

## 6. Visit at the Richard Novati Catholic Hospital (Comboni) in Sogakope



2.-12. November 2018

### Hectic travel preparations

The day before departure to Ghana, a few hectic rushes arose. I just received the happy news from Andreas Meier, CEO sales, resort Africa, by Ivoclar Vivadent in Lichtenstein, that some of the material for the laboratory and the clinic was released, and now is ready to be picked up. The material donated by Ivoclar includes a full year's consumption of the most common acrylic teeth according to shape, size and color, acrylic base materials for removable prostheses of all kind, as well as various materials for the production of Empress porcelain crowns.

So, in the early morning I drove to Schaan in FL, to pick up the goods and to take as much as possible in my luggage to Ghana.

But that was not all at all, the electrician team of GSHT (Ghana Swiss Hospital Technician) which already is working for about five weeks at the hospital, on the renewal of the entire power and emergency power supply, wished on the day before my departure, by mail, urgently, a replacement for the broken electrical cable lug crimping pliers. The time was no longer enough for me, to go and pick up this indispensable tool at the customer service of the distributor. This work was taken over for me by the night express post service. I received just on time, 09:00 am, the package with the tool at the door of my home, on the day of my departure to Ghana.

Only from now on, I could pack my travel bag. The case with the crimping pliers claimed eight of the thirty kilos of the free allowed baggage. The remaining twenty-two kilos shared my personal belongings such as clothes, shoes, toiletries, and some of the Ivoclar materials. Anyway, when checking in at the airport, my travel bag received an extra tag with the inscription "Heavy"

### Warm welcome at the hospital in Sogakope

As with any past trip to the hospital in Sogakope, was I, this time too, very much excited what I would expect, of course, especially in the laboratory. But first, I had very warm and happy greeting by the hospital administrator Mr. Bansah.

With my suitcase stuffed with the materials, I then made my way to the laboratory. There too, received I a very warm welcome by the staff of the dental clinic and laboratory team. The faces radiated much joy and expectation. Everyone was looking forward to my reaction when entering the lab. After all, they went out of their way to present the whole facility in an exceptionally clean condition, even all the walls were newly repainted and the doors to the changing room and toilet had been mounted.

They extremely appreciated the material I brought to theme with me from Ivoclar. First, everything was unpacked and stored in the assigned cupboards and drawers. We cleared out some more boxes, which I was able to send, a few weeks ago, in a container together with all the equipment and facilities for the power renewal at the hospital. While unpacking, I am always taking the time, to explain the correct applications and processing methods.

## The renewal of the emergency power supply and power distribution has started, and is well on course

I have already written in detail in earlier reports about the desolate state of the entire electricity system and the urgently needed renovation.

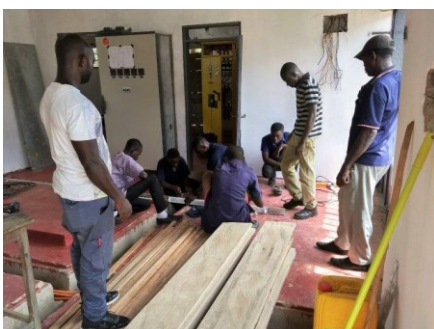
The hospital has grown steadily over the years, but the power supply facilities have not developed accordingly. In fact, the installations are in an extremely poor condition and do no longer meet the requirements for a hospital, to provide reliable and safe medical services, as the Richard Novati Hospital would like to do and is determined to do. Practically all installations are not in a safe state, even extremely dangerous. There is generally no electrical grounding and massive overvoltage is a normality. The hospital receives electricity from the ECG (Electric Company Ghana). During ECG shutdowns, which occur regularly for a few hours, up to entire days and nights, the generator of the hospital, 35 kVA, incredibly old, and not suitable for the increased demand, is used as emergency power supply. There is no emergency backup system, such as uninterruptible power supply (UPS), to ensure and provide power for the cessation of ongoing interventions in the operating room or dental clinic, in the event of a blackout of the National Grid, and till the diesel-powered generator comes into function and supplies the Hospital with electricity.

For five weeks, alternately, electrical technicians, plumbers, or other professionals of the GSHT (Ghana Switzerland Hospital Technicians) are as volunteers on site and install a complete new planned distribution and emergency power system with a battery-powered UPS system.



The renewal was made possible to a large extent because, in Switzerland, two complete plants, one in a commercial building in Pfäffikon SZ and one in the ex-Libris distribution center in Dietikon, were made available to the GSHT team for the projects in Ghana. The donor companies not only assisted us with the dismantling of these facilities, but they also provided us with cranes and trucks for the transportations to the interim storage facility in Seegräben, where everything was loaded into two containers and sent via Antwerp to Tema in Ghana.

