

Polyclinique La Medicale, which is located in the heart of Kigali City has successfully positioned itself as a leading Polyclinique offering diverse medical services ranging from general medicine and pediatrics to dentistry, ophthalmology and radiology.

This health facility has been rolling out its services since 1991 and boasts of presences in Huye, Ngoma, Musanze and Rubavu.

The Polyclinique continues to play a key role in strengthening Rwanda's healthcare systems particularly in the empowerment of medical professional. As a result, hundreds of medical workers including doctors and nurses have gained expertise and experience while dozens have upgraded their skills.



Dr. Pierre Celestin Kanimba, the Founder of the Polyclinic

Today, more than 250 people work there, and residents in many Rwandan districts access healthcare services offered by the facility.

Kwa Kanimba (Kanimba's Place) is a familiar name that resonates more deeply among Kigali City dwellers than its official trademark, Polyclinique La Medicale. Notably, it was among the first private health facilities when Rwanda liberalized the healthcare landscape.

The remarkable story behind Polyclinique La Medicale is intrinsically linked to Dr. Pierre Celestin Kanimba, the Founder.



Craving for better healthcare in a country where a shortage was unbelievably large before the liberation of Rwanda in 1994, Dr. Kanimba seized the opportunity 2-years following the liberalization of healthcare services. After serving for 10 years in public hospitals, the Doctor used his savings to open a small clinic, a stone's throw from Nyarugenge market.

It was not all roses at the beginning. People warned Dr. Kanimba of potential consequences, but with unwavering optimism, he took a leap of faith. Tragically, the clinic's nascent years coincided with the horrific 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and it was devastated, leaving the young clinic in ruins.

Emerging from the ashes, Dr. Kanimba refused to give up on his dream. He returned

to Kigali in 1994 to find nothing. Yet, with unwavering determination, he repurposed the old location and restarted the clinic.

The road to recovery was long and arduous, but he persevered. Slowly, he rebuilt the clinic, regaining its reputation for quality care.

When it upgraded to Polyclinique La Medicale, it relocated to the neighbourhood of St. Famille Church, embarking on an ambitious expansion plan. The first branch opened in Huye (2003), followed by Ngoma (2005), Musanze (2015) and Rubavu (2017).



Once a single doctor's dream, it became a symbol of national healing, bringing quality medical services to all corners of Rwanda and aims to become a fully-fledged hospital.

Dr. Kanimba's unwavering commitment to accessible healthcare has fostered a ripple effect, positively impacting patients, medical professionals, and the nation as a whole.

Polyclinique La Medicale has partnered with various insurance companies, making healthcare more affordable for Rwandans. The polyclinic actively participates in community health initiatives, promoting preventive care and public health education.

"We started small and at the time, enormous need for accessible healthcare lingered on. People would travel for hours, some on foot, just to see a doctor," Dr. Kanimba recalls.

Dr. Kanimba, who grew up in the rural Nyarubuye in Kirehe District, faced significant challenges in pursuing his studies. He attributes perseverance to his success. He graduated in medicine from the National University of Rwanda in 1981.

Pursuing education in the 70s or 80s even with good grades was difficult but university or a medical career was nearly impossible. There were a few qualified professionals in the country.

Reflecting on his journey, the man, now with 43 years of experience in General Practice, highlights the profound transformation brought about by the liberation of

the country. “Everything has changed,” he emphasizes, “from universal healthcare to free education and infrastructure development.”

“There is new hope and I believed in Rwanda’s future. I believed that people deserved better healthcare, and determined to be a part of the solution,” he notes.

He believes this progress must be protected, emphasizing the importance of accountability and a continued focus on development.

While the horrific events of 1994 genocide against the Tutsi were unimaginable, they were followed by a period of change brought by RPF, a new hope, new vision in a new country.



Dr. Kanimba contrasts the past with the present, highlighting the remarkable transformation of Rwanda. Today, importing medical equipment is tax-free, a stark difference from the earlier limitations.

He concludes by expressing his belief in a doctor’s responsibility extending beyond the confines of medicine. His dedication to his patients and his community is evident throughout his journey.