



Dukutober™

Cancer Wellness Magazine

Issue 2

March 2026

FREE COPY

INSIDE:

Knitted Knockers:

Comfort After Breast Cancer Surgery

Tisamala:

A place called care

Colorectal Cancer:

Richard's Journey

Charity Phiri:

**A life
rewritten
by cancer**



**ZAMBIAN
CANCER
SOCIETY**

Zambian Cancer Society publication

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Duktober
Cancer Wellness Magazine - Issue 2
possible

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Because of You, the Cancer Story is Changing



Udie Soko

Founder, Executive Director
Zambian Cancer Society (ZCS)
and 2x cancer survivor

After the first issue of Dukutober Cancer Wellness Magazine was released, messages began to come in.

One reader wrote, **“This magazine helps demystify cancer and remove the fear of going for routine testing.”**

Another shared, **“I woke up at 4 am just to read it cover to cover. Very insightful. I am inspired.”**

We also heard where we could do better. One reader said that accessing the Cancer Smart Youth Podcast through the QR code was difficult. That feedback reminded us that access should never be a barrier to information.

This prompted us to look closely at how the magazine reaches people. In this second issue, circulation has doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 copies, and expanded from 32 to 36 pages. We have also worked with additional partners to help distribute the magazine.

We continue to unite voices from various parts of Africa, sharing experiences shaped by diverse environments, yet often marked by similar fears, questions, and hopes.

Once again, we see that health decisions are rarely made in isolation. What one person learns is often shared with a sister, a friend, or a neighbour, and through that sharing, action happens.

Because of YOU, these stories move beyond these pages into real life.

And, as the African proverb reminds us, small efforts can be powerful when they come together:

“When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.”

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Breaking the Silence on Cancer



**ZAMBIAN
CANCER
SOCIETY**

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES 2026

Theme:

YOUR LIFESTYLE MATTERS



Mwilu & Idah
Cancer Smart Youth Leaders

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SCAN TO DONATE



A Day Of Cancer Awareness: Stories of Survival

In collaboration with Stein + Adding Pharmacy

Date: Sat. 28th March

Venue: Agora Village

Time: 10:00 – 14:00 hrsThe Cancer Smart Youth Podcast – Season 2

Date: Sun. 31st May - 29th November

Venue: YouTube @zambiancancersociety

Time: 24/7

4th Relay For Life Cancer Hike

In collaboration with Mwaba Mwila Adventures

Date: Sat. 6th June

Venue: Nkwashi Hill

Time: 07:00 – 15:00 hours

15th Kids Fun Day

Date: Thu. 25th June

Venue: Cancer Diseases Hospital

Time: 14:00 – 17:00hours

7th Duku Challenge

Date: Thu. 1st – Sat. 31st October

Venue: Global. Social Media

Time: 24/7

6th Cancer Awareness and Fitness Event

Lusaka

Date: Sat. 3rd October

Venue: East Park Mall at the Piazza

Time: 06:30 – 10:00hours

Community Health Outreach

in collaboration with Mimosa Resources

Date: Fri. 30th – Sat. & 31st October

Venue: Mkushi, Central Province

Time: 08:00hours – 16:00hours





From Socks to **KNOCKERS** **Preserving Dignity After Breast Cancer**

Maliana Chanda

My name is Maliana Chanda, and I live in Ndola.

In 2020, at Ndola Teaching Hospital, I heard the words that would change my life and body forever: “You have breast cancer.” My daughter was with me when the news was broken. Soon after, we were taken into a counselling room.

“I was scared. I knew very little about the disease and did not know what it would mean for my future.” For the next month, I struggled to accept the news. I couldn't understand it. Eventually, with my family's encouragement and love, I began to accept what I had been told.

As part of my treatment, I had an operation to remove my right breast. Facing myself in the mirror was not easy. Before I looked at myself, my husband sat me down and reassured me. He said, **“You are the same woman I fell in love with many years ago. You were not born with breasts; you can live without them.”** After hearing his words, I felt more at peace, and later, when I looked at myself, I did not feel as broken.

My journey was not easy. Every two weeks, I travelled hundreds of kilometres from Ndola to the Cancer Diseases Hospital in Lusaka for my cancer treatment. The long distance was exhausting.

The financial burden was just as heavy. Sometimes the hospital did not have all the medicines. Since I was not in formal employment, my husband took on extra work to support my treatment, and there were times we even had to borrow money.

For years, I continued to manage the changes in my body the best way I knew how. **“I used old socks filled with cotton wool to help balance my chest under my clothes.”** It was not comfortable, but it was all I had.

Then, in 2025, something changed.

I received a pair of Knitted Knockers from the Zambian Cancer Society. I immediately

removed the sock I had been using and wore the Knitted Knocker straight away. For the first time since my operation, my chest looked more natural.

When I was told the Knockers were free, I could not believe it. I kept saying, “**For free. For free!**” I was so happy that I recorded a short video at the Zambian Cancer Society office to share my joy and encourage other women to come for a pair. My chest looked more even, and I can now wear different tops again without worrying about how my clothes fit or how I look.

That moment helped me move forward and gave me the courage to talk to other women. Today, my message is simple. Cancer does not always mean death. My breast cancer was found early, at stage 2. I encourage women to know their bodies, notice any changes, and go to the clinic early.

More About Knitted Knockers

Knitted Knockers are hand-knitted breast forms made from soft, special cotton. They are lightweight, gentle on the skin, and intended for women who have had breast surgery. Knitted Knockers are supplied free of charge through a generous partnership with **Knitted Knockers USA** and made available in Zambia with the kind support from **ZOCA Dance Zambia**.

