



CPAR Report

Spring 2019

Female Empowerment Starts with Opportunity



Empowerment starts with opportunity, and the opportunity to openly discuss health issues in Malawi gave young Chimwemwe the tools to envision and pursue a future in community development for herself. The opportunity to learn from CPAR volunteers likewise empowered female nurses in Ethiopia to learn new skills and help keep their community healthy. These are just some of the stories you'll read about in this issue of our newsletter.

By placing female stakeholders at the centre of projects as leaders, collaborators and consumers, CPAR programming emboldens girls and women to trust their capacity to learn and serve as agents of positive change in their communities.

In this issue, CPAR is proud to highlight the accomplishments of our female staff and partners, celebrate them as role models, and share the impact they've had on the lives of other women.

We at CPAR cannot envision creating stronger health systems without the invaluable contribution of women. Since 1984 CPAR has been creating healthy communities in Sub-Saharan African and operating our programs through the lens of gender equality. There have been some major achievements with regards to the role of women in Sub-Saharan Africa in those 35 years, including increased enrollment of girls in primary school and a dramatic reduction in maternal mortality, but African women still face major disadvantages because of poverty or discrimination. In this edition of our newsletter we'd like to pay homage to the role of women who have powered our programs and those who have been empowered by them.



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Partnership and Collaboration between Fitch Hospital staff, CPAR staff and Canadian volunteers

Inclusive Knowledge Exchange & Capacity Building

CPAR's **Knowledge Exchange Project** at Fitch Hospital, North Shoa, Ethiopia reflects the CPAR vision of health systems strengthening. While CPAR has a history of working on all development goals as they influence health, this project focuses directly on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal #3, Good Health and Well Being.

The Ethiopian government has made tremendous strides at improving health outcomes in their country with their Health Sector Transformation Plan, most notably through the dramatic increase in the recruitment of physicians and other health-care professionals to support the local healthcare

system. However, there is a major shortage of qualified instructors with clinical experience to train increasing numbers of students enrolling in medical schools. Coupled with the poor state of Ethiopia's medical infrastructure, this deficit has resulted in compromised quality of care.

In response, in 2016 CPAR launched a **Knowledge Exchange Project** partnership between Canadian medical practitioners and the medical staff at Fitch Hospital focused on increasing the capacity of the hospital's emergency department, which is often an individual's entry point into a hospital.



What will YOUR legacy be?

In recent years, donors have informed us of their intention to include a gift to CPAR in their wills. These gifts provide a tax deduction for your estate and have a tremendous impact on our ability to improve the health of communities in East Africa.

Once you have provided for loved ones in your will, you may want to include a gift of money, stock or property to CPAR. A bequest to CPAR in your will offers you a way to make a significant charitable gift that you might not be able to make during your lifetime.

If you have remembered CPAR in your will, we thank you and ask that you please notify us. Knowledge of your generous intention will allow us to plan for future programs.

To find out more, please call Dee Ucci at 1-800-263-2727 ext. 31



This January, Canadian nurses Sherry Poirier and Della Magnusson volunteered to join the team of Ethiopian physicians and nurses at Fitch Hospital. Sherry Poirier has a teaching background at the School of Nursing for Algonquin College, and continues to practice as a public health nurse, and Della Magnusson is a nurse practitioner that has worked with underserved inner-city communities and in Northern Canada.

