

Judith van de Kamp

PhD candidate Medical Anthropology

Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam

For her masters degree in *Medical Anthropology and Sociology*, Judith van de Kamp studied the short term medical work of Dutch health workers in Ghana (2006-2008). She won the Van Foreest Science Award 2008 with her thesis, and she got encouraged to do further research in the field. In 2012, she started her current PhD research on western involvement in a rural hospital in Cameroon. She conducted fieldwork for 16 months, using qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, conversations, discussions and questionnaires. Her focus is on local perspectives, to find out to what extent western attempts to improve the hospital are being appreciated by local hospital staff, and how misunderstandings and conflicts arise.

* Judith's presentation focusses on one part of her research only; the cardiac center.

* Judith is in the process of writing her dissertation. She is expected to finish in Nov. 2015.

A cardiac center in rural Cameroon: nightmare or dream?

At a 12-hour-drive away from the capital of Cameroon, surrounded by green hills, muddy roads and dusty houses, there is a building that looks unlike anything else in the rural region. It is a cardiac center. It is being operated since 2009, and fully equipped to perform cardiac surgery and ASD closure, diagnostic and interventional catheterisation, coronary angiography, diagnostic coronarography, and pace maker implantation. The center which was built and equipped for 800 million USD, is largely sponsored by two Italian NGO's.

This presentation gives an insight in the establishment of a high profile specialised center in a remote and rural area of Cameroon. It shows some of the difficulties in running the center. The most important ones are 1) attracting and keeping specialised staff, and 2) getting patients to come to the center and having them to pay for treatment. Due to such challenges, the center struggles for its survival. This presentation also shows some contrasting views of people involved, on the role of western assistance in relation to keeping the center up and running.