

## **Case Study 1 - “Distance no object” – NHS Borders and St Francis Hospital, Zambia Partnership**

A deep and lasting partnership has developed over 25 years between two rural hospitals: the Borders General Hospital in South East Scotland and St Francis’ Hospital in Eastern Zambia.

The Borders General Hospital has 273 beds, serves a population of 115,000 and is funded by NHS Scotland. St Francis Hospital, situated in a very rural part of Zambia close to the borders of Malawi and Mozambique, is partially funded by the Zambian Ministry of Health with support from the Joint Anglican Catholic Management Board and a number of NGO’s, including ourselves. It has 360 beds and is a second-level referral hospital for an immediate population of 200,000. It also acts as a referral hospital for 1.8 million people in the Eastern Province and, given its good national reputation, there are a number of patients from Malawi, Mozambique and other parts of Zambia who also travel for treatment. There is an effective training school for nurses and midwives.

Recruitment and retention of staff at St Francis hospital is an ongoing challenge, particularly as the income from the Ministry of Health is dependent on the Zambian economy which is in turn dependent on a number of factors including the fluctuating price of copper. Despite this, however, the hospital is still able to carry out 3000 operations and 80,000 outpatient visits annually, and support the 18 Rural Health Centres around it. It has an operating annual budget of around £1.3 million.

NHS Borders has a formally established twinning partnership with St Francis Hospital to achieve improvements in service delivery and patient experience, ‘The Logie Legacy’ charity [www.logielegacy.com](http://www.logielegacy.com). Distance has been no object. By listening to needs identified by St Francis’ staff, opportunities are explored to work collaboratively to achieve sustainable developments and in return a value is realised of voluntary engagement in global health with NHS Borders staff bringing knowledge, skills and ideas back to Scotland.

Supported projects have included:

- sexual health - improve testing, treatment and contact tracing of STI’s and HIV
- tuberculosis control - bicycles for community volunteers, building improvements
- public health - improve water and sanitation to the hospital and compound
- pharmacy - stock control software and laptops
- radiology - provide equipment and training
- maternity - life saving skills course and training the trainers
- visits by medics, allied health professionals, support staff and other partners  
(Scottish Water)

A vision exists to strengthen and deepen the impact of this partnership and provide a model for others to adapt, ideally as a model ‘flagship’ for delivering secondary care in low/middle income countries.



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