



## Queen's Birthday: MOU Signing Ceremony April 2019

Facing the World was honoured for its work at the Queen's Birthday ceremonies hosted by the British Embassy in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. At the ceremony in Hanoi the charity signed a significant Memorandum of Understanding with Vietnam Airlines, 108 Military Central Hospital, Viet-Duc University Hospital and Hong Ngoc General Hospital. This is an exciting development which greatly furthers the charity's sustainable education projects and facilitates the increasing number of treatments of children born with facial abnormalities.



## Hanoi Mission May 2019

The charity sent a multidisciplinary team of 16 UK consultant medics to work with doctors from the charity's partner hospitals in Vietnam. They put in place treatment plans for 126 patients, and selected 56 of those for surgery during the mission week. The teams operated at Viet-Duc University Hospital and Hong Ngoc General Hospital.





Some of the patients required complex surgery to reconstruct the entire bony anatomy of the face and skull. Two children with Apert's syndrome, where some of the bones in the skull fuse prematurely, needed surgery to expand the skull and allow proper development of the brain. To achieve this, the surgeon makes a bicoronal incision (ear to ear across the top of the head) and all the soft tissue is then lowered to the level of the nose and to the back of the head. With combined input from craniofacial surgeons and neurosurgeons, strips of bone are removed to create artificial openings in the skull to allow it to expand normally. This is essential to prevent any further developmental problems with these children as they grow up.



Doctors completed numerous complex resections of tumours, including cancers of the parotid (salivary) gland, through which the main nerves supplying the facial muscles travel. Even a slight error here will result in a weakening of the muscles, which may cause eating and drinking problems, issues with eyes, and aesthetic concerns.







Other complicated procedures were carried out, such as reconstructions in which a flap created from the forehead was used to rectify a defect of the nose. This is a multiple-step procedure, to be completed by the local team later. One case was a complex revision which will be managed locally going forward, using plans put in place during the mission - an example of a complex version of a normally routine operation. Some of the nose reconstructions also involved taking cartilage from other areas of the body such as the ear. The cartilage was sculpted to the desired shape and inserted into the nose to make the new side match the other. All these procedures are life-changing in terms of the final outward appearance.



This year, the Vietnamese team placed emphasis on developing the in-house speciality of oculoplastics. Traditionally in the state system this is a speciality of the Eye Hospital, but there now is a need to have it available within the plastic and reconstructive surgery department. Conditions such as ptosis (droopy eyelids) can cause irreversible vision loss, since the brain fails to develop normally if the eyes are not exposed to light for a prolonged period. Early surgery is essential to preserve vision. During the mission, our oculoplastic surgeon performed different procedures on many children to help suspend eyelids. These procedures have been demonstrated in previous missions, so the local teams are increasingly hands-on, embracing the multidiscipline approach. Several patients were also treated for damaged tear ducts and eyelids following significant facial trauma. All had their eyelids repaired and permanent stents placed in their tear ducts to help drainage.







To complement the surgical training, the charity delivered daily lectures, hosted by Hong Ngoc General Hospital, which were open to the charity's full network. More than 100 doctors from all over Vietnam attended the lecture series.





The collaborative approach of the missions is designed to complement the extensive international Fellowship Programs run by the charity in the UK, Canada, and now the USA so that true craniofacial services can be established in Vietnam.

### **International Fellowship Program**

Through the charity's Fellowship Program from 2015 to date, 76 Vietnamese medics from our partner hospitals in Vietnam have visited top medical centres in the UK and Canada to observe and learn new techniques and approaches. Of that number, 20 have taken part in the program this year so far - 13 in leading hospitals in the UK and seven at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. A further nine are scheduled already for the UK in 2019, and, excitingly, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia will be hosting their first FTW fellow in June, with a second to follow in October.





## National Conference of Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery



Two Facing the World doctors from Birmingham Children's Hospital were invited by the Head of the new Center for Craniofacial and Plastic Surgery at 108 Military Central Hospital to deliver keynote speeches at the June 2019 3rd National Scientific Conference of Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery.

### Upcoming

Two doctors from the charity's partner hospitals in Vietnam, Viet-Duc University Hospital and 108 Military Central Hospital, have been invited to attend and present at the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Society of Craniofacial Surgery in Paris, September 2019.

**We aim to train a further 140 doctors over 5 years to achieve 40,000 surgeries**

## Will you help us?!

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