In the future, the aim is for these Knockers to be made locally, building knitting and small-scale production skills.

Since May last year, over 101 pairs of Knitted Knockers have been shared nationwide. Recipients range in age from their 20s to their 80s. The programme has expanded mainly through word of mouth, social media, and Dukutober events, as people pass the information to others.

If you're a female breast cancer survivor looking for a pair of **FREE** Knitted Knockers, contact the Zambian Cancer Society for further information.



“I used old socks filled with cotton wool to help balance my chest under my clothes”.



Dukutober™

What breast cancer can look + feel like:



KNOWYOUR LEMONS®

Breast health education for early detection.
App. Classes. Campaign.



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**ZAMBIAN
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Hope Comes to the Copperbelt:

By Mulape Kanduza - Medical Physicist, Cancer Diseases Hospital



*Ndola's Landmark
Cancer Hospital
Set to Open Soon.*

Image source: Cancer Diseases Hospital

For years, cancer patients from the Copperbelt and northern provinces have travelled hundreds of kilometres to Lusaka for treatment, often at great cost to their health, finances and families. The strain of these journeys has been as heavy as the disease itself.

Now, the skyline of Ndola is changing and with it, the story of cancer care in Zambia. Rising on the former Zambia Forestry and Forest Industries Corporation (ZAFFICO) site is the Ndola Cancer Treatment Centre, now 85 percent complete and set to open its doors in 2026.

For patients and families across the Copperbelt and beyond, this facility promises easier access and timely treatment. Most of all it offers hope.

Currently, the Cancer Diseases Hospital (CDH) in Lusaka is Zambia's only national referral centre for cancer care.

Every year, thousands of patients travel long distances, often at great cost, to access specialised treatment there.

The new centre in Ndola will change that. It brings world-class cancer services closer to Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt and North-Western provinces. It will ease the burden on patients and their families while helping to decongest CDH.

Once completed, the centre will provide a range of cancer services. These will include chemotherapy (medicine that helps to kill cancer cells), radiotherapy (treatment using strong rays to destroy cancer), surgery (operations to remove cancer), and palliative care (care aimed at managing pain and improving quality of life).

The Ministry of Health is already hiring and training a special team to work at the centre. This includes cancer doctors, nurses, and other

trained health workers.

Some of the training will take place in Zambia, and some will happen in other countries. This is being supported through partnerships with global organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Centre.

Safety and quality are at the core of the project. Before the first patient is treated, all equipment will undergo rigorous commissioning and quality assurance checks to ensure treatments meet the highest levels of accuracy and reliability.

For Zambia, the Ndola Cancer Treatment Centre marks a significant step forward. It brings to life a vision where cancer patients no longer fight two battles, one against the disease itself and another against the burdens of distance, cost and time.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Mwaba Mwila Hiking with purpose

Mwaba Mutanekelwa Mwila believes the outdoors can change us.

He is the founder of Mwaba Mwila Adventures, an award-winning Zambian tour company that promotes local tourism through hiking and camping. For more than 13 years, Mwaba has guided people through mountains and trails across Zambia. Through this work, he has seen how nature helps people feel stronger, clearer, and more connected.

“I’ve always been convinced that nature has the power to transform us physically and mentally,” he says.

That conviction led him to start Mwaba Mwila Adventures, not only to showcase Zambia’s natural beauty but also to create experiences that support local communities in growing and thriving. When he is not scouting new routes and hidden gems, Mwaba spends time with his wife and their two children.

As a Dukutober Ambassador, Mwaba values sharing causes he cares about with his own network.

“Seeing friends, family, and colleagues

come together around one cause has been powerful,” he says. **“It shows what is possible when we work together.”**

That belief in connection is also reflected in Mwaba’s involvement in Relay For Life. The Zambian Cancer Society brought Relay For Life (Relay) to Zambia in 2011, and in recent years, with support from Mwaba Mwila Adventures, the programme has been held as a hike.

Relay For Life is a global cancer movement led by the American Cancer Society and takes place in over 30 countries.

At Relay, survivors are celebrated, loved ones lost to cancer are remembered, and communities commit to fighting back against a disease that has already taken too much.

For Mwaba, the 2025 hike was filled with powerful experiences. One in particular stood out.

“One moment from our last hike will stay with me forever. When a cancer survivor was struggling to make it up the hill, other hikers came together to support him - physically and emotionally. Seeing strangers become a supportive community

Relay For Life Hike - 2025. Relayers “Conquering” Nkwashi Hill



in that moment was truly overwhelming, and it's exactly what the Relay for Life Hikes are all about: love, care, and the human spirit.”

The impact of the 2025 hike extended beyond the trail. More than K35,000 was raised and contributed to the Zambian Cancer Society's annual Kids Fun Day for children receiving care at the Cancer Diseases Hospital. The day helps young patients laugh, play, and simply enjoy being a child.

For Mwaba, volunteering is never one-sided:

“When we volunteer with an open heart, the experiences we have end up enriching us in ways we never expected - it's a beautiful two-way exchange.”

Kids Fun Day 2025



The next Relay For Life Hike takes place on Saturday, 3 June 2026, from 0700 hrs to 1500 hrs, at Nkwashi Hill. Event updates will be shared at mwabamwilaadventures.com, and partnership opportunities will be available through the Zambian Cancer Society at zcs.co.zm

EDUCATE A WOMAN, EDUCATE A NATION

How African Communities Are Tackling Cervical Health

By Benda Kithaka - Convener Secretariat Lead- African Cervical Health Alliance

Every day in Africa, doctors deliver devastating news to women diagnosed with late-stage cervical cancer. For the woman, it means fear for her children's future; for the doctor, it is another battle with limited tools. And yet, this story can be changed through the WHO's 90-70-90 strategy: vaccinating 90% of girls by age 15, screening 70% of women by 35 and 45, and ensuring 90% of women with advanced disease receive care.

