

# MISSION REPORT INTERPLAST TEAM MANGU

## Date and place of the mission

<b>Period</b>	<b>October 5 – 20, 2019</b>
<b>Hospital</b>	COCIN hospital Mangu, Nigeria

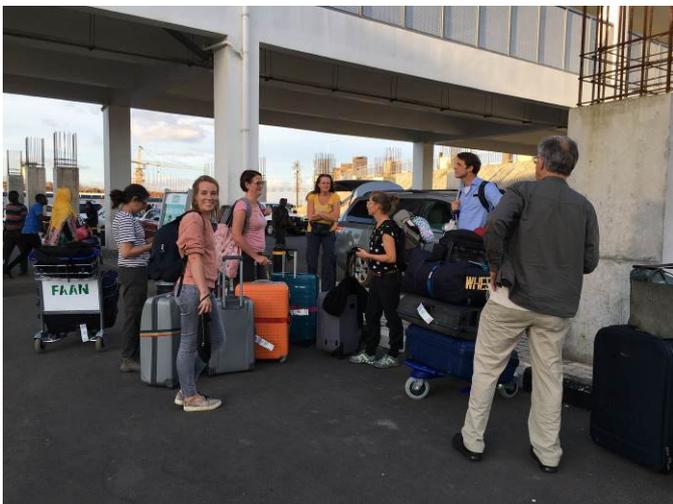
## Team

<b>Surgical team Netherlands</b>	Cees Spronk	Plastic surgeon NP and team leader
	Jenda Hop	Plastic surgeon
	Pauline Huizinga	Plastic Surgeon
	Ina Groustra	Anaesthesiologist
	Itxaso	Anaesthesiologist
	Petra Veerman	Anaesthetic nurse
	Femke Annema	Theatre Nurse
	Annet Banga	Theatre Nurse
	Niels Noordzij	Resident plastic surgeon, report

## Mission report

Our team existed of 4 newcomers and 4 veterans to Interplast Missions, led by chef de mission Cees Spronk. A good mix of experience and curiosity.

Our journey started early morning October 5<sup>th</sup>. After the last messages using 4G in Germany, it felt like we really had left. Halfway our flight from Frankfurt to Abuja, my neighbour, out of nowhere, started to talk. We ended up having discussed the marriage of one of his 11 children he was going to organise in his native village, his migration to the US, the purpose of our mission and a guarantee: “the people of Plateau state are nice people, you will be welcomed and have a good time. God bless you and thank you for helping the people of my country.” What a start.



After landing at the Chinese built new airport of Abuja (work still in progress) we were happy to find all our luggage had arrived. As usual, the group was too interesting for the officers at customs to just let us pass. However, a printed list with all things packed in our luggage, a request made by the same woman a year earlier, smoothed our entry into Nigeria.

*Just arrived*

A warm welcome by Kefas, our main contact and manager/head nurse at the hospital, and two drivers and we started the first part of our journey by car. First stop: ‘the nuns’: A monastery about one-hour drive from the airport and familiar first stop for those who had come on an earlier mission.

After an early breakfast the next morning we went on our way, a 5 ½ hour drive to the COCIN hospital of Mangu. After an internship in plastic surgery in Kampala, Uganda and having travelled in Rwanda, the DRC and my country of birth Tanzania, I was very curious what Nigeria would feel, look and smell like. It felt familiar. The towns and cities we crossed, the people selling goods alongside the road, the curious eyes and laughing faces.

Another laughing face was that of Phoebe when we arrived at the hospital grounds, long-time acquaintance of Cees and host of our guesthouse. We would be enjoying 3 meals a day prepared by her and her daughter Blessing. We used the rest of the day to explore the hospital grounds and greeting the people we would be Monday was outpatient clinic day. We screened the patients with two teams: a surgeon and anaesthesiologist paired up, the surgeon judging which patient could and should be operated, the anaesthesiologist deciding on the method of anaesthesia. A tablet connected to a radiographic transducer, made available by Interplast, made it possible to give regional anaesthesia.



