

Serving the Smallest

From the heart of Naro Moru, Kenya, Dr. Chelsea Shikuku is the first pediatric orthopaedic surgery fellow with PAACS. She is on a mission to transform pediatric orthopaedic care in rural Kenya. Her journey into medicine was inspired by her early volunteer work after high school at the Naromoru Disabled Children's Home. Orthopaedic surgeons from Italy visit twice per year for medical camps. This opened her eyes to the lack of local orthopaedic surgeons available to provide year-round care and follow-up. She wanted to fill this gap which inspired her to pursue pediatric orthopaedics.

Dr. Shikuku graduated from the PAACS orthopaedic surgery program at AIC Kijabe Hospital in 2023. Her time at Kijabe exceeded her expectations, enriching both her professional skills and spiritual growth. Now she is excited to be the first fellow of the newly established two-year pediatric orthopaedic surgery program, a collaboration between PAACS and CURE Children's Hospitals of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Through PAACS, Dr. Shikuku has learned to integrate her faith deeply into her practice in a way that she experiences God guiding her every day. Before cases, she takes time to think through the case and prepare for it the best she can to feel ready and confident. At the start, the team always presents the patient, the case, their hands, and their minds to Him, asking God to take the wheel. This spiritual grounding is essential, especially when facing unexpected challenges in the operating room. For those instances, Dr. Shikuku has made it routine to pause and pray, which always gives her new ideas and direction.

Recently, during a rotation in Ethiopia she began to see her impact as a local specialist with the critical role she played in a pediatric spine campaign. It was a collaboration with an Egyptian team to provide life-altering surgeries



to children with severe spinal deformities. Seeing the children return for post-surgical follow-ups and witnessing their improved conditions was a humbling reminder of those children she first met at the Naromoru Disabled Children's Home.

Looking forward, Dr. Shikuku is committed to serving in rural Kenya, addressing the critical needs of underserved communities. Her vision extends beyond immediate orthopaedic care, aiming to bring holistic and sustainable solutions to the countryside, guided by the hand of God.



PAACS

PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY
OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

Highlights



PAACS has been a blessing to my life. Through your support and prayers, the dreams of a young girl in Naro Moru have been made a reality. This Christian-based program, has afforded me the opportunity to do hands-on training. It has given me the ability to reach out to children in remote areas through outreach programs, facilitate my professional growth in the field, while also growing my spiritual values. May God bless you all as you continue to be a blessing to me and many more.



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Read her full story
on the back page!

Dr. Chelsea Shikuku
2023 PAACS Graduate
Pediatric Orthopaedic Fellow



Hospital of Hope - Bringing Hope to Togo

Launched in January 2023 at Hospital of Hope (HOH) the PAACS general surgery training program in Togo represents the realization of a vision nearly two decades in the making. This year, in January 2024, the program expanded to include Hopital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) in the southern region of the country.

According to Program Director Dr. Bryce Nattier, the program's unique structure offers residents a diverse and comprehensive surgical education. By rotating between the two hospitals, residents gain exposure to a wide variety of cases. HOH, which serves northern Togo and parts of Burkina Faso, handles a higher volume of trauma and emergency cases, reaching an estimated 2 to 5 million people.

Meanwhile, HBB focuses more on elective procedures, offering residents a well-rounded experience across a broad spectrum of surgeries. With three residents currently training across both hospitals, they have all stepped into leadership roles, excelling in their strengths while working on areas for growth. Their contributions have significantly expanded the capacity of the surgical departments, enhanced patient care, and eased the overall workload.

A milestone for the program came in late 2023 with the arrival of Dr. Enoch Mupepe as a new faculty member at HOH. He is a 2021 PAACS graduate from Galmi Hospital in Niger. His leadership has been a source of encouragement, serving as a tangible example to the hospital staff and the community of what can be achieved through PAACS programs. Dr. Mupepe illustrates a growing presence of national surgeons, reducing reliance on foreign missionaries.

In the predominantly non-Christian communities served specifically by HOH, there is a delicate balance between faith and professional practice. While public expressions of faith are rare, deep spiritual conversations often arise with long-term patients. Recently, a non-Christian patient faced a post-operative renal complication. This moment of crisis in the life of the patient, opened a door to prayer and gospel conversations. He ultimately accepted Christ, and the chaplain continues to walk alongside him in his faith. Every story of faith, like that of this patient, is celebrated by the PAACS team as a testament to God's work through this ministry.

Through the dedication of residents and faculty to provide quality surgical care and the gospel, this PAACS program at HOH and HBB combined, is bringing hope to the people of Togo and its surrounding countries.

