



Nicci Maxwell

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Location: Kisoro, Uganda



What I do: Providing paediatric and neonatal medical care to the community, and providing training, mentorship and support to local healthcare workers.

Dear family and friends,

It's been a little while since I last wrote a link letter, mainly because it's been a very busy few months. My rushing about has been curtailed for now – explained later in this letter – so I'm sitting down to update you.

In the last letter, published in December, I told you about the work that has been happening in one particular Batwa community in Kisoro. While that work continues, this time I thought I'd mention another of the things I'm involved with that isn't directly related to Potter's Village.

Rutaka Health Centre is a small health facility operated by the Diocese of Muhabura in the northern part of the Diocese. When I say small, I mean in terms of staff, services and patient numbers, because its floor plan is actually significantly larger than the facilities at Potter's Village Medical Centre! I first visited Rutaka about four years ago and it was the first time a doctor had visited the clinic in around five years. It's about an hour's drive in a 4x4 vehicle to get there and most people who attend the health centre would find it difficult to afford the cost of transport to get to Kisoro Hospital or Potter's Village. In 2021 I started going to Rutaka fairly regularly with the intention of supporting the clinical officers and nurses who work there in the care and management of more complex paediatric patients, as well as providing some knowledge and skills teaching to the team there. It has taken a little persuasion to get the staff to understand that I'm not there to do their work for them while they drink tea (!!) but we are making progress. We are hoping to be able to extend the rehabilitation and disability services at Potter's Village to include a visit to Rutaka every few months too. Please pray for this extension of our work, that it may be of benefit to the staff and patients in that area.

In mid-February, I flew to the UK for a planned period of home assignment. For the first five weeks, I had a wonderfully busy and enjoyable time of travelling around the UK meeting the fantastic people who are part of my supporting churches. I was the recipient of some wonderful hospitality and was able to meet and chat to many incredibly generous, caring and interesting people and share with them in person about the work they are enabling in Kisoro. I am thankful to God for safe travels and so many lovely meetings and conversations.



Rutaka Health Centre is in the northern part of the Diocese of Muhabura.

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



Unfortunately, my trip came to a very sudden halt when I tested positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of arriving in Plymouth at the end of March. God's provision was evident in that I was staying on my own in a friend's house, so no one else was put at risk by me being positive and I could self-isolate in comfortable surroundings with a great internet connection. Many wonderful friends, especially Gill, made sure I had "doorstep drops" of essentials for which I am very grateful. Thankfully I wasn't particularly unwell – before COVID-19 was a "thing", I had been to work many times feeling much, much worse! I was able to move several of my planned visits to online meetings and, although it was disappointing not to be able

to see people face-to-face (that's really the point of home assignment), at least we could still meet. There were a couple of meetings that just couldn't be rearranged – if that was you, I'm sorry! You will be my top priority on my next UK trip.

I finally tested negative after 10 days and felt safe to get back to in person visits. Perhaps foolishly, I tried to cram in dozens of missed appointments alongside the ones that were already in the diary over the following 10 days in Plymouth. It was a hectic time, but such a blessing to see friends and supporters and then to spend Easter with my church family at St Andrew's in Plymouth.

On Easter Monday I returned to Oxford to spend a few quiet days ahead of my planned departure for Uganda, but the niggling cough I'd had since having COVID-19 got progressively worse and I ended up quite unwell and on treatment for pneumonia. I thought I'd bounce back quite quickly so postponed my flight by about 10 days. The antibiotics seemed to help for a few days but then the horrible cough and shortness of breath came back again. Oh dear! I'm currently in Oxford, having postponed my return to Uganda again, and on another course of antibiotics with some additional tests and investigations in the pipeline for the next few days. I am desperate to get back to Kisoro, but common sense tells me that I really shouldn't go while I'm still too short of breath to walk more than about 500 metres on the flat... Kisoro is very hilly for a start!

I am trusting completely that God knows exactly what he is doing through this apparent delay to my planned return. Please pray for a complete recovery and the ability to return to work very soon. I feel guilty at having had to extend my time in the UK because I know the team at Potter's are working very hard in my absence. Please pray particularly for the clinical officers who are covering all the work between the two of them, especially when we all thought I would be back to relieve some of the burden at the end of April.

Thank you all so much for your continued support, love and prayers.

Until next time, hopefully from Uganda, every blessing,

Nicci



Photos from top to bottom: Delivering supplies on a visit to Rutaka Health Centre; I managed to squeeze in a couple of days in sunny North Devon; I miss this lovely view from my home in Kisoro; Planning for our new feeding/nutrition clinic at the government hospital with Ezra and Rachel.



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