

Report on working visits, 2018

We made two working visits to Mozambique in 2018. The first was in February – March during the rainy season and the second was in June – July, the dry season.

We stayed in Beira for the whole of our first visit, as the rains had rendered the roads out of the city impassable. We combined teaching at the Faculty of Health Science with coaching our scholarship students. The start of the new academic year is always a particularly busy time. Our students Patricia and Johanna, who had been living in a safe house run by nuns, needed a new place to live, as the nuns had decided to use the house for a different purpose. With help from our Doctors for Mozambique students, alternative safe accommodation was found for them.

Our activities during our second visit were as follows:

Teaching: Harrie helped with the dermatology course, which is now headed up by one of our first students, Doctor Zeca Calima, who was able to qualify as a dermatologist thanks to financial support received from the Netherlands. Gitta taught microbiology, assisted for the fourth time by Edmee Bowles from the Radboud University Medical Center.

Future: The Doctors for Mozambique Foundation is planning to create a Mozambican subsidiary. The rector of the University is delighted with this move, and his lawyer is helping us. The Chamber of Commerce in Beira has advised us to set up an association. One of the advantages would be that the Members' Council of an association is its highest consultative body.

Preselection: As soon as the annual graduation ceremony, including the taking of the Hippocratic Oath, was over, we set out for the rural mission schools. One of our newly-qualified doctors went with us to help. As a child, he did not start attending school until he was twelve years old. Only then was he strong enough to undertake the daily five-hour walk to school and back. Lack of funds during medical training meant that he often survived on just one meal a day. In short, a young man who is well acquainted with life in the Mozambican hinterland. We visited five missions, at one of which one of our former students is now working as a doctor.

We drove more than 1000 kilometres on poor roads and crossed rivers on old ferries that can only operate during the dry season. At each mission school we visited, we explained what Doctors for Mozambique does and picked out the most promising pupils. These preselected pupils will come to Beira in January 2019 to take part in a three-day selection weekend, at the end of which definitive selections will be made.



Harrie van der Meeren