

Kampala, Uganda

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I spent the third week of February 2014 in Kampala, Uganda as a visiting surgeon following an invitation from Dr. Andrew Hodges. Andrew was born in Great Britain, and he and his wife Sarah, an anesthesiologist, are permanent residents of Uganda. They were wonderful hosts to both myself and former SickKids' Plastic Surgery Fellow, Marc Swan.



We were based at CoRSU Hospital ('Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services in Uganda') which is a purpose built facility funded by the European Charity CBM. It was established in 2006 as a private non-profit non-governmental organization. The services provided are predominantly Plastic Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery with full rehabilitation services available in a multidisciplinary setting. Over 350 primary oro-facial clefts are treated annually at CoRSU, making it one of the largest units in sub-Saharan Africa. Other reconstructive burdens include post-burn contractures, congenital urological anomalies, head and neck pathology, and lower limb trauma. The cleft work is currently funded by The Smile Train, whilst other paediatric pathology is covered by the

hospital's charitable funds. Adults must pay for their treatment, although those in genuine hardship are heavily subsidized by a UK charity called Interface Uganda.

I had an opportunity to teach four Ugandan Plastic Surgery Trainees – a great privilege seeing as they represent the future of Plastic Surgery in Uganda. During the five operating days, we performed three cleft lip repairs, two palatoplasties, two bilateral Tessier 4 cleft repairs, and two total ear reconstructions. The list would have been longer had four patients not have been cancelled on the day of surgery because of Malaria!





The trainees are on a three-year Masters in Plastic Surgery Programme which was developed by Andrew and is organized through Mbarara Medical School. The program has strong links with Vancouver, with many of the Residents spending a six-week sabbatical at BC Children's Hospital.

Andrew is heavily reliant on a visiting 'International Faculty' to assist in teaching the Residents. Other surgeons who have given their time include Francoise Firmin (Paris), Brian Sommerlad (London), and Hubert Vermeersch (Belgium).

Of the international surgical trips I have taken, this certainly rates very high. The people were lovely, the hospital was well equipped, and I felt that I had made a useful contribution. My advice for anyone interested in international surgery is to wait for an invitation. It is always best to go where you are welcome.