



ISABEL MISCHKE

Hand therapist with the Re-Foundation working in Uganda

'Re' stands for Reconstruct, Restore and Revive

Isabel may be young but she is putting her energy and skills to good use in Uganda. She invited Christ into her life at a camp at the age of 13 and as a teenager she dreamt of working in Africa. After matriculating, Isabel studied Occupational Therapy and planned to specialise in work with children, in her 4th year she broke a finger and received hand therapy. After qualifying she worked in the UK and was fortunate to work as a hand therapist, this eventually opened the doors to be involved with a clinic in Uganda.

In 2007 Isabel backpacked with friends to Uganda where she heard about the devastation caused by the LRA rebel army. The army would attack villages and force the boys to become soldiers. Men were killed and women mutilated – faces and hands were cut to keep them as sex slaves as there was no hope for another man wanting them, many burn victims were also left behind.

A few months later Isabel went back to Uganda for the WATATO conference – an organisation working with the orphaned and abandoned children in the country. Here she heard about the desperate need for surgeons, nurses and other medical staff. On return Isabel spoke to Dr Frans Birkholtz – a plastic and reconstructive surgeon at the hospital where she works. He quickly put the wheels in motion to put a team together and recruited a wound healing specialist, physiotherapist, dentist, anaesthetist and theatre nurse.

In June 2009 the team travelled to Gulu in Northern Uganda for a 2 day clinic and fact-finding mission. They were overwhelmed by the need as people started queuing 24 hours before the clinic opened and desperate victims walked up to 2 days to receive help. The team has just arrived back from a week-long clinic at the end of March, they will return for a follow-up visit in mid-June and again in November. They have documented 3000 people who need medical attention, but they can only help the urgent cases for now.

Isabel feels that “we were born in Africa for a time like this. We have the skills to give joy, restore trust and revive hope. I can't stand back and watch, I want to make a difference.”

The goals of the Re-Foundation are to:

- Make a physical difference in people's lives
- Train staff in Uganda to do as much as possible
- Give hope

The plan is to duplicate teams and also build teams to work within South Africa. Visit their website at www.re-foundation.org, or see their facebook page for an update on their recent trip.

YOU can become involved by:

1. Volunteering your services, either as a medical professional or in administration – there is a great need for help in this area
2. Financial partnership to cover travel expenses, medical supplies and upgrading of clinic facilities
3. Committing to prayer partnership

“Now that I have seen, I am responsible”