

Report Visit Marimanti and Chuka November 2025

By Mimosa Bruinooge, co-chair foundation "Friends of Marimanti"

Introduction and purpose of this visit

The foundation Friends of Marimanti has now been active since 2021. We're proud of what we achieved: we managed to place a well-functioning solar system in the hospital and were able to send a nurse to for pediatric training and 2 doctors for emergency obstetric care training. But, since the last visit of Myrrith in November 2024, not much progress has been made. The main issue is the re-imburement of the expenditure saved by the electricity bill, as described in the MOU signed January 2024. FOM and the County signed an MOU agreeing this funds would be used to renovate the Maternity Ward. Due to various challenges at County level, few actions had been undertaken so far. Therefore, one of the main reasons of this visit was to encourage all stakeholders to keep to their end of the bargain and discuss the challenges and opportunities.

Furthermore, we aimed to agree on a MOU concerning elective medical students from the Erasmus University.

Another challenge is the fact that dr Andrew Njoroge has been replaced to Chuka hospital. We wanted to make clear the role and involvement of the new management in Marimanti Hospital and the reassurance that dr Andrew Njoroge would stay involved as co-chair of FOM.

This visit was carried out by Mimosa Bruinooge, the co-chair of FOM accompanied by her 14 year old daughter Iris, who was granted special leave from school to achieve specific learning goals, including acknowledgment of the school system, health system and cultural exchange

Tuesday 4th November

Journey from Middelburg to Nairobi by train and plane from Schiphol airport. We arrived late in at night and spend the night in a hotel nearby the airport

Wednesday 5th November

Dr Andrew Njoroge picked us up at 7 am from the hotel and together with his family we travelled to Chuka. There we attended a graduation party at the school Andrew's children are attending, this to experience the way things are done in a (boarding) school here. After that, we were warmly welcomed in Andrew's house and enjoyed a lovely meal prepared by his wife Miriam.

Thursday 6th

The main agenda for today was a meeting with the Minister of Health of Thanaka Nithi County, dr Gichuyia Ntharuku M'riara. Andrew and Mimosa were welcomed in his office at 11 am sharp, together with dr Elijah Kameti, the director and Rose Micheni, public health officer. We discussed several items, all in a very friendly atmosphere

1. Success in our collaboration so far:

- Solar system functioning
- Pediatric nurse in school
- In total 5 medical students from the Netherlands, successful
- Successful funding activities
- 2 doctors for LSS training in Nairobi

We mentioned that participation director in our meeting was well appreciated, even as the letter of appreciation that FOM recently received. Also, the work of FOM was much appreciated by county team.

It was assured that dr Andrew Njoroge will stay the spokesperson for FOM, Marimanti Hospital and exchange students although he is transferred to Chuka now. As a sign of courtesy he was even given time of to host dr Mimosa and her daughter during her stay in the region.

2. Students

- Success full short term internship of 5 medical students in Marimanti so far.
- Shared wish for a MoU between Erasmus University and County. Proposal was shared by Mimosa: a general MoU between Erasmus University and Ministry of Health of Tharaka Nithi county and an agreement tailor made for the electives in Marimanti. After a brief look it was agreed upon in principal, just the legal department will have a second check before it will be signed. Dr Elijah promised to come back to us about this end of the week
- Since dr Andrew is transferred from Marimanti to Chuka, it was unclear what his role would be regarding the medical students. It was agreed upon that he will stay the first contact person, but on day to day basis in Marimanti it has to be the local staff. We agreed dr Martin Mawera, our much appreciated board member, will work with them under supervision of dr Henry Muchiri, the new MO in charge.
- The wish for the Erasmus University to work together for the minor "Global Health" was mentioned and enthusiastically received, including the possibility for students to go to Rotterdam for exchange

3. Solar system

- Since 1 year now, the solar system is functioning well and saving Ksh80,000- 90,000 (530-600 euro) per month on the electricity bill. Although we repeatedly urged the Ministry to invest these regained funds to start with renovation of the maternity ward, this process was not started yet, partly because of legal challenges. Because of this, FOM had decided not to continue with the solar system although the financial means are there.

Fortunately, a draft of the renovation plan was shared and it was promised that plans would be finalized shortly after consulting the Marimanti team and actual activities in rebuilding will start ASAP

4. Rotary

- The idea to work together with the Rotary Club and apply for a Global Grant was well received and encouraged. Details on this subject will follow

Finally, it was decided that it's most effective to communicate directly with dr Elijah Kameti.

We spend the rest of the day enjoying ourselves with the family

Friday 7th

Delayed department to Marimanti where we had a meeting with the staff. See minutes made by dr Martin.

Unfortunately, we our board member dr Kamanja could not be present due to health issues.

After the meeting, we passed through maternity ward and neonatal ward and tried to get a vision of what and how it will be changed after the renovation. Suggestions were noted down by James (acting nurse officer in charge). This will be shared soon.

Some discussion about neonatal ward was not agreed upon. Dr Henry suggested to look how it's done in other places and after that we will make up our minds. Mimosa stressed that it's also very important to go through the ideas with the midwives and gynecologist before definitive agreement.



Team in front of maternity ward

After the official meeting we spent time with dr Martin, dr Henry Muchiri (the new MO in charge) and dr Andrew at the Home lodge. In a casual we spoke about many things concerning Marimanti and the foundation.

In conclusion:

- We identified the main challenges to prioritize:
 - o Mothers coming late
 - o Care for newborns
 - o Respectful maternity care and the challenges the staff faces to deliver this (eg because of lack off material)
 - o Teenage pregnancies
- Dr Henry Muchiri is very supportive in our collaboration



Leisure time with the FOM board



Team in front the hospital

We spent the night at Jordan's place in Marimanti, dr Martin joined us for a drink and we celebrated our collaboration and friendship

Saturday 8th

After a relaxed morning we went back to Marimanti hospital, for me to see with my own eyes how the solar system was functioning. Also, it was good to show our faces and share our ideas in an informal way to the staff. And for our children it was very interesting to see the hospital. The rest of the day we enjoyed the surroundings and went back to Chuka



Solar panels

Sunday 9th

Most of the day was spent in Chuka by visits not directly related to the foundation. In the evening dr Andrew and dr Mimosa sat together to discuss the rotary plan. It turned out that we were not really on the same page.

In conclusion, together with the Marimanti staff we suggested to focus on 3 main challenges, namely:

1. Mothers arriving late at the hospital
2. Insufficient care for premature babies and neonatal care in general
3. Respectfull maternity care

Dr Andrew will, together with his team, compile a document as a suggestion for the global grant. These document will at least contain the current data, evidence based suggestions on how to improve including an estimation of cost and a way to monitor.

Dr Andrew will be the project leader and communicate with the local team, the Rotary in Chuka as well as the Netherlands and FOM



NICU at Marimanti Hospital

Monday 10th – Wednesday 13th

These days were spend enjoying the beautiful country and good company.

