

OFFICAL OPENING OF LUANGWA INN CAFETERIA – 23/10/2020



The official opening event marked a major milestone in facilitating a sustainable way of renovating and maintaining of the Katondwe Hospital's mother's shelter. A project spearheaded by Young Midwife Leader for Zambia as an alternative financing for the mother's shelter renovation works. Construction began on January 2nd, 2020 following discussions with the Hospital

Director Sr. Dr. Mirosława Gora. Project also served as an outlet for staff to access affordable meals during the covid 19 lockdown. By opening day, a total of approximately K45,967 had been invested into the project with more activities still left to be done.

Over 30 different stakeholders ranging from traditional to civic and religious leaders were invited to witness this event with only a handful confirming attendance. Hospital administrative staff, local headmen and the religious priest (as guest of honour), were in attendance, as well as the Country Director for Solidarinvest. The event was integrated with the official opening of the Hospital staff houses built by Solidarinvest as well as thanks giving retirement appreciation for one of the hospital staff that served the institution for over 42 years.

One key stakeholder, Childfund, has since pledged to undertake the renovation of the maternity waiting home and so far, preliminary assessments of needed works have been done. In the meantime, the official opening of the cafeteria is meant to serve as a starting point towards the sustainable way of maintaining the integrity of the maternity waiting home and serve as an economic hub for various local businesses and services. It will also serve, as an income generating activity for the institution but that calls for various stakeholders, especially the local community to make use of the facility so that funds can be generated as intended.

The President of the Republic of Zambia, Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, during the launch of the youth empowerment fund in August 2020 stated that he is very delighted to interact with the Zambian youth who possess energy and intuition that can unlock the country's developmental potential for sustainable socio-economic growth. It is hoped that this facility will serve that purpose, to drive the economic growth of the area as more people become engaged in farming activities to supply the cafeteria. The call on civic leaders remains to support such initiatives being led by the young people.

Many thanks go to the Hospital Director for having supported the cafeteria team's idea to open the cafeteria and to the local youthful team of highly skilled individuals who helped translate an idea into reality. We now we look forward to seeing the project bear the intended fruits.



Innovations amidst Covid-19

Covid-19 in Zambia became marked around March 18th, 2020 when the country recorded its first two cases and following further restrictions to halt its spread, there was a noticeable, marked change in daily way of life. Goods and services were becoming more expensive, travel restricted and very few social interactions.



Figure 1: The two waiting shelters at the Hospital

The picture in figure 1 shows two buildings situated near the mission hospital in the rural part of Zambia. These are mothers waiting homes for pregnant women who come from villages very far away from the hospital. The mothers come and live in the hospital shelters when their pregnancies are in the third trimester to prevent the delay in accessing health services. Unfortunately, the state in which the buildings are is very bad and not habitable. The infrastructure is currently dilapidated, there are no beds, no water facilities and no electricity. This is what prompted the young Midwife to come up with a project to renovate the buildings so that they are habitable.

This big project does not have any allocation of funds from the government or hospital for renovation the buildings. Fundraising ventures have been organized but has not yielded much to complete the project. Even though the communities have been involved, there are few resources raised because the larger parts of the population are peasant farmers.

What started as a Zambian Young Midwife Leader's project in late 2019 took a turn in early 2020. It was no longer just about renovating a mother's shelter but venturing in a more sustainable resource mobilization project towards completing of the mother's shelter

A small structure adjacent to the mother's shelters within Katondwe Hospital community has since been made into a cafeteria. The cafeteria project started in January 2020 and officially commissioned on 12th March, the national youth day. The project was born out of sheer desire and mentorship from the ICM Lead Midwife Advisor team to see the mother's shelter renovation get started using available local resources.

The COVID-19 era

Following the Presidential directive to suspend operations of any businesses which may expose people to COVID-19 infection and subsequent lift of the suspension for some businesses such as restaurants, saloons, churches, and other small businesses, an opportunity was born that saw the start of cafeteria services on 17th of April, 2020.



Figure 2: Cafeteria buildings in April 2020

The Cafeteria is not just offering food, but is another way to contribute to the fight against Covid-19. Many hospital staff are benefiting from the food which is meeting their nutritional needs at an affordable price instead of walking to and from home for meals.

The hospital management has been very supportive of the project since inception and helped to promote the services through advertising to the visitors coming to the hospital. The cafeteria has increased its visibility, business has improved and the income has significantly increased. I am very happy that my leadership has received a lot of support from the hospital and the surrounding community including the traditional leaders. I am confident that the mother's shelter will be completed soon and this will be my dream come true. Major hospital celebrations have also been conducted at the premises and a MoU was prepared and signed to that effect.



Figure 3: Hospital management team with traditional leaders visiting the mother's shelter March, 2020.

CAFETERIA VISION/PURPOSE

1. The cafeteria is attached to the Young Midwife Leader's project as a long term plan to help raise funds from profits to renovate the mother's shelter and help improve indicators in maternal and neonatal health.
2. Conduct cooking demonstration programs at the cafeteria to teach and share with the local people on how to prepare different food in a healthy way and as a way to motivate mothers and the community to be attending under five child services/ clinics.
3. To serve as a youth empowerment project which will provide employment to local youth.
4. To provide nutrition services to local community and create a sense of hope for locals to engage in farming and supply their products at a ready market.

A lot of lessons have been learnt along the way and it became clear that partnerships can indeed help achieve many objectives.

Although the main project still need attention, it is hoped that with the official start of the operations at the cafeteria, a percentage of the profits will go towards the monthly maintenance of the maternity waiting home.

So, don't hold back, if you can, support these projects!

About the Author



Bartholomew K. Kamlewe is an innovative, self-motivated young Nurse and Midwife working at Katondwe Hospital since July 2009. He is a Branch Chairperson for the Union, Branch secretary for the Midwives Association, a clinical mentor in Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC), trainer in advanced neonatal resuscitation and also a Clinical instructor for student nurses. He has also served as chairperson for the hospital's quality improvement committee and focal point person for the Maternal Death Surveillance Response committee. He is the recipient of the Midwifery Association of Zambia, 2017 International Day of the Midwife award for promoting Quality Midwifery Care. He is also the first Zambian on the ICM's Young Midwife Program (YML). His YML project is aimed at renovating the Katondwe Hospital's maternity waiting home to make it more suitable for pregnant women awaiting delivery and possibly contribute to reduction of maternal mortality through increased number of supervised deliveries. A cafeteria has since been set up to help with fundraising for the project.

Contacts

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