.

At the End of the year, R. Pfister participated as a resource to a unique experience; the **CERN HACKATON** brought together several groups of eight young academics from all over the world with different professional background for a non-stop 3 days and two nights marathon within a think- and lab-tank. The aim of each group was to develop a pre-defined humanitarian project. Our group **developed a prototype of an essential incubator**.



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## Future challenges

1. To consolidate KC at Bonassama in order to maintain its role as pilot in Cameroon, particularly for other district hospitals.
2. To back the transition period to a new leadership for KC at Bonassama district hospital.
3. To expand KC to other structures in Cameroon and Burkina Faso and elsewhere.
4. To fasten early management of newborns in Cameroon, creating treatment starter kits for specific acute neonatal diseases such as infections and hypoglycaemia.
5. To provide financial support in the way of free of charge hospitalisation days in the KC unit as well follow-up when the parents cannot pay.
6. To participate in the development and dissemination of low cost but high impact equipment on survival and quality of life for new-borns (bilirubin-meter, resuscitation equipment, essential incubator or baby pod).

*To all the Kangaroo care families and babies who trusted in our project, our entire Kangaroo care team of Bonassama, and to you, all our local supporters who help to make the projects possible.*

**MANY THANKS TO YOU and A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016!**

**Cristina Exhenry**

**Riccardo Pfister**

**Zaccaria Exhenry**

**Enea Exhenry**



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