

## **Swedish NICU Donations Save Young Lives in Africa**

Swedish and its neonatal nurses are reaching out to hundreds of sick and premature babies in one of the world's poorest countries – and providing them a chance at life.

The scene is Kiwoko Hospital, located in the African nation of Uganda and some 50 miles north of Kampala, the capital. It was here in that the ISIS Foundation, a Bermuda-based charity, established a labor room and neonatal unit. And it is here that Swedish nurses are helping save young lives, without ever leaving home.

“Kiwoko Hospital was struggling with premature and low-birth-weight babies,” says Debbie Lester, the foundation’s Uganda special projects manager. “We’ve been with them since 1998 and got funding to build the neonatal unit and fund a large portion of it on an ongoing basis – but we needed neonatal and life-saving equipment for the babies.

“The need was greater than you can imagine.”

Lester, who now lives in Seattle, solved that problem with the assistance of Swedish and four other area hospitals. At Swedish/First Hill, bins to collect supplies are in place on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), a Level III unit, and the Swedish Infant Special Care (Level II) Unit.

“We collect items that, for whatever reason, we can no longer use,” says Angelita Bautista, the Swedish NICU nurse who coordinates Swedish’s ISIS participation. “We don’t want to waste anything that can save lives in a third-world country.”

Everything from bulb syringes to catheters, from pacifiers and forceps to baby warmers and incubators, is collected from the various Seattle-area sources and stored in a Bothel warehouse. There, it is packed and readied for shipment, with the next shipment leaving this summer.

“We are really, really fortunate to have Swedish involved,” says Lester. “Kiwoko Hospital treats more than 400 babies a year, and needs supplies that can’t be purchased in Uganda. Swedish has helped save many children.”