While governments set policies, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) under the African Cervical Health Alliance (ACHA) in 16 countries across Africa are stepping up as powerful drivers, mobilising communities, fighting stigma, and ensuring no woman is left behind.

Our action is localised yet guided by global best practice. In Kenya, Zambia, and Malawi, we are engaging faith leaders, fathers, and elders as champions for awareness; in Cameroon, we are targeting schools to integrate HPV education. In other countries such as Nigeria, survivor networks work to empower women to share their stories, while in Côte d'Ivoire, governments adapt CSO-developed community materials. Youth groups create music and skits to bust myths, while men are brought into conversations as partners and advocates. We are demonstrating that cervical cancer is not a “woman's problem” but a whole community issue.

Eliminating cervical cancer requires governments, private sector and development partners to join hands with civil society. The tools exist; what remains is the commitment and willingness to engage. Through our combined efforts, we build trust, advocate for policy change and support implementation while still holding governments accountable.

Together, CSOs in Africa are leading communities in action for elimination because every woman deserves a future free from cervical cancer.

The African Cervical Health Alliance (ACHA) is a network of grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), working together across 16 countries in Africa, in diverse geopolitical settings, to put community action centre-stage in the elimination of cervical cancer. Learn more about our work here www.acha.africa

ACHA Advocacy ECHO Program



Strengthening Advocacy for Cervical Cancer Elimination Across Africa



Africa Cervical Health Alliance (ACHA) is launching ACHA Advocacy ECHO Program, an 8-month Pan-African virtual training series designed to equip grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Anglophone and Francophone Africa with the skills, tools, and networks to meaningfully contribute to national and regional cervical cancer elimination efforts.

What you'll gain:

- | Practical skills in advocacy, community engagement, communication and resource mobilization, among others.
- | Expert-led sessions & mentorship
- | Peer-to-peer learning across Africa
- | Certificate of Attendance (per session) + Certificate of Completion (for all 8 sessions)

Program Timeline:
August 2025 - April 2026

Register Download program flier

Multilingual Translation (EN | FR)

achaecho@kilelehealth.org +254 114 976 737

www.acha.africa @ACHAAlliance [acha_alliance](https://www.instagram.com/acha_alliance)





Cancer not only disrupts lives but also sometimes completely alters a person's path.

For Charity Phiri, that moment came in February 2019. She was 64, working as a nurse, and enjoying life when she suddenly started bleeding. Since she was already post-menopausal, she knew something was wrong.

Charity came from a family of medical professionals. She had spent many years caring for others, but nothing prepared her for becoming a patient herself.

After several tests, Charity was diagnosed with stage 2B cervical cancer, meaning the cancer had spread beyond the cervix to nearby tissue.

"I was in shock. Even as a nurse, I was scared. I knew what cancer could do."

Treatment did not start immediately. Charity faced a six-month delay because of limited treatment options and a lengthy

waiting list at the Cancer Diseases Hospital. Concerned about the effects of this delay, she managed with her family's support to travel to Nairobi Hospital in Kenya to begin treatment, with her sister as her main caregiver.

By July 2019, Charity had finished her treatment and returned to Zambia. The constant fatigue led her to decide not to renew her work contract and to focus on her recovery. During this period, Charity's faith helped her remain strong. "God is first in everything I do," she says.

When Fear Began to Fade

As Charity slowly recovered, she began to reflect on what she had endured. Being a widow, she was used to showing strength and hiding her feelings. "I sometimes felt guilty that I was able to travel abroad for treatment. I would remember some of the other women who weren't so fortunate and later passed away from the disease."

Her daughter, Faith, believed Charity's experience could help other people. Faith, a Dukutober Ambassador and volunteer,

encouraged her mother to get involved in cancer awareness and patient support through the **Zambian Cancer Society**.

Charity felt uncertain. Sharing her story seemed awkward. Getting involved meant openly discussing her diagnosis, fears, and life after cancer. But she chose not to let fear dictate her future. She promised her daughter she would consider joining the Society when she felt strong enough.

That decision marked the shift from surviving cancer to serving others affected by it.

In 2023, Charity became a volunteer counsellor with the Society. “I felt welcomed and encouraged, and I thought to myself that I too could use my experience to help others.”

Through her work, she started to share her story.

Her confidence increased. While her medical training supports her efforts, it is not the primary focus of her role. Charity collaborates with other counsellors to help patients throughout their cancer journey. This work is made possible by you, who assist in covering the practical costs of patient care.

Being Present When It Matters Most

Charity's service is grounded in her personal experience. She spends time with patients, listening carefully and explaining medical terms in plain language.

Her work is reflected clearly in the experience of one patient.

Charity supported a woman who read the first issue of the **Duktober Cancer Wellness Magazine**. After reading it, the woman went

for cervical cancer screening. Doctors identified pre-cancerous changes, and she was treated successfully at **Matero Level 1 Hospital**.

After treatment, the woman became concerned about ongoing discharge, fearing something might be wrong. Charity held her hand and explained that healing takes time and that recovery is different for each individual. Eventually, the discharge stopped. She was grateful not only for the medical care but also for the reassurance she received.

Walking with Communities

Charity's work takes place in Lusaka and other parts of Zambia. She has been involved in cervical cancer awareness activities in **Kapiri Mposhi, Monze, and Chongwe**.

