



Introduction

The Mothers of Africa charity was founded in 2004 by Professor Judith Hall, OBE who is a professor of Anesthesiology at Cardiff Teaching Hospital, Cardiff, Wales. The charity was founded as a solution to the enormous issue of the high mortality rate of women during pregnancy and childbirth in Africa and a lack of education opportunities for adolescent girls. In sub-Saharan Africa pregnancy and childbirth complications are the second highest cause of death for girls aged 15-19. In sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than one in five girls makes it to secondary education.

The charity was set up as a UK registered charity to provide medical education to doctors and healthcare workers in sub-Saharan Africa, and has completed successful projects in Benin, Togo, Ethiopia, Liberia and Zambia. In 2014 the objectives of the charity were extended to include general education and the building of infrastructure to support these initiatives. Our biggest project is in Zambia.

Zambia is one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most highly urbanised countries and the majority of the 16 million populace experience poverty, unemployment is 13.30%, and the rate of inflation is 7.00%¹.

Zambia is a poor country. The majority of economic growth and reliance comes from mining (copper) and the agricultural industries, neither of which are high revenue earning industries in comparison to neighbouring African countries. GDP per capita is approximately \$1,607 (Dec 2015)¹

The Government of Zambia is challenged to properly fund the basic elements required for a thriving population, e.g. healthcare and education. The Zambian government budget operates at -8.10% and debt/GDP is 31.00%¹.

Zambia relies heavily on global NGO's to bridge the gap between the needs of the country and the resources available as well as helping to progress the ongoing development that Zambia endeavours to sustain.

According to the Zambian 2010 census 61% of the population live in rural areas and an estimated 45.40% of the population are predominantly youth (i.e. below the age of 15). This provides a stress upon the Zambian Government who want to implement integrated strategies for gender equality in education which recognise the need for changes in attitudes, values and practices. Long distances between schools in rural areas also limit access particularly for children in the early grades and this is further complicated by migratory and resettlement practices brought about by economic imperatives².

Background

Our current project is an on-going geographically-based collaboration in Chongwe District with local health and education providers and community leaders, designed to improve education access and attainment to the regional population of 250,000. This project started operationally in March 2012 with the charity's visit, during which it was decided to:

1. Support the opening of Chongwe District Hospital. Given the expertise of the charity, we were particularly interested in supporting education and development of the operating theatres. The charity consolidated our relationship with the excellent Clinical Director of the Hospital Dr Job Mwanza who has remained our main Zambian local collaborator.
2. Support the development of education, especially of girls and women in the Shiyala Village, a village of 2000 people in rural Zambia, within Chongwe District. The charity has a close and effective working relationship with the Abesu Women's Co-operative in the community and also with village elders, especially with Mr Maxwell Mwanza Head of the Shiyala Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Over the past 6 years Mothers of Africa has fulfilled its ambitions, including:

1. Assisted in the opening of the hospital and operating theatres and provided many educational activities for a broad range of clinical staff working in the hospital. Within the first year of opening, 250 operations were performed including 52 caesarian sections;
2. Built and powered a solar education centre in the Shiyala Village, provided health and general education packages for the classroom, and in addition, provided solar power for the community centre, health centre and nurse's house. The latter ensuring that a permanent nurse was always on-site for the village population;
3. Built a fully functioning Zambian Primary School for 540 children from grade 1-9 and consists of: nine classrooms, a small library, headmasters office, teachers office, strong room to hold exam papers, disabled access toilet, two houses for teachers with six bedrooms, landscaped the grounds to protect the building from rains;
4. Donated a great deal of materials and equipment for both the District hospital, Health Centre, Community Education Centre and the Primary School.
5. Delivered several holiday schools and support for the village adult numeracy and literacy classes.

Conclusion

We are a tiny charity and must work hard to raise funds through very generous donations and fundraising events.

To help and support the aims and objectives of the UK charity a Mothers of Africa Monaco Association was officially established in December 2017.

The overall significance of these projects to the local community is immeasurable in terms of esteeming the women, children, teachers, doctors and healthcare workers.

