



MSF Diary (experience from the field) April 2010

The flight attendant of KLM flight no KL 0565 announced arrival information in Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. When I came out from airport after completing immigration formalities it was already 10 pm at night. Our MSF driver Vincent picks me up from airport. He took me to Woodmare apartments where I am going to stay that night and also informed me that I would fly for Loki next day afternoon. Loki is a small border town near South Sudan border inside Kenya. It is the logistics and supply base for South Sudan mission and I am going to join their as a Capital/Supply logistician for 9 months. So my base would be in Loki and from there I need to support all projects in South Sudan. This is my 2nd international mission with MSF. My 1st mission was in Nigeria and before that I worked as a national staff in MSF Bangladesh mission for 4 years. Next day Vincent again picks me up and took me to Wilson Airport for my flight to Loki. I was boarded to a small beach aircraft which has only 20 seats. For the first time I am flying in such a small plane. But I was excited to fly on this small aircraft and also I become more excited when Vincent told me I am going to see MSF own plane with MSF logo in Loki airport. Yes, MSF Plane with MSF logo. MSF chartered a Cessna Grand Caravan for its own uses in South Sudan Mission. After almost 2 hours flying I arrived in Loki airport and finally saw the MSF plane standing in the parking bay. Loki is very different than Nairobi. Weather is hot, dry and dusty. It's like a town in desert. MSF driver drove me to MSF compound in Loki. On the way he showed me all other NGO's compound which are empty now as everybody moved to Juba.

Work in Loki:

As a Capital/Supply logistician and only expat in Loki after CMT moved in Juba, I was in charge of almost everything in Loki, which includes supply, flight operation, Tech and ICT support to all projects and Juba office. I was also in charge of Loki security, finance and HR. Supply to all projects was a big challenge because we need to supply almost everything including fresh food to the projects. And it's a cross border supply by MSF plane which can take only 1000 kg including passengers. So you need to weight every items and project can request only 800 to 900 kg cargo in every ten days. Also because of cross border every items need to have custom documents. We had big warehouse in Loki where we kept most of the drugs for the project because project do not had the capacity to have all of its drugs. Logistics and other items also sometimes not possible locally in Loki, so we need ordered those items in our Nairobi Supply Centre. We also have a big transit warehouse in Loki where all project cargos are packed, labelled and weighted and waiting for transport to respective projects. So, sometimes it's takes 2 to 3 months for one particular item to arrive in the project site.

Another big challenge was flight operation. The only option to move expat between projects and Loki is by air. Also for medical and food items air transport is the only option. So it requires very good and accurate planning for cost effective air operation. One hour of extra flight time can cost MSF up to 1500 USD. Beside, regular flights, we also need to arrange emergency flight for evacuation or transfer patient for surgical needs. As all the expats came from the field for their R&R on this flight, they become frustrated if flight is being cancelled for any reason. But that is the life in South Sudan. In rainy season flights can be cancel even for one month because of un land able airstrip

Field Visit:

I managed to visit all 4 projects Lankien, Leer, Nasir and Pieri in South Sudan. I was welcomed in all projects by expat and national staffs. It was good experience for me to visit projects and get informed about problems and supports needed in project from Loki support and supply center. Team life in project was also great. I remember the bar b q in Pieri by Karl, Indian foods in Nasir by Dr Ashok and in Leer by Dr Chandrika. I thank them and all other expats to made me feel home away from my home.

Life in Loki:

Life in Loki was never boring. There was always somebody passing by Loki either going in or out from the projects. Also Logco spend 50 percent of his time in Loki. Finco and other CMT members often visited LoKi. In Loki we have a big compound with nice Tukuls. You will never lose weight in Loki as our cook Mary cooks delicious food. All the Loki staffs are very helpful and friendly. Every Sunday we went for bar-b-q in camp Afex. Often we also went to 748 camp for drinks, cheese burger and a game in pool table. Loki became my 2nd home. Thanks to my Logco Paul Verth, Robert, Felix, Jafferson, Benjamin and all other staff for giving me wonderful time in Loki.

Time to say goodbye:

Yes, 9 months went very first and time came again to say goodbye to South Sudan mission. There was mix feeling in the mind. In one side, the joy for going back to family and friends and other side the sorrow of leaving another family and friends behind. There was a fare well party for me in Loki camp where Mary backed a cake for me. Also there was a great dance party performed by everybody. I will never forget this party.

At the End:

Working for MSF is always challenging. As MSF work in very remote area and for the people who have no access to healthcare, we save life every

day, we bringing smile in the face of people every day. I never fear to leave my family behind to join in MSF mission, because I know that blessing from all the people and children for whom we all work in MSF will keep my family safe. I also wish same for all the MSF friends.



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