These conversations encourage women to ask questions, speak openly, and challenge

myths that often delay seeking life-saving medical treatment early.

In 2026, Charity is recognised as a Global Hero of Hope by the American Cancer Society. The award honours cancer survivors and caregivers whose courage and service inspire hope worldwide.

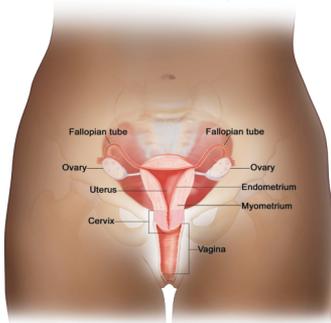
A Life Rewritten

Cancer changed Charity Phiri's life. But it did not end it; instead, it rewrote her story, turning survival into service. Her journey reminds us that life after cancer doesn't have to be wrapped in fear or fenced in isolation. Sometimes, it becomes a life dedicated to helping others feel less alone.

Survival gave Charity her life back. Service gave it new meaning.

As a nurse, Charity understood illness well. But nothing prepared her for becoming the patient.

What you should know about cervical Cancer



Cervical cancer is the most common cancer found in Zambian women. It is also the most common cause of death among all cancers in Zambia. This is unfortunate because cervical cancer is highly preventable and treatable if found early. In order to prevent yourself from getting cervical cancer, you must go for cervical cancer screening at your nearest health facility. If your health care provider finds something unhealthy on the cervix, most of the times they can get rid of it immediately.

What a normal and abnormal cervix looks like

Normal cervix



Abnormal cervix



It is important to stay healthy; please get screened to prevent cervical cancer

It only takes a few minutes and it's free in government health facilities.



Faith in the Storms of Life

By Dr. Mutale Dee Chilangwa Chisela (DBA)
Leadership Coach

What helps us stay strong during hard times?

Life has a way of surprising us, not always with joy, but often with storms we never saw coming. Illness, loss, or the sudden end of a livelihood can shake even the strongest among us. Yet, as long as we breathe, storms are inevitable.

In John 16, Jesus warned his disciples that hard times would come, but he also urged them to take courage. Those words remain alive today, offering strength when life feels uncertain.

When storms hit, the first step is to acknowledge them. You cannot wish them away, but you can decide how to face them.

Begin by slowing down. Take early morning walks and let nature speak. The birds singing, the wind brushing your face, the steady rhythm of your breath. Pause in gratitude for these small but meaningful gifts.

Prayer is a lifeline. Talk to God about your fears and hopes, and listen for that still, small voice that brings comfort. Let go of what you cannot control and place it in God's hands.

Practical choices matter too. Nourish your body with healthy food, uplift your spirit

with music, and surround yourself with friends who bring encouragement. Keep a gratitude journal.

Write down what you are thankful for and what you like about yourself. In these reflections, you may discover strength you did not know you had.

Mother Teresa once said, Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin. Each new morning is a new chance to start again. When you wake up, whisper to yourself, I have only today. Let me begin.

Storms will come, but with faith, gratitude, and courage, peace can still be found even in the midst of cancer's challenges.

Whether through prayer, meditation, or quiet reflection, find what brings you peace. Begin today. Take a deep breath, write down one thing you are thankful for, and remind yourself you are stronger than the storm.

Begin today. Choose one small action that brings you peace and helps you feel stronger.

If you need someone to talk to, reach out to the [Zambian Cancer Society](#).



Dukutober Ambassadors

United by Purpose,



Kajal Patel

Astro Holdings Limited

“A smile is the most beautiful headwrap. It carries our strength, holds our struggles, and shines a light on hope.”



Dirk Vlahakis

DVs Fitness Evolution

“I wanted to give back, and found my purpose with ZCS, using fitness to support people affected by cancer.”



Felicity Mwila

Africa Health & Economic Transformation Initiative (AHETI)

“As a Survivor, I encourage a positive attitude to impact healing”



Tesha Shinondo Makulu

Professional Insurance Corporation Zambia

“I was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2024. After full treatment, I received a clear report the following year. That's why I'm passionate about talking to others.”

ambassadors 2026

Unique in Voice



Charlotte Chanda Mudolo
Sho'dol Group of Companies
"Hope is the heartbeat of healing, together let's beat cancer"



Chola Noble Bweupe
Noble Finance & Consultancy
"As a breast cancer survivor, I feel great championing Male Breast Cancer Awareness"



Mwaba Mwila
Mwaba Mwila Adventures
"What means a lot to me is sharing a cause I care about with my network and seeing their support."



Bwalya M. Soko
Spring Branding Services
"I believe awareness is power and I use my platforms to champion cancer education and early detection."

#Workplace Wellness Zambia

Why it matters

As non-communicable diseases continue to rise in Zambia, workplaces are becoming an increasingly important setting for protecting and promoting good health.

Wellness can be understood as functioning optimally within an individual's current environment.

Workplace wellness focuses on how the working environment supports people's health, not just productivity. In Zambia, many adults spend a lot of their waking hours at work, making the workplace a vital space for wellness.

It is not a one-size-fits-all programme. What works in an office may not be effective in a mine, factory, school, or construction site. Effective workplace wellness puts people at the centre and recognises that different work environments require different approaches.

Encouragingly, some organisations in Zambia have already taken positive steps.

Weekly aerobics and walking programmes, alongside basic nutrition information, are being introduced in some workplaces. While these initiatives may seem modest, they help employees start to change daily habits and think differently about health in their everyday lives. **Effective workplace wellness initiatives integrate education, leadership commitment and a health-promoting work environment.**

For these initiatives to succeed, they must

begin at a level where people are ready, with goals that are simple, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.

