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DAILY NATION

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Forget advisories, all I want is to see children live healthy

American Toby Tanser has already celebrated the construction of four primary schools in the North Rift.



Mr Toby Tanser (left), founder of Shoe4Africa, with Dr John Kibosia, the director of the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital on June 10, 2014. PHOTO | JARED NYATAYA NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

- Tanser's hospital project is driven by the lack of adequate medicare for the country and region's children

Elias Makori

Besides building what will be Africa's biggest public children's hospital in Eldoret, American

Toby Tanser has already celebrated the construction of four primary schools in the North Rift.

The Sally Kipyego Shoe4Africa Primary School, Janeth Jepkosgei Primary School, Martin Lel Primary School and the Shoe4Africa Moses Kiptanui School and Sports Academy are all beneficiaries of Tanser's fund-raising prowess and spurred by his love for athletics.

Tanser maintains that the US and British governments are inconsiderate in dishing out travel advisories against Kenyan destinations which he noted were hurting a nation that is struggling to get its economic footing.

Speaking at the site of his children's hospital, which will be completed in December, Tanser said he has been in and out of Kenya for 20 years and doesn't see the importance of the travel warnings.

"Terror attacks happen anywhere. I was jogging past the World Trade Centre in New York just 30 minutes before the twin towers were attacked, and no travel advisories were issued against the USA then," said Tanser, a former athlete.

"This shows such attacks can happen anywhere, not just in Kenya."

Tanser's hospital project is driven by the lack of adequate medicare for the country and region's children.

"It's extremely sad that one in eight children in Kenya die before reaching five years and that two-thirds of these deaths are preventable," says Tanser, founder of the Shoe4Africa charity.

"It is equally disappointing that 80 per cent of children who die in East Africa will not have seen a health provider. It is this that spurred me to build the hospital," said Tanser during a site visit of the hospital in Eldoret in the company of Dr John Kibosia, the director of the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital that donated land for the children's hospital.

"This is a great project as it will help provide better medicare for children in a more friendly environment than the one currently in the normal hospitals," said Dr Kibosia.

"I hope the Kenya Government will come in and help in equipping the hospital once it is complete," appealed Tanser who said he needs over Sh250 million to buy equipment for the hospital.

"Donors should come up and adopt a ward or adopt a bed to help in equipping this hospital which will benefit patients not only in Kenya, but from as far as Rwanda, Uganda and Southern Sudan," Tanser added.