GSHT is strongly supported during these installations by Ghanaian specialists such as the HTU (Health Technical Unit), a group that builds and maintains the technical facilities of hospitals. This group was founded by the Presbyterian Church, the staff is paid by the state of Ghana. Furthermore, technicians from various hospitals in Ghana and Cameroon have come to help. Also, apprentices from the Comboni vocational school are integrated into this project for training purposes, under the supervision of the GSHT technicians. They are used according to their level of education.



It is so beautiful and impressive to see how everyone here is working with an extreme enthusiasm.

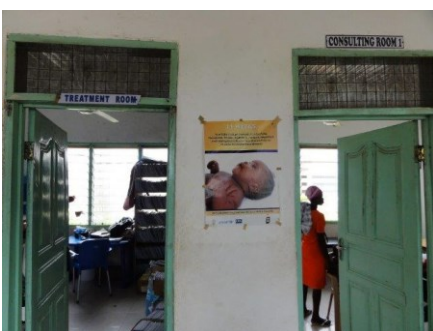


Once this project is completed, it will not only tremendously improve the technical capacity of the hospital, but on top of that, all the participants will benefit for their future from the experiences and all the learning.



### One doctor for a catchment area with 65,000 inhabitants?

Last Thursday we drove with Dr. Cham Momodou and accompanied by Ruedi Eggenberger, Peter Stirnimann, Wonder Frenzy, and Kwaku Bassinge along the Volta River up to Tagadzy-Dorfor in the district of North Tongu. Dr. Cham had also invited three representatives or project coordinators of the GRVD (German Rotary Volunteer Doctors). The gentlemen arrived shortly after we have and are currently on a hospital visit tour in Ghana. The meeting point is an outpost of the Novati Hospital in Sogakope, called St. Anne's Polyclinic. It is a small, modest, one-doctor, medical care unit, reimbursed and supported by the government. The description "modest" is quite a harmonious expression, everything is in a heavenly sad state, from a human point of view below of dignity, to see with your own eyes downright stressful, for our understanding far from any medical hygiene and comfort. Here, women come to deliver their babies, bring children for medical care, or for vaccinations.



During the clinics outside tour, the GSHT engineer found a fatal error in the water supply. The borehole of the well is too close to the septic tank, only a couple of meters apart. The danger of a drinking water contamination is real.

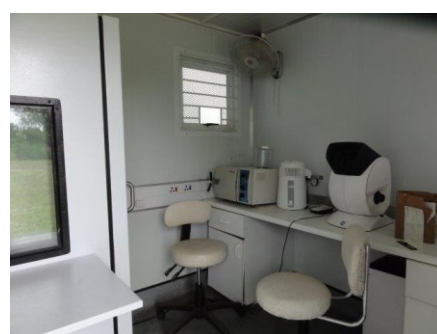
A good hospital is available nearby. Unfortunately, on the other side of the Volta and can only be reached by boat or ferry. The drive of the ferry is very irregular, from 19:00 till the next day, the operation is completely stopped. Because of the difficult accessibility, it happens that for a mother or and child any live saving help is too late available.

That is, what Dr. Cham is wants and is determined to change. He plans to ensure that a well-functioning medical care service comes close to the people, and not the other way around, that people in need must make long, arduous, and life-threatening journeys. The ideal location according to his plans would be St. Anne's Polyclinic. Dr. Cham explained

to us in detail, his ideas of how the clinic should be designed and in which time horizon, and he is looking very much forward that he can bring together the necessary support and resources.

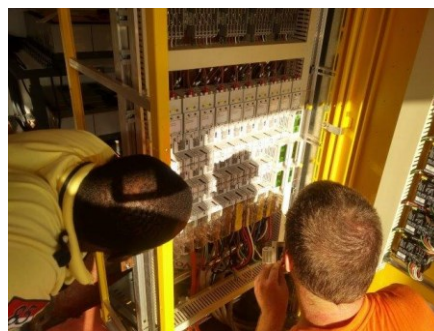
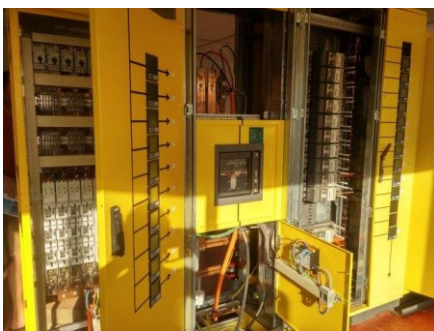
### Wrong, misplaced, and useless aid projects

On the way back, we made a detour to the Digital Village in Volo, also located in the district of North Tongu. This is the most advanced of all aid projects, a container-mounted, solar-powered, fully digitized medical diagnostic station, built and sponsored by Samsung. This diagnostic station is located on the edge of a small village surrounded by no-man's-land, and there is no treatment available so far. The facilities in the containers are powered by solar energy with a 110-volt power. While everything in Ghana is running at 220 volts, there are no interchanges with other medical devices. This Station, when it was delivered three years ago, was, as we were told, worth about 860,000 US Dollars, is hardly respectively not used, taking damage, inside as well outside, caused by the high humidity. It remains abandoned, as a memorial of an ignorant high-tech company, Ghanaian government officials and functionaries of UNESCO. The large board at the entrance to the Village welcomes everyone. I quote: "WELCOME TO VOLO Digital Village- With Solar Integrated Solution- FUNDED BY SAMSUNG- BENEFICIARY VOLO COMMUNITY- PARTNERS: Government of Ghana- UNESCO». Just, nobody appears.



