



Winds of change in the hospital.

Photo: Olivier Brandenberg

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Trust in the hospitals



Dr. med. Svend Capol,
President of SolidarMed

In 1919, Germany handed control of what is today Tanzania over to the British. In those days, Mahenge was the colonial capital. It was not only an important administrative centre, but also the home of notorious slave traders. Later, when the government moved its affairs to Dar Es Salaam, historical Mahenge sunk into obscurity. Today, there are still ruby mines in the area, some forestry and interesting fossil sites, but these do not benefit the people of this poor region. Most lead a very simple existence cultivating maize, rice and beans.

Mahenge district is insignificant today and its health sector has been severely neglected. But thanks to SolidarMed, the villages are now supported by community health workers. These are trained to recognise when a child requires treatment in a health centre. From the village, a child is referred along a well-established "primary health care pathway" to a health centre for a first check-up. If necessary, the child is then referred to the district hospital in Mahenge.

The condition of the hospital cries out for renovation. For children to receive proper care, the hospital needs not only targeted training for

its staff, but also the necessary infrastructure with which to diagnose and treat its patients. If their children receive good care, the population's trust in this health facility will grow. When they trust the hospital, they are more likely to seek help on time for other health problems like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/Aids. Many hospitals in Switzerland do something similar: If a child is born in a well-equipped, appealing maternity ward, this creates a good relationship with the parents and strengthens their trust in the hospital.

This year, SolidarMed needs donations to resolve the most serious shortcomings in the children's ward of Mahenge hospital. Thank you for your dedication and commitment.



Photo: Olivier Brandenberg

Crumbling walls and draughty windows

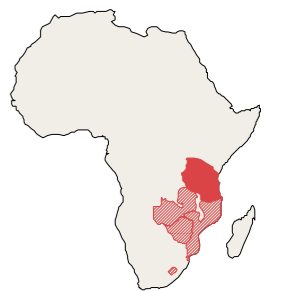
Tanzania Built in 1904, Mahenge District Hospital is in a pitiful state today. The walls are crumbling and the windows don't close properly. SolidarMed project manager Elisabeth Rotzetter explains why the children's ward urgently needs to be refurbished.

SolidarMed: What are a district hospital's responsibilities?

Elisabeth Rotzetter: Uncomplicated ailments are treated by nurses directly in the remote health centres. More complicated cases are referred to the hospital in Mahenge town. The hospital can treat severe malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, HIV/Aids complications or fractures.

What does Mahenge lack?

The infrastructure urgently needs renovating. The walls are crumbling, the windows don't close and there is no equipment to treat severely ill patients who require intensive care. At 1000 metres above sea level, the winters can get very cold. Frankly, the chances of getting better in this hospital are not as high as they could and should be.



Tanzania:
Inhabitants 49'253'000
Doctors per 1000 inhabitants 0,03
Life expectancy 63 years

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SolidarMed is the Swiss organisation for health in Africa and improves health care for 1.5 million people. SolidarMed strengthens and expands existing medical services sustainably and meaningfully. The projects pay particular attention to the health of mothers, pregnant women, newborns and children.



Photo: Benjamin Gross

Elisabeth Rotzetter is Country Coordinator for SolidarMed and has been living in Tanzania for over 10 years.

Why do parents still bring their children to Mahenge?

This is very gratifying and means that our sensitisation work in the villages is working. More people are using the medical services in the health centres. As a result, more severely ill children are being referred to Mahenge Hospital on time and the number of children admitted to the hospital is rising. We now have to ensure that the hospital provides good quality care as soon as possible. This is the only place where patients can access medical treatment. Mahenge is the only hospital in the district. Hardly any families can afford the long journey to Ifakara. You can't forget that most people survive on what grows around their houses.

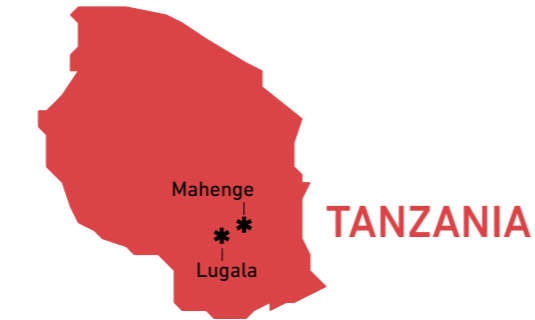
Photo below
Mothers and children wait in front of the district hospital in Mahenge.

Middle photo
A family in the children's ward of the hospital.

Photos on the right
Support works: After seven years of cooperation with SolidarMed, the quality of medical services in Lugala Hospital, 200km away, has massively improved.



Photo: Olivier Brandenburg



SolidarMed will first improve the children's ward. How is such a decision made?

The need for action is greatest here. Every year, up to 12'000 children are treated in Mahenge's outpatient ward and around 2'500 children are admitted. In addition, our health promotion in the villages focusses on mothers and children, so it is very important for us that the hospital is capable of helping them.

Where do you see the challenges?

Renovations alone do not ensure good quality treatment. In the long-term, good medical services require enough motivated staff at the hospital. Right now, we are looking for a new project manager in Mahenge. This should be a medical doctor who can support the hospital in improving the quality of its services.



Photo: Olivier Brandenburg

Renovation of the children's ward

The children's ward of Mahenge hospital is in a bad state. SolidarMed is renovating the building and making sure that patients receive appropriate treatment.

By the end of 2017, SolidarMed will:

- Renovate the floor, roof and walls; replace doors and windows
- Refurbish the sanitary facilities
- Repair the electrical system
- Equip a basic intensive care unit. For effective emergency treatment, SolidarMed will buy oxygen canisters and 2 heart rate and respiration monitors.

