

# 2020\_21 ANNUAL REPORT



a project of  
**Rotary**  
Box Hill Central



**OUR GOAL IS  
TO GIFT A SMILE  
FOR LIFE TO  
CHILDREN  
BORN WITH  
A CLEFT**



## Overview:

As a Rotary Club based program, we proudly celebrate 16 years of providing free cleft surgical services to the disadvantaged, low-income Cleft suffering families of Bangladesh.

At the conclusion of this 2020/21 year, we acknowledge the impact of the global pandemic, the resultant unimaginable challenge experienced globally, not least across Bangladesh, South Asia and also its impact generally on our Operation Cleft Australia free cleft lip and palate surgical program.

Yet, even with all the global pandemic has thrown at the program, the dedication and faithful support of our Australian donors and the tireless, dedicated commitment of our surgeons and partner DCKH and staff in Bangladesh (Cleft Bangladesh), Operation Cleft Australia has achieved a most positive outcome for the year completing 1,611 life changing surgeries.

While the Covid-19 challenges continued to impact the Australian community over the year, the Australian donor family, including many Rotary Clubs have faithfully contributed a total of \$172K this is just 4% below the previous 19/20 year.

## Surgical Program Outcomes:

Our four Bangladeshi surgeons completed a total of 1,611 surgeries. This is a remarkable result, and well above the optimistic planned budget of 1,500 surgeries. Together with our German Cleft partner (Deutsche Cleft Kinderhilfe e.V) we operate within Bangladesh as "Cleft Bangladesh". Operation Cleft Australia accepts responsibility for 600 surgeries per year as part of this our second, two-year agreement with DCKH. Since Operation Cleft commenced providing surgical support for cleft lip and palate patients in 2005, we as Operation Cleft Australia, and together with our partner DCKH, since July 2018, have now completed a total of 16,500 surgeries as of June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021.

During this 20-21 year, Cleft Bangladesh advertised for two new positions for trainee cleft surgeons to work alongside our present long serving, highly experienced craniofacial cleft surgeons. These two positions calling for experienced qualified plastic surgeons were eagerly sort after with extensive interviews conducted. We were pleased to fill the positions with both a female and male surgeon. The Covid-19 lockdown situa-

tion has delayed their planned training program, which will commence in earnest from July 2021. We are excited about their contribution as potential valued members of the expanded surgical team.

## Patient Safety Protocols:

During the year it was agreed by Operation Cleft and partner DCKH to undertake a full review of current Cleft Bangladesh Surgical practices and together with the surgeons prepare a set of revised documented 'Best practice' protocols, reflecting our commitment to ensure the highest priority is given to patient safety and care across all areas of the Cleft Bangladesh surgical program.

## Fundraising Outcomes:

We continue to be deeply appreciative of our many long-term regular Individual donors, faithful Rotary Clubs and other organisations like trusts, schools, and businesses for their continuing support of Operation Cleft Australia, and its life changing work across the nation of Bangladesh.

Individual supporters and the Friends of Operation Cleft Australia have continued to support and encourage us so much. The donations from Individual supporters was higher at \$86,000 for the year, 16% higher than for the previous year. Rotary Clubs even with their fundraising activities severely restricted have continued to be very supportive and generous. Rotary Club giving for the year, is \$66,000, against \$68,000 last year, a reduction of just 4%.

## Other Organisations:

Operation Cleft Australia has over the years deeply appreciated the support of other organisations; Trusts, Clubs, Schools and the many businesses that have supported us. The support from 'Other organisations' this year totalled \$20,000, down from \$36,000 the previous year.

# CHAIR REPORT



## In Conclusion:

A huge thank you to our Operation Cleft Australia key supporters and Ambassadors located within Rotary Districts across each state. We appreciate their ongoing effort to promote the life changing work of Operation Cleft Australia.

Thank you to Nirasha Silva our part-time, hardworking Fund-raising Officer. Nirasha looks after communications, the editing, organising, and coordinating the distribution of promotional materials, Newsletter distributions, e-mail outs, database management, media relationships, while coordinating meetings and other promotional opportunities.

Thanks to Good-will Ambassador Moinul Islam (now located in Geelong) for his liaison work with our In-country manager and surgeons in Bangladesh, and for his time and input on the Cleft Bangladesh Development Group (CBDG) Committee to review patient Safety Protocols. Moinul also assist with presentations to Rotary Clubs.

