



The view of the hospital building

Newsletter December 2022

Dear friends and family,

As this year comes to an end, there have been a lot of changes on our campus we'd like to share with you about. Our first nine months in Settsü, Nagaland have been quite adventurous! But we're ever so thankful to have been able to settle in this new environment and get used to a very different way of life compared to Switzerland. The beauty of the forest surrounding us has made up for all the insect bites and the joy of harvesting our own vegetables and fruits and drinking our own cow's milk has made up for the slow progress at the hospital site. All in all, it has been quite a lesson in patience, especially for me, Nadia. For Elisa however, who's 20 months old now, it's been paradise!



Our Container finally arrived on the 4th of September!

It was very hard to believe when we heard that our container could finally leave the port. There were so many hurdles before it got that far. First of all, they took forever to process the paperwork, then they wanted customs duty for the container itself, finally when all was done and cleared it was nearly impossible to find a truck willing to bring the container up to Nagaland and eventually when we found a truck, it had to camp at the port for 5 days until all the final paperwork could be done and bills could be paid because they were charging a horrendous amount for parking the container there for all those months. Nonetheless, we were overjoyed when we finally got to open the container on our site and find that nearly everything had survived the journey and the heat without much damage! Even my precious piano wasn't much out of tune at all! So, we thank you all for your prayers and God for his mercy and favour.



Arrival of our container

The hospital building is nearing its' completion

In May we had hoped that the hospital would be finished by now, we're close, but we're still not quite there yet. Who would have thought that it would take 2 months or more just to paint the doors of the hospital?

The Doors

We bought the doors and doorframes 4 years ago, so they have undergone a great deal of seasoning and most of the panels have shrunk so much that gaps of more than a centimetre have to be stuffed with filler, sanded, sealed again and painted. This process is about a days' job for four workers per door, the result however, is fabulous! But, we have 46 doors to be done. And until the doors are in, the plumbers don't want to fit the toilets, because they might get used without water and until the plumbing is done the flooring can't go in because it might get damaged. So, all we can do is be patient again.



The Roof

We're happy to say that the tin roof of the second floor of the newly added blocks has been completed, so hopefully there will be no seepage to worry about and the building looks more complete. In addition, it will serve as the drying room for the hospital washing. The laundry room has also been completed right on top under the Solar-Water-Tanks.



The Windows

Wow, if anything, getting the windows in was a huge challenge. When we ordered them in May we were told they would be delivered on the 10th of August together with the missing mosquito nets for our windows. Well, what a surprise when the 10th of August came and went without a window in sight. They said they had a little delay because there was a fire at the factory. They should come by the end of August. August passed, September passed and we were really getting irritated as we wanted to finish the painting inside. Finally on the 12th of October they arrived and could start getting fitted. One window was missing, 6 windows didn't have the frosted glass as ordered, 1 window didn't fit and two didn't have the opening latch in the right place and the OT entrance door-window was wrong. The fitters just wanted to get their job done and over with and made a mess of the mosquito nets. So, we had to stand over them and check every single window and net taking hours. All in all, it was a very frustrating experience but they're in now and now that the rainy season is over the building is watertight.



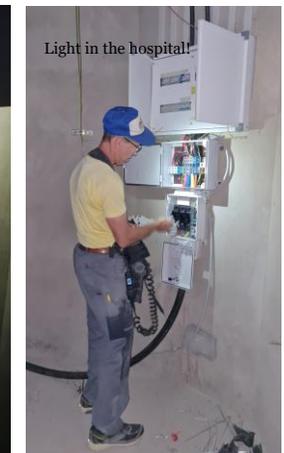
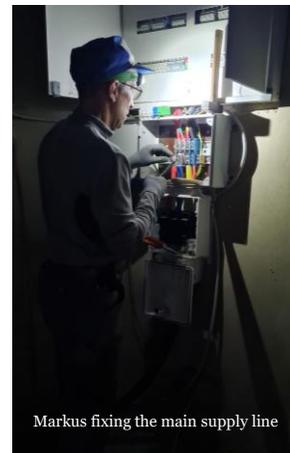
Landscaping

To keep away snakes, crabs (we actually found one in the hospital building as well as a dead scorpion) and other creepy-crawlies we've been levelling and clearing the hospital grounds and courtyard and will be creating a little garden-oasis in the middle of the hospital building with all the lovely tropical plants that grow here.