Starting small allows organisations to identify what works, improve gradually, and avoid viewing wellness as a short-term project. High-level workplace wellness is an ongoing journey that evolves alongside both the organisation and its staff.

Over time, investing in workplace wellness can lead to healthier employees, stronger teams, and more sustainable business performance. By encouraging healthier daily routines, workplaces can also help lower cancer risk.

As one business leader once observed, **“If you are in business, you are in the business of health.”** This perspective reminds us that wellness is not an add-on; it is part of responsible leadership.

Organisations seeking to strengthen workplace wellness are encouraged to contact: zambiancancersociety@gmail.com



“WELLNESS IS A PROCESS, NEVER A FIXED STATE.”

Childhood Cancer Stories

The Doctor

By Nkole Nkole

As a teenager, Segá Diallo faced a tough battle with fibromyxoidsarcoma, a rare cancer that turned his world upside down. Before he could even begin treatment, his medical results went missing, delaying his care by at least a year. The delay forced Segá to put his final year of high school on hold, as he found himself grappling with the painful treatment process- one he doubted he would even complete because of its severity.

In 2019, at the age of 22, Segá was declared cancer-free. Today, he stands on the other side of his ordeal as a newly qualified medical doctor, graduating in 2024. His faith, which has been central to his life and recovery, continues to guide him as he embarks on his medical career.

Now, Segá is dedicated to sharing his story of survival to inspire and encourage others facing similar battles. As a doctor, he combines his medical expertise with his personal experience, offering hope to those still fighting cancer.



Dr Segá Diallo

“My cancer advocacy journey has shown me that purpose can be born from pain.”

This story was first published in 2024 under the Brave Hearts Photography Project by the
Zambian Cancer Society.



SCAN
&
READ

Bridging Voices Through Partnership: Reflections from Zambia

By Nadia Rahman , Clementine Geffroy, Margarita Rozenshteyn and Neha Londono.

In January 2026, we had the privilege of spending time in Zambia through Pfizer's Global Health Fellows (GHF) programme, working alongside the Zambia Cancer Society and dedicated local partners. This experience reinforced for us that strengthening cancer care goes beyond systems and infrastructure. It is grounded in people, relationships, and shared understanding.

Across our engagements with hospital teams, rural communities, patient advocates, and faith-based leaders, one message came through clearly: personal connection matters.

One-to-one communication remains a powerful way to share information about cancer, especially when paired with storytelling and lived experience.

Patients, survivors, and caregivers shared that personal stories foster understanding, empathy, and hope in ways that formal materials alone often cannot.

Across our conversations, particularly with community-focused groups, several themes emerged. These included genuine hesitations, sensitivities around cancer stigma, and provider preferences that shape how people seek care.

We also heard repeatedly that peer testimony can be a trusted and powerful tool for learning. We heard a strong and consistent desire for accessible “Cancer 101” information. This includes clear explanations of what cancer is, what treatment may involve, how to support health and wellness, and what life after cancer can look like.

Dukutober Cancer Wellness Magazine plays a critical role in addressing this need by offering trusted, relatable content that individuals and families can revisit, reflect on, and share within their communities.

The Global Health Fellows programme is Pfizer's signature skills-based volunteering initiative. It enables colleagues to share professional expertise with global health organisations while supporting health-system strengthening. Our time in Zambia was defined by listening, learning, and deep mutual respect. Seeing both urban and rural contexts underscored the importance of



meeting people where they are, something ZCS and many other health organisations continue to do thoughtfully as they work to bridge information gaps across regions.

We are deeply grateful for the openness, generosity, and partnership we experienced. We are inspired by how the Zambia Cancer Society continues to amplify stories that drive awareness, confidence, and connection, one meaningful conversation at a time.

How You Can Communicate More Effectively About Your Health



By Olly Moonga

Award Winning Speaker | Corporate Communication Trainer | Communication Expert | Published Author | Certified Trainer

Many people leave a healthcare visit wishing they had asked one more question.

Good healthcare is not only about medical skills. It also relies on clear communication between you and your healthcare provider. When communication is poor, you might leave an appointment feeling confused. This does not necessarily mean the care was inadequate. Sometimes, information is not shared clearly.

You can improve your healthcare experience by preparing beforehand. Writing down your symptoms, concerns, medicines, and questions helps ensure that important topics are covered. This is especially beneficial when time is limited. Preparation results in clearer and more effective conversations.

Before Your Healthcare Visit

- Write down your symptoms and questions
- List all medicines you are taking or carry them with you.

During Your Healthcare Visit

- Ask for simple explanations
- Take notes during the visit
- Speak up if something is unclear

Good Care Starts With Good Communication.

Being clear and honest is important. Your healthcare provider relies on correct information to give the right care.

- Try to explain your symptoms clearly.
- Avoid exaggerating or hiding how you feel.
- Be open about daily habits that may affect your health.

You should feel comfortable speaking up.

Asking questions, and talking about treatment options help you take part in decisions about your care. Healthcare works best as a partnership, not a one-way conversation.

Listening carefully also matters. Pay attention and make sure that you understand what has been said. This helps prevent confusion and makes it easier to follow medical advice.

Share your feelings and any challenges you face.

These may include money worries, transport problems, or a lack of support at home. Stress and worry can affect your health and treatment. **Sharing these concerns helps your healthcare provider to give better support.**

“Good care starts with good communication.”

For those who may not know, what is the role of the

Office of the Public Protector?