Thanks to our Volunteers and Management Committee members for their assistance to support the fundraising activities and for also helping to promote the work of Operation Cleft.

My deep thanks to the serving of the Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Management Committee, for their commitment, support, and willingness to not only provide leadership and direction but also present and promote the good news story that makes this such a significant life changing program.

Sincere thanks again this year to Prospect Wines for continuing to provide our much-appreciated Blackburn office free of charge. Through this substantial contribution we can undertake more surgeries.

We also want to thank and acknowledge the work and support of our auditors, McPhail and Partners Pty Ltd

who have efficiently looked after the auditing of the OCA program now for sixteen years.

We are only able to continue to provide this free surgical program life because of the faithful giving, committed interest and enthusiastic support of so many individuals, Rotary Clubs and long-term friends of Operation Cleft Australia. To achieve 1611 surgeries in such a difficult year is no small achievement I'm sure the Mothers and Fathers and extended families of these many Bangladeshi children would want to express a huge thank you and remind us that their child can now 'smile' because of the gift of surgery that has been provided for them by Operation Cleft Australia in this 2020-2021 year.



**Bruce McEwen**

Chair, Operation Cleft Australia Inc.  
(Trustee for Operation Cleft Australia Foundation)





## OCA History

In **November 2004**, a member of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central, Colin Macfarlane, while assisting with the funding of an Bangladesh Interplast mission, agreed to join the mission and was shocked to observe the number of people with untreated clefts. In March 2005 the outcome of Colins Report back to the Club, the Rotary Club agreed to link with Lamb Hospital in northern Bangladesh to fund a small number of cleft repair operations. The before and after surgery photos convinced the Club members of the incredible transformation that could be achieved by performing relatively low-cost surgery.

In **July 2005**, it was decided to expand the project and **Operation Cleft Australia** was established by the Club with the support of the Glencoe Foundation. The Club set a target of raising funds for 60 surgeries. This was achieved, and the decision was made to establish Operation Cleft as an ongoing Club project and to actively raise funds to further grow the project. A committee of Club members was formed to manage the project. Administrative support was initially provided by the Glencoe Foundation. Surgical camps were held in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Laos. As the project developed it was decided in

in the interests of efficiency and in recognising highest Cleft need, to restrict the project to Bangladesh.

In **May 2008**, The Rotary Club of Box Hill Central established the Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Trust, an independent “not for profit” organisation registered with the ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for - profits Commission) to manage the project. Operation Cleft Australia continues as an independent organisation managed by a Committee of Management made up of Rotarians, the majority of whom are drawn from the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central. It remains a project of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central and is a proud Australian Rotary Club project with valued support from Rotary Clubs and Rotarians across Australia. Volunteers and a part-time Fundraising Officer share the fundraising and marketing responsibilities with the assistance of a network of Operation Cleft Ambassadors and members of the Committee of Management. As of June 2021 Operation Cleft has together with partner DCKH (German Cleft) completed over 16,500 cleft operations. More than 5,000 children are born each year in Bangladesh with clefts issues, repair surgery is not covered under the Bangladesh’s public healthcare system.

### Strategic Partnership:

From July 2018, Operation Cleft Australia moved into a collaborative agreement with DCKH–Deutsche Cleft Kinderhilfe e.V. (German Cleft). Within Bangladesh we are ‘Cleft Bangladesh’. Outside of Bangladesh, DCKH provides free surgeries and related services in 12 other developing countries. DCKH have been doing some surgeries in Bangladesh since 2009. By working together, Operation Cleft Australia and DCKH plan to undertake 1500 cleft surgeries in Bangladesh each year. The partnership will also open doors for Operation Cleft Australia to share access to a planned Comprehensive Cleft Centre to be established in Bangladesh by DCKH. This will provide important support for cleft patients with access to Speech Therapy, Orthodontics as well as ear, nose, and throat treatment.