Carpentry Work

The Carpenters are doing a terrific job of making fitted counter desks for the nursing station, the laboratory and the reception and pharmacy, never mind making the main entrance door and a couple of other doors that were missing. They've also done a lovely job of the pharmacy and reception wall, although I guess they struggled to understand our design idea in the beginning.

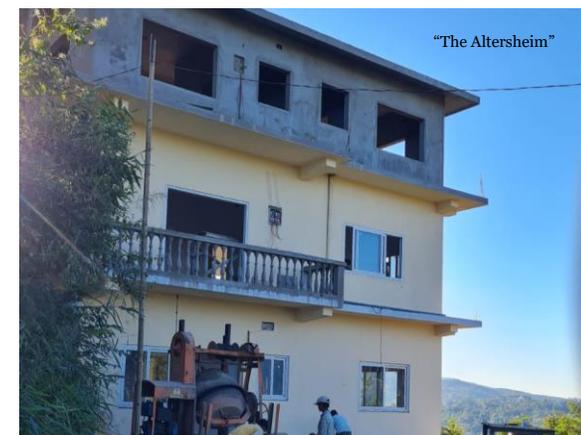


The Solar-Water-Heaters and Plumbing

Another big achievement was connecting our water tank from up on the hill to the hospital. A big trench had to be dug and we were worried the pressure might not be sufficient to reach the solar water tanks on the roof, but praise God, it was more than sufficient. We have purchased and received the solar water systems, but are yet to put the up on the roof of the laundry unit.

The electrical work

Markus Bänziger, our dear friend from Switzerland who's an electrical engineer volunteered to come and make sure all the electrical work that has been done by a local electrician will be safe for running a hospital. I'm afraid I'll be doing injustice in trying to describe what all he has been installing, as my understanding of electrical work is utterly poor. But what I know is he brought two suitcases of cables and special earth leakage circuit breakers and voltage surge protection devices, and spent three weeks working on the hospital and our parents' house "the Altersheim" ensuring we won't be surprised by electrical surges that might ruin all our equipment, kill us or burn down the hospital. He also helped instal the main line for the power supply to the hospital, so finally there's light in the building! We are so grateful for his exceptional work here!



Apart from construction...

We enjoyed a little break from the construction when we joined our local church call "Christ Church" for a weekend in Tzurang Valley. The church had organised free drugs from the government and so we held a small medical camp for the tee leaf pickers and rubber tree plantation workers who have no access to medical care. The problems we faced were shocking. We were asked to help a 12-year-old child with hydrocephalus who was bed ridden since childhood, a one-and-a-half- year old baby who should have been running around with Elisa, but who couldn't even sit up and weighed perhaps around 6kg, most probably due to oxygen deficiency during childbirth at home. A little 4-year-old boy was brought to see us who was blind since birth...We couldn't do anything for any of them there in the forest with no facilities. All of them had never been seen to by medical professionals. Furthermore, they were all asking when they could come for treatment to our hospital. Again, it has been a confirmation that the need for medical care is quite desperate here.



At the moment.....

- We are in the process of putting up light fixtures which should be completed by January 2023. We have been unable to make the connection for a backup generator to the main hospital control room as we do not have the resources at the moment to purchase a generator for the hospital.
- Painters will be putting a second coat of paint to the exterior walls and should be finished in a few weeks.
- The masons are in the process of completing the outside drain for the rainwater to run off and the paving along the perimeter of the hospital building.
- The plumber will come by the end of January 2023 to put in all the fixtures and do a final check.

Once all these jobs are completed, we will finally instal the flooring for the hospital which should take about a month from the time we place the order. Only then will we be able to order the hospital equipment if we should have the finances to do so.



Personally.....

As we have mentioned a couple of times, patience has been the key word for us since we have been here overseeing the construction work. We are grateful to God for all that he teaches us and for all his blessings in various ways. The last few weeks have been challenging, as I, Nadia have had to travel to the UK because sadly, my grandfather passed away. Travelling with a small child is really tiring, never mind undertaking a three-day journey with 8 hours in the car, four flights and airports, delays, many missed flights, rebooking, overnights in airports etc. So, we hope we can take a few weeks of rest during this festive season of Christmas and New year to enjoy some much need time with family and friends. Having to oversee two construction sites and deal with so many different trades and workers has had quite a strain on us too.

Our sincere acknowledgment and gratitude to all our friends, well-wishers, families and Churches for being that pillar of support to us and accompanying us on this crazy journey. Our prayers and best wishes accompany this newsletter to you and your dear ones during this season of Hope. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to all.

Nadia, Sungti and Elisa

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