The renovation of the children's ward will benefit both the children and their parents. Better working conditions will benefit the staff and make it easier to improve hygiene standards in the ward, to the benefit of the children.

More information on SolidarMed's work in African hospitals:
solidarmed.ch/en > Topics > Hospitals and Health Centres

A great deal was achieved in Lugala

Lugala Hospital lies in the neighbouring district of Malinyi. Seven years ago, this hospital was in a similarly poor state as the hospital in the mountains of Mahenge. Since then, SolidarMed and the hospital team have massively improved the quality of care and treatment. Thanks to the nursing school, the hospital has more and better-trained staff. It has a working water supply, crucial medical equipment is available and the important buildings were renovated. In the past year, the government designated Lugala – which previously had hardly any patients – as the new district hospital. Every year, Lugala's medical staff treat over 70'000 patients.



Photo: Olivier Brandenburg



Photo: Olivier Brandenburg



A final push against HIV/Aids?

Lesotho Many people in the small mountain kingdom of Lesotho do not know their HIV status and so place their families at risk. As part of a research study, SolidarMed teams tested around 15'000 people from 77 villages for HIV in their own homes. Those testing HIV positive were counselled on-site and informed of their treatment options. Those who agreed received their medication immediately and could begin their treatment. Previously, this required many visits to the health centre.

Jointly, SolidarMed and Swiss TPH examined the feasibility of this new treatment approach and its acceptance in the population. The preliminary results are impressive: 87 percent of those approached agreed to an HIV test in their own homes. "This surprised us a lot, as HIV is still strongly stigmatised in Lesotho" said the HIV specialist and project manager Niklaus Labhardt.

This research also plays an important role in reviewing the 90-90-90 strategy defined by the WHO. By 2020: 90% of people should know their HIV status, 90% of those infected with HIV should be in treatment and 90% of those in treatment should have an undetectable viral load. HIV experts from around the world await the definitive results of the study in Lesotho. These could fundamentally change the treatment approach.



Lesotho
A final push against HIV/Aids?

Lesotho
Recognising viruses

Zimbabwe
Digital health

Zambia
52 new health professionals

Recognising viruses

Lesotho For the very first time Lesotho's history, a test was performed at the end of last year to examine why a specific HI-virus is resistant against treatment. This test took place in a small laboratory in Butha Buthe, which SolidarMed supplied with the necessary equipment. The test was carried out for a 6 year old child whose virus was not being suppressed, although a number of different drugs had been tried. Thanks to the test results, it is now clear which viral genotype is involved and how it can be combatted. Without this knowledge, doctors cannot effectively treat patients with treatment resistance and without a quick change in therapy, many of those affected will die.



Digital health

Zimbabwe Information age, digital revolution, modern communication technology – very few people think of a rural hospital in Africa when hearing these words. But e-health and the use of digital technology in health care is also becoming ever more important in the countries in which SolidarMed works.

Access to internet-based knowledge is crucial for health staff, even during their training. SolidarMed installed networked computers for students from Silveira Nursing School. As the school's internet connection often breaks down, a control unit was installed at Silveira. This will now also be done at the second partner nursing school at Musiso Hospital.



52 new health professionals

Zambia SolidarMed has been supporting the training of Medical Licentiates (MLs) in Zambia for a number of years. These associate clinicians are an important pillar of health care services in the rural areas, where there are hardly any doctors. MLs receive comprehensive clinical training, including training in important, life-saving emergency interventions. They are even able to perform emergency caesarean sections.

SolidarMed was actively involved in restructuring this training into a Bachelor of Science degree. The goal of this upgrading was to boost the competencies (and the recognition) of these health professionals. In the summer of 2016, the first group completed their Bachelor exams. After a two-week exam marathon, which included theoretical and practical questions, most students passed. In November, 52 proud new MLs were rewarded with a Bachelor in Clinical Sciences in a colourful graduation ceremony. After a supervised practical year, they will begin applying their knowledge and skills independently, providing crucial care where there are no doctors.



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Contact Eliane Jenny directly under e.jenny@solidarmed.ch, + 41 41 310 66 60.



A big thank you to Pratteln secondary school!

To date, the secondary school in Pratteln has collected over 40'000 Swiss Francs for Lugala Hospital in Tanzania. Since 2011, students at this school can take the elective subject "Matingatinga", which focusses on sustainability. Students ran a tuck shop, sold colourful candles and delicious baked goods at the Christmas market and collected donations during the Christmas concert. With the proceeds from these activities, SolidarMed is improving the children's ward at Lugala Hospital.

More information under

sek-pratteln.ch > Infos A-Z > Matingatinga

Nik Hartmann visited Moçambique

Our goodwill ambassador Nik Hartman visited our project for mothers and children in Chiúre. The well-known TV and radio presenter immersed himself in the life of families in rural Moçambique. He visited the children's ward of the local hospital and experienced what it means when there is only one instead of the required three nurses to see to the mothers waiting in the health centre. Hartmann also spent the night in the extremely remote village of Savanone. He gained an insight into how simply people live and learnt about the health risks which lie in wait for their children.



91st Annual General Meeting on the Sonnenberg

On the 20th of May 2017, the members of the SolidarMed association will hold their 91st Annual General Meeting. As in previous years, this will take place on the Sonnenberg in Kriens. After the statutory part, the afternoon will be filled with exciting presentations. SolidarMed looks forward to seeing many familiar faces. New members are of course also very welcome!

Saturday, 20th of May 2017
AGM of SolidarMed,
Restaurant Sonnenberg in Kriens