



Nicci Maxwell

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Location: South Sudan



What I do: Providing paediatric and neonatal medical care to local and refugee communities, and training and supporting local paediatric teams



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life to release their God-given potential

Dear friends,

Juba has definitely begun to feel like home. It feels as though I've been here far longer than just five months. I have settled into a pattern of work and social activities and found a church that I can feel part of. My little house is feeling more homely now with some pictures on the walls, a comfortable new mattress and even a little dining table and chair, with a second chair being worked on by a local carpenter so I will soon be able to invite a friend to visit. I am getting accustomed to the heat, even though temperatures in the mid-30s every day aren't always comfortable. I certainly haven't needed a cardigan since I arrived! The one thing I thought I might not get used to is having no hot water at home. However, stepping into a cool shower after a very hot and humid day is actually something I really look forward to now!

I think I'm beginning to form some good friendships, both with neighbours on our compound and with people I have met through work. I am growing in confidence in navigating the city and I'm enjoying some aspects of city life like shops and restaurants. I'm grateful to everyone who prayed that my work permit would eventually be processed – it was! I'm so thankful for the peace of mind it brings in allowing me to move around the city and the country and even leave the country without hindrance, if need be.

My work at Al Sabbah Children's Hospital continues to challenge my clinical and managerial skills. We got running water on the ward for the first time a couple of weeks ago which was very exciting. Praise God for that breakthrough! I had planned some publicity among the staff about the importance of hand washing for the safe care of newborn babies but within 24 hours of getting the water sorted out, we had to vacate the ward completely to allow for some renovations to take place. It has been quite tricky to look after up to 26 mums and babies across four temporary rooms and a corridor with only 15 beds and no water again! Thankfully it will only last until the renovations are completed. Please pray that there will be no delays and we will be able to move back soon. I have 8–15 medical interns (doctors in their first year after finishing medical school) to help me on the ward but I get a new batch of these doctors every two weeks which means I repeat myself a lot! I am thankful for two lovely medical officers (doctors who have completed their internship training) who work incredibly hard and keep the ward mostly under control, especially on the days that I am



Main outpatients at Al Sabbah Hospital

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



not there. Please continue to pray for the work at Al Sabbah. It's incredibly busy and most of the patients we see struggle to afford even the most basic medications.

I have not yet been offered an open door to the neonatal unit at Juba Teaching Hospital, where most preterm infants are born and cared for, although I managed to sneak in and look around one day! I have more than enough to do at Al Sabbah at the moment so I am not pushing that door too hard.

On Thursdays and Fridays, the refugee camp at Gorom is usually a welcome break from hospital medicine as I provide a primary care clinic for children under five years old. Among the dozens of children I have seen with common complaints

like malaria, pneumonia and gastroenteritis, I have also seen children with less common tropical diseases like noma and Guinea worm. My tropical medicine course skills are coming in very handy! Please pray for the work among refugees – many are deeply traumatised by the conflict that has led to them becoming displaced. The worldwide financial crisis and multiple other priorities for large NGOs means that provision in the camps is not always sufficient and refugees face a constant battle to find sufficient food and other necessities.

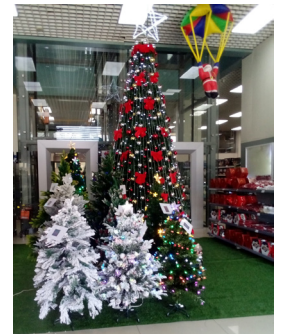
I think the most surprising thing I have found since moving here is the sense of hope among the people I meet, both colleagues and patients. They express a very real expectation that tomorrow, or some future day, will be better than today. People generally talk about when, not if, peace comes and how things will be different (in a good way) someday soon. I am constantly in awe of the commitment shown by so many hospital colleagues who continue to come to work and give of their best despite not having received salaries for a full year. Do pray for them!

By the time you read this we will have just begun the season of Advent. It was quite a surprise to me to see a local Juba supermarket decked out for Christmas in early November, especially as Christmas decorations were really not a feature of life in Kisoro. Almost all of my friends and neighbours will be leaving South Sudan for their Christmas holidays in the next few days. While I will be spending part of December in Juba, I will be taking a short break over Christmas which will allow me to spend Christmas Day with my family for the first time in several years. I can't wait!

Thank you for your love, prayers and support over the past year. May you have a peaceful and blessed Christmas and I look forward to continuing to join with you in all that God will be doing in South Sudan in 2025.

Every blessing,

Nicci



Photos from top to bottom: The neonatal unit at Juba Teaching Hospital, compared to...; ... the temporary neonatal unit at Al Sabbah, complete with "floor beds"; Christmas came to a Juba supermarket in early November; a combined Christmas and Thanksgiving meal with my neighbours



Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

I've been encouraged to hear recent mission stories from around my wider area of work. In South Sudan, communities have taken steps towards peace as pastors from different tribal groups reconciled, and my colleague Joan has shared a growing vision of a new tribe of peacemakers. Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/empower