

Position: Computer Trainer/Adviser

Muhimbili Medical Centre
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

Period of Assignment: January 1999 - January 2001
Muhimbili is comprised of Muhimbili Medical Centre and Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences and is based in Dar es Salaam.
This is the biggest hospital in East Africa and the main referral hospital for Tanzania.

There were approximately 200 computers, 150 of which are now networked with a wireless connection for Internet and Email, etc.

At Work

My job as Computer Trainer/Adviser had a broad definition. Over the 2 years I would advise on a variety of projects from computerising the library to assisting people in buying PCs or other equipment and liaise with contractors and vendors responsible for our network maintenance and support.

Due to the timing of my placement, I was also responsible for the Y2K project, which included all medical equipment as well as computer hardware and software.

Apart from these tasks, my daily routine would be to address problems, such as computer viruses, hardware problems and queries on how something works.

In addition to this, I designed computer literacy classes for all staff and students and used the academics computer room, which contained 16 computers, for classes.

When time allowed, I would also help external organisations and groups in a similar way. This was due to the fact the necessary staff were not always available. Fortunately, due to a boss who understood the problems encountered by such groups, I was able to take time off during the quieter periods of the working day instead of having to use up all my free time.

In my final year, we received funding from APSO to locally employ staff for a newly created Information and Communications Technology Unit.

Together we put procedures and policies, pay and billing structures, along with bonus schemes, in place

and created a help desk and database for dealing with requests. Each morning we would meet to discuss the progress of the tasks that had been assigned to the individual members of the group and assign the new tasks that came in the previous day.

On-the-job training for all members was an important part of this unit along with the hand-over period, before my assignments completion, for the administration and logistical side of the group.

The aim was to create a self-financing department to deal with all technological issues in Muhimbili, from maintenance, administration, training and improvement of all services supplied by the unit to a step-by-step computerisation of the whole hospital and college business functions.

In brief, over the 2 years, I saw a large number of changes:

- The number of computers, networked or otherwise, grew;
- Plans and materials for training in computer literacy were put in place;
- Training, both informal and formal, took place with regards to computer literacy and on-the-job technical training;
- The use of Internet and email, for research and correspondence purposes, expanded;
- Plans to computerise departments such as the Library, Sales, Accounts, etc. were put in place and the initial steps in the proceedings made;
- 2 computer rooms, for staff and student access, were opened with a third in progress.

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