



CASSIOPEIA NKANI

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CASSIOPEIA-BRINGING 5 STAR QUALITY HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO THE 5 TARGET HOSPITALS FOR UHC

JICA - THE PROJECT FOR STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT CAPACITY OF GENERAL HOSPITALS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT



Ms. Michiko Nyanga, Japanese expert in Hospital Management and Infection Prevention and Control taking part in a GEMBA walk with Matero First Level Hospital senior management

**FIVE FIRST LEVEL
HOSPITALS
HIGHLIGHT
PROGRESS
IN HOSPITAL**

**PROJECT
WELCOMES
NEW PROJECT
COORDINATOR**

**OVER ONE
THOUSAND
HOSPITALS
STAFF TRAINED
IN INFECTION
PREVENTION
AND CONTROL
IN FIVE**

**CASSIOPEIA
PROJECT ENTERS
FINAL YEAR:
STRENGTHENING
OWNERSHIP AND
TRANSITIONING
SUPPORT
STRUCTURE**

FIVE FIRST LEVEL HOSPITALS HIGHLIGHT PROGRESS IN HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



Data / management review meeting at Chipata First Level Hospital with Balanced ScoreCard review

As the JICA Cassiopeia Project enters its last year since its launch in 2021, administrators from some of the 5 First Level Hospitals (FLH) shared their experience under the project's first output which is geared towards hospital management strengthening of the governance structures. They reflected on how their hospital management practices have changed through their involvement in the project.

The aim of the project is to make current issues more visible, to help managers to manage based on objectives, and enable them to resolve issues on their own at each target hospital and enhance regular monitoring of hospital activities through the hospital management's use of the Balanced Score Card. The use of the BSC has become a

key component for setting goals, planning hospital activities, and conducting routine monitoring.

GEMBA Walk: Ms. Mercy Ndimbwa, the hospital administrator at Chilenje FLH shared with the project that effective hospital management is crucial in ensuring efficient operations, high-quality patient care, and the overall success of healthcare institutions. For the hospital, she contends that among the innovative approaches to improving management practices in hospitals, the GEMBA walk and regular senior management meetings stand out as transformative tools.

"These strategies focus on fostering collaboration, enhancing decision-making, and addressing challenges in real-time. Through the GEMBA walk, management can observe operations and interact with staff to identify bot-

tlenecks, gather insights, and create an environment conducive to problem-solving and continuous improvement. For instance, just recently on 27 May 2025 the management team at Chilenje Level 1 Hospital undertook a GEMBA walk where they discovered a plumbing fault in the labor ward that had not been reported but could have affected service delivery to expectant mothers. The issue was resolved on the spot by the resident plumber, who had been trained in advance as part of a capacity-building effort led by senior management."

This sentiment was echoed by Ms. Florence Mwanza, the hospital administrator at Matero FLH who stated that GEMBA walk, also called Management by Walking (MBWA), enhances real-time problem solving by engaging frontline staff in process

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improvements which leads to faster resolutions of issues. This reduces waste of time and resources by addressing issues at the source rather than through delayed reports, thus leading to improved patient care by directly observing clinical workflows and making immediate adjustments.

At Matero FLH, this management technique has led a shift from assumption-based decisions to data-driven insights. Moreover, it has led to faster corrective actions due to direct observation and immediate feedback, and contributed to the establishment of a culture that emphasizes accountability and continuous improvement.



Dr. Richard Mwila, Medical Superintendent during the strategic management training in 2024

Regular Senior Management Meetings: Another management technique enhanced through the Cassiopeia project at the two health facilities is the holding of frequent, documented Senior Management Meetings. Ms. Mwanza explained that holding regular senior leadership meetings (with structured agendas and documented minutes) ensures strategic alignment through the standardization of communication across departments, thereby reducing misalignment. It also ensures accountability through clear action items and follow-ups and has improved transparency by tracking progress on key initiatives. Lastly, these meetings facilitate evidence-based decisions by reviewing performance

metrics and GEMBA findings.



Senior managers at Matero First Level Hospital conducting a senior leadership / management meeting

Ms. Ndimbwa shared the same sentiments stating that holding regular senior management meetings serves as a platform for key departmental heads to share insights, discuss challenges, and set strategic directions. She added that this process promotes a multidisciplinary approach to decision-making.