Addressing Anesthesia Care in Africa

Across Africa, the shortage of trained anesthesiologists is a significant challenge. In East Africa, the density of anesthesiologists is notably low, ranging from 0.02 per 100,000 people in Burundi to 0.39 per 100,000 in Kenya—well below the internationally recommended target of 5 per 100,000. This gap in anesthesia care directly affects patient outcomes, with many surgeries being performed without adequate anesthesia support.

In response to this need, PAACS launched its first anesthesiology program at AIC Kijabe Hospital. What sets this program apart from others in Africa is its focus on spiritual discipleship along with capacity building. The program aims to not only train skilled anesthesiologists but also to empower them to become leaders who can multiply their impact by teaching and discipling others. Rooted in Christ, the program views every medical interaction as an opportunity for ministry, reflecting on the compassionate care modeled by Jesus.

Program Director Dr. Matt Kynes explains that there are currently six residents in the program—three are from Kenya, one from Ethiopia and two from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dr. Kynes stated that these future anesthesiologists are being trained to meet patients in their most vulnerable moments, offering reassurance and peace just before surgery. This program prioritizes both advanced medical skills and the spiritual growth of its residents. They engage in weekly Bible studies through the PAACS spiritual curriculum, which has already had a transformative impact on their lives. Many have expressed how in-depth study of scripture has shaped their spiritual growth, helping them integrate faith into their medical practice.



*It's not just getting them to
sleep and waking them up.
Anesthesia care starts way before
that and continues long after.*

The need for improved anesthesia services is evident in hospitals all across Africa. At Kijabe, patients often travel over 30 kilometers from remote areas for care that is unavailable closer to home. Assistant Program Director, Dr. Greg Sund, previously served at Kibuye Hope Hospital in Burundi. Recently, two senior residents from Kijabe traveled to Kibuye to teach and assist with complex cases, demonstrating another step in the program's capacity-building efforts and its potential to meet needs across the region.

PAACS' anesthesiology program represents one step forward in improving anesthesia services in Africa. It not only provides life-saving treatment but equips a new generation of leaders who can transform their communities through much needed anesthesia care while sharing the gospel.

Expanding Surgical Hope to Angola at CEML

The Centro Evangélico de Medicina do Lubango (CEML) in Angola is a key healthcare facility known for its specialized surgical services. With 50 beds and over 150 staff members, CEML handles up to 9,300 outpatient visits annually, a third of which are surgical consults. In a region with limited access to advanced medical care, CEML plays a crucial role in meeting the country's healthcare needs.

As the first Lusophone general surgery training program within PAACS, CEML is set to become a key training site for Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. The introduction of PAACS has already strengthened the hospital's organization and sharpened its focus on education, allowing faculty and residents to develop a long-term vision for medical missions.

Dr. Annelise Olson and Dr. Sam Fabiano are the program co-directors at CEML. Dr. Olson is a missionary kid who mostly grew up in Portugal and Dr. Fabiano is a 2019 PAACS graduate, and Angola native, who returned home with a mission to serve. They were both instrumental in launching the PAACS program at CEML. Dr. Fabiano's leadership highlights PAACS' impact

in developing Christian surgeons who not only excel in surgical skills but are deeply committed to advancing surgical education and expanding the kingdom of God in their home countries.

In January 2024, CEML welcomed its first two PAACS residents, Dr. Benedito Joaquim and Dr. Ilda Badukila, both from Lubango. "The most rewarding thing has been to see the joy when new residents are accepted. There are very few opportunities to become a surgeon in Angola, and PAACS is a dream come true for these residents," said Dr. Olson.

Dr. Joaquim and Dr. Badukila will gain experience across various specialties, including general surgery, trauma care, and specifically vesicovaginal fistula repair and total hip arthroplasties. CEML also plans to partner with two rural mission hospitals, providing these residents with diverse educational opportunities and preparing them for future service.

A holistic approach to patient care is central to CEML's mission. Surgeons, doctors, nurses, and support staff like guards and cleaning teams regularly pray with and counsel patients. One recent case illustrates this approach. A patient with Crohn's disease underwent a complex distal ileal resection and remained at the hospital for several weeks. Reflecting on this experience, Dr. Olson shared that the care provided to the patient is what they considered routine; with doctors and nurses providing quality, excellent, compassionate care for the patient and his family and praying with him on rounds. The patient was shown the love of Christ. At the end of his stay, he asked for the chaplain to come and help him accept Christ. The reason was the testimony of PAACS residents, faculty, and hospital staff during his time at the hospital. PRAISE GOD!

