

New shelter for expecting mothers takes shape in Lupane

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KUSILE Rural District Council has partnered with Afrikaprojekt-Ubuntu Schales, a German organisation to construct new mothers' shelters at St Luke's Hospital as part of efforts to decongest the existing facility, which is failing to cope with demand.

Afrikaprojekt-Ubuntu Schales Trust has invested tens of thousands of dollars in Lupane through various educational, health and sanitation and infrastructure projects.

Ubuntu Schales Trust is an implementing arm of the Forderverein Afrikaprojekt

Schales Association located in Saarbrucken, Germany, and Afrikaprojekt was created for the promotion, development and financial support of the medical and educational work being done in Lupane District by Dr Hans Josef Schales (86), who is a resident at St. Luke's Mission Hospital in the district.

The project has been in Lupane since 2002 and is implemented in communities and schools within a 50km radius of St Luke's Hospital, where infrastructural and social amenities projects have been carried out.

In an interview yesterday, Kusile RDC chief executive officer, Mr Sifiso Hadebe said the new mother's shelters will decongest the current facility at Luke's Hospital, which is failing to cope with the ever-increasing number of expecting mothers.

"At St Luke's Hospital, which currently serves at our provincial hospital, the number of expecting mothers are always high yet the mothers' waiting shelter that they are using is small resulting in overcrowding. We have partnered with Ubuntu Schales Trust, which is constructing mothers' shelters and so far they have completed two, with a capacity to accommodate up to 80 mothers at any given time," he said.

"The other two have since been roofed and constructors are now working on putting kitchens and ablution facilities, a theatre, and a borehole. We expect the project to be commissioned next year."

The project has ignited excitement among the local community and brought relief to expecting mothers, who were forced to travel distances to access healthcare.

One of the expecting mothers, Ms Sibonokuhle Ncube of Somgolo village said the waiting mother's shelter will go a long way in improving maternal healthcare services. "This project is a welcome development for us as locals. This facility will also help to ensure that

as expecting mothers, we deliver safely. Sometimes villagers are forced to travel distances in scotch carts with pregnant women, posing a threat to them," she said. Mr Dube said the waiting mother's shelter will go a long way in assisting the local community.

Ms Tinashe Ngwenya of St Paul said the waiting mother's shelter will go a long way in assisting the local community.

"Women that require close supervision during their pregnancy were forced to travel long distances as the current mother's shelter is too small. The new facility will accommodate a lot of expecting mothers.

Ms Thandeka Ncube of Gwambe said: "Women that needed close supervision during their pregnancy were forced to travel long distances to St Luke's Hospital as the current mother's shelter is too small to accommodate a huge number. This new facility will therefore address those challenges and for us, it is a positive development."

Mr Petros Moyo, a local villager, said once the facility is opened, women will be able to access improved maternal services.

St. Luke Hospital which lies along the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls highway near Lupane Town, has become the beacon of health service provision in Matabeleland North Province. The hospital, which is owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Bulawayo is also a designated provincial hospital.