

Dear Friends,

March 2021

This week Mano Ntayingi and I drove across town to participate in a “photo op” celebrating improvements to two health centers funded by UKAID and carried out by IMA World Health. In my role with IMA I supervised a group installing solar power to see it was done correctly. Mano plays a much greater role. He oversees IMA’s “Covid Response” in Congo, supporting hundreds of neighborhood health centers and hospitals all over the country.

This UKAID funded project includes major renovations for strategically important health centers, providing staff with training, personal protection equipment, and other well-known Covid fighting materials. These include pulse-oximeters to clip on fingers, and life-saving oxygen concentrators when patients present with low oxygen saturation levels, a technology which is RARE in Congo hospitals. Since oxygen concentrators require electricity, that’s where the solar systems came in.

The air we breathe is 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen and the remaining 1% contains lots other gases of which carbon dioxide; is 0.033% (and rising). An oxygen concentrator works by running this air at high pressure through a cylinder filled with tiny beads of a material that absorbs nitrogen so that the air coming out is 99% Oxygen. Pretty nifty.

Last week, after the UKAID staff inspected the facilities and photos were duly taken, Mano and I remained to get signatures on the paperwork required to turn over concentrators, supporting materials, and solar energy systems at the Mbankani health center. Then, Mano had an additional stop on his schedule. He had equipment to donate to the large Ndjili hospital that supports 20+ neighborhood health centers.



Solar technicians in yellow hard hats proudly show off their work at the Mbankani Health Center. Being just below the equator, our sun goes straight overhead every day year round. Hence the solar panels are flat on the roof.



The job is not finished until the paper work is done.



Mano (left) with the Ndjili hospital Director and staff receiving oxygen concentrators and related accessories.

The director of the Ndjili Hospital received us gracefully. As his staff unloaded equipment from our car, the director told us that since the Covid outbreak, oxygen consumption at the hospital went from a dozen bottles a month to over 50. Hence the concentrators would help greatly to lower costs. Later, Mano passionately explained to me how many patients who die at home when Covid causes respiratory distress, would be saved if the neighborhood health centers could provide life-saving oxygen. Hence, using UKAID funds, he was equipping sixty health centers with concentrators and where necessary, backup solar and battery power systems.

intentionally chosen to work with our faith-based organization rather than seeking a better job elsewhere. He has been part of our team since I came to Congo in 2004. I enjoy working at IMA and was gratified to learn from Mano how my rather unexciting oversight of contractors would have a part in saving an untold number of lives in Kinshasa.

Thank you for *your* part in making our presence here possible.

Wayne Nile



Oxygen bottles over flow into a hall way at Ndjili hospital. Covid has stressed hospital capacity in Congo as everywhere the world over.