



## **EDUCATION BULLETIN - FEBRUARY 2016**

### **Vocational Training, Microcredit, and Educational Scholarships**

One of the great challenges facing centres supported by IDF Life for a Child Program (LFAC) is how they can provide support for young adults once they turn 26 years of age. LFAC can no longer provide insulin, meters and strips, HbA1c tests etc. in these situations – our resources are limited and there are still many unmet needs for younger children and adolescents. Given resources can cost US\$25-70 per month, it is a real and significant life-issue for those affected.

However, if the young person can afford to provide their own supplies, the problem is solved. This is possible if the young adult has acquired skills and can earn the money themselves. Some young people previously supported by LFAC have become independent through the standard school and university systems. In at least four countries, LFAC-supported centres have provided other opportunities for young people:

#### Vocational Training:

The *Rwandan Diabetes Association* has a six-month in-house school for young adults, teaching skills such as hairdressing, sewing, agriculture, and animal husbandry. There is also much beneficial diabetes education.

In Dhaka, the *Bangladesh Diabetes Association* has a vocational training program covering such skills as beautician training, a computer classroom, and is being expanded to also include mobile phone repair and cooking training.

#### Microcredit Programs:

The *Tanzanian Diabetes Association* has developed a microcredit program for parents and older youth – depending on skills and need a small business (sewing, brick-laying etc.) is identified and initial funds are provided, with the aim that these are paid back and then given to another person requiring support. The *DREAM Trust in Nagpur, India* has also supported the start of a number of small businesses.

#### Educational scholarships

The DREAM Trust also provides educational scholarships in some high school and tertiary situations, and even gives girls (and boys) bicycles so they can get more safely and quickly to high schools, which are often some distance away.

These initiatives are mainly locally-funded, through grants from Rotary Clubs (particularly in Tanzania and Bangladesh), local fundraising from business-houses and local donors (India and Rwanda), and also international donors such as Marjorie's Fund (Rwanda). LFAC has also been able to provide some support on occasion.

LFAC will be working with the respective centres to evaluate the programs listed above – to see the medium-term outcomes. Training is a good thing – but does it lead to employment and income? Everyone likes the idea of microcredit – but is the new small business profitable and does it continue? No-one expects that support will have the desired effect every time, but some methods will work better than others, depending on factors including determination, aptitude, skills, and need for the skill. These evaluations will help us all learn what approaches are most effective, and then we will spread this information to all centres and put it on the LFAC website.

We also would like to know if any other centres are doing any similar programs – so your experience can be shared with everyone.