



# Mulanje Mission Hospital Newsletter

December 2023

Mulanje Mission Hospital  
CCAP Blantyre Synod  
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Malawi

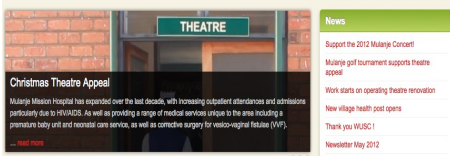
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## Editorial comment

By Dickson Chisale

Dear friends of Mulanje Mission Hospital, partners and colleagues,

economic instability is reality of the day for many at the moment.

Christmas is just around the corner, people across the world celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. MMH also wishes to share the love and hope of God with its partners across the world.

However, as MMH, we also look back at many successes, to name a few: opening of the eye department, renovation of several departments, guideline improvements and very successful programmes in our Primary Healthcare department.

We are looking back at this year with mixed feelings: we have had a heavy storm in March, as you might have read in earlier newsletters. Many people lost their lives; houses and property were washed away. People from this area still have fresh memories of the disaster. Hunger and eco-

We are proud of all who made this possible and worked so hard.

May the Joy and Peace that was present at the birth of Christ be present at your homes this season.



## #1 Best NCD Clinic in Southern Malawi 2023



Mulanje Mission Hospital has won a first prize for best Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) clinic in Southern Malawi again, second year in a row!



**Δ Louis Mbingwani**

Linda's Fund has been supporting bursaries and school projects at Mulanje Mission Community Day Secondary School since 2006. It started as a link

between the school and Fortrose Academy in the north of Scotland. During visits the link widened to make connections with Mulanje Mission Hospital, the Youth Club and other community projects. Bursary students are assisted with costs for attending local colleges for courses and over the years this has included motor vehicle maintenance, bricklaying, hairdressing, electrical installation, accounting, public health, nutrition, animal husbandry and more.

Currently we are supporting two students at Milonga College studying electrical installation.

The photo's here show past pupil Louis Mbingwani now working as an electrician in Lilongwe for Central Poultry

Limited and current student Sipiwe Limited studying at Milonga College.



**Δ Sipiwe Limited**

**Maternity Protocols revision**

**- by Marleen Zijderveld**

Over the last months, new maternity protocols for the hospital have been written. With about 3000 deliveries each year, maternity care is an important part of the care provided at Mulanje Mission Hospital. The previous maternity protocols (2017) were re-

vised and multiple topics were added. This was done by a group of various disciplines: nurse-midwives, senior nurses, clinical and medical officers, radiographers and anesthetists. During five days, 39 topics were written and discussed, which resulted in a booklet

with over 100 pages, soon available on our clinical app too. MMH is proud of this joined, fruitful effort. Last step is a final revision by an obstetrician from the central hospital, after which training and implementation will be take place. To be continued...!



**Δ Part of the team which has written the new maternity protocols**

As a 3rd year Water Management student from the Netherlands, I have been immersed in the fascinating world of water management at Mulanje Mission Hospital for the past five months. I have been working in various departments at the hospital, and



*△ Together with supervisor, Mr. Katumbi*

especially in the flood response after cyclone Freddy.

The core of my work is testing for E-coli bacteria in water samples, a crucial part in ensuring the health of the local population. Not alone theoretical knowledge have I acquired but I have mostly learned from the community on the unique challenges they face.

In collaboration with the Sustainable Livelihood team, I have also been involved in optimizing irrigation schemes in the villages surrounding the hospital. This is not just about applying modern techniques but also understanding local needs and respecting age-old agricultural traditions.

Within the walls of Mulanje Mission Hospital, I am actively engaged in improving the water supply to the hospital by installing water filters and implementing the continued chlorination of borehole water. As a student, I am



*Testing water in the field*

aware that my presence here is not just about gaining new knowledge and academic skills but, more importantly, about learning from the rich experiences and insights of the local population. I have learned a lot about building towards a more sustainable and healthier future for Mulanje.

**Small scale irrigation: hope for a farmer and his family**

*- by Harry Samaria*

Malawi's weather has been unpredictable, the onset of the rain has increasingly changed over the past years and the rainfall pattern and distribution is not consistent. This has been so because of la Niña, El Niño and different cyclones that have hit Malawi. This situation has brought difficulties in rainfed farming. The Southern Region is the most affected.

