

MEDICAL ADVISORY AND CARDIOLOGY

Dr Nicolas Madsen is a paediatric cardiology fellow at Seattle Children's Hospital, and was one of the ISIS medical volunteers selected in 2011 to visit Kiwoko Hospital.

While at Kiwoko Dr Madsen conducted a needs assessment of the Hospital's capabilities to diagnose and treat paediatric heart related conditions. He also started to develop a training programme on how to conduct basic heart ultrasounds, identify heart defects, and determine their significance. During his trip, significant steps were made in the hospital's ability to advance paediatric cardiology in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Below is an account from Dr Madsen of some fantastic events that occurred during his visit which made development of the programme possible.

"Two amazing things happened while I was in Uganda. One, as if out of thin air, a portable ECHO machine (used for heart and chest ultrasounds) arrived from Ireland the same day I arrived in Kiwoko. An Acuson Cypress portable ECHO machine EXACTLY like the one I was carrying with me from America. I brought it with me so I could use it while working at Kiwoko, but which sadly, I could not leave behind. Consequently, every lesson I provided to Kiwoko staff could now be carried forward long after I left.

Then surprise number two happened. On the day of my departure from Uganda, I set up a meeting with a well-known hospital in Kampala and one of two paediatric trained cardiologists.

The purpose of this visit was mostly to satisfy my own curiosity, but as luck would have it, the meeting turned into something more. It turns out that the paediatric cardiologists and his medical partner were hoping to begin a cardiac outreach programme because many rurally located patients had difficulty reaching their facility. The doctor mentioned he wanted a hospital for the outreach that was well organised, led by talented doctors, frequented by a reliable patient population, about 60-90 minutes from Kampala, and most importantly, a place with an ECHO machine - as they did not have one to bring.

Well, you can guess how long it took me and the doctor to laugh and smile at the coincidence of it all. I cannot help but feel incredible gratitude and optimism that there is an opportunity here. I truly hope that the results of this first trip are but a spring board toward better care of cardiac disease at Kiwoko Hospital."

Soon after Dr Madsen's visit, Dr Rory, the Medical Superintendent of Kiwoko Hospital went to meet with the two cardiologists. They agreed that setting up an outreach clinic at Kiwoko is a very beneficial venture for all. Since then, clinics have been organised and began.

As part of ISIS's telemedicine/medical advisory programme, with the help of Dr Madsen, ISIS has been able to create a link with Seattle Children's Hospital so some of the more complicated images from the ECHO machine can be viewed and advised on from Seattle. This could be a valuable teaching tool for the future and expand the medical advisory programme. This programme has so many benefits to the people in the catchment area Kiwoko supports.

Dr Madsen is now a pediatric cardiologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and hopes to continue his work with the programmes at Kiwoko through ISIS and the Cincinnati Children's global health programme.

