

Letter from Dr Sigrid Leilich  
August 2009

Hello Friends!

Greetings from Kagando! It's long long time ago since you last heard from us. Hopefully you are not too surprised about this Newsletter and you still remember our small hospital somewhere in nowhere in the south-western tip of Uganda.

For all new readers: I'm a German Doctor working at Kagando, so please don't mind my English!

A lot has changed in the last month. People came and went, some who have been here before left us, many new faces were seen in Kagando, some of them left already or are about to leave. And others are about to come!

Here the changes at a glance: Doctors: Mr. Frank Asimwe - is still around!!! He continues his great job as Medical Superintendent, as excellent surgeon and as VVF-Specialist. In the latter he is joined by our Gynaecologist, Dr. Asa Ahimbisibwe. He came in March, and was warmly welcomed. He came with his lovely wife Brenda (who has been in Kagando before as a pre-Intern). They are not only very good doctors but also very good friends! They are staying in Toks former house. Dr. Michael Tindikahwa is still around with his family. He is very busy not only with Pediatric Ward but also as Deputy MS and In-Charge of HIV-Program. Dr. Herbert is also still around. He is trained in Public Health and responsible for the Community Program, but helps also a lot on the wards when there is a shortage.

Dr. Alphonso Gatere was transferred as In Charge to a nearby Health Center V. He is about to shift with his family to this place. Dr. Yusuf Baseke is still around, also Dr. Hassan Sebina and Dr. Edward Kironde. Dr. Charity Onek went back to Kampala in February. Dr. Alex Muhindo just left recently. He wants to become a Neurosurgeon and I'm happy for him that he could get this opportunity to work in the neurosurgical unit in Mulago as a trainee, together with his colleague as the first Neurosurgical Trainees in Mulago! GMMT-Doctors are still the same. Dr. Annette came last year September for one year, meaning she is also about to leave. I'm finishing my time in Kagando in December. Our Team-Member Steffi, a medical Student, left in January. She is now "replaced" by Carmen, an Occupational Therapist who is very much looking forward to working here. It's not yet clear what exactly she will do here. Since there is no established structure and only an empty room for her, she will first have to find her place.

In the last half year we had two western doctors helping us, Dr. René Etzold from Germany and Dr. Morwena Marshall from UK, but unfortunately both left.

NEW Doctors are Dr. David Mutibwa, just finished Internship, and at the end of August we're expecting a couple from UK, Dr. David Lynch and his wife. Dr. David Lynch is Urologist and will mostly work with Fistula-Work.

Other Changes: As usual, there are a lot of changes in staffing concerning nurses and also clinical officers. Our Matron, Sr. Geneva, left. She is replaced by Sr. Laheri. This has for Sr. Laheri a positive and a negative side. On the one hand Sr. Laheri (she is the only double trained nurse, as I know) seems for me to be a very good Matron, on the other hand she is very much needed on Pediatric Ward and the only trained Pediatric nurse in Kagando! My friends, Peter Yekka and Nancy Yekka are not longer in OPD. Former left Kagando, and latter is on maternal leave! They are joined by a sweet baby girl called Anne!

Apropos Anne: Dr. Anne and Sr. Anne have been around for a good time to work on Palliative Care and other things. Sr. Biira Mary, Sr. Lilian Muwonge und Br. Iremba Wilfred are now our full-time palliative nurses. We are very grateful for the good job all palliative care members are doing! Many other Bazungu have been around and helping in our work in Kagando or outside of Kagando. The american couple, John and Katherine Bowers, left in March. A trustees meeting of Friends of Kagando with the Kagando Hospital Management took place in spring with lots of decision makings. For this Dr. Ralph Settatee, Andrew Holt and Rob Morris have been around. They were joined by some friends and able to help not only in Management but also practically on wards and with CMI's.