This has had a positive impact on the decision-making process in the health facilities by enhancing the strategic prioritization of hospital goals (e.g., reducing waiting times, improving staff satisfaction); cross-departmental collaboration through shared insights from GEMBA walks as well as the historical reference from meeting minutes helps track decisions and avoid repeated discussions.

Recording and maintaining of meeting minutes (senior management, departmental and committee meetings) leads to the institutionalizing of knowledge and accountability. This has led to the creation of an audit trail that shows decisions, rationales, and responsible parties. It has improved follow-up by documenting action items and deadlines and enhanced compliance with regulatory and accreditation requirements.

Balanced Score Card (BSC): Another management tool adopted and being utilized in the FLHs is the use of the balanced score card (BSC). Chipa-

ta FLH Planner, Ms. Kanekwa Nkoma stated that the implementation of the BSC had significantly strengthened the hospital's management systems. "As a management team, we have seen notable improvements in how we conduct our business. Management and data review meetings have become more structured and consistent, guided by well-established meeting schedules. The hospital now operates with greater clarity on performance expectations and alignment across departments".

Ms. Nkoma further stated that one of the most impactful outcomes has been the development and monthly review of departmental Balanced Scorecards. Each department has tailored its BSC to reflect its priorities and strategic objectives. These reviews have become a platform for tracking performance, identifying gaps, generating action points, and implementing practical solutions.

This structured approach has fostered a culture of performance management and continuous improvement. Moreover, the hospital has recorded tangible improvements in key operational areas. For instance, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) activities have been significantly enhanced, with BSC indicators helping us monitor IPC adherence more effectively.

Summary: The parting conclusion was that the integration of GEMBA walks, BSC and structured senior management meetings (with proper documentation) has transformed decision-making in the hospitals by shifting from reactive to proactive problem-solving; strengthening the leadership visibility and staff engagement; ensuring decisions are based on real-time data and historical insights. And lastly, it fosters a culture of continuous improvement, accountability and patient-centered care, ultimately leading to better operational and clinical outcomes.

JICA CASSIOPEIA PROJECT WELCOMES NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR

Ms. Yu Hagiwara Saito has joined the JICA Cassiopeia Project as the Project Coordinator after the departure of Mr. Kei Ogata who was Project Coordinator for 2 years.

Ms. Saito first joined the project as a short-term expert in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for three months in 2024. Her mandate with the project was to work with and support the IPC teams in the five First Level Hospitals (Chawama, Chilenje, Chipata, Kanyama and Matero) to formulate

standards operating procedures (SOPs) in infection prevention and control.

She is a nurse specializing in IPC and has clinical experience at the National Center for Global Health and Medicine (NCGM) in Japan, which was visited by the Zambian team during their training program in Japan under the Knowledge Co-Creation Program. She later served as an official at the Nursing Division of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan.

As Project Coordinator in the final year, she is expected to play a key role in fa-

cilitating close coordination with project stakeholders.

In addition, as an IPC expert, she is expected to contribute to the standardization of hospital-level initiatives at the Lusaka district and provincial levels, thereby supporting future scaling-up to other hospitals in the catchment.

Mr. Ogata in his farewell address wished the project and all counterparts well in the remaining year of the project. He also thanked all facilities and individuals who he had encountered in his work and stay in Zambia.



*Left: Past Knowledge Co-Creation Programme (KCCP) participants bidding farewell to Mr. Kei Ogata
Right: Ms. Yu Hagiwara, the new JICA Cassiopeia Project Project Coordinator*

OVER ONE THOUSAND HOSPITALS STAFF TRAINED IN INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN FIVE FIRST LEVEL HOSPITALS IN LUSAKA PROVINCE

The five First Level Hospitals (Chawama, Chilenje, Chipata, Kanyama and Matero) held trainings of various cadres in infection prevention and control from March to May 2025. Those trained ranged from general works, nurses, pharmacists, administrative staff and doctors.

The training that begun at Chawama FLH in March was prompted by recent Infection Prevention Control (IPC) committee meetings in the hospitals which revealed poor compliance with IPC standards, partly due to limited knowledge and understanding of IPC, surgical site infections (SSI) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) among health-care workers including support staff. To address the gap, the IPC teams and hospitals' management initiated this comprehensive IPC training to improve staff knowl-

edge, attitude and IPC practices.