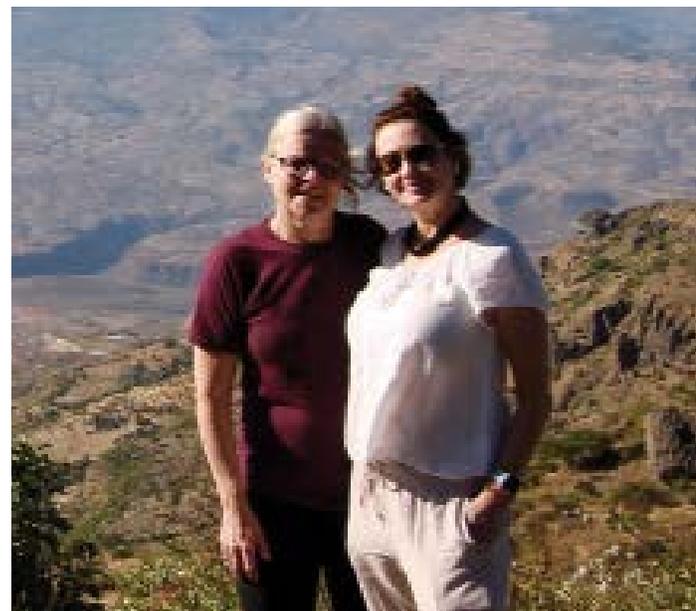
Their objective was to increase the capacity of healthcare at the hospital by focusing on improving the operational systems in the Emergency Department. During their stay, they worked to increase knowledge, confidence, and the capacity of the ER team to provide improved patient care.

While volunteering at the hospital, Della and Sherry came across a suction machine that was not functioning and relegated to a storeroom, despite the pressing need for the equipment in the ER. Upon further inspection, they discovered that the machine simply needed to be properly cleaned. This was just not a part of the routine

that the staff were taught at the hospital, and the responsibility to care for this piece of equipment had fallen through the cracks. Fortunately, Della and Sherry were able to get the machine fully functioning after a thorough cleaning. Their colleagues were inspired by this easy fix and became eager to learn how to clean the machines themselves. The nurses now have the confidence in their knowledge of what to do when equipment malfunctions, and enhanced problem-solving skills. This is capacity building in action.

In an interview after her volunteer rotation at Fitch, Della spoke about the impact of working with the nursing staff: “nurses see things holistically, this work is not just about the medical model, but about patient care, communication, working as a team, and so much more than that...”

In addition to the volunteer deployment, CPAR has supported Fitch Hospital with medical equipment and supplies which complement the knowledge that ER physicians and nurses are gaining. Having the equipment and supplies on hand allows the Fitch Hospital staff to utilize their new skills on the job and results in improved patient care. CPAR will remain on the ground working with hospital staff to understand their needs, to secure the most needed and appropriate equipment for the hospital and support staff with learning how to use and maintain the equipment.



Did you know?

Ethiopia has the second-highest population in Africa, with 94.1 million people.



Children as agents of change: Students are effective communicators of positive hygiene practices to their communities through drama, songs, demonstrations, and inter-school WASH related competitions.

Focusing on the Future Generation

CPAR implemented the **Stop Malaria in Its Tracks** project in support of the Malawian government's 2015 Malaria Communication Strategy. CPAR uses a Social and Behavior Communication Change strategy to catalyze changes in communities' attitudes and behaviour to combat high levels of malaria in Nkhata Bay.



Chimwemwe Chirwa is a young woman with ambitions to work in community development. Her membership in a CPAR-supported Youth Club in Nkhata Bay has helped her conceptualize what that work would look like. Chimwemwe worked as a volunteer to shatter the widely held belief in her community that malaria could not be prevented.

Through CPAR's programming, this committed young woman helped educate and empower her community to prevent malaria by participating in a number of dramatic performances, sports events and other outreach activities. She expressed that she learned a lot, but most importantly she learned that there is plenty that people just like her can do to stay healthy.

Gomezgani Ngwira, CPAR's project coordinator for **Stop Malaria in Its Tracks**, wants to encourage more women to assume leadership roles with this project. The community action groups that she organizes encourage both male and female membership, and intentionally create a space where women and girls like Chimwemwe are encouraged to recognize, value and trust their capacity to serve their communities. Youth Club member Chimwemwe told us that "most women are denied their voice, to express their feelings, but things are changing..." This program has empowered the youth, including girls, to utilize their voices and engage the community in health promotion activities. Chimwemwe Chirwa is just one example of a bright young scholar who is applying what she learned to serve her community.

Did you know?

Malaria is a disease caused by a parasite spread by a particular kind of mosquito which bites at night-time. Approximately 92% of deaths from Malaria occur in Africa.



