

A Letter from Michelle

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Dear Friends,

The big news since I last wrote is that we have moved in to the new operating theatre/ICU building! It took a whole day to move everything across and even as we were moving, we were still doing cases in the old theatre. I gave the anaesthesia for the last case: a little girl had swallowed a coin and it was stuck in her throat, thankfully we were able to remove it without too much trouble. A few hours later I had the privilege of giving the first anaesthesia in the new theatre when we delivered a healthy baby girl by C section.



Last case in old theatre and first case in the new theatre!

The building is lovely and with 5 operating rooms (3 major and 2 minor) much more spacious than our old one. It is great to have the ICU in the same building and a designated area for patients to recover post anaesthesia rather than in the corridor as we did previously. On the roof, there are rows of solar panels that provide electricity and charge our "back up batteries". These batteries are our power supply at night if there is a mains power cut.



One of the many things I love about living in Zambia is the weather! It is very predictable we have a 6-month rainy season, November to April and then it is dry May to October. And with an average of 7.35 hours of sunlight a day I can be outside for some of nearly every day of the year. Even at work I get to feel fresh air as our wards are separated by covered walk ways. Events such as graduations can be planned for dry season and held outside. It has been helpful as we try

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to socially distance and prevent the spread of Coronavirus that we can do things outside. Our team prayer meetings are now held outside so we can space out more.

Recently we have had 2 outdoor events at the hospital, the first was a blood drive. The team from the blood bank came to Mukinge and instead of collecting from donors inside it was all done outside, on the graduation podium at our nursing college. I was able to give blood along with my friends Amy and Amber. It was great to see blood being donated as at that time our blood bank was down to the last two units. It is always difficult when the supply of blood is almost out, doctors have to make hard decisions on who to give blood to and who not. Sometimes major elective surgery has to be postponed until more blood is available.



The second event was the COVID Vaccination Launch for Kasempa.

We are so happy that the vaccine (Astra Zeneca) is now available in Zambia. There is quite a bit of resistance and fear around it so the Launch was planned to encourage people to get the

vaccine and to give them factual information about it. There were speeches given by health professionals, testimonies from those who had been sick or lost loved ones, a poem, a sketch and a song about kicking COVID out of Zambia. Two local chiefs attended and were among the first to receive the vaccine. By the end of the day 370 people had been vaccinated including myself.

Thank you for your interest in the work at Mukinge. I hope this letter finds you well

Love

Michelle