The photograph was taken back in 2004 during Interplast surgical mission in Dhaka Medical College Hospital



**It takes as little as  
A\$350 and as few as  
45 minutes to pro-  
vide life-changing  
surgery!**

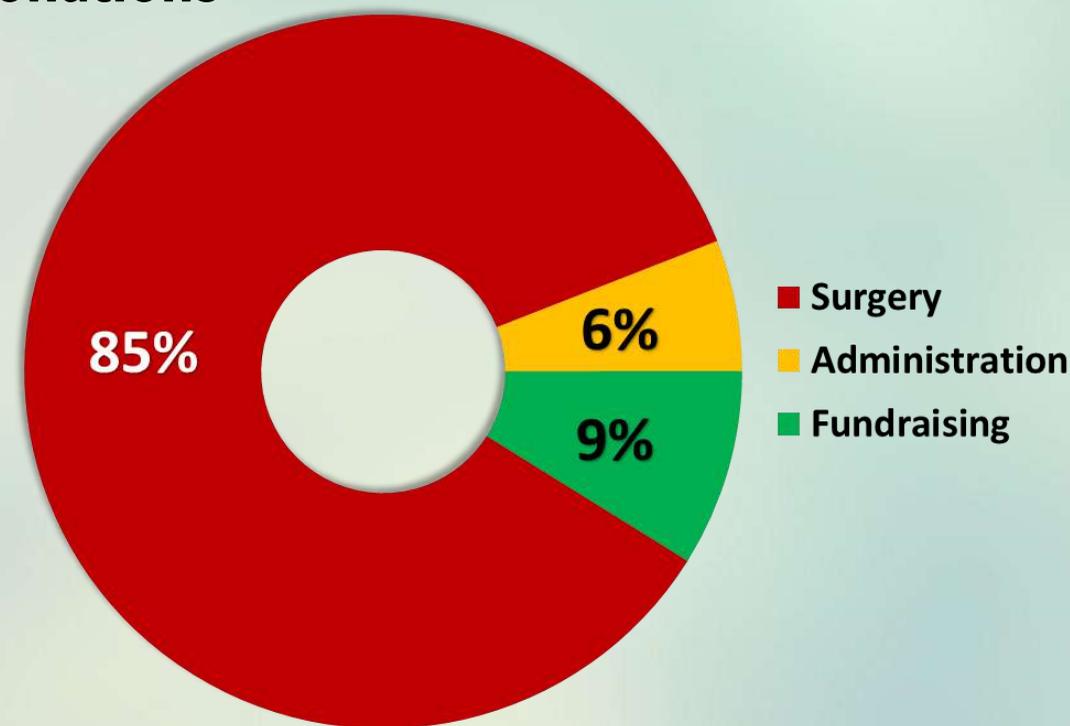
When a child is born with a cleft condition, it affects their health, their self-confidence, their ability to make friends and their future. Our mission is to continue to provide these free, life-altering surgeries to those in Bangladesh most in need. Our passionate and highly trained medical volunteers understand that when parents bring their child to us, they are placing their trust in us to treat them as if they were our own. After the surgery, the child a bright, beautiful new smile and their family leads a normal life. They get access to education, build a social network and to reach his or her full potential as a contributing member of their community.

# **16-YEAR JOURNEY OF MIRACLES**

# COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS



## How we utilised Your Generous Donations



OPERATION CLEFT FOUNDATION INC  
 A PROJECT OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOX HILL CENTRAL  
 ABN 36 063 471 446  
 FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE  
 2021 (AUD)

Period Ending:	30 Jun 21	30 Jun 20
<b>PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT</b>		
<b>INCOME FROM DONORS</b>		
Rotary Clubs and individuals	172,000	179,000
<b>LESS EXPENDITURE</b>		
International project expenses	191,000	150,000
Local expenses	33,000	46,000
	224,000	196,000
Surplus (deficit) for the period	-52,000	-17,000

### BALANCE SHEET

#### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	212,000	252,000
Sundry Debtors	4,000	

#### LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES

Sundry creditors	19,000	3,000
Provisions	3,000	3,000

#### NET ASSETS

	194,000	246,000
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## Donation Received Comparison for this year against last FY