Mrs Caroline C.Z. Sokoni - Public Protector Zambia

The **Office of the Public Protector of Zambia (OPPZ)**, is an oversight institution that helps make sure people receive quality, timely, and fair services from government institutions. Both the government and the public benefit when services are delivered fairly and properly.

Q:

What kinds of concerns can people bring to your office, especially in healthcare?

We investigate complaints from patients and families about healthcare services. This includes delays in diagnosis, inadequate treatment plans, lack of access to specialised care or concerns about the evacuation process for treatment abroad. Based on our findings, we make determinations to hold institutions accountable and push for fairer service.



When someone affected by cancer, whether a patient or caregiver, wants to reach out, how can they do so?

We have made our services widely accessible. Other than our Lusaka office, we are present in Ndola, Choma, Mansa, Chipata, Solwezi and Mongu, so people do not have to travel far for help. We are also reachable through calls or WhatsApp on 0955 399 655, via our website (www.oppz.gov.zm) and on social media platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn, X and TikTok under Office of the Public Protector Zambia.



What key message would you like cancer patients and caregivers to know about your office?

We want them to know that OPPZ is a public institution, free to access and there are no charges for our services. We are their voice for justice. If they face delays, unfair treatment or negligence in health or social services, we will listen, investigate and ensure their rights are protected.



How do you hope your work makes a difference for people seeking healthcare?

Our role is to safeguard the rights and well-being of patients while driving systemic improvements. In addressing complaints we aim to remove barriers that stand between people and the care they need. Ultimately, no one should have to fight for both their health and their rights. Healing should come with dignity and support.

OPPZ at a glance

- Free public service, no charges
- Offices in Lusaka, Ndola, Choma, Mansa, Chipata, Solwezi and Mongu
- Call or WhatsApp: 0955 399 655
- Website: www.oppz.gov.zm
- Social media: Facebook, LinkedIn, X, TikTok - Office of the Public Protector Zambia



Patient Navigation

A Lifeline in Rural Cameroon



By **Eveline Tata Mayaah** - Founder, Humanity at Heart International

In the heart of Cameroon, where vast distances and a lack of resources can make a cancer diagnosis feel like a death sentence, Humanity at Heart International is working to rewrite the narrative. Our mission is to ensure every woman has equitable access to breast and cervical cancer information and treatment, and our Community-Based Patient Navigation Program is the core of this effort.

For women in rural communities, the journey to a health Center is often fraught with barriers—fear, financial constraints and a complex healthcare system. We bridge this gap by actively linking women to our partner health facilities. Our dedicated team of patient navigators serves as a trusted guide, providing crucial information, arranging transportation and securing appointments for screenings and treatment.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure no woman is lost to follow-up, a challenge that plagues many healthcare systems. By providing continuous, personalised support, we walk alongside each woman from her first screening to the completion of her treatment, tracking her progress and helping her adhere to her care plan.

Beyond the clinical, we understand that a cancer journey affects the whole person, which is why our wellness counselling offers comprehensive emotional, spiritual and psychosocial support. We create a safe space for women to process their feelings, find strength in their faith and connect with others who understand their struggles.

This holistic approach has proven to be a lifeline. As one of our beneficiaries, Anne-Marie, shared:

“Before I met my patient navigator, I felt completely alone and lost. I thought my diagnosis was a secret I had to keep but she showed me a path to healing. I am not just a patient; I am a fighter with a team behind me.”

REBUILDING THE MIRROR

A Journey of Self-Esteem for Cancer Patients and Survivors

By Dr. Yasmin Sultana-Muchindu, PhD
Director / Psychologist / Mental Health Expert



A cancer diagnosis can shatter more than physical health. It can strike at the very heart of identity, self-worth and confidence. For many, the journey moves past treatment to rediscovering who they are beyond the illness.

Cancer doesn't only scar the body, but it can wound the mind. Hair loss, weight changes, surgical scars, or simply feeling “different” often leave patients disconnected from the person they once knew.

• **“I looked in the mirror and didn't recognise the person staring back,” shared a breast cancer survivor. Losing my hair and breast felt like I had lost my femininity.** Yet self-esteem, though shaken, can be rebuilt. Just as the body recovers, the mind and spirit can heal with time, care and support.

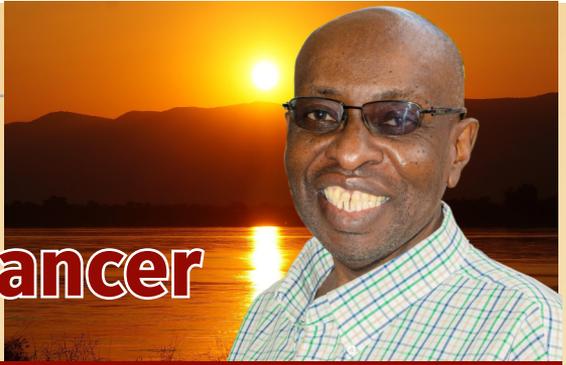
Rebuilding involves:

- Starting a new chapter after cancer, such as returning to work, hobbies like gardening, or volunteering
- Connecting with others for support, by joining a cancer group or a faith or community group
- Taking care of yourself, eating healthy foods, walking regularly, or simple grooming
- Caring for your emotional health, for example talking to a counsellor, nurse, or trusted person
- Sharing your story, through speaking at a community event or encouraging someone newly diagnosed

For more information, contact the **Zambian Cancer Society**
Tel: +260 976 659 914 (WhatsApp)

Happy Healing!

