

The International College of Dentists (ICD) and its Role in Humanitarian and Educational Aid

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Short Communication

Mission statement

The International College of Dentists is the Preeminent Global Dental Honour Society recognizing outstanding professional achievement and meritorious service while advocating for Humanitarian and Educational Initiatives.

The core values

Leadership

Uphold the highest standard of professional competence and personal ethics.

Recognition

Recognize distinguished service to the profession and the public worldwide.

Humanitarianism

Foster measures for the prevention and treatment of oral disease by encouraging and supporting humanitarian projects.

Education

Contribute to the advancement of the profession of dentistry by fostering the growth and diffusion of dental knowledge worldwide.

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International Professional Relations

Provide a universal international forum for the cultivation of cordial relations within the profession and to assist in preserving the highest perception of the profession worldwide. The above is a summary of what the ICD is about and highlights its core values. The College is more than 100 years old and was founded by the friendship between two Fellows, Dr. Louis Ottofy from the USA and Dr. Tsurukichi Okumura of Japan.

There are more than 12,000 Fellows now in 125 countries worldwide consisting of academicians, researchers, clinical specialists, and general practitioners. There are 15 ICD Sections and 15 Regions encompassing the Globe, and it is this network that provides the College with the ability to spread and share educational and humanitarian information worldwide. The College has a number of foundations which carry out both educational and humanitarian projects, and there is a college-wide fund called the Global Visionary Fund (GVF), which is the charitable arm of the International Council. Its initiatives in fundraising and programming allow ICD to achieve its social mission of providing oral health care for the underserved, as well as the delivery of educational programs where they are most needed. Created in 2013, the ICD GVF is a tax-advantaged (U.S. IRS 501c3) charitable organization owned and operated by the College. Originally created to receive contributions from other corporations who share our values, it has developed a following of loyal individual donors and supporters. Today these supporters allow ICD to make a difference in the face of huge unmet dental care needs worldwide. The College leverages its impact by collaborating with likeminded foundations, charitable groups, and partners to achieve the maximum betterment of the oral health of the public we serve. A perfect example of this is the donation of \$3.6 million of PPE to the College by Henry Schein Cares during the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been both political and legislative protocol difficulties in delivering this donation to countries where it is most needed.

However, the College has done extraordinarily well in delivering to the most underserved communities. The ICD has many volunteers who give of their time and talent but often this is not enough because there are real costs in providing humanitarian care, which includes materials, equipment, venues, transportation, medicines etc. The GVF removes these barriers. When the GVF receives a request for funding, the application must adhere to proper clinical and research guidelines, including well-documented outcome reports. Most importantly the rationale for support should comply with the following:

Simplicity

Complicated procedures are more time consuming and are not beneficial on a cost/health basis if we are to connect with as many patients as possible. Simple procedures as outlined in the WHO Basic package of Oral care (BPOC) should where possible be utilized.

Sustainability

There are many papers that extoll the virtues of achieving sustainable projects in underserved communities.

Suitable to local needs

Demographics and epidemiology need to be considered when formatting projects. The ICD European Section liaised with the World Health Organization in getting basic methods published, and it is available online at: www.icd-europe.org

The message is clear that measurements need to be taken both pre and post treatment to adequately assess the outcomes.

Supported by a written protocol

It is important that all applications provide information on need and are written in such a way that is scientific and evidence based. All projects must provide outcome measurements and documented photographic images of the work carried out.

Serviced by a local contact

Having a local person on hand to receive materials, help with potential language difficulties and facilitate local help is important.

Social Inclusion

This relates to every human being's right to have housing, sanitation, good nutrition and of course, health care provision.

Many ICD Sections support humanitarian projects. These projects throughout the world are visible evidence of our presence to the public and to the profession. In fact, the College has created a projects world map, which is interactive and can be used by ICD Fellows, humanitarians, educators, volunteers, and leaders worldwide: <http://www.icd.org/projects-2/>

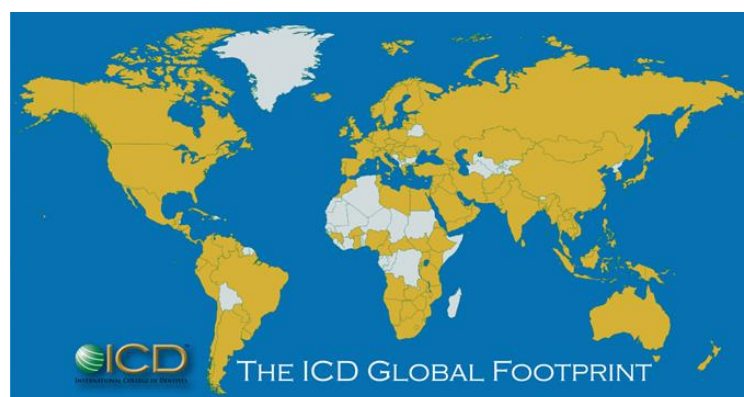


Figure 1: The ICD global footprint.

The College has a number of educational programs including a Dental Safety Program, which is an international educational initiative designed to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and implement the safer practices of oral health professionals/personnel to meet standards in infection control and occupational safety. The emphasis of this educational and capacity building initiative is towards developing nations. The goal is to control the spread of infectious diseases from patient to patient, oral health professional to patient and patient to the oral health professional during the provision of dental care. This is particularly important during the pandemic.

The ICD also has an Understanding Antimicrobial Resistance Program. Antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance are critical issues to public health systems worldwide. Because of it, infections that were once easily treated with antibiotics are becoming more dangerous, causing treatment failure, prolonged suffering or even death. The College formed a partnership with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Be Antibiotics Aware Program. The mission is to disseminate critical information on antibiotic and antimicrobial resistance and appropriate antibiotic use to ICD Fellows globally. The College maintains working relationships with other important international healthcare organizations. The goal is to collaborate in ways where we are well positioned to play a meaningful role in advancing oral health care and dental education globally.

Recent updates

Alliance for Oral Health Across Borders (AOHAB)

As an Associate Member of this organization, we have sent ICD representatives to their working sessions. The focus is to increase collaboration between dental schools in different nations whose governments do not have strong working relationships, in an effort to improve dental education overall.

Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention (CDC)

We have a formal Memorandum of Understanding in place which authorizes ICD to consider the CDC an official partner within their global Antibiotics Awareness program. We use their science as the underpinning of the ICD Understanding Antimicrobial Resistance program.

FDI World Dental Federation

ICD has been an Associate Member for the last 10+ years. We represent our interests by sending a representative to their annual meeting, staying in contact by means of document exchange or other personal correspondence between officers of both groups.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The Fellows of Section V Europe developed and are financially supporting a health survey platform which WHO, the health programs arm of the United Nations, uses in its relative initiatives.

World Economic Forum (WEF)

ICD is invited each year to send representatives to an annual WEF meeting in New York City during the United Nations General Assembly. Together with other health organizations, ICD provides input to the group's ongoing efforts to get oral health included in the UN's political declarations in order to raise the awareness of global oral health issues.

United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

The College is in Special Consultative Status with the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) branch of this United Nations department. We expect to be in position to provide direct input to this division of the UN on oral health-related topics, very soon.

Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP)

The ICD holds a Non-For-Profit-Organization membership with OSAP. The purpose of this membership is to receive important and updated information and resources related to dental safety, asepsis and prevention, and infection control, for use and dissemination to Fellows worldwide.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

References

1. <http://www.icd.org/projects-2/>