Thanks to our Nursing School and recently finished Nurses we still have some nurses working on the ward. Nevertheless, all the problems mentioned last time are still going on. Particularly our hard working and good nurses are struggling with the conditions in Kagando and looking for other, better paid jobs. There is still a big need of improving the working conditions for nurses (and other staff) in Kagando. The salary in Kagando is less than half of Government payment, and the working motivation here is much higher (a friend of mine working in a Government Hospital as a doctor is waiting during wardround till all investigations are done because he knows if he just orders and continues his work without follow up they will never be done). The longlasting complaint about the long night shifts seems to be solved. The night shifts are now 5 nights in a row instead of 7 nights.

Other challenges are the never-ending-stories about equipment. Either lack of them, or just poor maintenance. Unbelievable: the ECG-Machine is still not really in use. First we had too many interferences, and it took us a while to find out what to do. Now the machine is working, the paper is available, but obviously the ink has dried... The X-Ray-Machine was not working for around 3 months. It needed some spare parts, as a consequence we were not able to do X-Rays (except such of bones of limbs with the old machine) during this time. This very much disturbing problem was solved when Friends of Kagando came. In addition to that most of our machines in laboratory are or have been faulty, and we still have a big big problem with glucometers or sticks. It seems to improve with a simple solution: our glucometers are now fixed in a wooden box at the reception of Medical Ward and Paed Ward and Nurses are taking the blood with a slight to the glucometers. In the last two months on Medical Ward I tried to run a Medical Ward without ECG, Chest-X-Ray, Liver Function Test, Renal Function Test, Electrolytes and Blood sugars. So I'm happy to tell you that at least some of these problems have been solved. The Haematology Analyzer I was mentioning last time has not been mentioned by anyone else since Absalom left. Its so sad.

But I'm very happy about other new equipment, like some pulseoximeters, oxygen concentrators and a nebulizer for Medical Ward! They are nearly daily in use, and we are so happy! Thanks for all of you who contributed, financial but also in prayers! Even the availability of drugs improved a lot in the last month (I've heard in the same time the depts at Joint Medical Store increased..)

My time on Medical Wards ended in May on my own request. My first change was a rotation to Maternity, where I was able to learn a lot from Dr. Asa, the midwives and others. After a few weeks I was able to operate C-Sections on my own! Then I went on leave, and now I'm back on Paediatrics. My wish is to spend at least two months of the remaining time on surgical ward, if it is possible.

Diabetes still remains a big challenge. Dr. Brenda is involved in a study about diabetes from Kampala including our Diabetic Clinic with funds for special Diabetic Sheets, Tests and probably insulin. Or better, was. When I asked her about this study last week she said, it looks like we are stranded. The Accounts will provide us with a list of all poor diabetics (means all diabetic patients on insulin who are not able to pay their bills). If you know a Diabetic Association who is happy to fund poor people with Diabetes in developing countries, let us know!!!

Our Nursing Training School wants to become an University. They are working hard for this. One step is a new building with new class rooms, office rooms and dorms, funded by DANIDA. It is already under construction at the place where the badminton court and the football pitch has been - and its growing daily. Badminton is now taking place at the Community Hall.

Kilembe Power is about to reach our Staff Quarters and will help with power supply when Kagando power is not stable. The power wires needed space, so the road down has now a lot of sunshine. Nearly all trees at one side had to be felled (felled?).

Any other news? Oh, yes, we had again plenty of Bazungu here, Nursing Students from Belgium (nurses and midwives), Medical Students and Teachers, and there are more coming. Clay House and Guest House are already fully booked for the whole summer! If you wish to come again, you are very welcome, please tell Dr. Frank in time.

And we had had a very good seminar at Chapel, about the Fatherheart of God, from Winette and Ingrid from Mto Moyoni in Jinja. God doesn't want only our obedience, He wants our heart, to heal it and to change it.

Thanks again for your help, interest, support and your prayers! If you want to know something about some special people or events or if you think, I've missed something important or give wrong information, please let me know!!!

God is still in control, in spite of all our weaknesses and failures and everything that doesn't take the way we wanted. If we ask Him and allow Him. Here in Kagando and in your life.

Thanks again! Yours Sigrid

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