

Panzi Hospital - Newsletter # Oct 2010



Panzi in World March of Women

Thousands of women from all over the world gathered in Bukavu on Sunday October 17th for The World March of Women.

A group of 147 women from Panzi, patients and staff, participated and contributed with important messages. To promote the health care for women, access to family planning and maternity care, prevention of hiv/aids and fight against SGBV.

- It was important for us to unite with women from the world and show that we are many who are tired of experiencing the violations against women, says doctor Neema Rukunghu.

The World March of Women is a feminist movement which started ten years ago and activities have been going on since March 8th in more than 50 countries based on four fields of action, women's economic autonomy, the common good and public services, peace and demilitarization, and violence against women. DR Congo and Bukavu was chosen for the closure in solidarity with women who resist the effects of armed conflicts, such as sexual violence. An estimated number of 20 000 women walked on the streets of Bukavu, singing, dancing and rising voices with calls for peace, end of militarization and violence against women. The march ended at the Square of the Independence where the Manifest of Women for peace was read in different languages and both the minister of gender and the president's wife participated.

-There is a difficult situation for women in DRC, but this gives us hope because we know we are many.



Trainings extends Panzi

To spread knowledge of the work at Panzi Hospital and improve the quality of the care for survivors. Those are the objectives of the training program within the SSV-project (Survivors of Sexual Violence) directed to medical staff, local NGOs and representatives from different authorities. During the present phase of the project the trainings are intensified and will be focused in ten different health zones in South-Kivu.

The medical training is focused on prevention and treatment of gynecological disorders for doctors and nurses in order to bring more adequate and specialized care to remote areas. For the NGOs the core is more understanding of GBV (Gender Based Violence) and gynecological problems. Local associations are often the first points of reference and identification and it is important to understand what kind of assistance the survivor is in need of, and where this can be accessed. In addition to this the trainings contain awareness rising for women's rights, specifically concerning the right to health care for survivors of rape and to maternity health care.

During a recent training in Walungu, Panzi Hospital (SSV-project) collaborated with EUPol and the participants were a mix of local police and NGOs.

- This is a good way not only to explain the work of the SSV-project at Panzi and the referral system, it also a platform for the different actors in the area to get to know each other. By this the network gets stronger and more effective in assisting survivors, says Bagabo Saleh Malungu, SSV-project.





Awareness for people living with HIV/Aids

HIV/Aids is part of the life for many people in the area where Panzi Hospital works, both adults and children. Recently more than 600 people with HIV/Aids gathered at Panzi for one weekend to learn more and discuss relevant issues. How can the stigma decrease and living conditions be improved for people affected by the illness?

-It is very important for people facing the same problems to come together, share experiences and strengthen each other, says doctor Tina Amisi.

-We also encourage people to avoid traditional medicines and trust the treatment offered by the hospital.



Since 2007 Stephen Lewis Foundation has funded a HIV/Aids-project at Panzi Hospital. Today the project is treating around 650 adults and 120 children, and the patients come from Survivors of sexual violence's project, Panzi hospital's primary care, outreach activities in churches and schools, and other hospitals and NGOs. The project offers the following services; Pediatrics, Maternity service, Nutrition of inpatients, Anti-retroviral treatment center, Volunteer test center (VCT), Laboratory, Security blood transfusion center. The project also includes social activities such as micro-credits and school equipment and fees for students. With the mobile visiting program Panzi's staff is able to perform counseling and hiv-tests in villages outside Bukavu.

- This is a good outreach where we can advise people with HIV to come to Panzi to get professional treatment for free, says doctor Tina Amisi.

Social assistant Esther Munyerenkana winner of Nelson Mandela award

– I am happy, this prize shows that I am not working in vain. It strengthens me and helps me go on with my work. But this prize is not only for me, it is for all my colleagues at Panzi Hospital. It gives us hope, says Esther Munyerenkana.

The award is given every three years by CAW, Canadian Auto Workers union, to a person or organization for exceptional achievement in the promotion of human rights. Esther Munyerenkana, nurse and social assistant has worked at Panzi since the SSV-project (Survivors of Sexual Violence) started in 2004.

Esther was recommended to the CAW by Stephen Lewis and playwright and activist Eve Ensler. The first recipient was Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma and other recipients include Stephen Lewis and Craig Keilburger.



Denis Mukwege honorary doctor at Umeå University

The medical director of Panzi Hospital Dr. Denis Mukwege received a honorary doctorate at the Medical faculty at Umeå University in mid October. He received it for being a spokesperson for peace and human rights in eastern Congo, especially by putting the spotlight on the systematic use of excessive violence against women. Margot Wallström, UN special representative on SGBV received a honorary doctorate in the same ceremony.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



The General Referral Hospital of Panzi (GRHP) is located Bukavu, capital city of the South Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The hospital was inaugurated in 1999 and has specialized in gynecological disorders, specifically trauma from sexual violence and fistulas. Panzi Hospital provides services in Obstetrics, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine, general and specialized Surgery, Ophthalmology, Dental and Nutritional. It also boasts its own laboratory, radiology, ultrasonography and endoscopy units.

Panzi Hospital is a private hospital run by CEPAC (Communauté des Églises de Pentecôte en Afrique Centrale).

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