

Reproductive Health Center: Supporting Data and Relevant Information

The former first lady of Zambia (2011-2014), Dr. Christine Kaseba-Sata stated, “I have witnessed first-hand the way in which sexual reproductive health information and services, including family planning, can increase opportunities for families, uplift them out of poverty and enable young people to realise their full potential.”¹

The American Partners² hope to continue to improve reproductive health information and services at the Mwandu Hospital, located in the village of Mwandu, in Western Province, Zambia. The Mwandu hospital is a Level 1 referral hospital for the entire Mwandu district of approximately 30,000 inhabitants. Currently, it has 82 beds and employs 56 men and 76 women in medical and administrative positions. Last year the hospital was designated as a COVID-19 center. Seventy-five percent of the hospital’s operating costs are supposed to be supplied by the Zambian government in the form of a monthly \$1700 grant, but the actual receipt of the grant is not guaranteed.

The Mwandu district is primarily rural and Mwandu is the largest village in the district with 20% of the population. According to 2020 population estimates, 20% of the district’s population are children under 5 years of age and 22% are women of childbearing age. In the last three years, 10% of the pregnant women who were seen at the Mother and Child Health (MCH) center had pregnancy complications. Another crucial statistic for Western Province Zambia is the infant mortality rate. According to the World Data Atlas, about 7% of infants die (73.8/1,000 live births) in this province.³ Further, 29% of children under age 5 exhibit stunted growth and 10% of women of reproductive age are malnourished. These factors demonstrate the need for more effective reproductive health services and nutritional counseling at the Mwandu hospital.

A 10-year strategic plan for the hospital was approved in 2017 by the local board in Zambia and the American Partners board. Some of the primary goals of this plan are to develop medical personnel, infrastructure, and technologies to meet the increasing regional demand for healthcare services and to achieve Level 2 medical facility status. A master plan for infrastructure was completed in the fall of 2020. Phase 1 of the master plan is the building of the new reproductive health center.

As mentioned in the project’s narratives, current MCH spaces are inadequate and are not addressing the needs of families of the Mwandu district. Crowded, poorly ventilated spaces (very problematic during the COVID pandemic) and lack of privacy (especially for HIV+ pregnant women) discourage full utilization of the medical services available for family planning, antenatal, and under-5 child health services. Male partner participation in MCH services is also very limited. Lack of male involvement can negatively impact maternal and child health outcomes⁴ and is a major focus of efforts currently spearheaded by Zambia’s Ministry of Health.

¹ https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/ns/docs/CIP_Zambia.pdf

² The Mwandu Hospital [American Partners](#) were established in 2012 as a charitable organization to assist the Mwandu Mission Hospital with its provision of healthcare to the people of Mwandu, Zambia. Other American Partner projects on the Global Giving site are the [Solar Project Saves Lives](#) and a fully-funded project [Clean Water Improves Patient Care in Rural Africa](#).

³ <https://knoema.com/atlas/Zambia/ranks/Infant-Mortality-Rate>

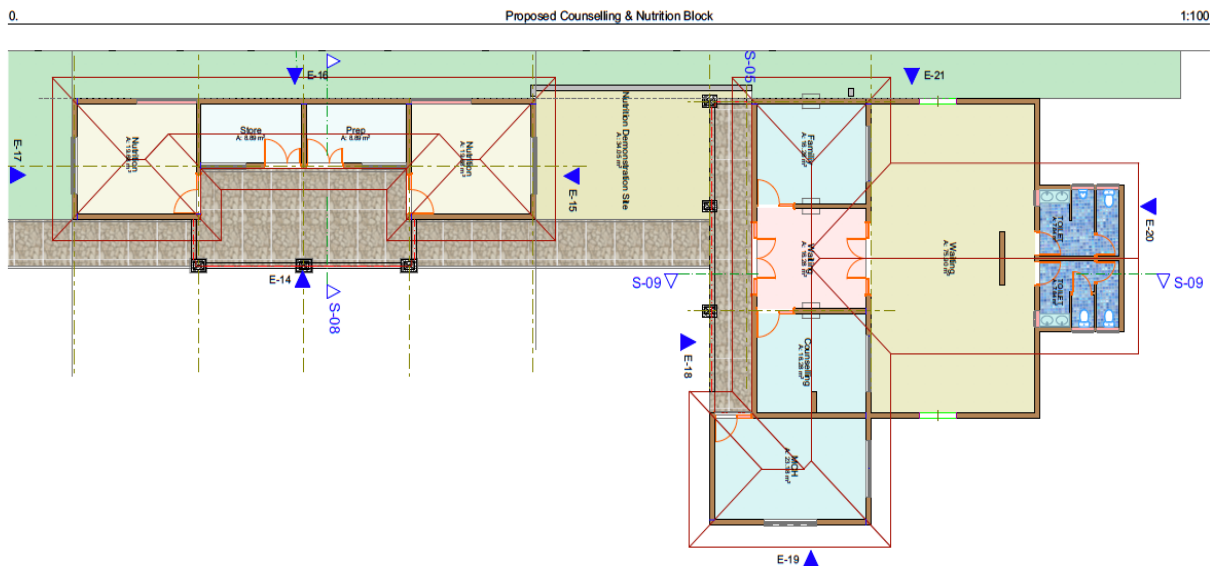
⁴ <https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-as64-analytical-studies.cfm> https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KKWN.pdf
<https://www.imedpub.com/articles/perceptions-and-experiences-of-young-pregnant-women-aged-15-19-years-on-low-male-involvement-at-antenatal-care-clinics-and-pmtct-ser.pdf>
<https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-019-4294-8>

The new reproductive health center will address the inadequacies of the current facilities by providing a 160m² reproductive health center that will allow safer, faster, and more effective patient care.

Specifically, it will provide:

1. Adequate ventilation in enclosed spaces and a large outside, areas with seating and bathrooms.
 - Check-ins and vitals will be performed in the outside waiting area to reduce the time it takes to transition patients to private exam rooms.
 - The provision of seats and bathrooms, plus the shorter wait times, will reduce the chance that patients will leave without being seen by medical personnel.
 - An additional covered, outside area or the waiting area will be used for health education programs on a variety of topics (e.g., child nutrition).
 - Educational programming for larger groups will eliminate the need to repeat programs many times during a day and will allow medical staff to spend more time with patients.
2. Exam rooms that are large enough to accommodate small family units and give all patients privacy when being examined, treated, or counseled.
 - Clear separation of exam rooms from waiting areas will increase patient comfort and security during discussions of sensitive issues, such as HIV status.
 - Providing adequate space for thorough and more complete examinations will improve interactions between patients and healthcare staff and improve the standard of care administered to patients.

Below is a floor diagram of the projected reproductive health center:



- A counseling room (16.28 m²) (blue)
- A family planning examination room (16.28 m²) (blue)
- An antenatal examination room (23.18 m²) (blue)
- A large, covered outside area for educational programs and demonstrations (34.05 m²) (tan)
- Two staff offices (each 19.68 m²) (off-white)
- A outside waiting area, with adjacent toilets, and a smaller reception area inside the facility (tan)