

## Nigerian Shares Journey to Become a Better Biomed

*The lack of trained biomed in developing countries often leads to the postponement or cancellation of life-saving procedures. Uku Edouk, a graduate of the MediSend Biomedical Repair Training Program, is helping to fill the need for skilled technicians in his native Nigeria. In this issue of AAMI News, Edouk describes what he's learned.*

There has always been a lack of well-trained professional engineers and technicians in the field of biomedical engineering in my country.

When I first joined a major hospital in southeastern Nigeria as a biomedical engineer, the hospital had a



Uku Edouk

biomedical department, but only one properly trained technician, who happened to be a graduate of MediSend.

Practical experience in repairs and troubleshooting would not only be a major plus for my career, but an important resource for my hospital and my community, so I applied for the program. Thanks to a generous grant from ExxonMobil, I soon left Nigeria for six months at MediSend's campus in Dallas, TX, known as the Elisabeth Dahan Humanitarian Center.

Upon arrival at MediSend, the class spent a few days getting acquainted with trainees from other developing countries and meeting the faculty, but we quickly launched into hard work.

MediSend's teaching approach made even the hardest theoretical aspects seem simple, but it took determination, perseverance, and hard work. Costel Rizescu, PhD, the program director,

and his instructors instill these qualities into their trainees.

Before MediSend, I lacked training on the electrical aspects of medical devices, and my confidence was quite low when dealing with such equipment.

There, I learned how proper safety measures, troubleshooting techniques to diagnose faults, and how to read electrical schematics. I also learned the function of each component, and how they work together. The key word at MediSend is safety.

During the program, the class went through a month-and-a-half interactive electronics training program used by the U.S. military for its biomedical training.

We then received intensive and hands-on training on numerous types of equipment, such as electrocardiographs (ECG), vital-sign monitors, defibrillators, patient monitors, ultrasound



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machines, and clinical chemistry and hematology analyzers.

All of the trainees had the opportunity to join the biomedical team at Baylor Health Care Systems in Dallas as interns for a week. We experienced firsthand how a modern biomedical department runs and the importance of this department in every healthcare facility.

MediSend taught me how to implement an advanced asset and inventory management system called AIMS.NET. Basically, this is a way of keeping records for a biomed department on inventory, maintenance scheduling, technical specifications, status of machinery, etc.

MediSend also provided my hospital with a Mobile Biomedical Test and Repair Kit that contained everything a biomed might need for maintenance and repairs. Every MediSend graduate's hospital receives this important tool.



**Uku Edouk, left, and fellow MediSend graduate Samson Adesite work together in Nigeria.**

Dr. Rizescu and his instructors stay in close-contact with graduates, and receive frequent updates and progress reports from each of us. They keep us in contact with other alumni, so we can exchange ideas, as well as with different biomedical websites and online technicians ready to help in solving technical problems.

I am now the head of the Biomedical Unit at the University of Uyo Teaching

Hospital in Akwa-Ibom, Nigeria. My hospital staff and administrators have been amazed at the impact of my repairs and problem-solving techniques. They realize that they are saving funds by not having to hire private contractors for repairs and that problems are being dealt with swiftly on-site.

They are now planning to expand the biomed department. Administration has also made arrangements for the purchase of new biomedical equipment, a great blessing for the community and a new challenge for the department.

I have become an important figure in the hospital. The management of the hospital seeks my advice on biomedical equipment that they wish to acquire. My work has been recognized by the Nigerian Institution for Biomedical Engineers, which recently named me as the state coordinator. ■

—Uku Edouk



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