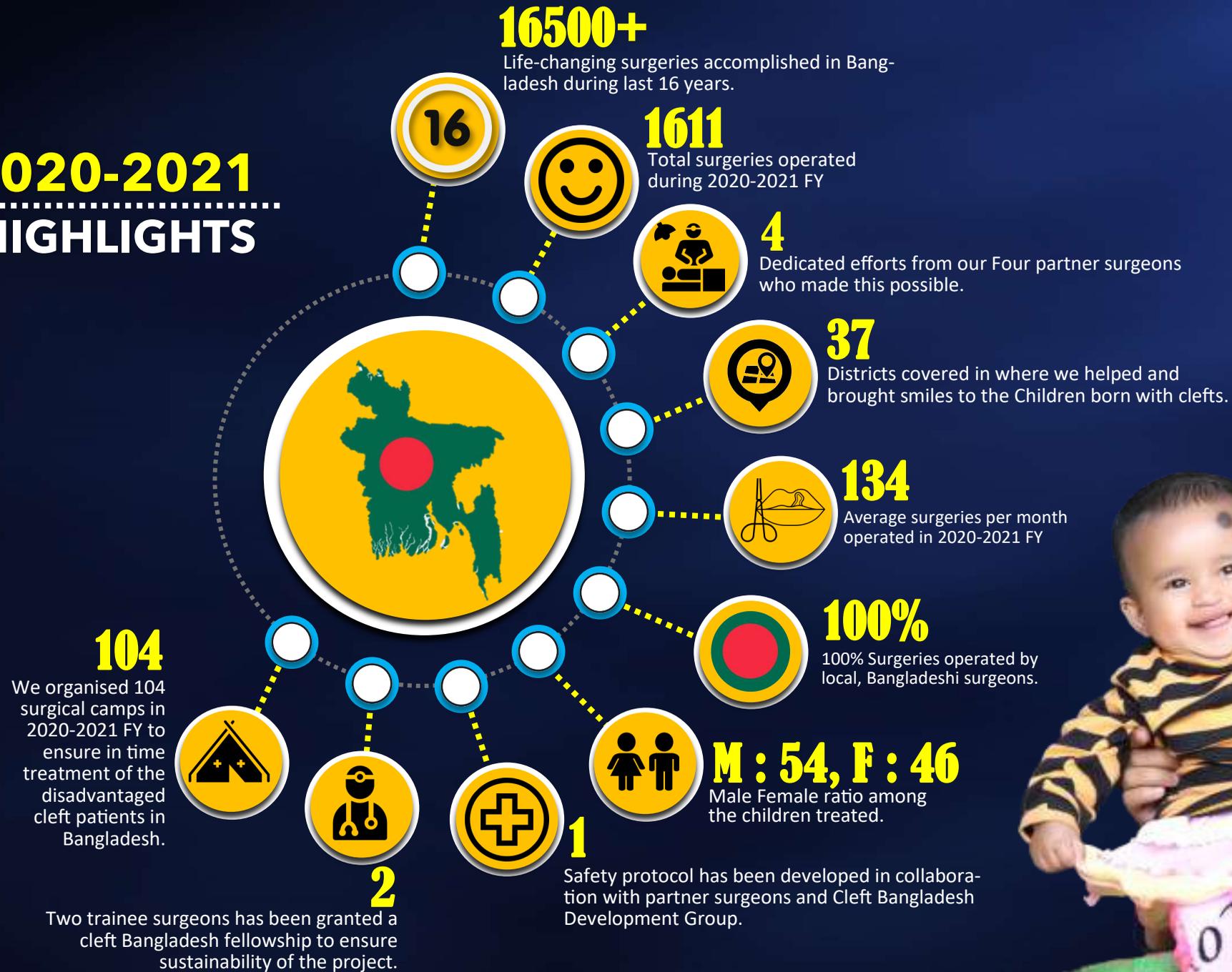
Donations Received	2020_2021	%	2019_2020	%	Change %
Rotary Clubs	66,000	38%	68,000	38%	-3%
Other organisations	20,000	12%	36,000	20%	-44%
Individuals	86,000	50%	74,000	42%	16%
TOTAL	172,000	100%	178,000	100%	-3%

**A GLORIOUS  
16 YEARS...**

**16500 +  
Clefts Repaired**



# 2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS



# OCA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

## Operation Cleft Matters to me because,

Free surgery bringing hope, future and a smile to so many kids across the poorest, most disadvantaged areas of Bangladesh.



Bruce McEwen, Chair

Being a charter member of RC of Box Hill Central, I am pleased to be a part of OCA that assisted over 16500 needy children in Bangladesh.



