Saving Mother’s Giving Life (SMGL) is an endeavour to reduce Maternal Mortality by 50% in Kalomo District, Southern Province of Zambia by the end of 2012.

Kalomo District has over 14,000 births a year, only 5 medical doctors, no ambulance, 1 Operating theatre and less than 50% of the health facilities have reliable electricity.

One such health facility is Habulile Rural Health Centre (RHC) which is located 174 kilometres north of Kalomo. It has no power or running water. However, it has two committed midwives who have been at the clinic since it opened in 2001. One of these midwives is Laura Munansangu. Laura came to Habulile with a desire to “learn more”. In December 2011, as part of the SMGL endeavour, Laura was trained in Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC). She took the training to heart. After returning from the training, she and fellow midwife Shelly Syabbamba took the message of the importance of facility births to the communities they served. They educated women about the dangers of home delivery and importance of birth at a health facility with skilled personnel like themselves. By January 2012, the number of deliveries per month at Habulile RHC had increased by 300% and has remained that high ever since. To manage the increased workload, Laura has been training two general workers at the facility to assist with delivery, until they can afford to construct a house for additional skilled staff. There have been no maternal deaths at Habulile RHC since Laura attended her EmONC training.

When asked how she was able to sensitize the community so quickly, she recounted the following story. “The vice chief of Habulile was ill and came to me for care. As he was leaving he mentioned that he was rushing off to attend a meeting of the Royal Council (of chiefs). I asked him for five minutes of his time. During that five minutes I asked him to deliver an important message to the Royal Council...about the importance of facility deliveries. He took my message to the community and you have seen the result.”