AFRICAN VISION MALAWI

'Creating Lasting Change'

www.africanvision.org.uk

SAFE MOTHERHOOD UNIT & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT & THERAPY UNIT

Overview of programme by Heather Palmer

February 2023

Introduction-

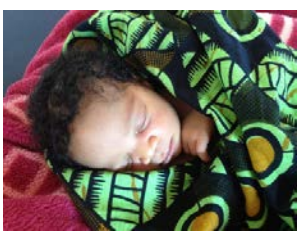
African Vision Malawi (AVM) has been operating in Malawi since 2005 in a specific area of 400km² and approximately 60,000 people. The area is in central Malawi and is rural with many marginalised people who are struggling subsistence farmers. Our aim is to see an **'educated, healthy and self-sufficient community in Malawi'** by empowering people to become independent through vocational and life skills training and providing some basic services. Our focus areas of support are through Education, Health, Agriculture and Self-sufficiency of which they interlock with each other giving holistic support to the most vulnerable people. Some of our programmes are supporting the whole community, such as providing clean water and, in this case, the Safe Motherhood Unit (SMU) and Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) unit.

Summary of programme-

In 2013 we built a new Maternity Unit at M'bang'ombe Clinic. The old one was small and not fit for purpose. Part of this build was to provide running water and a borehole was installed with water going direct to the unit along with to the staff houses and the clinic. We installed solar energy to give light and power to the unit. Previously women had to bring their own candle or light so that the midwife could see if the birth was during the night. Statistics improved from 20 births to up to 80 births per month and provided a safer place to give birth.

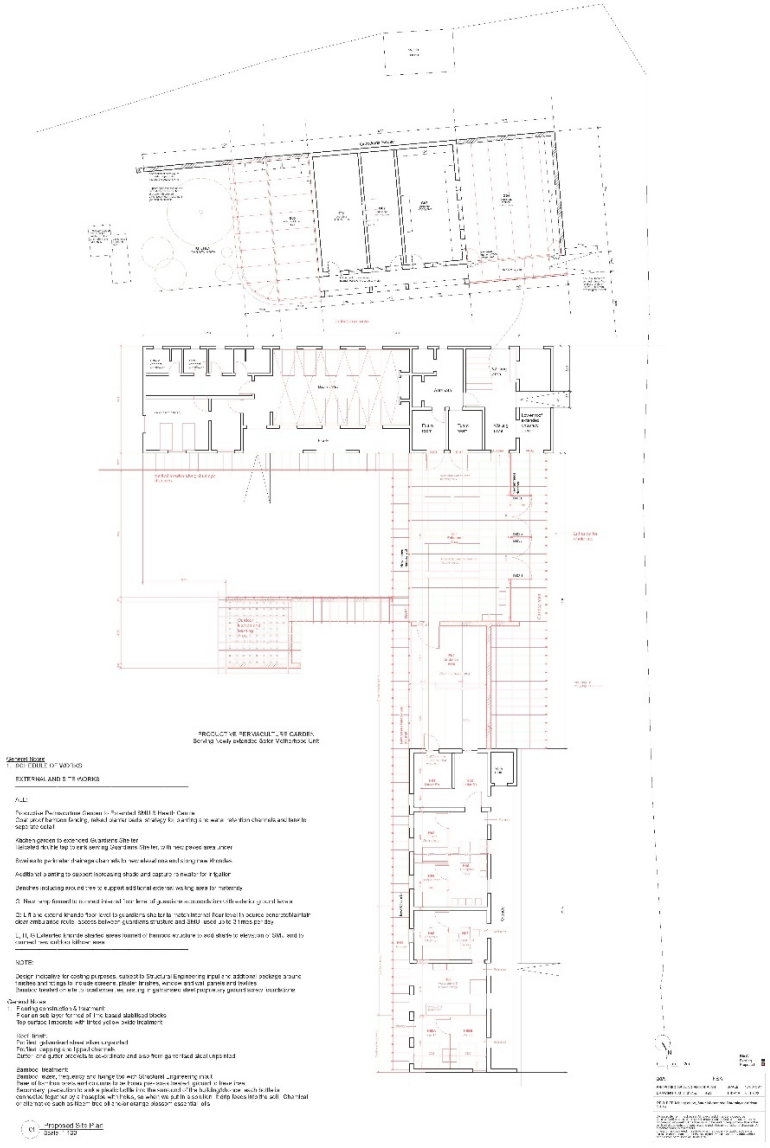
AVM are now improving the centre so that it supports the local community further by renovating the old unit and extending it to link to the new maternity. The aim is to provide safe maternal care with additional nutritional and life skills training to support the nurturing of their new-born baby and the mother. By linking the SEND unit to the SMU means that we can have early identification of any traumatic births which could result in a child having special needs. If they are identified early, they can be monitored at the under 5's sessions and assessment and therapy can be given direct from the unit. Early intervention of therapy has shown that some special needs can make positive strides in improving that persons' life, giving them independent living.