Geoff Limmer, Deputy Chair

OCA not only allows opportunity for many children to have a wonderful life, it also invests health system in Bangladesh by training surgeons.



Kath Ronan, Secretary

Bangladesh and our own country are both blessed to be in a better place whilst this project continues.



David Routledge, Finance

I feel extremely proud to be involved in Operation Cleft, it changes lives of so many children in Bangladesh. I also feel proud that we support local surgeons.



Olive Aumann, Member

Operation Cleft enables those who donate, to make a real difference in a child's life. A single smile can say so much!



Janine Scott, Member

Operation Cleft signifies to me because it is an instant life changing experience for children born with cleft lip/palate.



Kevin Dobson, Member

The lives of children with cleft lip/palate and their families are greatly improved both physically and socially by the contribution of Operation Cleft.



Andy Shaw, Member

It's about hope. Giving people that might feel like the world has given up on them, the chance at a new beginning and a better life.



Ashley Coleman-Bock, Member

I saw closely how dreadful the pain from cleft could be both physically and emotionally! Through fixing clefts, we are giving them hope, a new life.



Moinul Islam, Goodwill Ambassador

Operation Cleft is administrated by Operation Cleft Australia Foundation Trust, an incorporated association with DGR (Item2) status as a public ancillary fund. ABN 36 063 471 446. The trust is administered by a dedicated management committee who care about every smile this project bringing in Bangladesh.

# Leave a Legacy...



## Gift a smile for life by gifting a card to your loved ones...



Include Operation Cleft in your will to give a new lease of life to children born with a cleft lip/palate in Bangladesh.

To include Operation Cleft in your will, we suggest the following wording for consideration by your Solicitor:

"I bequeath the sum of \$..... (or portion of my estate or description of property) to The Trustee for Operation Cleft Australia Foundation for its general purposes free of all duties. I declare that the receipt from an authorised officer of the organisation shall be a complete and sufficient discharge for the executor (s)".

For more information please visit:

**[www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of leaving a bequest to Operation Cleft Australia and how much it will help our project, please contact our office on: **03 9877 9717**

Email us: **[info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au)**

We appreciate your kindness in thinking about a bequest to gift a smile for life and leaving your legacy.

*My Last Will...*

We recently started 'OCA Gift Cards' - a new way of giving to the cleft children in Bangladesh. If you need a present for someone who cares about disadvantaged cleft children to the poorest part of the world, who doesn't have adequate access to treatment, there's no better choice. Not only does the recipient get a beautiful card, but together you make a real contribution in transforming lives of cleft children in Bangladesh by **gifting a smile for life**. Every Operation Cleft card will help transform the lives of children born with congenital cleft lip/palate in Bangladesh.

Please collect your card from the link bellow:

**<https://www.operationcleft.org.au/shop/>**

# Hasan is a bundle of joy!

When Hasan was born, I was afraid of social taboos, superstitions and rejection. I did not share with anyone when he was born until I got the date of cleft surgery. At 3 months, Hasan got his cleft surgery at Lion Mukhlesur Rahman Children's Hospital, Chattagram. My son is growing up, he has a bright smile now which makes our day. One day he will be a wonderful role model for other kids with cleft lip and palate. I love watching him grow and foreseeing the man he will become. I want him to be a religious leader.

**From Md. Harun, Hasan's Father**





## “Giving back” can add so much meaning to a surgeon’s life.

*Dr. Sayeed Ahmed Siddiky*

There is nothing more rewarding than working for disadvantaged children. Bangladesh is a country of 170 million people. The population density is overwhelming. Rivers and canals that flow south into the Bay of Bengal crisscrossed this country.

The remotest parts of the country rest with no electricity and no adequate infrastructure. Babies born with congenital birth deformities, eg: cleft lip and cleft palate in these lonely islands, do not have access to surgery. I am privileged to extend assistance to those isolated communities. I, along with my team, travel from one island to another in a floating hospital. With the support of Cleft Bangladesh, I bring medical facilities to the doorsteps of these underprivileged communities.

I am involved in regular cleft camps in major city hospitals for many years now. Working in floating hospital is very different. As winter approaches, the hospital floats upstream and anchors at a different island, treating a new group of people. During each visit, I stay in the floating hospital for an average of three days operating on cleft babies.

