Providing Digital X-ray Equipment for Plateau Mission Hospital in Kenya

Plateau Mission Hospital is the only Class 4 rural hospital in Uasin Gishu County which has a population of 894,000. The largest city in the county is Eldoret, located about 15 miles from Plateau Hospital.

History of Plateau Mission Hospital

Plateau Hospital was founded in 1951 as a dispensary by South African Boers who migrated to this area in Western Kenya in the early 20th century. Until Eldoret became a large population center with a number of government and private hospitals, Plateau hospital was often the only medical service provider for the poor rural families in the 30-square miles surrounding the hospital. The poor roads, often impassable during rainy seasons, made it impossible for the rural poor to go to Eldoret even if they had some form of transportation.

When Kenya achieved independence from England in 1963, the South Africans who founded and operated Plateau dispensary left Kenya for a variety of reasons. The native Kenyans did not have the skills or the money to continue these essential health services. A Netherlands-based church-affiliated organization stepped in to provide funding and higher level medical staff for several decades. The medical services were expanded in 1970 when the 89-bed hospital was built by the organization from the Netherlands. In the 1990s the support from the Netherlands began to decline, so that by 2002 the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) had to assume the entire responsibility for owning, operating, staffing, and financing the hospital.

The transition to complete Kenyan control created a difficult period for Plateau Mission Hospital. The poor rural population it served had very little money to pay for health services. During one period the entire hospital staff was not paid for five months, but the dedicated staff continued to serve the community. Among a wide variety of services they provided, usually without a resident doctor, was the delivery of about 50 babies each month by midwives.
Plateau Mission Hospital remains essential to the rural community because roads in the area remain very poor. They are often unusable during rainy seasons making transportation to the hospitals and clinics in Eldoret nearly impossible. Even when the roads are passable, Plateau Mission Hospital is the only health service provider readily available to the poor rural Kenyan families whose access to affordable transportation is very limited.

**Going Forward**

Going forward there is good reason for optimism about the future of Plateau Mission Hospital. Positive developments since 2010 include:

- Improvement in the administrative, medical, and governing board capabilities of the Kenyans who now run and staff the hospital.
- Increasing Kenya government support by providing most of the time a young medical doctor to serve on the Hospital Staff.
- The recent introduction of basic government-funded health insurance covering some of Plateau Mission Hospital’s patient base.
- A new formal relationship with the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, as well as the Nursing School in Eldoret. Moi Hospital is overburdened by increased demand for primary care, and therefore desires to strengthen Plateau Mission Hospital to offload some of that burden.
- European and North American groups who have been involved for years in the area are helping to improve the range and quality of services at Plateau Mission Hospital through donations of specific equipment and supplies.
- Currently the main road to the hospital, which was impassable during the rainy seasons, is being paved, which makes Plateau Hospital services accessible to many more people.

For historical reasons Plateau Mission Hospital is highly respected by the local population as a source of basic outpatient and inpatient health care. On a scale of 1 to 10, the surrounding population already rates Plateau Hospital at a healthy 5. But personnel from both Moi Hospital and Plateau Hospital believe that adding digital x-ray services at Plateau Hospital will increase that reputation up to a 7 or 8.

Adding x-ray is also strongly supported by the Christian Hospital Association of Kenya (CHAK) of which Plateau Mission Hospital is an active member. While CHAK and Moi cannot finance the purchase of an x-ray unit for Plateau, the two young radiologists at
Moi, and representatives from CHAK, will help Plateau Hospital by supervising the purchase and installation of the equipment, training Plateau personnel and helping interpret the films.

**Who We Are, and Our Role:**

Since their retirement, Dennis Hoekstra and his wife Jeni have been traveling to Kenya to do charitable work. From 1979 to 1993 Dennis was CEO of the Barnabas Foundation (a charitable foundation based in Chicago) and earlier the President of Trinity Christian College in Chicago. Dennis and Jeni are now both in their mid-80s, but have been blessed by God with the health and energy required to make four trips to Kenya in each of the past two years, in addition to numerous trips over the past 20 years.

Dennis has helped establish a modern dairy farm not far from Plateau Mission Hospital as well as facilitating clean water and education projects. Jeni brings laptops to Kenya and teaches the local young people to use them. Dennis and Jeni currently live in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Hoekstras’ 20-year involvement in the area surrounding Plateau Mission Hospital and their personal connection with the people of the region, led to a request from the administrator of the hospital, Jairus Serser, to
help them obtain x-ray equipment. Because the Hoekstras knew little about
the technical aspects of x-ray they enlisted the help of a radiologist, Dr. Ken Gritter, when
they returned from Kenya in the spring of 2016.

