



St Luke's Hospital, Milo is a 50 bed hospital serving a population of 150,000. It has one doctor, a single car, no mains electricity, no telephone, no public transport and a journey of 80 miles to collect or send mail.

# Fuel shortage costs life



The late Eliza Mpangala's widower and baby, with his nurse

## Life-saving treatment

Thirty-four year old Tumaini ('Hope') is grateful to St Luke's Hospital for saving her life following a difficult childbirth.

Tumaini's first husband with whom she had three children divorced her for reasons unknown. The second one left her soon after she became pregnant this time.

Having had no problems with her previous deliveries, when she went into labour Tumaini's family persuaded her that there was no need to go to the hospital. However, labour did not progress and eventually they brought her to St Luke's during the night.

On examination she was found to have a badly ruptured uterus and she was operated on immediately. It was as well that her family had come with her, as they were able to donate blood to replace the loss she suffered.

Her uterus was repaired, although with difficulty, but her child had already died. The blood transfusion saved her life, but she lost her baby.

She was discharged after 10 days in hospital for further rest at home, and she is now a vendor selling vegetables at the village market.



## Eliza Mpangala, nurse attendant at Mbongo dispensary, died while giving birth to a son earlier this year.

Eliza suffered severe blood loss as the result of a retained placenta – a problem which can only be managed in hospital. The nearest hospital – Ludewa Government Hospital – is over 70 kilometres away. Manda Health Centre (near Mbongo) has a vehicle provided by the government but it is often lacking fuel. Unfortunately this was the case that day. Late in the afternoon a vehicle was borrowed from the Roman Catholic church nearby (at a cost of 100,000 shillings) but by this time there had been too much delay; Eliza did reach Ludewa, but died soon after arrival before anything could be done. Her body was sent back home.

Dr Lwoga, Doctor-in-Charge at St Luke's, was informed of Eliza's death on the following day, and asked to pay all the expenses incurred, including transport costs to the hospital, the cost of returning the body, and the funeral expenses. This the hospital did.

It was a few months before Dr Lwoga was able to visit the family as

Mbongo cannot be reached in the rainy season. When the river is flooded, the villagers cross the river in groups in order to scare off the many crocodiles, but Dr Lwoga told us he would not dare attempt this. In the dry season, vehicles can drive through the river to Mbongo.

Eliza's little boy is doing well. He is being breastfed by a good woman and being given additional cow's milk, which the father can hardly afford, as he was actually dependent on his late wife's income.

'Had transport been available from the start, Eliza would have been alive today,' says Dr Lwoga. 'May God Almighty rest her soul in peace.'

### Please pray:

- For Eliza Mpangala's husband and son
- That difficulties around the provision of transport may be overcome
- For Tumaini and her children