My team members include an anaesthetist, a nurse, and a documentation assistant. The medical officer on board in the floating hospital does the preliminary screening of cleft babies. I check on the details, including the photographs of the patients a few days before I arrive. I do a final screening just after we arrive. Usually, we select simple low-risk patients for the ensuing 2 days’ camp. For complex and difficult cases, I bring them to my centre in Dhaka so that I can perform safely their surgeries.

Thanks to Operation Cleft Australia and DCKH for providing me with the means to undertake such a humanitarian effort. I would also like to thank the NGO ‘Friendship’ for running the floating hospitals and organising cleft camps at regular intervals. As much as I love to practice aesthetic plastic surgery in my city hospital, I love to go out to these remote island communities as frequently as I can to serve them. I now realise that “giving back” can add so much meaning to a surgeon’s life.



Dr. Sayeed Ahmed Siddiky is an experienced and energetic Cosmetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgeon based in Bangladesh. We are lucky to have him in our team as a Surgeon. Dr Siddiky shared his experience working with us and his feelings on supporting with disadvantaged communities of Bangladesh.



## Dr Zaman Trains Trainee Surgeon from Somalia

Dr Ahmed Warsame Elmi from Somalia has joined in a two months cleft training program under our eminent plastic surgeon, Dr Quamruzzan, in Bangladesh. Dr Elmi is an ENT, Head and neck specialist and completed his post-graduation and graduation from Makerere University, Uganda and International University of Africa (IUA), Sudan. The University of Bosaso appointed him as a Dean for the School of Health Science, Garowe campus. Dr Elmi he has been teaching in that university for last three years.

Our partner in Germany, Deutsche Cleft Kinderhilfe (DCKH), has established a full-fledged cleft hospital in Somalia and planning to open cleft care from Dec 2021. To make sure quality cleft services and aesthetic cleft surgeries, DCKH is assembling all interventions to substantiate the centre with qualified surgeons. After the training, Dr Elmi will join the hospital in Somalia.

Dr Quamruzzan is one of the prominent plastic surgeons in the country. So far, he has completed over 9000 surgeries and we hope Dr Elmi will learn from Dr Quamruzzaman's long experience, skills, tactic and technique in cleft surgery. So far, Dr Elmi has joined around fifty cases, including both cleft lip and palate surgeries, as an observer. We wish him luck in spreading smiles in other corner of the world.

# Meet our Trainee Surgeons

To ensure sustainability of the project, DCKH and OCA granted a fellowship for two aspirant young surgeons from Bangladesh for the Cleft Bangladesh Fellowship program 2021. The two fellows for the program are Dr S.M. Masfiquer Rahman and Dr Shantona Rani Paul. They will get hands-on training under our home surgeons and will receive international training gradually.

Dr. Masfiquer is a Pediatric Surgeon and working as Assistant Professor under the Department of Pediatric Surgery at Jessore Medical College & Hospital. Dr. Masfiquer completed his Master of Surgery in Paediatric Surgery from Bangladesh Institute of Child Health, Dhaka after pursuing his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Rangpur Medical College, Rangpur. He joined in 5 surgical camps as an observer. Best wishes Masfiquer!



**Dr. Masfiquer**

Dr Shantona Rani Paul is a Paediatric Surgeon working as a Resident Paediatric Surgeon at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, Rajshahi, Bangladesh. She completed her Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the same medical college in 2003. She started her FCPS degree in Surgery 2015 and later on joined the Master of Pediatric Surgery program in 2017 at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka. Best wishes Shantona !



**Dr. Shantona**



# SURGICAL CAMPS IN 2020-2021 PROJECT YEAR

In 2020-2021 we successfully organised 104 surgical camps in different locations in Bangladesh. We tried to reach o the communities as much as we can. Those pictures are taken from different surgical camps.





**YOU CAN  
CHANGE  
A CHILD'S LIFE  
FOREVER**



Operation Cleft is an International Project  
of the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central Inc.  
District 9810, Australia

For more information please visit:  
[www.operationcleft.org.au](http://www.operationcleft.org.au)

If you would like to discuss any aspect of a  
donation, leaving a bequest, or any infor-  
mation about Operation Cleft Australia and  
how much it will help our project, please  
contact our office on : 03 9877 9717 or

Email us: [info@operationcleft.org.au](mailto:info@operationcleft.org.au)

