

Doing our bit for the planet...

Early March saw us faced with a unique challenge. In typical PhysioNet 'do can' fashion we turned a problem into an opportunity. This was our chance to do our bit for the planet.

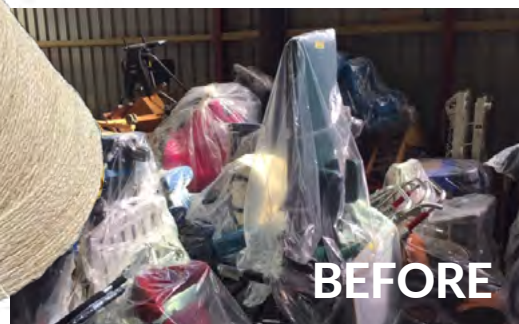
The ASFA Physiotherapy Centre offers sustainable inpatient and outpatient physiotherapy treatment and rehabilitation services in the Nyarugru District in Southern Rwanda, East Africa. Quality physiotherapy equipment is much needed by the centre.

While preparing a pack of 396 items bound for the centre we were made aware of Rwandan law number 17/2019 which **"prohibits the manufacturing, importation, use and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items"**.

The hundreds of items, including 234 specialist paediatric physiotherapy items, we had already wrapped in plastic would not make it through customs. What were we to do?

We rolled up our sleeves, pulled off the plastic for those items already wrapped, and sourced some natural twine to do the job instead.

We're delighted to have been inspired by the challenge and we'll be avoiding the use of single use plastic where we can from now on for all shipments.



... and ASFA Physiotherapy



ASFA Physio was established in 2014 as a joint venture between MAD 4 AFRICA and Sœurs Pénitentes de Saint François d'Assise au Rwanda – a wholly Rwandan community of Franciscan Sisters

The centre treats children with developmental delays and disabilities and provides adult outpatient care. The need is great and with the right equipment, results can be life changing.

In August 2020 MAD 4 AFRICA funded a new 30 bed centre with dedicated therapy rooms. More specialist equipment was needed however, to scale capacity and most importantly to become a government registered healthcare provider. Enter PhysioNet.

MAD 4 AFRICA believes that the PhysioNet shipment and valuable training resources will make ASFA Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Centre the best equipped paediatric centre for disabled children in the whole country, if not East Africa.

Spreading the word

Heather Angilly, one of PhysioNet's volunteer physios, is a very valuable member of the team. She has worked with children for most of her career in the NHS, and joined the charity in 2015 to assist with the children's equipment.

"Since joining PhysioNet, I have been interested in finding out what the recipients of our children's equipment think of the items we provide, and their view of the process. I have been collecting feedback, and have now analysed the results of 14 shipments from 2016 to 2020. A poster summarising the findings was recently accepted by the World Physiotherapy organisation for this year's conference. The meeting was scheduled to be held in April in Dubai, but is now online."

"I hope that the poster will draw in new recipients and encourage higher income countries to recycle their own equipment. Our aim is to develop and improve the service PhysioNet provides to those less fortunate than ourselves."

The Benefits of Children's Equipment Donated to Lower and Middle Income Countries: a Case Study from PhysioNet

Author: Heather Angilly MCSP
Email: Hangilly@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION
Should wealthy countries send used therapy equipment to LMICs? Some UK charities donate redundant therapy equipment to less developed countries. The practice is controversial, with some therapists arguing that the benefits outweigh the benefits. However, the competing positions are usually justified by anecdotes or individual experiences which are assumed to have universal application. Various bodies including the WHO have produced helpful guidelines for donors of equipment, but very little empirical evidence has been published on the value of the donations to recipients. This pilot study looks at refurbished equipment sent to 6 different LMICs by the UK charity PhysioNet.

METHODS
Data were collected using questionnaires completed by recipient organisations and by 50 end users in Bulgaria, Ghana, India, Kenya, Romania and Sri Lanka. They reported on children's equipment in 14 consignments over a 5-year period from 2016 to 2020.

