

## Dental Volunteers

### Aid Project REPORT 2022

**PROJECT:** Tanzania 2

**OBJECTIVES:** Help the unprivileged Tanzanian people without insurance and no possibility for a dental treatment, especially the Massai people.

**LOCATION:** Massai land Tanzania close to Arusha (Naepo, Naisinyai) and Marang Lutheran Hospital, small villages near Marangu

**DATES:** 10.10.-10.11.22

**PARTICIPANTS:** Fiona Weng, Sandra Weigl (and Ruben Pfeiffer (11.10.-19.10.22))

**UNIVERSITY:** University of Regensburg

**NUMBER PATIENTS TREATED:** 245

**TREATMENTS PERFORMED:** Fillings, extractions, (root canal treatments), scaling, school visit with teaching how to brush correctly

#### **REFLECTIONS ON THE TRIP:**

The experiences we had in Tanzania were enriching and quite diverse. Not only did we have the opportunity to help people with their - sometimes enormous - dental pain and deepen our experience with different treatments than we are used to in Germany, but we also got to know so many new interesting people and their culture. It was our particular motivation to provide all locals with access to basic dental care. The Tanzanian people took us in with such a heartwarming welcome and have been thankful for the help we were able to provide. Everyone was very curious to know who the Europeans were and what a dentist does. Especially the time spent in the Maasai district and some other small villages near Marangu, which were cut off from civilization, was a time we will never forget. Going to sleep exhausted but happy because you can't think of a day in Germany when you helped so many people in one day. Being confronted with new problems every day and thinking outside the box to solve them with few materials and instruments. We saw cases that we would not have seen in Germany. For example, being confronted with so much calculus that you can't see the

actual problem, with many teeth completely destroyed or with roots only partially left in the mouth. Also, it takes some time to get used to treat a patient on a normal chair or table and to accept the fact that perfect treatments like in Germany are not possible. We didn't have an x-ray to see how difficult it really is to remove the wisdom tooth. It really took some time to get used to this unusual situation, especially as many Tanzanians have their wisdom teeth completely destroyed because they couldn't reach them or don't have a toothbrush at all. The Maasais still use the branches of the "oremite", also known as the toothbrush tree of the Massai people, for domestic dental care. A special concern was the visits to local schools and different grades to distribute toothbrushes and toothpastes, an examination of students and group prophylaxis. Many of these patients, some of them very young, needed subsequent treatment and were very grateful for free and competent help. The special challenge was to communicate with the patients, as many do not speak English. A large share of our patients were afraid of the extraction or possible pain. Fortunately, we had two competent local doctors who took care of the organization, translation and accommodation. So we felt safe and welcome at all times.

We would like to thank them for the opportunity to be a part of this great project. Without the support of Straumann, this project would not have been possible. We are very grateful for the financial support concerning our flights and our medical safety. Furthermore, we would like to thank "Dental Volunteers e.V.", who supported us in our project and planning. It has been very rewarding for both of us to help patients of all ages and ethnicities and bring smiles to their faces. We will never forget this charitable project and our time in Tanzania and will always have fond memories of it.

**PHOTOS: PLEASE PROVIDE HIGH RESOLUTION JPGs (300 DPI or higher).**

**NOTE, WE CANNOT USE PHOTOS WHICH ARE IMBEDDED IN A PDF OR PPT PRESENTATION.**

**Report Submitted by:** Fiona Weng, Sandra Weigl

**Date:** 12.12.2022