



## Report of the mission of Interplast Holland to MANGU, Nigeria from 7 to 18 March 2020

### Team:

Sibrand Jan Schepel	Plastic surgeon and team leader (report)
Tom de Jong	Pediatric urologist
Wiebrig Rusticus	Operations assistant
Hille Posthumus	Operations assistant
Rob Niemeijer	Anesthesiologist
Mrs Jennifer Lynn Niemeijer-Heaton	Faridpur Foundation
Rian Gerritsen	Anesthetist
Astrid Lamsma	Anesthetist



*The Interplast team*

After an exploratory meeting at the Spronk family in Oenkerk, during which the members of the team were able to get to know each other for the first time, we met again at the Lufthansa desk at Schiphol airport for a flight, via Frankfurt, to Abuja, the capital of the Republic of Nigeria.

After we had installed ourselves on the connecting flight as a group at the back of the plane, the cabin crew inquired curiously about what we were going to do in Nigeria. When we explained that we were going to treat children with birth defects and burns for free, we were showered with praise and received spontaneously upgrades, which we accepted in gratitude.

At the airport of Abuja they also turned out to be extremely lenient, so that we could pass customs without any problem with our large suitcases full of equipment. Outside, as with the previous Interplast missions, the team was cheerfully greeted by Kefas, the irreplaceable coordinator of the Cocin Hospital in Mangu and two drivers of the hospital. After loading the luggage we left for the night to the monastery of the Daughters of Divine Love Retreat and Conference in Abuja to be well rested the next day and to be transported with two vans to our destination in eight hours.

A nice detail was that the vehicles were equipped with the logo of the Faridpur Foundation but with the text : "Stitching Faridpur". A nice entry for cutting specialists.

After arrival at the hospital we were delivered to the beautiful "Neeltje" guest house and welcomed by the hostess Phoebe, who would take care of us extremely dedicated throughout the mission.

The next day the first consultation took place, during which more than 200 patients were reviewed. Tom saw all the urological patients in a separate room while Sibrand and Rob took care of the screening of all other patients in an adjoining room. Unfortunately, as is often the case with such missions, the number of potential patients greatly exceeded the operation capacity, forcing many to be disappointed. We have tried to set as many priorities as possible and referred the remaining patients to the next mission in October.

During the consultation, the two anesthetists Rian and Astrid and the two operation assistants Hillie and Wiebrig prepared the operation room for the surgery program in the coming days.

Surgery was carried out in a reasonably well equipped room with two tables. All procedures in the children were performed under general anesthesia in combination with a plexus or caudal block, which was very beneficial for postoperative pain management.



The new Lumify Philips ultrasound device, linked to a Samsung tablet, proved to be a great asset when setting the regional blocks. A number of surgeries in adults were performed under local anesthesia. In all procedures, the operation area was infiltrated with a combination of local anesthesia and adrenaline.



There was surgery every day from 8:00 to 18:00, interrupted only by a short lunch in the guesthouse. A total of 71 patients could be treated surgically. Twenty-eight urological procedures were performed, ranging amongst others from perineal to coronary hypospadias, patients with adrenogenital syndrome, hydrocele, groin rupture and cystoscopy. And despite the fact that not two or more plastic surgeons participated in the mission (as with the previous Interplast missions in Mangu) we were able to treat 26 burn victims with the relief of severe contractures and skin grafting.

#### *Lots of local support*

This was possible thanks to the excellent assistance of the local doctor Dr. Patience, the plastic surgeon Dr. Thomas, who came over from the city of Keffi especially for the mission, the local ophthalmologist Dr. Kuden and our own urologist.

In addition, 7 cleft lip and palate corrections took place and 11 other operations.



#### *Tom at work*

*A creative solution; operation table raised with a number of large suitcases*

Unfortunately, we had to end the mission prematurely when we learned that the Nigerians, because of the virus problem spreading around the world, were about to close the airspace to all traffic to and from Europe. As a result, we had to sacrifice the last three days and therefore also missed the farewell dinner with the staff of the hospital.

On the last day we changed all dressings of the first week, which showed that almost all skin grafts were vital and no complications were detected.

The next morning we were returned to Abuja, where we were just in time for the very last scheduled flight to Europe. All in all, it was a fruitful mission, thanks in part to the harmonious and efficient cooperation of our entire team and the local operation staff. It was just regrettable that the corona problem at the end of our stay has thrown a spanner in the works.



*Safely back at an abandoned Schiphol airport*