Main findings:

- Most equipment is valued and is useful
- All recipient organisations reported equipment arrived in very good or excellent condition
- 97% reported that items were suitable to their environment
- 58% of respondents had access to help with maintenance
- All respondents said they would work with PhysioNet again

Conclusion:

- This small study demonstrates the benefits that can be achieved with donated equipment

RESULTS
Items particularly valued were: standing frames, walking aids, chairs and buggies

Some comments from the questionnaire analysis:

- Did the equipment you received match your needs? 13 out of 14 answered yes
- "He is more comfortable and feeding is easier"
- "It's perfect, he can now sit and use his hands"
- "He enjoys standing up"
- Most individuals received only one item of equipment

DISCUSSION & FUTURE WORK
Some areas of pre-shipment communication need improvement to avoid sending unwanted items. Post-shipment training is necessary to help with fitting and maintenance of equipment

PhysioNet
Helping people with disabilities connect
www.physionet.org.uk

World Physiotherapy Congress 2021 online

Heather's poster can be seen on this link: adobe.ly/3v8nrty

Our 100th shipment has arrived in style



Reaching the milestone of our 100th shipment was the cause of much celebration at PhysioNet. We are now equally pleased to see that the shipment has now safely arrived at the Spinal Injuries Association in Fiji.

Star of the show was a number of posh scooters, seen here being examined by George Edgar, the British High Commissioner to Fiji (the tall gentlemen centre).

The scooters and a number of wheelchairs were donated by Suffolk based TGA Mobility – a leading manufacturer of quality mobility equipment. A huge thank you is due from PhysioNet and, of course, the recipients of the equipment in Fiji.



A word from our Chairman

On your marks. Get set Go! Or is it? Is our country on course for re-opening, can we dare to hope? A freezing winter, Covid moving us to both tiers and tears – not much reason for optimism is there? Actually, there is. These maybe difficult times but they are also exciting times, and with the remarkable NHS vaccination programme there is hope of better times to come.

It has been just over a year since the United Kingdom 'lockdown,' came into force, immediately after PhysioNet's AGM in March 2020. Additionally, equipment collections and shipments ground to a halt during April and May but slowly picked up momentum again with a loading in June and every month thereafter. In the year from end of March 2020 PhysioNet made 10 container shipments including celebrating our 100th loaded in October '20 destination Fiji, a truly tremendous effort.

A final note, to all of our volunteers, those dedicated people who give selflessly of their time, talent and treasures a great big thank you. Physionet may not be able to help everyone in the world but we can make a world of difference to one person.

Mike.



A smile that says it all

Thank you to our friends at Kekeli Ghana for sharing this happy picture of one of their children with an assisted walking device courtesy of our work and colleagues support!



Thank you Jenx



Jenx was founded in 1982, with the aim of enriching lives and changing perceptions about disability. For over 30 years Jenx has been researching, designing and making pioneering developmental equipment that supports children as they grow. PhysioNet and Jenx have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship over numerous years for which we are extremely grateful.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish Clive and Catherine Jenkins a long and happy retirement from the company and we thank them and Holly for their continued support in the donation of parts to enable PhysioNet to send more items overseas. We know that Catherine loves to see the equipment being used overseas!

Shipments

Oct–Mar

The following shipments were made between October 2020 and the end of March 2021. The shipment to India on 19th December was the last, before activities ceased for a while due to a further Covid-19 lockdown. Over the 6 month period a total of 2,815 items including 615 wheelchairs were loaded into five 40 ft containers..



Fiji – The 17th consignment to the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) in Suva since 2010 was loaded on 17th October; the shipping costs were met by an Australian Aid grant. This was PhysioNet's 100th consignment to 27 countries and an account of the loading was covered in the last Newsletter.



