

Vacancy for Volunteer Medical Doctor in Rural Tanzania - MNERO
Invitation for applications

4.3.2020

Mnero is a small village in a remote location in southern Tanzania about 40 km away from the District capital of Nachingwea (<https://www.google.de/maps/place/Mnero,+Tansania/@-10.1691431,38.4570164,9z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x18f187a38b56048f:0x404eccc602bed56!8m2!3d-10.18473!4d38.62709>). The only European style buildings are the former Benedictine Mission and the hospital. Mnero hospital has been built almost 70 years ago. Since long it belongs to the Catholic Diocese of Lindi.

The hospital currently has about 80 beds and a staff of roughly 50. It is providing all essential medical services for the very poor rural peasant population which hardly has access to any other place for medical treatment.

About 30 years ago the former German Development Service (DED, since 2011 merged with GIZ) sent the first volunteer doctors to Mnero Hospital to help improving its services. Before that the hospital had not had a resident doctor for many years. The volunteers stayed for 2-3 years each and succeeded each other without interruption for the subsequent 18 years. Together with their Tanzanian partners they were able to reestablish and run appropriate medical services. In 1994 they started a small charity in Germany called "Solidarität Mnero" (SolMne) which is active up till now. It was founded to assist the hospital in terms of advice but also with funds for the improvement of infrastructure, education, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. Over time, the activities extended to other fields only indirectly related to health like reforestation, support of local schools or village water supply.

In 2007 the support with volunteer doctors from Germany ended. Since then the hospital was run by several Tanzanian doctors and administrators. SolMne continued to provide some financial support and tried to help with intermittent short visits from previous volunteers. Nevertheless partly due to a lack of medical doctors partly due to administrative incompetence and mismanagement the quality of medical services decreased very much over the years. The situation of the hospital became less and less transparent and the communication between previous volunteers/SolMne and Mnero less frequent and clear. The diocese as the owner was not able to substantially improve the situation. Therefore the Diocese – as well as the hospital staff itself – has asked once more for support by a medical doctor from abroad.

After long and intensive discussions in 2015 we from SolMne decided to comply with this request by sending a medical doctor again in order to prevent further deterioration of medical services and bring them back to an acceptable standard.

SolMne succeeded in finding suitable volunteers: From August 2016 a Dutch couple, both medical doctors, has been working there. This, in addition to a completely new and by the meantime well established Tanzanian and European managerial staff, improved the situation substantially. These Dutch expatriate doctors left by mid of October 2018. They were replaced by another couple where she is a Medical Doctor and he has a training in management and finances. As his professional background came in very handy he too got (half) a contract to assist with all sorts of management and financial issues. They have been working in Mnero since Sept. 2018 and plan to leave in the beginning of August 2020.

Therefore we are looking now once more for a volunteer medical doctor who is able and willing to continue the work. It would be possible to live and work in Mnero as a single person, a couple or as a family. In case of a couple we would try to provide (a part time) employment to the spouse provided s/he has a professional background useful in the context of our work.

Profile and task

The living and working conditions demand a personality with high intrinsic motivation, flexibility and tolerance. In terms of medical skills, the position requires the applicant to have a reasonable experience in surgery and/or gynecology/obstetrics and/or pediatrics (the nearest hospital with well equipped and educated MD's is two hours driving distance away). Applicants moreover should have a substantial knowledge of medical care in a setting of very limited resources. Therefore they should have done a course in tropical medicine (or have the equivalent working experience).

The main task will be to stabilize and further improve appropriate medical services for in- and outpatients in very close cooperation with the local staff. That includes to do all the necessary clinical work while at the same time trying to provide on-the-job-training of the local Assistant Medical Officer(s), Medical Assistants and Clinical Officers. In addition the task includes to advise and support the local hospital administration in different sectors of management (financial administration and planning, staff development, quality management, communication). Flexibility and the will to adapt are essential.

This applies not only to the professional but also to the personal field: while colleagues, staff, people generally are very friendly the professional cooperation is sometimes not easy. Different ideas, different working rhythms, different attitudes can lead to disappointments – normally soon overcome. But one should be aware of this potential problem and bring along a good amount of patience and a sound ability to bear with frustrations.

Conditions

As we are only a small charity we cannot offer a "real" salary – a fact we are not happy about. We intend to provide a monthly allowance of € 800 (€ 1000 for a couple) which is supposed to cover ALL the expenses (including health insurance as well as retirement funds!). If there are children we are ready to slightly increase this allowance.

In addition housing with basic furniture and equipment will be provided free.

We also plan to provide an initial lumpsum of € 300 (per adult) for personal expenses including furniture and appliances for the house.

We will also pay a lump sum of € 1000 (per adult) for the flight to and from Tanzania at the beginning of the contract and at its end. To enable the volunteer to visit home we pay an additional lumpsum of € 1000 (per adult) for travel expenses after the first year, second year etc. provided another year of contract follows.

We would also cover the costs for the mandatory registration with the Medical Council of Tanganyika up to € 500 and the costs incurred to get a work- and residence permit up to a total of € 500 per adult.

We would aim at a two years contract – with the option of extension if both sides agree.

The chosen candidate would be expected to learn intensively Swahili as soon as it becomes clear that we agree on each other. As it is essential to speak Swahili reasonably well we would contribute € 600 (per adult) for a language training course in the country (before starting the work).

Procedure

If you are interested please provide your detailed CV together with a letter of motivation to Dr. Friedhelm Bernreiter at the following email-address: daktari_bern@aol.com

Sending your data includes permission that we from SolMne confidentially share this information for discussion among ourselves and with the Diocese.

We then would reply to you by mail and/or by phone and if we are interested we would invite you to a personal interview before any decision would be taken – on your and on our side.

We are interested that you get the best possible information on working and living conditions and therefore would establish contact between you and the volunteers who have been working there before.

After having agreed we would appreciate if you learn more about SolMne, its intention and procedures and about the local situation and would try to prepare you a little bit more by possibly arranging for further personal meetings with you if this would seem desirable and feasible.

Please be aware that we would make a contract with you while another working contract would be made finally between the Catholic Diocese of Lindi and you.

This is an opportunity to live and work among extremely friendly people in an amazingly beautiful landscape of the “real” Africa. All former European volunteers came back satisfied having done meaningful medical work and enjoyed this period of their lives greatly.

More information can be found (however in German only) on our homepage: <http://www.mnero.de/>
The Dutch volunteers meanwhile have set up a corresponding network. Their homepage is: <https://www.freshi.nl/>