### *Screening and working with the Philips Lumifyer*

We screened over 200 patients that day, sometimes having to deny an operation when a procedure seemed too dangerous for the given circumstances, or futile, like in case of a Volkmann’s contracture. Not an easy message to deliver. At the same time our nursing staff was working hard, getting the OR prepared and ready for the next day. After a long day we had planned around 105 patients for the next 2 weeks. A few more would follow and be added to the list in the following days.

Our operating days started with the occasional sports or yoga for some, a cold shower for everyone. Improvements were made since last missions: we could use the shower instead of only the bucket of water. After further waking up with some reading, a tea or coffee we would spend breakfast with the group, prepared by Phoebe. Tea and cookies were taken to the theatre building where we aimed to start around eight o’ clock. One would do a ward round while two surgical teams began the first operations. The ward rounds were an event in itself: patients and their families were sleeping together in the wards, despite the circumstances of their presence a cosy sight. (and getting cosier as the days progressed and the wards filled to their limits).

During the day we were helped in theatre by the local ‘theatre boys’: Nuhu, Noa, Timothy and Aleesha, who provided a warm welcome every day. They helped in the role of circulating nurse, sterilising the operating equipment, changing bandages and casts and getting the patients to and from the OR, often comforting the smaller children in their native languages. Every patient would get a small present before surgery, sometimes accompanied by Petra singing for them.



On most of the days we were joined by one or more local doctors. Dr Patience and Dr Emanuel, who are general doctors in the hospital both keen in doing surgery, Dr Mike who is the medical superintendent, and doctor Thomas and Choji, plastic surgeons in Plateau State.

We enjoyed lunch at the guesthouse every day, Phoebe her pancakes being the all-time favourite.



After surgery in the afternoon, we would again do a ward round. As the days passed by, this became an opportunity for the patients and their families to get a ‘snapshot’ with one of the doctors by a photographer. (who later turned out to be one of the nursing staff)

Over the course of 2 weeks, the team operated 8 full days and 2 (extended) mornings. We performed a total of 112 operations on 109 patients.

Our team was soon baptised 'Star mix' (by ourselves), after one of the flavours of tea brought with from Holland.



Time flew by fast. The last Friday we finished the last operation with the whole team present. The rest of the day we packed and counted all the medical gear that was left, paid a visit to the local school which is supported by the Faridpur foundation and made preparations for the variety evening (bonte avond).

As is tradition we had dinner with the managing staff of the hospital. This moment turned out to present a big surprise for them and our team: Cees announced this would be his last visit. A tough decision, but one he had been contemplating about during these 2 weeks. The news was met by tears and many words of gratitude. It was very special to have been present at this moment, seeing in what high esteem Cees is held by the people in Mangu.



*Last time for Cees*

After many goodbyes we headed towards our last evening. This turned out really well, seeing a quiz, a game and a song all about everything we had experienced during our stay. Cees' impression of a jumping frog was legendary.

The next day we had an early breakfast, prepared by an emotional Phoebe. After the last goodbyes we were brought back to Abuja by Kefas and our drivers. We enjoyed a generous lunch at the house of Johan Verhoef, after which we headed back to the airport.

At customs I received the last joke by one of the officers:  
"You stayed for two weeks? Well, at least you tried. Please come back."

It was an amazing experience to have been part of this team, and a privilege to have been given the opportunity as a resident to join one of the Interplast Missions. I would like to thank Stichting Interplast (Annemarie Maas in particular), the local staff of COCIN hospital in Mangu and team members Petra, Ina, Itxaso, Femke, Annet, Jenda and Pauline for a fantastic time in Nigeria. And of course Cees. I hope we made your last visit one to look back to with satisfaction and good memories.

Niels Noordzij



*The complete team*

## Patient's statistics

<b>Patient gender</b>	
Male	58
Female	51
<b>Age of patients</b>	
0-9 years	48
10-19 years	15
20-29 years	16
30-39 years	16
40 -100 years	17
<b>Anesthesia</b>	
General	41
Local	29
Regional (spinal/plexus brachialis/popliteal block)	22
General + regional	20
<b>Diagnoses</b>	
Cleft lip/Palate	
Cleft Lip	3
Cleft palate	
Post Burn Care (contracture and ulcer)	70
Malformation (incl syndactyly)	4
Post traumatic	3
Lipoma/cysts/tumor	17
Keloid	10
Other	5