Fiji – This consignment was loaded from Exeter by PhysioNet (South West) on 12th December for the Spinal Injuries Assn. (SIA) in Suva. The shipping costs were met by an Australian Aid grant and both the British and Australian High Commissions recently handed the consignment over to the Fiji Government and SIA.



India – The consignment was loaded on 19th December for the Satya Special School in Pondicherry, the shipping costs were met by the consignee. Very largely therapy equipment, it has arrived safely and apparently experienced fewer problems at port (Chennai) than the 2019 shipment.



South Africa – The consignment was loaded on 20th February for the Northcliff Rotary Club in Johannesburg. A regular recipient, the shipping costs were covered by one of the Club's benefactors.



Team PhysioNet load for South Africa, February 2021



Rwanda – The consignment was loaded on 13th March for the ASAF Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Centre, Southern Province, Rwanda. The shipping costs were met by the consignee and the background to the shipment is covered in this Newsletter.

Third party shipments – Only three collections totalling 70 items. Mainly to Jubilee Outreach Yorkshire (JOY) for Yemen plus a token 3 items for Kenya.

Say goodbye and hello to two trusted Trustees

PhysioNet's trustees are key to the smooth running of the charity. This spring we see a change to the team.



John Tapscott has retired

John, a member of the Rotary Club of Saffron Walden was a former member and Past President of the Rotary Club of Knaresborough. In 2013 John and his wife Helen moved south to a village called Hampstead transferring his rotary

membership to Saffron Walden where he resolved to set up a collection hub for PhysioNet. RC Saffron Walden responded magnificently not only with enthusiastic volunteers but also a collection van donated by one of the Club's members while another allowed the use of a barn for equipment storage. Collection of equipment grew to a point where RC Saffron Walden was delivering one van load of equipment per week into the York Depot equating to just over 50% of all equipment collections. John was appointed

PhysioNet's Co-Ordinator for the South East of England and later a valued Trustee. It was through John and RC Saffron Walden that another van was donated for use at the Yorkshire Depot. Needless to say John's decision to retire as a trustee is much regretted but very understandable after so many years of magnificent service.

All at PhysioNet wish John and his wife Helen a long and happy retirement and hopefully we will see him at the York Depot as a volunteer equipment collection driver?



Russell Rollings is appointed

Russell Rollings, who was elected to be PhysioNet's UK Collections Co-Ordinator in 2019 is a member of the RC of York joining in 2011. RC York has always been a keen supporter of PhysioNet and is a regular source not only of

volunteers but former Trustees for the charity. Russell was formally appointed a Trustee at the Board meeting held on Wednesday 10th Feb 2021. Russell is an enthusiastic volunteer and Collections Co-Ordinator and will be a great asset to the Board of Trustees.

A fine tribute to Prince Phillip

PhysioNet was very saddened by the news of the passing of Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, but heartened to receive a cheque for £100 in his memory. The kind sender wrote:

"Prince Phillip requested instead of flowers a donation to one of his charities or one of my own. Travel to London and Windsor is expensive and flowers soon fade and die. I am sure you will put this to good use and keep up the good work. Kindest regards"

Such kind donations help us keep up the charity's work. Our sincere thanks goes out to this kind lady of Harrogate and all others who have donated.



Our long standing relationship with Spinal Injuries Association in Fiji (SIA) continues to pay dividends.

The above shows a ceremony to receive our 18th shipment to SIA. From left to right. SIA Executive Director, Joshko Waqaniyasi; Deputy British High Commissioner to Fiji, Paul Welsh; Fiji's Assistant Minister for Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation, Veena Bhatnagar; and The Australian High Commissioner, John Feaks.



DONATE or GET INVOLVED

Individual donations are very important to us. Our HSBC bank details are: **Sort code: 40-23-12. Account no: 72496194.** Alternatively donate via **Now Donate** using the link on our website. If you would like to get involved email Peter Thompson at peter.thompson@physionet.org.uk.

physionet.org.uk