The training was also aimed at educating the staff on how poor IPC practices lead to AMR as well as having an impact on the surgical results in surgery patients.

Ms. Michiko Njanga, JICA Cassiopeia Project expert on Hospital Management and IPC expressed her gratitude towards all the facilitators and participants for their hard work and positive outlook. She further stated that the willingness by the health facilities to conduct such training shows their commitment to improving IPC practices in the hospitals as well as ensuring good outcomes for the patients. Ms. Nyanga has urged hospital management to continue with bi-annual training to refresh staff on IPC protocols but also training new hires.

This was echoed by the Ms. Cathel Chiboola who is the

Chief Environmental Health Officer at Lusaka Provincial Health Office who expressed gratitude to the JICA Cassiopeia Project stating that “through the support of JICA we broke the record by training over 1000 health workers from 5 first level hospitals within 2 months. Two hundred health care workers were trained from Chawama, Chilenje, Chipata and Matero and two hundred and fifty from Kanyama”.

She continued on to explain that “this simply means that we have an informed work force on IPC protocols in the 5 first level hospitals, and that we expect that the trained staff will implement IPC measures on the ground hence reducing the transmission of nosocomial infections from patients to staff and vice versa. We also expect a reduction in SSI as the two are *inextricably linked*”.



Left: Training participants during group work at Kanyama FLH

Right: Sister Moono Shimoko (IPC Nurse at Chipata FLH) demonstrating hand washing techniques

CASSIOPEIA PROJECT ENTERS FINAL YEAR: STRENGTHENING OWNERSHIP AND TRANSITIONING SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The JICA Cassiopeia Project entered its final year in May 2025. In response, JICA headquarters has outlined a new policy direction emphasizing the further enhancement of Zambian ownership. While a certain level of ownership has already taken root on the ground, this final year focuses on deepening that commitment and embedding it institutionally.

The main objective for this final year is to ensure the sustainability of the achievements to date. To that end, the project plans to focus on the standardization and scaling-up of systems developed in hospital management, infection prevention and control (IPC), stock management of essential medicines and supplies, and

medical equipment management, with adjustments tailored to the local context. At the same time, it is expected that further optimization, the introduction of new systems, and improvements will be driven by the Zambian side.

In line with this policy and action plan, the expert dispatch structure has also been revised. The long-term expert team that has formed the core of the project will be reduced to two members in 2025: the Chief Advisor and the Project Coordinator, who also serves as the IPC expert.

Meanwhile, technical assistance will shift to a more flexible format through the deployment of short-term experts based on requests and needs identi-

fied by the Zambian side.

To guide discussions on the final year's direction and implementation, the annual Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) meeting is scheduled to be held on June 19th, 2025. In preparation, a pre-JCC meeting was held on June 3rd, 2025 with 80 project stakeholders in attendance.

During the JCC meeting, participants will discuss the final years' targets and activity plans, proposed revisions to the project plan (PDM-PO), and strategies for sustaining the results of the project. Each institution is currently refining its plans internally ahead of the JCC meeting.



Chipata FLH discussing sustainability of project outputs at the Pre-JCC meeting



Dr. Maxine Kayawe - Public Health Specialist at LPHO - making opening remarks at the Pre-JCC meeting held at InterContinental Hotel in Lusaka on June 3rd, 2025

Japan International Cooperation Agency

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Handwashing demonstration at the IPC training venue of Chipata Hospital during the IPC training



Mr. Chatban Mpepesa a pharmacist at Kanyama FLH facilitating the AMR section during the IPC training



IPC facilitators at Kanyama FLH on the last day of training



IPC facilitators at Chipata FLH being applauded on the last day of training



Mr. Ackson Munyama- Zonal IPC EHT for Kanyama facilitating the portion on making chlorine solutions during the IPC training at Kanyama FLH



Group photo of IPC training participants at the IPC training venue of Chipata Hospital



JICA Cassiopeia Project bids farewell to Mr. Joseph Chizongo (middle) who was a project officer. Pictured with Mr. Kazuhiro Ajiki (left) - medical equipment expert and Mr. Friday Matafwali (right) - Medical Equipment Officer at LDHO

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