

Ärzte für Ifakara  
Boznerstraße.14  
6060 Hall in Tirol

## Report

### Installation of a new „Multix Swing/Vertix“ X-ray machine at St. Francis Hospital/Ifakara, October 31 – December 15, 2009

The association “Doctors for Ifakara” and its chairman Dr. Willi Schennach stay in close contact with SFDDH in Ifakara. Nearly every day do we exchange E-mails or telephone calls with the administration, as some sort of service. This way, urgent problems are discussed, and we can instantaneously react to minor and major disasters. During our stay in Ifakara in May we noticed that the X-ray device was in bad shape. One month later, the nearly 40-year old machine broke down. Our association therefore decided to buy a brand-new gadget.

The radiographer Atti Pahl arranged a meeting with representatives of Siemens Innsbruck. This company offered an uncomplicated device, yet quite suitable for tropical regions, a Bucky wall unit included. This gadget met all demands of St. Francis Hospital. As far as the price in relation to working standards was concerned, the Siemens “Multix-Swing/Vertix” was also superior to similar X-ray machines offered by other firms. The board of our association decided to start a donation appeal because there were simply no USD 60.000 on our account. Believe it or not, supported by the Regional Government of Tyrol, a lot of Tyrolean doctors, the Medalp Clinics Tyrol and many private donors who had organized highly successful charity events, we accomplished the impossible. The necessary money could be raised within two months. We ordered the X-ray machine and determined the date of installation in Ifakara.

A small team, consisting of Christine Schennach and Renate Schwamberger, was to oversee the assembly of the gadget and the training of the personnel. They set off for Tanzania on October 31. To put it simply, troubles continued. Instead of a promised flight transport the device was sent by ship, with three stopovers in Hamburg, Rotterdam and Salalah/Oman, which resulted in a delay of nearly 2 weeks. The ship didn't arrive before 23/11/2009. So we had to postpone the flight back to Europe.

In the meantime, we restored the old X-ray room so as to make it go well with our visual and hygienic ideas. But it was much more important to adapt the room to radiation protection regulations, which are a must in Tanzania as well. It was quite a tough job to take all the necessary measures. For example, two thirds of the X-ray room windows had to be bricked up and the doors had to be provided with lead sheets.

At the front of the lorry which delivered the X-ray machine one could read: “God is Great”, and in fact, we were in dire need of help. One example: customs formalities

were nerve-racking as always and in this very case, Godfrey Mkwiche was our helper in need. Finally, on December 4 the X-ray device arrived in Ifakara. Prashant Gorkan and his team from Vanguard Ltd started the installation on 6/12/09, and within two days the job was done.

Tuesday 8/12 and Wednesday 9/12 were devoted to the training of the local X-ray staff. We had it announced over the radio that X-ray examinations on those days were free of charge. The result was that patients, usually coming when it is nearly too late for medical help, thronged the waiting room. Our staff had more than enough opportunity for training.

On Friday 11/12 the Right Rev. Bishop Agapit Ndorobo celebrated Holy Mass and christened the new X-ray department in a solemn ceremony in the presence of the Austrian Honorary Consul Mr. Helmut Suitner. Afterwards, the employees of the hospital and the population of Ifakara threw a meanwhile legendary party. I would like to remark that our association organized this feast to also inform the people of the region about the activities of our association.

We want to say “thank you” to all our donors, the Vanguard Company with Mr. Prashant Gocarn, the members of our association, the representatives and the staff of the hospital and Mr. Hannes Steinkellner from Siemens Innsbruck, who all gave us helping hands.

Renate Schwamberger