One such area is Luwanje village in Mulanje district. The past three years crop production levels have decreased due to dry spells, rainfall variability and sometimes floods at the end of the rainy season. This has caused high loss of crop produce and making rainfed farming unreliable

and unpredictable.

After experiencing this challenge, the people of Luwanje village approached MMH through the Sustainable Livelihood program to help them establish small scale irrigation groups.



*△ Makwinja standing on his field and to the left are some of his tomatoes*

This has been very successful. One of the beneficiaries from these groups is Mr Paul Makwinja.

Mr Paul Makwinja, married with six children engaged himself in irrigation farming. He is irrigating a piece of land of about one acre using watering cans and buckets. On this piece of land, he demarcated two plots where he planted maize and tomatoes. The combination of different interventions on his

irrigation field, together called conservation agriculture, earned him fruits as he had a very successful year after selling the produce. He sold the tomatoes and maize and earned K700, 000.00. He has since managed to buy his own land on which he intends to maximise his irrigation. He has also managed to buy food for his home. Mr Makwinja got high recognition from the community and from one of the media houses, Mzati radio and TV. He was awarded

an interview which has helped him to get technical support from other stakeholders. " *I was in a hunger crisis and accessing food was not easy*" said Makwinja. He also said that this work needs a lot of commitment as it is not easy to uplift water using watering cans. He is also happy because MMH has with funds from Fane Valley now started to construct a solar powered irrigation scheme in the area which will ease his work.

## **Palliative care at MMH**

*- by Merel Punt*

As part of my elective programme as a fifth year medical student from Utrecht University, the Netherlands, I completed a three-month tropical medicine elective placement at MMH. This encompassed both a clinical and a primary healthcare part. During this last part, I explored various facets of primary healthcare, including palliative care. The work of the team captured my interest.

Palliative care follows a holistic model and offers a support system to both patients and their families. The majority of patients suffer from chronic conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes. Additionally, other conditions like kidney failure, chronic liver disease, neurological disorders, dementia, and drug-resistant tuberculosis may also necessitate palliative care. MMH offers various forms of support to terminally ill individuals within their catchment area. The team comprises health workers who have received specialized training in palliative care. They operate from their own consultation room within the hospital, where they attend to all patients enrolled in the program. Additionally,



they see patients in the wards upon request or conduct home visits as necessary. Occasionally, they receive referrals from the central hospital or from community health workers in the villages. The hospital provides patients with various types of support. For instance, they offer physical support by administering morphine for pain relief. When a further review is needed, the patient will be referred for a doctors consultation. In situations requiring psychological support, the team provides counselling, as there is no psychologist available. Social support is extended to individuals lacking the resources to meet their basic needs. This includes provisions like soy-maize flour

and soap. Because of the cyclone Freddy a lot of patients needed essential supplies such as blankets. The program provided the neediest patient with these supplies. When patients require spiritual support, the team is available for counselling, or they can seek assistance from the hospital chaplain who is also trained in palliative care. Additionally, they offer support to relatives through bereavement visits, during which they assess how the family is coping with the loss of their loved one.

The program at MMH is a great example of holistic care to terminally ill patients in a financially constrained setting.

The year 2023 ends with a smile on the face of Agnes Lifa, 23 year old. A very courageous young woman who thought her economic chances had diminished when she had a baby in 2020.

It came as a dream when she was identified and enrolled in vocation skills training through our Teenage Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) project, funded by EMMS International (Scotland). This programme was introduced to prevent teenage pregnancies through women empowerment and increasing awareness on reproductive sexual health services and rights to adolescent girls and young women. It also features a back-to-school programme.

Agnes Lifa is one of the beneficiaries in the TPP project. This is her story:

*“ I did a welding training for six months in 2021 with support from Mulanje Mission Hospital through the TPP project. Today am glad to say that I got a job and am able to support my child and my family through welding. I have gained vast experience in welding and I don't just do welding of windows or door frames but I have also learnt how to do roofing of houses using steel metal. My plans are to become independent and start my own business. Currently I am saving money to start buying my own equipment, I have given myself one and half a years to raise funds and open up my own welding shop. To my fellow young women: never give up in life”*

Empowering women is not just a matter of social justice; it is crucial for achieving sustainable development and creating a more prosperous and inclusive world.



