

*Welcome to the Fall 2022 Makupo Development Group News Update.  
Thank you to Makupo's generous supporters and volunteers.  
Please add our email address to your address book so that you are sure to receive these Makupo - Moni Abwenzi Updates. Thanks again for all your support!*



## Moni Abwenzi

Fall 2022

### **The Chilanga Health Centre is thriving!!**

It is hard to believe that what started in 2004 with a family's dream of helping a small village in Malawi, has grown into a fully operational government-mandated health centre in 2022.

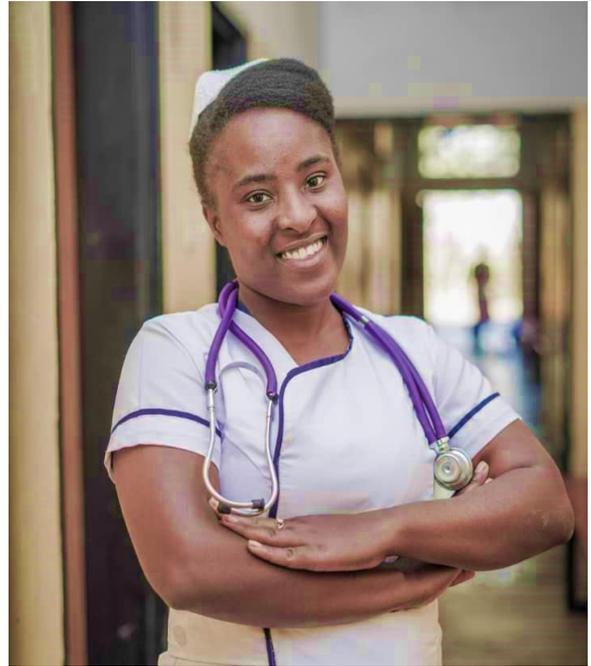


From a request for assistance to build a local health clinic, first articulated in 2011 by the Makupo villagers, to the laying of a foundation, the moulding and burning of bricks, the installation of electricity and plumbing, and the application for accreditation, the local population has been intimately involved.

The staff currently offer a wide variety of services, including palliative care, an under-five clinic, HIV testing, cervical cancer screening, and out-patient, ante-natal and youth-friendly services.



The Health Centre now has 30 employees paid by the government at government rates and serves a catchment area of over 27,000 rural residents. Daily operations are very capably handled by Clinical Officer, Mike Besten, assisted by Susan Maoza, Head Nurse/Midwife and other medical staff.



Joining the medical staff are grounds-keepers, security guards and nutritional support workers.

## **Outreach Program**

In addition, the outreach program, Chisomo Community Health Organization, continues to be supported by 33 volunteer Village Health Workers (VHW) performing basic health interventions as well as providing information to encourage health promotion and prevention of the most direct sort. They maintain a data bank of information on individual villagers' health which is shared with the Chilanga Health Centre to ensure appropriate follow-up. This information allows the staff to identify needs and provide workshops when trends and problems are identified.



Village Health Workers gathered for training and lunch

## **Visit from Makupo Development Group Canada**

In March 2022, Doug Miller, Melodie Hicks and Gwen Schulman from MDG were able to visit the facilities and observe in person the Health Centre's smooth operations with the additional staff. But ultimately oversight of the Centre is the responsibility of the Chilanga Board of Directors, chaired by Patrick Shema, headmaster of Chilanga Sighted Primary School, and including Reverend Likhoozi, head of the CCAP Mission, the headmasters of the school for the blind and the secondary school, representatives from Makupo village and staff members of the Health Centre.



Board members meet with MDG delegates: Doug Miller, Jean Mtholo (treasurer), Frazer Manda (Makupo village rep), Ellen Mbewe (village rep), Mike Besten (chief medical officer), Gwen Schulman, Patrick Shema (chair of the board), Susan Maoza (nurse), Melodie Hicks

**Famine Relief**

Again this year, Malawi’s harvest was severely impacted by the short rainy season and the effects of climate change. While there, Melodie joined the Health Centre staff and Board in distributing basic food supplies (including maize, oil and rice) to palliative care patients.



## Continuing to Work with Chilanga's Partners

### K2 Foundation

We have been fortunate to continue our close association with K2 Foundation which recently sponsored Mike, head of the Health Centre, to attend a five-week training program on palliative care. On his return, he held a workshop for clinic staff and the Village Health Workers.



### Vanier College Nursing Program

From the beginning of the planning of the Health Centre, the Vanier College Nursing Exchange Program has been an important partner. And, in September 2022, after a 2- year hiatus due to COVID, Vanier was able to host five visitors from Malawi, including a faculty member and two of her students from Kamuzu University, and two representatives from the Malawi College of Health Sciences.



The teachers enjoyed a whirlwind of activities and workshops with a focus on clinical simulation and getting to know us better while the students attended classes. One highlight was a weekend at Mont Tremblant where all five were joined by the newly formed team of Vanier nursing students who will be travelling to Malawi, accompanied by Melodie Hicks and Chrissy Mitchell (Alumni 2013) in March 2023. There they will complete their final internship spending three weeks at the Chilanga Health Centre and three weeks at Kamuzu University in Lilongwe.



### **So, what is next?**

It has always been MDG's goal to help establish a sustainable Malawi-based establishment run by the national government and local authorities. The accreditation of the Health Centre under the auspices of the Chilanga Board has helped move MDG closer to that goal, but there is more to be done. The Health Centre Board and staff have outlined a number of priorities. First, as electricity services in the area are unreliable, there is an urgent need to expand the solar energy installation. Second, an expansion of the current plumbing facilities would allow us to install flush toilets. Finally, as the local villages are not able to provide suitable accommodation for all the new employees, new and improved staff housing would be a major step towards attracting and retaining staff.

Zikomo to everyone who continues to support us as we move closer each year to an independent Health Centre. Here's how you can make a contribution:

**E-transfer:** [hicksm@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:hicksm@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

**Personal cheque:** Makupo Development Group, 160 Hébert, St-Laurent, QC H4N 2K5

**PayPal:**

[DONATE](#)