



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 friends,

It's planting season again in Kisoro. I have come to enjoy the cycle of planting, growing and harvesting here over the past few years. Along with my local friends, I look forward to the rains and to seeing the fields turning from brown to green as seeds of maize, sorghum, beans and other crops begin to sprout and grow. I still don't enjoy the dry season with its dust and wind, although I know my local friends really like it because when the harvest has been brought in, it's quite a restful time for people who work very hard in the fields for most of the year, often alongside more formal, paid employment.

Such cycles are probably less marked in medicine than in the world of agriculture, but nevertheless we still notice that things are less busy on the wards when crops are being planted or school fees are due. Similarly we are busier when it's been cooler or very wet, or shortly after harvest when people have a little more money to facilitate a trip to the doctor. My refugee work has stopped for now as the fighting is going through a lull and most refugees have returned home or been resettled elsewhere. However my usual commitments at Potter's Village, Rutaka, Mikingo Batwa community, the Catholic hospital and especially the government hospital are ongoing and continue to provide frustrations and challenges almost every day.

I've also been blessed with some downtime at the beach in Kenya and in the national parks of northern Tanzania. These certainly helped to recharge my batteries a bit for dealing with a government hospital that has all but run out of essential medicine and supplies, but is obliged to keep admitting patients for whom it can do very little. It can take a great deal of creativity to work out how to manage a sick child without access to most of the, even limited, resources I'm used to. I have, on a couple of occasions, resorted to asking families if they would be willing to come to Potter's Village where we might perhaps be able to help them more effectively.

If there has been a theme to the past few months, it has been "visitors". Tourism is busy again with many local shops, hotels and restaurants benefiting from overseas visitors who pass through on their way to see the mountain gorillas in nearby Bwindi and Mugahinga national parks. Potter's Village has welcomed CMS mission associates Janie Robson (paediatric physiotherapist) and Paul Darrall (electrical engineer) for short



*Me in my "happy place"
(Photo: Maddalena Bassetti)*

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With each other
To the edges**



visits as well as a host of other visitors from Europe and the USA. We are hoping to be able to set up a rotation of American doctors between Potter's Village and the Catholic hospital, which will benefit both services and the experience and education of the doctors.

Most of you will have perceived that the past year, since having covid, has been quite a struggle for me. I've really battled with fatigue and almost non-stop minor illnesses. I have found it incredibly frustrating that I have not been able to give as much as I've hoped to give to the work I feel called to here in Kisoro. I am thankful to God that the work at Potter's Village is in a very good place and mostly able to

carry on with much less input from me. Despite this and some adjustments to my work schedule, I am still very busy and seldom able to get the rest I now seem to need to function at my best.

After a lot of thought and prayer and some confidential discussions over several months, I have decided to take a break. I will be returning to the UK in June for my "home assignment", including visits to my wonderful link churches, as previously planned but then I will stay in the UK for several more months as I attempt to fully recover my "get up and go" again. Please pray for this!

At the moment, the future isn't completely clear. I'm not leaving CMS and will still be in need of your prayers and support. I hope I might be able to undertake a few months of further study in tropical medicine and global health, with the support of CMS, to potentially make me more useful to the people and communities I hope to continue to serve. I have definitely not ruled out a return to Uganda after that (though I am unlikely to return to Potter's Village now that they don't need as much input from me), but there may be another context in which my skills and experience might be better utilised to bring the love of God to people. I'm excited to see what God might have in store for me. Please pray for this discernment process.

I am thankful for CMS who have been so supportive of my decision and the decision-making process over the past few months. I am blessed to work with and for an organisation that values and supports its team so well.

I am also so, so thankful for the amazing opportunities I have had to serve God's people in Kisoro for most of the past seven years. Perhaps more than this, I am grateful for each one of you who has prayed for and given towards the work here. You have blessed me and hundreds of children and families by your thoughtfulness and generosity. Thank you!

I hope that I will be able to see very many of you during my time in the UK. I'm in the early stages of planning "home assignment" already but please do get in touch if you'd like to see me.

With much love,

Nicci



Photos from top to bottom: Incredible wildlife in Tanzania; Beautiful new cots for Potter's Village special care unit, thanks to Solihull Rotary Club; Helping with the cooking in Mikingo; Some of our American visitors.



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