

Dr Ray Towey's work



Dr Towey has volunteered at St Mary's Hospital Lacor, Gulu, Uganda since 2002 (part time since 2008). He had previously been in Tanzania for 8 years.

St Mary's is a not for profit, church supported, general hospital of 476 beds in northern Uganda. For many years it has had a small four-bed Intensive Care Unit near the operating theatre, which was upgraded to an eight-bed unit in 2005. It is a teaching hospital for anaesthetists, medical students, nurses and laboratory technicians and it is attached to Gulu University Medical School. The majority of the patients are the rural poor and can come from remote areas up to 100 miles away from Gulu.

Since 2002 Dr Towey has been involved in the training of anaesthetic officers, nurses, and medical students. He is now a part time volunteer and is focusing on the development of the intensive care ward.

How African Mission can support St Mary's Hospital in 2022

Dr Towey writes:

'The hospital has an intensive care unit of modest proportions with an international reputation and often the nurses who shine there are enrolled nurses. After some years of performing very well these nurses need to be ungraded to the level of a state registered nurse as reward for their dedication and as part of their professional development even when they move on from intensive care. It can cost upwards of £800 to pay for this training and African Mission has identified a nurse for this training for 2022.

Critically ill patients in the ICU or the Covid Ward may get secondary infections not responding to the first line inexpensive antibiotics. African Mission would like to purchase antibiotics such as Ceftriaxone (pronounced kef try axe zone) and Pisa which is piperacillin a strong penicillin. Often the patients are poor and cannot afford these antibiotics and these antibiotics can make the difference between life and death to critically ill patients. The costs of these antibiotics may be £1,000 a year.

In 2022 we anticipate that we will send more tracheostomy tubes for the ICU and for one long term patient with a home long term tracheostomy. Often these tubes of the correct quality cannot be found in Uganda. We are doing our best to assist the hospital to find these tubes in Uganda. A year's supply may cost about £500 until the hospital can find a supplier in Uganda.

African Mission can identify central venous neck lines for the ICU and Covid Ward which the hospital is willing to buy from UK but the cost of transportation for African Mission can be about £200 a year.

The impact of the Covid pandemic on the hospital has been major and we have helped with high quality oxygen masks and oximeters for the nurses. So far the hospital has had 145 Covid deaths and for 2022 it is uncertain how the pandemic will go. African Mission needs about £1,000 of funds for its rapid response contingency fund if the pandemic becomes worse when the schools open in January.