

CHARITY: FUND PAYS FOR DOCTORS AND TEACHERS

We're helping Iraq get back to work

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by **CAROLINE WRIGHT**

Chief Reporter

Doctors and teachers are returning to work in Baghdad – bankrolled by the people of Bradford.

The Human Relief Foundation charity is sponsoring two hospitals and five schools in Iraq as it struggles to get back to normal.

Around £250,000 has already been spent on medical supplies and equipment for the hospitals.

And in the long term around £1 million will be spent on backing for staff.

Mobeen Azhar, from the HRF charity based in Great Horton Road, said the emphasis was getting people back to work so they can buy food.

Mr Azhar said: "The Government used to pay so many of the wages and

now that is not happening. We are providing a fair wage for people to come in and to do their job.

"At the moment most hospitals are functioning only as "first aid" centres and cannot house patients.

"We have made this a priority."

They are backing a 500-bed hospital in Mosul with up to 80 staff and a specialist cancer unit in Baghdad.

Mr Azhar said: "Iraq has one of the highest cancer rates in the world. There is a lot of depleted uranium around and because of sanctions it has been very difficult to get treatment."

He said the schools had books and equipment but were lacking teachers in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Dr Nabeel Al-Ramadhani, the charity's managing director, has been in

Iraq for the past month supervising the relief effort.

So far donations have paid for 60 tonnes of essential food. Water-purification units have been built in some northern villages.

He reports that food supplies are getting very low in the countryside because many families based in the cities fled there for safety.

Donations have poured into the charity – set up in 1991 after the first Gulf war – after the current conflict in Iraq broke out.

The HRF is working alongside the UN aid efforts and many other aid organisations.

Donations should be sent to: HRF, FREEPOST BD 3125, PC Box 194, Bradford BD7 1YW.

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