We act in a way to empower the women and girls in Africa by helping them to understand that there are options which offer a way out of poverty - sadly it is very usual for young women to become teen mothers due to lack of alternatives

The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health (2016-2030) encourages several forms of implementation to achieve its objectives and targets³. With these projects we have utilised community engagement to strengthen community action; to ensure inclusive participation. We have also invested in individual potential; supporting people as agents of change.

Our aim is to continue to support the current projects in the Chongwe District. Summer 2018, we plan to organize and run a vacation school, a train the teachers program and a group of doctors will lead a clinical education program in the hospital. In 2018, we want to fully-equip the primary school: text books, teacher's desks, bookcases, equipment for home economics and science lab, soft play area and landscaping of the netball and football pitches. **Estimated at a cost of £30,000.**

Our proposed project for 2019, is the building of a resource centre for teenagers at The Evergreen School about 5km from Shiyala Primary School. This resource centre will actively encourage both teenage girls and boys to stay after lessons to consolidate their studies in order to pass important exams in grades 7 and 9. An initial costing has been **estimated at £70,000.**

We are committed to the continued education of women, adolescent girls, children, doctors and healthcare workers to empower the future mothers of Africa and to help them build their sustainable future.

¹ www.tradingeconomics.com World Bank

² Zambia Education for All 2015 National Review <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/>

³ Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030



Shiyala Primary School



Women from Shiyala village working on the school for their children



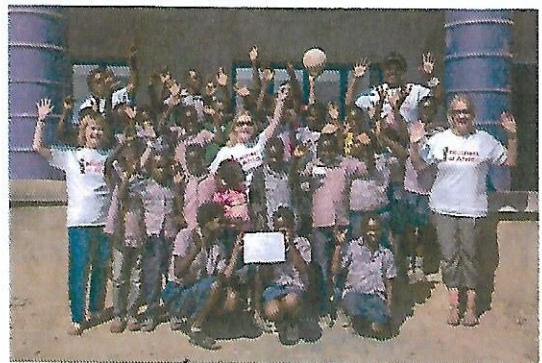
Shiyala teacher, Mirriam, and her class



Children in the infant school receive their first toys



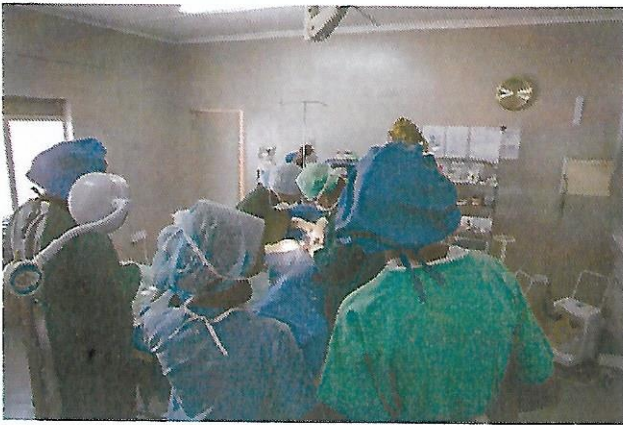
Sports and activities during playtime



Class photo for the Vacation school, August 2017



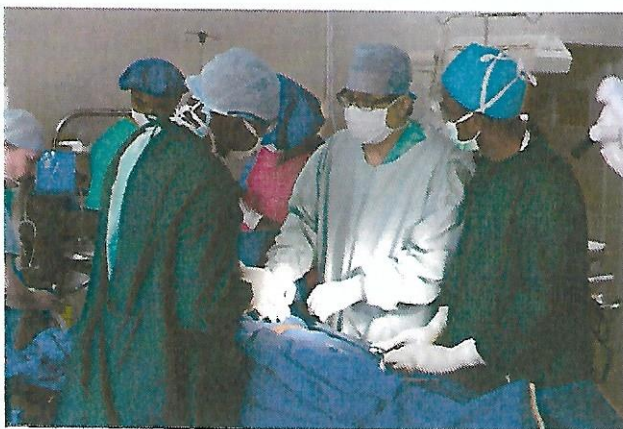
Dr. Mwanza looking at the empty operating theatre with visiting medical staff from Cardiff



Operation in progress in Chongwe District Hospital



Successful caesarian section



Hands on teaching from visiting, volunteer doctors



Founder, Professor Judith Hall (right) teaching