### The switch over worked

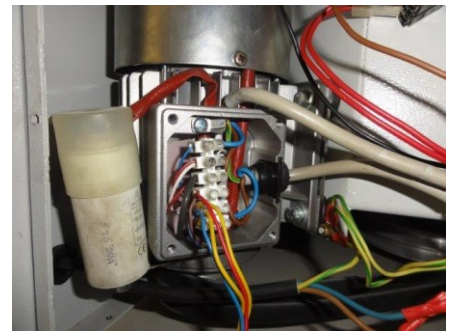
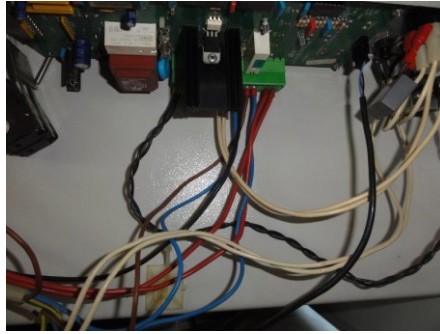
The power grid renovation at the hospital continued to make good progress this week. At the end of the week, for two days, always early in the morning, when the hospital still was asleep, Stefan, the project manager, was able to make the switch over to the new control and distribution center. These are always very tense moments for the engineers. To the great joy of all involved, everything worked perfectly. The hospital tracts with the theatres and the dental clinic will now be fed by the new system and protected in the event of a power failure via the UPS system. But there is still a lot of detail work to do. All departments will be connected to the same network in the next couple of weeks, up three to four years, such as the X-ray station, pharmacy, administration, laundry etc., until the whole hospital complex can function with a technically reliable, secure, energy supply.



### Finally, a long-standing problem has been solved

Shortly before my departure, on the last working morning, I was given a great sense of achievement. The casting machine in the laboratory, which never worked from the beginning, and we have tried in several attempts to solve the problem of this machine, but without success. Today, Ruedi and I were able to get the stubborn device going, in one last attempt. That was a big relief for me. And, most likely, everything started with a ridiculously small problem, had it been discovered, the problem would have been solved quickly.





Through the many attempts, searches and trials, a new error was created, and moreover a trivial one. But "oh luck" we detected it today.



As a farewell, a new shirt was handed over by the administrator and the head nurse

The administration, along with all the staff available at the hospital, has helped so much, equipped with a lot of energy and cooperation, that this power project has progressed so well in the past seven weeks.

Link to more information about the project of Ghana:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/v7hlNa669wlasbg/AADDrcCfF4BPyLTNASOidZc4a?dl=0>

#### List of participants

##### GSHT Switzerland und Ghana:

Eggenberger Ruedi, Burri Stefan, Iseli Ueli, Aminu Abdul Mumuni

##### Other volunteers from der Switzerland:

Riklin Dieter, Stirnimann Peter, Kobler Ursula, Stricker Sandro, Dubs Bernhard

##### HTU Ghana:

Adjei Fio Lassey, Konogo,

##### Other volunteers from Ghana und Cameroon:

Bassinge Kawaku, Konongo, Ouwusu Nyame, Donkorkom, Kumi Mark, Dormaa,

Kwasi Ado Dominik, Abetifi

Bohfuhkisu Fedrick, Njinikom, Cameroon, Godwin Milleng, Njinikom, Cameroon

**Coworkers of the Richard Novati Hospital:**

Administration: Adolf Bansa, Administrator and office, electricians, masons, carpenters, plumbers, drivers of the hospital, canteen: Chef cook Faustina and staff  
Students of the Comboni vocational college

Hans-Peter Spielmann  
November 2018



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Dieses Projekt wurde nur möglich durch Zahlreiche grosszügige Zuwendungen

This project was only possible through numerous generous contributions

Questo progetto è stato possibile solo attraverso numerose generose contribuzioni

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Laser Vista Klinik in Pfäffikon, SZ

Ex Libris Distribution Center in Dietikon

Migros Genossenschaft Zürich

Comboni Assoziation Italien

GRVD German Rotary Volunteer Doctors

Richard Novati Hospital

Und vielen hilfreichen Spenden aus der Schweiz, für den Einkauf von Material z.B.  
Elektrokabel, Werkzeugen etc.

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And many helpful donations from Switzerland, for the purchase of materials, e.g., electric  
cables, tools etc.

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E molte donazioni dalla Svizzera, per l'acquisto di materiali, ad es. cavi elettrici, utensili ecc