Since then Dennis and Ken have researched equipment and communicated by email
with interested parties in the Netherlands and Kenya. At our request, Jairus Serser, the
hospital administrator, did a financial analysis of how many exams they can reasonably
expect to do each month, the prevailing charges for those exams, how much they are
likely to actually collect, what their operating expenses will be, and what they can expect
to put aside for repair and future equipment purchases. We believe that his estimates
are reasonable and that once the cost of purchasing the initial equipment is covered, x-
ray services will be a profit center for the hospital, and should become self-sustaining.

Dennis and Jeni returned to Kenya in August/September 2016 and met with the hospital
administrator, hospital board, and two radiologists from Moi Hospital. Based on our
investigation, the meetings in September, and the extensive knowledge, experience,
and connections that the Hoekstras have in Kenya, we have concluded that the project
is worthy of support.

Both General Electric and Phillips supply and service equipment in Kenya, so it is
available for purchase locally at a reasonable rate. The two young radiologists at Moi
Teaching and Referral Hospital will supervise the project and train the Plateau Mission
Hospital Staff.

Dennis and Jeni Hoekstra returned to Kenya November 22, 2016. Along with the
hospital administrator, Jairus Serser, they nailed down a quote from Phillips in Nairobi to
purchase a new Phillips Primary Diagnostic AR (NRDT 300), including a table and
upright stand. This x-ray generator will be used with CR cassettes because the
radiologists at Moi hospital recommended against a completely digital unit due to
frequent voltage swings in the electrical supply. The x-ray generator was initially quoted
at $55,000, but because it had been ordered for a Nairobi hospital that subsequently
backed out, we now can get it for $35,000 if we act before December 25 (the quote is
good for one month). An Agfa CR 10-X Digitizer System, which includes the reader,
5302 printer, three CR cassettes, and the computer, will cost $23,200. Preparing the
room will cost $14,253. The total is $72,468. The price includes a one-year warranty on
the system once it is officially handed over to the hospital.

The missing component to make this a reality is the $72,468 needed to purchase
and install a digital x-ray unit at Plateau Hospital. A Netherlands-based foundation
has committed 10,000 Euros to the project, and $2,000 is available in Kenya, leaving an
additional $60,000 to be raised.

If we should exceed our goal of $72,468, excess funds will go into a reserve x-ray fund
to pay operating costs until the x-ray volume at Plateau Hospital grows to the extent that
it becomes a profit center. Should we be blessed with contributions that exceed even
the need for a reserve fund, it will be used to support other capital projects at Plateau Mission Hospital.

If you would like further information on Plateau Mission Hospital and the x-ray project, please feel free to contact either Dr. Kenneth Gritter at kgrit1@gmail.com or Dennis Hoekstra at djhoekstra2214@gmail.com.

**How to Contribute**

For administrative and tax purposes, contributions will be received through Partners Worldwide, a 501(c)(3) development organization based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Partners Worldwide has projects in 25 countries, as well as economic, education, and safe water projects in Kenya (including those that the Hoekstras have worked on for years) that serve the people around Plateau Mission Hospital. Additional information on Partners Worldwide can be found at [www.partnersworldwide.org](http://www.partnersworldwide.org).

**To contribute by credit card:**

1. Call 1-800-919-7307 or 616-818-4900. Specify that you are contributing to the Kenya Medical Account and provide your credit card information.

2. Or click go to [http://bit.ly/kenyamedical](http://bit.ly/kenyamedical). *(To return to this page after visiting the donation page, use the “back” arrow on your browser)*
   - Once on the donation page, click on Choose a Type, then select Support a Partnership
   - Click Choose a Designation, then select Kenya Medical Account
   - Fill out payment information and select Send my Gift

**To contribute by check:**

1. Please send a check to:
   Partners Worldwide
   6139 Tahoe Drive SE
   Grand Rapids, MI 49546
   
   **Memo line: Kenya Medical Account**

Partners Worldwide will send you a receipt for federal tax deduction purposes and will take no more than 5% of contributions for processing and administrative purposes.

We thank you in advance for your interest in this project, and for any contributions you choose to make! X-ray is a service we in the United States take for granted, but which remains unavailable for many rural Kenyans. We hope to change that soon!

Thank you,

Dennis and Jeni Hoekstra

Ken and Marianne Gritter