

DMU project aims to educate children around the world about the importance of hand washing

A project led by a De Montfort University Leicester (DMU) academic is aiming to prevent the spread of disease by educating children around the world about the importance of hand washing.

Dr Katie Laird, Head of the Infectious Disease Research Group at DMU, has worked with Dr Sarah Younie to author an interactive book called *A Germ's Journey*, which focuses on teaching young children the importance of hand washing and how it can prevent the spread of disease.

1000 copies have already been donated to schools and community centres in the UK and India and Dr Laird is now crowdfunding to launch a new project: *A Germ's Journey Around the World*.

The new project aims to provide a range of educational resources to teachers, children and healthcare workers on an international scale.

Dr Laird is hoping to translate the children's book into Gujarati, and distribute it throughout the Gujarati region of Ahmedabad, India. The book, along with culturally relevant posters and guides for parents and teachers, will provide valuable education on how quickly germs can spread and what children can do to reduce the risk of infection.

To launch the project, Dr Laird and her team need to raise £10,000, and are looking for companies and individuals to pledge their support.

Medilink EM member Pal International have been the first company to take up Corporate Sponsorship with a pledge of £1,000 which allows the company to have their logo featured in the book as a corporate sponsor and a link to their website on all digital resources.

Pal International is a manufacturer of disinfectant wipes and hygiene workwear, providing hygiene solutions to food and healthcare markets throughout the world.

As a member of Medilink EM, Pal have access to sector-specific business support and meet periodically with their account manager to discuss new opportunities. When Pal expressed an interest in working with someone who had a passion for infection control, Medilink EM put them in touch with Dr Laird.

Another £1000 pledge has been made by the manufacturers of Q Shield, Q Biotechnologies Ltd, a company specialising in infection prevention solutions based at the University of Lincoln.

Q Shield is the flagship product range of Q Biotechnologies, a persistent skin and surface disinfectant manufactured and distributed internationally.

Dr Laird is hoping that the sponsorships will help to enable *A Germ's Journey* to make a real impact in one of the world's most deprived areas.

She said: "We're delighted that Pal International have decided to sponsor the 'Germ's Journey Around the World' project, and the money they are providing takes us a huge step closer to reaching our target.

“If the crowdfunding is successful and the project goes ahead, we are confident that it will have a significant impact on children’s lives including their education, hygiene practices and their health.”

Perminder Rupra, Managing Director of Pal International, said: “Having been successfully working with Katie on Infection Control projects for approximately one year, we felt that being a corporate sponsor for the latest project would be a great opportunity for us to get involved in a project we really believe in.

“We will continue support Katie with her mission, and would like to thank the team at Medilink EM for the invaluable introduction.”

Dr Andrew Kemp PhD (Bio) is the Principle Scientific Officer and CEO of Q Technologies Group, he became aware of A Germ’s Journey while contributing to the Infectious Diseases Special Interest Group chaired by Dr Laird.

He said: “I was very impressed with A Germ’s Journey, we are pleased to have the opportunity to support the new *A Germ’s Journey Around the World*. Through our international distributor network, we are aware that culturally relevant resources on the spread of infection and hand hygiene are a much-needed accessible resource.”

To find out more about the project, and how you can pledge your support, please go to <https://dmu.hubbub.net/p/germsjourney/>

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