▲ Agnes Lifa at the new workshop at the Youth Centre

## News from the MMH Charitable Trust

- by Ken Rice, Treasurer

Back in 2021 Mulanje Mission Hospital Charitable Trust was established and registered with the Scottish Charity Commission. The idea behind establishing this Trust was to eliminate ever increasing charges by institutions collecting international donor funds to transfer to MMH bank accounts in Malawi and ensure that 100% of donated funds are available to the hospital, whether for specific projects or general funds.

The donations collected and deposited to the Trust bank account totals £106,000 to date, and currently there are regular monthly donations of £565. Money is transferred to MMH as requested by the Medical Director, and has supported many programmes including inpatient care (bed sponsorship, drugs and laboratory equipment ), staff training and protective clothing, improvements to the hospital

solar installation, and community activities such as flood relief and tree-planting.

The Trustees are all persons with extensive experience and knowledge of MMH. The Chairman is Thorsten Koenig who, with his wife Astrid, have been supporting and visiting MMH for fifteen years. Other founding Trustees are Vera Heaslip who with her husband John have brought MMH programmes to the attention of many partners from Northern Ireland and Alison Campbell who provides a link with Edinburgh churches. Ken Rice, who has extensive knowledge and experience of finance in Malawi, and husband of the past Medical Director, Ruth Shakespeare, is the Treasurer. A more recent Trustee appointment is Isobel Lovell (King) who has worked as a doctor at MMH.

As a UK registered Trust, the financial statements are subject to annual audit and submission to the Scottish Charity Commission. HMRC, the UK tax authority, returns to the Trust an amount equivalent to 25% of donations by UK taxpayers registered for Gift Aid. The Trust is always grateful for donations to the work of MMH and you can rest assured that 100% of donations to MMH Charitable Trust will be passed on to the hospital.

It is possible to deposit directly into the Trust, Bank of Scotland account or use PayPal via MMH website.

**The Trust's bank account details are:**

**Mulanje Mission Hospital Trust**

**Sort Code: 80-22-60**

**Account number: 21658669**

Thank you for your support!

Tuberculosis (TB) is a common and serious disease in Mulanje. It can be spread silently by people who suffer from it, but don't know they are infected. Treatment for the disease is long (6 months) and has to be completed before a patient can be declared cured.

Tuberculosis is a disease of poverty, spreading much faster when there is poor housing, overcrowding, malnutrition and co-infection with other diseases.

Therefore it is very important that patients, their families and community members of patients are followed up closely. Occasionally those with close contact to TB-patients also need further examination such as X-rays, which are available at the hospital but can be a financial burden to clients.

In the past months, we have analyzed our outcomes in the TB control programme. Big challenges are:

- the loss of patients who were started on treatment, but subsequently did not return to the TB-clinic for further doses of medication
- too little investigation of relatives and community members.

Some areas were worked on right away, such as lack of communication and phone credit, but others needed more investment, for example in a



▲ Tuberculosis office under renovation (left). Next door will be the IT-office and Ombudswoman's consulting room.

well-equipped centrally located TB-office. (the office has been frequently relocated in recent years, since its' former location had to be used for patients with Covid-19 and cholera).

With the help of our friends from Malawi Werkgroep Leeuwarden, an existing building is being refurbished into a new TB-office. This work is almost completed.

In this appeal we want to ask you to support the further improvement of TB-care:

1. Funds for free **X-rays and other tests** for patients suspected to have TB

2. Funds for a **motorbike** and communication for the follow-up of TB-patients and their relatives.

Will you help us to make and end to TB in Mulanje?

**Your donation of £/€/ \$ 2,00 will allow one patient or close contact to be screened using X-Ray.**

**A motorcycle for follow-up visits and screening of close contacts, including riders' suit and a small fund to keep it on the road for 2 years, costs £ 3100 / € 3600 / \$ 4000.**

Donate in €



You can make a donation via any of the options on [www.mmh.mw/donations](http://www.mmh.mw/donations) or one of the QR-codes.

Many thanks for all your support in 2023. Merry Christmas and a blessed 2024 from the MMH community!

Donate in £