A Chapter Marked by Cancer



Update:

Richard Munalula passed away shortly before this issue went to print. We are grateful for his willingness to share his reflections, which now stand as a lasting reminder of love, hope, and determination.

In 2024, at the age of 63, businessman, rancher, and tourism entrepreneur Richard Munalula was diagnosed with stage 3 cancer affecting the rectum and anal area. The warning signs were blood in his stool, ongoing pain, and rapid weight loss.

“The diagnosis was a shock. My first thoughts were about my children and grandchildren,” he recalls. **“But I knew I had to be strong for everyone around me.”**

That strength was tested quickly. Radiation therapy, an important part of treatment, is currently unavailable in Zambia because the department is undergoing an upgrade. Fortunately, Richard was able to travel to India, with the Zambian government covering the cost.

“My treatment was funded by the Zambian Government, for which I am very grateful.”

In India, the first week was filled with tests and doctor visits that gave him hope. The doctors were reassuring, he remembers. The best news was that chemotherapy would be in tablet form. **“The IV treatment I had in Zambia left me very weak, with side effects that were hard to manage.”**

Being away from home was not easy. There was loneliness and unfamiliar food, which he and other patients often joked about. To stay connected, Richard created a WhatsApp group of 30 Zambian patients. What began as simple updates soon became a source of encouragement and support. As he puts it, quoting Jeffrey R. Holland:

“We may not be able to alter the journey, but we can make sure no one walks it alone.”

Back in Zambia, the journey was not yet over. Chemotherapy and radiation had reduced the cancer, but it was still present. Richard was now speaking with doctors at the Cancer Diseases Hospital about the next steps.

He spoke positively about the future with hope and a gentle sense of humour:

“I still have a lot to live for, like watching my grandchildren grow. And who knows, maybe one day the doctors will allow me a glass of red wine as I watch the sunset over the Zambezi River.”

ABOUT

Colorectal Cancer

Key facts

- Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer worldwide, accounting for approximately 10% of all cancer cases and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths.
- It mainly affects older people, with more than two-thirds of cases occurring in those aged 50 years and above.
- Several lifestyle factors have been linked to colorectal cancer, including diets high in processed meat and low in fruit and vegetables, physical inactivity, obesity, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol.
- Colorectal cancer is often diagnosed at advanced stages, when treatment options are less effective.
- Primary prevention through healthy lifestyles, avoiding risk factors, and early detection through screening can significantly reduce incidence and mortality.

Symptoms

Colorectal cancer often develops without any symptoms, especially at the early stages.

Symptoms may include:

- A persistent change in bowel habits, including diarrhoea, constipation or change in stool consistency
- Blood in the stool or rectal bleeding
- Persistent abdominal discomfort, such as cramps, gas or pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue or weakness

Prevention

Colorectal cancer can be prevented by adopting a healthy lifestyle and through regular screening. Measures include:

- Eating a healthy diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Engaging in regular physical activity
- Avoiding tobacco use
- Limiting harmful use of alcohol

Source: World Health Organisation Colorectal Cancer Fact Sheet

Colorectal Cancer in Zambia - Number of new cases in 2022

MALE: **238**

FEMALE: **217**

Source: – Globocan 2022

The Rise of **TISAMALA** Cancer Wellness Centre in Chongwe



**Community
outreach at
Tisamala**

For many cancer patients who travel to Lusaka for treatment, the hardest days are often not spent in hospital. They are the days in between, waiting for the next appointment, managing side effects, and finding a safe and affordable place to stay far from home. For patients living outside Lusaka, these days can be physically, emotionally, and financially draining.

Tisamala Cancer Wellness Centre is being developed in response to this often-overlooked reality. The initiative is shaped through collaboration with communities and partners, under the **Zambian Cancer Society**. As part of this collective effort, the centre's architectural drawings were developed by **Timestone Architects**, helping translate vision into a practical space.

Located in Chombwa Village in Chongwe, Tisamala is a developing wellness centre designed to support adult cancer patients during these in-between days. One of its key aims is to provide low-cost accommodation. The word Tisamala means “**we care**” .

Listening As We Build

As Tisamala Cancer Wellness Centre continues to take shape, a women's health discussion was held at the site during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October last year. With the support of local Headman Tito Mulenga, women from the surrounding community were invited to take part. The discussion was planned for twelve women, but twenty-three showed up, reflecting strong interest and concern about cancer-related challenges.

During the discussion, women spoke openly about the stress of travelling for treatment, the uncertainty of waiting between hospital visits, and the need for a safe place to rest and feel supported. Eneless Chibangu, whose young son Miracle passed away from cancer, spoke

about the hardship of travelling from Chongwe to Lusaka for his treatment, including the cost, the long journeys, and the emotional toll on her family.

The conversation also centred on information. They talked about the importance of learning more about breast and cervical cancer, not only for their own benefit but also so they could better understand the disease and support others in their families and communities.

Learning Over Time

When a smaller group from the previous discussion met again in January this year, the focus had shifted. The conversation was no longer solely about the need for the Centre, but also about what could follow. They discussed remaining involved as Tisamala develops, not just as beneficiaries but as active community members.

Eugenie reflected on the breast and cervical cancer information she had received earlier and how it encouraged her. She spoke about wanting to pass this knowledge on to other women, while noting that she needed to learn more herself first. For her, empowerment meant gaining a deeper understanding before speaking to others with confidence.

Local leadership continues to play a vital role in this process. Headman Tito Mulenga has upheld his support for the initiative, saying, “As headmen, we are the focal point in communities, and having basic training about cancer would be useful.”