Headteacher, Ms. Cecilia Kapudzama, shares the impact of CPAR's Rainwater Harvesting Project that was implemented at her school, Misuku Primary School, in the Kasungu District of Malawi. Funded by a generous CPAR donor, the project includes the building of latrines as well as a rainwater harvesting tank.

Collecting Rainwater as a Community

CPAR's primary school-based **Rainwater Harvesting Project** is about more than water management; it's also about supporting education for both girls and boys. In addition to collecting rainwater for a variety of uses, CPAR recognized an opportunity to level the playing field for female students by making academic success easier to achieve. As in many schools across Africa, female students at Misuku Primary School often do not attend school while they are menstruating because of a lack of discreet facilities where they can practice menstrual hygiene. By constructing separate, private latrines for girls, CPAR has removed a major barrier to education faced by girls.

The rainwater that is collected by the tanks is also used to ensure there is a reliable supply of water for handwashing, ensuring better hygiene within the school and reducing the spread of germs that can make students sick and miss classes. The excess "gray" water that runs off from the handwashing stations is used to water the school garden, which provides the children with fruits and vegetables, boosting their nutrition. Since the implementation of this project, more children are coming to school because they have access to food from their own school garden, and a source of clean, accessible water. Students have reported that they have more energy and are more enthusiastic in the classroom, since they no longer share the burden of having to walk long distances for water.



Cecilia identified that the tank built for the school has become a nearby water source for local community members as well. In fact, members of the local community in Kasungu were involved in every step of the process from the building of latrines to rainwater harvesting tanks. Some community members even took what they learned from the professionals CPAR hired in building these water systems and built similar structures for their own homes and community as well.

Did you know?

Having separate and private latrines increases the likelihood that girls will feel safe going to school.



All Things are Possible with Good Role Models and Leadership

Olivia Kachuma has worked with CPAR Malawi for 4 years as a Project Manager. Through CPAR Malawi's projects in rural communities, she has seen girls and women realize their potential, and that they too have a voice in the work taking place in their communities. Through her unwavering support, Olivia has seen women and girls become leaders who work to be champion projects in the forefront of their communities. Olivia's work with CPAR Malawi has brought her a sense of pride and fulfillment. "Seeing women and girls take active roles in project implementation is great. This group is usually left behind in most cases, but CPAR Malawi promotes gender inclusion in its project implementation." As a result, Olivia has seen women and men, girls and boys, work together at an unprecedented level. For instance, the community committees have female membership in senior positions, and youth clubs have girls who can articulate the development issues just like their male counterparts. This level of inclusion and collaboration is also evident for the women from communities like Nkhata Bay, where CPAR Malawi has implemented CPAR's successful **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project**. These women have learned how to construct hand washing facilities beside their household latrines using locally available resources. Previously, this was a role that only men would traditionally take.

There is an intentional movement of including girls at CPAR Malawi and, moving forward, Olivia hopes to help even more women foster confidence in their ability to take on new challenges and autonomy.

This is the kind of participation that gives Olivia the confidence that she is making a difference herself as a female leader, and that the projects she is instrumental in designing are having a positive impact in the targeted communities. She describes her work as challenging, but rewarding, and always wants to impart women and girls with the sentiment that "all things are possible to those who are committed to achieving them."



Did you know?

According to the World Health Organization, children in Sub-Saharan Africa are more than 15 times more likely to die before the age of five than children in developing countries. The leading causes of death in Sub-Saharan Africa for children under 5 are preterm birth complications, pneumonia, birth asphyxia, diarrhea, malaria and nutrition related factors.



Small Interventions, Big Impact

The **Knowledge Exchange Project** was designed to strengthen health service delivery at Fitche Hospital through capacity building activities. These activities were recently led by CPAR volunteer physician and McGill University graduate, Dr. Ayesha Al Memari. Dr. Al Memari is an Emirati physician who specializes in emergency medicine. She is a recent recipient of the Abu Dhabi Award in recognition of her work in medicine and humanitarian aid. Dr. Al Memari taught Basic & Advanced Airway Capacity certification courses to train nurses and doctors at Fitche Hospital in intubation techniques, some of whom have never been taught the techniques. Shortly after the training, two physicians were able to put their new training to life-saving use, as they were able to successfully intubate their first patient in the Emergency Room.

