The Zambian Anaesthetic Programme is a new project, uniquely designed to be mutually beneficial to the host organisation and the senior UK Anaesthetic registrar. It fulfils a service need and training gap in the developing country, as well as develops a UK registrar in aspects of teaching and training; leadership and management; anaesthetic skills needed to cope in a limited resource environment and so much more that comes from working in a challenging environment.

The project is part of a Zambian UK Health care alliance funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), aimed at supporting the training of Zambian Anaesthetists. The Healthcare partners include University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka, Department for International Development (DFID), UK MMed faculty, Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET), RCoA and AAGBI. Until 2011, Zambia did not have an anaesthetic specialist training program. Most anaesthesia is carried out by clinical officers- non physician anaesthetic technicians with 2 years of training.
The UTH is the only tertiary referral centre in the country and has 1600 beds and 250 baby cots serving a population of 13.8 million people. The Department of Anaesthesia services Intensive Care and 19 operating theatres with a small faculty. There is a wide range of surgical specialities including Paediatrics and Neonates, Neurosurgery, General Surgery, ENT & Maxillofacial surgery, Orthopaedics, Urology, Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

As the ZADP Anaesthetist you will be challenged to:

- Deliver safe anaesthesia in a limited resource setting. (With lack of trained assistance, shortages of equipment, monitoring and drugs)
- Develop teaching and training skills
  o support the Zambian MMed Anaesthesia Trainees in all aspects of their training (clinical, discussion, lecturing, audit and research),
  o deliver formal and informal teaching,
  o run simulation courses as well as design locally relevant moulages.
  o Lectures and support the non physician anaesthetists. (Clinical officers)
  o Support the delivery of the SAFE obstetric course, Lifebox, and the Primary Trauma Course.
- Leadership and Management
  o Meet hospital managers. Facilitate release of staff from clinical duties to deliver training workshops.
  o Develop relationships within the anaesthetic and surgical departments,
  o Map hospital systems and processes- needed to navigate change.
  o Promote surgical safety,
  o Encourage reporting and review of serious untoward incidents.
  o Promote Monthly M&M meetings, providing a judgemental environment to freely discuss and learn from mistakes.
  o Develop locally relevant guidelines and protocols which with the backing of UTH are published nationally. Including Major Haemorrhage, GA and spinal CS, Difficult airway and recovery protocol.
  o Be a role model- the staff and trainees look at you as the European standard of excellence, and learn a lot from the way the UK registrar behaves.
- Research and Audit
  - Opportunity to develop and carry out a research project – due to sustained support from subsequent ZADP registrars. So far 2 research projects are under way with full support from the University of Zambia Research and Ethics Committee. These projects are both funded by the International Relations Committee (IRC). The first project provides a means to reliably collect mortality data, defines the incidence of perioperative mortality and its causality over a 1 year period; the second investigates a locally relevant paediatric weight estimation formula.
  - Mentor Zambian MMeds in their research dissertations.
  - Demonstrate audit process, support and mentor local staff in completing and presenting audit projects to improve standards of care. This has included a WHO surgical safety checklist, major haemorrhage and temperature audit.
  - Develop Quality Improvement projects – our current project is providing a safe and accessible anaesthetic store in each theatre suit. This project is shared with the MMeds trainees.

Working In Zambia has been a wonderful cross cultural learning opportunity. It offers ample exposure to develop teaching skills and anaesthetise challenging clinical cases. However the learning is bi directional, you will learn from people far more expert than you at working in a limited resource setting. One develops new insights into cost effectiveness and resourcefulness as supplies and finances are evidently limited, waste will result in evident compromised care of subsequent patients, which is a powerful lesson in how to manage resources effectively.