More Than A Place To Stay

While accommodation remains central to the vision, Tisamala is evolving into more than just buildings. It is a place where individuals and the wider community can find support and learn together.

Key foundations are already in place. The land is enclosed, a caretaker's house has been built, and a borehole with a water pump supplies water. At the same time, relationships are already forming. Trust is growing, and women, community leaders and the district health team are stepping forward to be part of what Tisamala is becoming. In this way, the centre is taking shape not only through structures, but also through people.

Thank you, First Quantum Minerals, Lusaka Polo and Hunt Club and the Zambia Polo Association, for your contributions that are helping to turn vision into reality.

How You Can Be Part of Tisamala Cancer Wellness Centre.

Tisamala is being built step by step. If you believe that care should not stop at the hospital gate, we invite you to walk this journey with us.

Contact:

Tel. +260 976 659914. **Email.** zambiancancersociety@gmail.com

Your support in pictures 2025



Pinktober Health & Wellness event at the American International School of Lusaka



Cancer Diseases Hospital receiving medical supplies from Lusaka Gymkhana Club & ZCS



Nederburg Pink Polo organised by the Lusaka Polo & Hunt Club



African Women's Awareness Association (AWCAA) official launch - Nigeria



5th Annual Cancer Awareness & Fitness Event



The Cancer Smart Youth receiving a Z'kidpreneur Academy Award presented by Mr. Jito Kayumba, Special Assistant & Advisor for Finance & Investment to the President of the Republic of Zambia



The American Cancer Society Global Relay For Life Forum - UK

Duku Challenge



Medlink Services



Cancer Diseases Hospital (CDH)



Rennie B. Shamambo



The Royal Dill Restaurant



Global Health Partnerships



Kim Otteby - Umoyo Natural Health



Dangote Cement Zambia

Make Health Your Favourite Challenge



By Dr. Adarsh Samuel Baroi - Medical Doctor & Food Enthusiast

Caring for my father before he passed away from cancer taught me an important lesson. Knowing what to do for our health is one thing. Actually doing it is another. Today, as a medical doctor and passionate cook, I have seen that making wellness fun helps people stay consistent. This is where gamification comes in. Gamification is the use of game-like elements such as challenges, points, rewards, or friendly competition to encourage healthy habits.

Studies and everyday experience show that gamification can help people stay consistent with habits, from exercise to nutrition. In Africa, where community and creativity are part of daily life, gamified wellness can feel natural and joyful.

Play Your Way to Health

1. Fitness Challenge Jar

Write workouts on slips of paper and select one to work on each week or month. The surprise keeps routines exciting and consistent.

2. Step Challenge

Track your daily steps and aim to improve week by week. Share progress with friends or family to stay motivated.

3. Fruit and Vegetable Explorer

Try a new local fruit or vegetable each week or month. Share a photo, video or recipe to inspire others.

4. Gratitude Jar

Write one thing you are grateful for each day and reflect weekly. This habit boosts mood and mindfulness.

5. Health Trivia Night

Turn family or friends' gatherings into a fun quiz about nutrition, fitness and wellness. Learning becomes playful and social.

The Takeaway

Wellness does not have to feel like homework. With play, surprise and shared moments, healthy living becomes both enjoyable and sustainable. For me, food, family, and health are always connected, and the best reward is more joyful, meaningful time with the people we love.

“Wellness does not have to feel like Homework”

Have **YOU** listened to our **BREAST CANCER AUDIO GUIDES YET?**



First developed in 2018, these guides bring together simplified information and real stories from people affected by breast cancer. They were created to help patients and caregivers better understand what is happening and what to expect.

Available in English, Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, and Luvale.

SCAN & LISTEN



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Partner with Us: Connect, Support, Empower.

Join us in creating meaningful partnerships that strengthen cancer awareness, support survivorship, and empower communities.

Biannual Publication Circulation - 20,000 copies

For partnership opportunities contact: zambiancancersociety@gmail.com - 0976 659914

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Comments, articles, and letters submitted for publication in Dukutober Cancer Wellness Magazine are welcome and can be sent to: zambiancancersociety@gmail.com

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Readers should conduct their own research into any person, company, product or service.

Please consult your doctor for personal medical advice. The information and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the **Zambian Cancer Society** or the Editor.

Myth Buster



By Dr. Olivia Dhas - Medical Director MARS Clinics

Myth	Buster
1 Does stress cause cancer?	Stress itself doesn't directly cause cancer, but chronic stress can weaken your immune system and trigger unhealthy habits such as poor sleep, bad diet, smoking or drinking that may raise the risk of chronic illness including cancer. Managing stress through exercise, relaxation or talking to someone you trust is a powerful way to protect overall health.
2 Do bras or deodorants increase breast cancer risk?	The good news? There's no scientific evidence linking bras or deodorants to cancer. That said, tight underwire bras can be uncomfortable and restrict lymph flow so opt for softer, wireless options when possible. While deodorants, may contain aluminum or parabens, studies haven't shown a cancer connection.
3 Does drinking cold water with meals harm digestion?	Water, whether cold or warm doesn't "kill" digestion. In fact, staying hydrated helps your body break down and absorb nutrients. If very cold water feels uncomfortable, room temperature might be easier but there's no cancer risk either way.
4 You can get cancer from another person	Cancer is not an infectious disease. However, people living together often share similar diets and lifestyles, which might explain why certain diseases are associated with higher family risk.
5 Exercise rule "No pain, No gain"	Exercise changes your body, mind, and mood. it does not have to be painful or even strenuous to be effective. Even a little Exercise, even just a couple of times per week, has a huge positive impact on our well-being.

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