In the design of the unit we considered the activities that were already happening at the unit and listened to the needs and challenges of the clinic staff and their infrastructure.

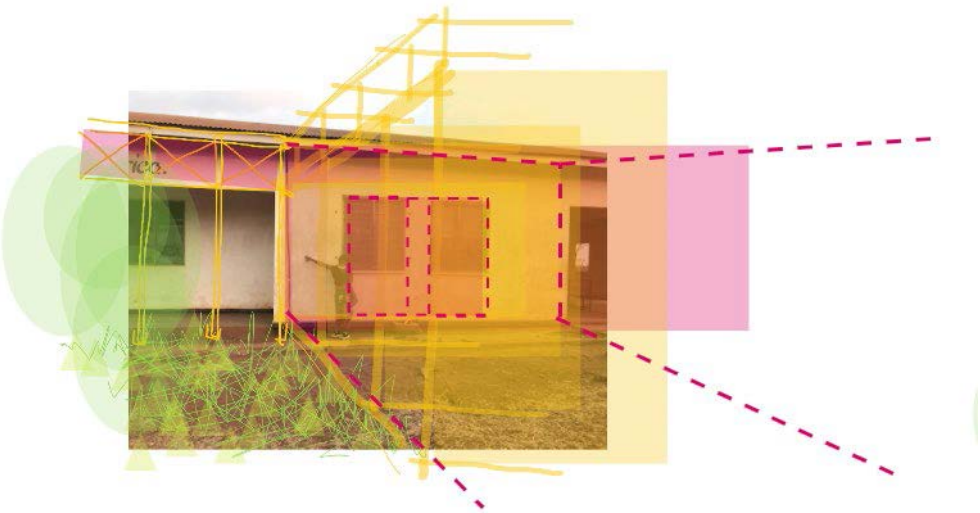


The improved SMU build will provide the following areas:

- **Increased Guardian Shelter accommodation**. New mothers are currently sleeping on the floor of the maternity while waiting to give birth.
- **Nutritional permaculture training garden** with kitchen for cookery demonstrations
- **Under 5's area** – currently being held outside or in the old maternity unit
- **Multipurpose area** for any training such as antenatal, HIV prevention, family planning etc.
- **HIV testing and consultation area**, currently being held in the 2013 built maternity unit
- **Ovarian cancer prevention** through male circumcision, currently being done in the old maternity unit
- **Special Educational Needs & Disability assessment and therapy unit**. This will provide assessments and therapy such as physio, occupational and speech & language therapies.
- **Overnight ward** for observations on patients at the clinic or patients waiting for an ambulance. They currently sleep on the cement floor of the open waiting room
- **Increase access to transportation to the unit through providing further bicycle ambulances in a 10km radius.**



Plan indicating new structure in red



(Above and below sketch image) Connecting old to new unit with bamboo and earth-built structure.



Timeline –

We have approval from the District Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Education (MoE) along with the District Executive Board (DEC). We still have to present a final budget and M&E programme to the DEC.

We have now got a completed design which we are reviewing. We need to finalise the bills of quantity, structural engineers input and working drawings. We anticipate this will be done by the during 2023.

We are holding a Stakeholders meeting to invite relevant community and NGO representatives to discuss our upcoming project of SMU and SEND.

When we have the final architectural drawings, we shall be going out to tender to select the contractor and know full costs.

We anticipate forming a contract with successful contractor and start to build in the dry season (from June 2024)




Bicycle ambulance and new mother in unit built in 2013