*Dr. Al Memari says
“Small interventions make big impacts.”*

This training is not the only success Dr. Al Memari has had at this hospital. When she first started working at Fitche Hospital she noticed that patients who came to the ER with preeclampsia would be transferred immediately to the maternity ward in order to receive medication – magnesium sulfate. Preeclampsia is a condition unique to pregnancy that causes blood

pressure to rise to dangerous levels, and this trip to the maternity ward could take up to 15 minutes or longer. Time is a critical issue for a patient with preeclampsia and immediate access to medication can save lives. Without immediate treatment, this seizure-inducing illness can result in both maternal and infant death. Dr. Al Memari stocked the ER medicine supply with magnesium sulfate to ensure that women can be treated as soon as they have made it to the ER, buying critical time. This small but significant change is something that Dr. Al Memari put in place due to her expertise in dealing with ER patients. It likely would not have otherwise been implemented due to gaps in many of the hospital staff’s knowledge and experience.

As a teaching hospital, Fitche Hospital experiences a lot of staff turnover, so treatment protocols and systems for conditions like pre-eclampsia that last beyond clinical rotations are essential. Dr. Al Memari’s introduction of a process to deal with pre-eclampsia has now become a common practice at Fitche Hospital. As health care workers continue to learn at the hospital, the impact of this intervention is not limited to Fitche Hospital, as the knowledge and skills acquired by staff will be spread as practitioners move to other hospitals and share their learnings.



Dr. Fentaye and Dr. Teshome are both doctors at Fitche hospital specializing in emergency medicine. They both attended Dr. Ayesha Al Memari’s course and prior to this training, they had never intubated a patient before. Dr. Fentaye intubated her first patient in the ER recently and recalls successes from across the hospital as a result of this training. Dr. Teshome has intubated 8 patients in the emergency room and operating room. He recalls his first patient, a young woman needing intubation in the operating room for ectopic pregnancy. The surgery was successful for both her and her child thanks to the knowledge transfer.



Are you a Canadian Healthcare practitioner with Emergency Room Experience? Do you want to make a difference in the lives of communities in Ethiopia?

Since 2016 CPAR has been implementing the **Knowledge Exchange Project** at the Fitcha Hospital in Ethiopia. The goal of this project is to improve the overall capacity of the emergency department to deliver high quality care. Fitcha Hospital is located in the North Shoa zone of Oromia region in Ethiopia. Fitcha Town is located Approximately 125 km from Addis Ababa. Typical placements are approximately one month in duration, with repeat placements highly valued and encouraged. While at Fitcha Hospital, Canadian volunteer nurses and physicians spend much of their time working alongside the ER duty doctor who is an Ethiopian general practitioner (GP). Ethiopian GPs are recent graduates from their internship programs and are stationed at Fitcha Hospital for 2-3 years prior to eligibility for application to specialty training programs (a near universal route).

The knowledge exchange and teaching is at the bedside. The teaching targets are the GPs as well as the nursing staff, the emergency surgeons and students in the community health officer and public health programs of various universities including the newly established Selale University in Fitcha Town.



There are also teaching opportunities via case reviews and via lectures at the twice weekly morning sessions for medical staff. These include teaching modules on various topics such as airway management, cardiac emergencies and trauma care. Where possible we will be partnering with local agencies such as the Health Sciences Faculty at Selale University and staff and upper level residents from the emergency medicine residency program at Addis Ababa University. To find out more, please contact Dr. Steve Ferracuti, project lead and Board Chair, via info@cpar.ca

A special thank you to all of our donors and supporters.

The projects and successes outlined in this newsletter are a reflection of the hard work, determination and resilience of the people in the communities in which we work.

Their achievements are a direct result of your generosity. Thank you!



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CPAR works in partnership with health professionals, vulnerable communities and governments to build health systems capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa.