



Manual

This work can only be finished with your help!

Please use the numbered stamps in front of you and stamp the empty spaces you select in the order of your choice.

Fingerprint one of the circles on the cover and take the booklet with you.

An African Thunderstorm

(monologue)

Our NGO specialises mainly in care for mothers with children and also helps everyone who comes to the hospital. We are providing medical aid. General drugs, antibiotics, antihistamines.

This care is provided eight hours a day and the work of our doctors and nurses is effective. Regular visits and check-ups. We contact patients if necessary.

Apart from us there is another organisation working in the hospital.

If our mutual patient starts having peculiar symptoms or strange difficulties that have never occurred before we would try to gain information from the employees of that organisation as to why this is so.

Gradually we observed that patients had double records.

It's possible to find out. Some things are simply not recorded in the ordinary medical records. For example what treatment and steps were taken when examining the patient.

They have a special room, which the doctors and nurses of our organisation can't access. We noticed, that when examining our mutual patient they take different medical records from that room. We are unable to see these records.

Suddenly a child dies. Why so sudden?

Anything is possible in these countries. Combination of illnesses can cause various symptoms. If it happens twice or three times a month we try to gain more information from people that work there.

If they suspect anything they may even question it themselves. Why can't they go to that room? Even the ordinary medical personnel haven't got access. That room in the hospital is restricted only to a specific employee of that organisation and only that doctor can access it.

The organisation claims it's doing research. Also for this reason they have „research centre“ written in their title. Many hospital employees know nothing of what the organisation really does with a patient. Only the doctor that injects a patient with the trial vaccines or gives drugs knows.

There is a prevalence of HIV, occurrence of malaria and of course tuberculoses as an adjoint illness. The organisation has the ability to merge HIV with malaria and tuberculoses to form their own statistics.

They have a cheap material resource, most of which are children.

Before entering the research program parents sign an official document that they were informed about possible adverse reactions. In return they are promised one meal a day when attending a vaccination or check-up.

In regions where people die from hunger one meal twice a month is a huge benefit. Parents are therefore facing the decision: should their child die of hunger or be involved in a research program?

They are ordinary people, maybe shepherds. Some of them can't even read or write so when a doctor, moreover a local one, who works for that company tells them everything is all right, they will believe it. How can they make a judgement from a medical point of view as to whether it is as the doctor claims?

We had to, for example, buy the stamp inkpads as they were signing using their fingerprints. This is 21st century in Central East Africa, which is one of the most developed African regions.

Is the information provided to parents adequate as to what's being researched in the given field?

These voluntary patients don't know they are in the special room.

Mainly American firms operate in this field and they know exactly what their interests are.

The locals think they came to help them.

These research programs are legal, everything happens with the permission of the official institutions, offices and the hospital. Such programs could of course not be done without permission.

Research centres alongside with research also provide aid but it's really just speck. And only speck.

There are international organisations in place that regulate such things. Every country has its own control office, which should investigate any suspicion but it's very difficult to prove wrongdoing when large and famous organisations are concerned, their papers are correct. Just that sometimes they do something unofficial alongside their research programs. Nobody wants to know anything about this. They've been either given a backhander or have a certain role in the process. I'll employ him - you'll employ her. I'll keep quiet - you'll pay. Sometimes international agreements are involved.

People of these countries are tied up in corruption. In Kenya for example there is 50 percent unemployment. If one wants a job one has to, in most cases, pay for it. If he wants to work as a chauffeur or a cleaner in a company and has no inside connection or relative, he has to pay his way in. Civil servants definitely pay.

Surely if you're looking for work you would have no money. You'd have to go into debt so as to get the job and then pay back. It doesn't make sense.

None investigates the cause of death of those children. It's hard to prove anything retrospectively. Firstly, the parents would have to report the death of their child and this is not a common practice. Even if they did report it. They simply don't know. They get a medical report. What should they do with it. They haven't got the money for hiring lawyers or getting reports from different doctors and these organisations probably count on that.

They're using their lack of education and mutual apathy.

When an individual or small organisation gets involved they don't solve anything. It's a global problem.

Without proof we at least wanted to point out the bad behaviour by employees of that organisation.

They select the patients. Sometimes they are rude to our employees. Not even kind to the patients themselves.

We were asking too many uncomfortable questions. They realised we know or suspect something.

They began to make our work in hospital unpleasant, making up stories that we didn't help some patients. Without any proof of course and then they had to apologise.

How can I accuse them of giving a child a certain vaccine or injection? To find out whether a drug was, or was not given, requires a child to go through various examinations.

In the end we decided to leave before we are denied our activity in the country. If the death toll kept rising they could blame us. We have to be careful.

The representative of the local community came to ask us not to leave. He was hoping we would help. He said the children had been dying over a long period of time. I don't know what the expression long period of time means in his community, but the research centre has been functioning in the area for a very long time. When the community co-operated with that organisation their children out of the blue had strange complications, problems. They started to feel very sick at school, vomiting, had diarrhea, raised temperature and their condition worsened in few hours.

The representative of the community wanted to meet up with someone from the research company. I gave him a contact at the ministry who helped us greatly.

We always abide by the rules of the country in which we are. Even in the case of agreement with the international control office we could be deported. Our NGO couldn't get involved in this. Even if we tried putting on pressure the only thing we could achieve would be the official stop to some project, which would be continued in some other way.

When someone has a vaccine for diseases such as malaria, TBC or HIV they gain a financial monopoly. Every drug costs money. Doesn't matter who pays for it - government, humanitarian organisations or the patient. Research always underlies to political interests. Hardly any organisations are involved for humanitarian aid.

If they were really concerned about a patient they would distribute the drug for free.

This is Africa. I reply: this is an excuse.

„I do not agree, but I accept“ this is the rule of social work.

I don't agree with a system that involves corruption, bureaucracy, ignorance and an appalling gap between the rich and the poor, but I have to accept it if I want to work here.

After the monologue I went to many local photo studios to collect unwanted pictures. How do people want to be seen? How should they be remembered?

*Every solution leads to nothingness
and fulfilment of the idea to its denial.*

(Alta Vášová)

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Monologue by my childhood friend

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