

Malawi German Health Programme (MGHP)

Quality Management

Challenge

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 is about ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for every individual. For this to materialise, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) must be a priority for countries and at the core of UHC is quality of health services. For the past decade, Malawi has seen improvements in access to health care services, especially for mothers and new-borns. Despite the improvement, evidence shows that a lot of preventable maternal and new born deaths still exist. The high mortality rate is mostly due to poor quality of health care.

The key bottlenecks leading to poor health outcomes range from weak leadership, management, and governance structures without accountability mechanisms; poor human resource management and development resulting in unmotivated staff; an overall lack of adherence to standards and guidelines; services which are not client-centered; inconsistent availability of equipment and supplies; poor quality and under-use of health information data for evidence-based decision making and quality improvement.

Our approach

The Malawi German Health Programme (MGHP) works in partnership with national and international institutions to address the challenges. All interventions are aligned with the country's priorities as documented in the current Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) 2017-2022. The operational plan is also informed by the Quality Management Policy and Strategy.

At the national level, MGHP provides technical advisory services to the Quality Management Directorate (QMD) of the Ministry of Health (MOH). The QMD is mandated to provide strategic guidance in the implementation of all quality related activities in the health sector and MGHP support focusses on strengthening the national accreditation program

and institutionalizing Quality Improvement (QI) processes. The main emphasis is on the development of local accreditation standards and further support to eight selected hospitals in their journey towards hospital accreditation through QI initiatives.

At district level, MGHP supports 4 districts in the Central West Zone to strengthen QM and improve Quality of Care in MNH services; Lilongwe, Dedza, Mchinji and Ntcheu. This support is being provided by GIZ Technical Advisors (TA) based in the 4 districts. The focus is on capacity development in Quality Management / Quality Improvement (QM/QI) and the provision of financial grants to health facilities to implement QI projects (QIPs). Experience of care is measured through Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) and Hospital Ombudsman and together with data generated by the health information system informs QI projects.



Project name	Malawi German Health Programme
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing organisation	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	Malawi; Target districts: Dedza, Lilongwe, Mchinji and Ntcheu
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Health (MoH)
National partners	MoH, Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) facilities Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH); Local Councils in target districts;
Duration	01.08.2020 – 31.07.2023
Financial volume	EURO 15,028,897



Photo left: Health workers being trained in basic lifesaving skills at Kamuzu Central Hospital

Photo right: Firefighting training to equip health personnel with knowledge and skills in managing one of the most common risks in the hospital setting



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Photo left: Before and after pictures of the record management at Mua Mission hospital

MGHP also supports MOH to advance the agenda of the global network for improving Quality of Care for Maternal, New born and Child Health (QED Network). The vision of the network is ensuring that every pregnant woman and new born receives good quality care throughout pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal period through QI interventions and global learning. MGHP supports Lilongwe district which is one of the six learning districts in the country to operationalise and implement national standards, tools and job aids.

Results in figures...

Under the accreditation programme, eight health facilities receive grants to support implementation of Quality Improvement projects to address some of the standards that are partly or not implemented. QIP activities include capacity building, procurement of medical equipment and supplies, development of hospital policies and strengthening of QM and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) processes. More than 500 hospital personnel have been trained in QI and use of accreditation standards. About 450 personnel have been trained in risk management including firefighting which is a common risk in the Malawian health system. Another 600 health workers have been drilled in resuscitation which covers basic lifesaving skills.

Due to extensive capacity building on the use and interpretation of accreditation standards, National assessors are now able to introduce new facilities to accreditation without technical backstopping from external organizations. This includes introduction of accreditation programme to conducting assessments and producing a survey report. With this knowledge, hospital accreditation has been rolled out to 5 more health facilities outside MGHP implementation.

A facility mentorship programme is in place to support continuous capacity development in the use and interpretation of accreditation standards. Through that initiative, 10 mentors have been promoted to be National Assessors based on their performance. Currently, there are 35 National Assessors

and each accreditation facility has a minimum of 6 trained Mentors.

Remarkable success has also been registered in implementation of QI projects. A total of 32 health facilities have implemented QI projects by May 2022 to address gaps in Maternal and Neonatal health and another 28 are in the design stage.

In Ntcheu district, through Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) audits, it was identified that some neonatal deaths arose due to late initiation on Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). The neonatal Nursery embarked on a project to address that challenge and initial evaluation shows a remarkable reduction in Neonatal deaths between October 2021 and January 22 from 21 to 5 deaths.

Under the QoC network, Lilongwe district trained 6 health workers from the 3 learning sites to support implementation of MNH standards. Further to that, about 20 community members have been oriented on Patients Charter.

All the three learning sites have institutionalised performance reviews including clinical audits to improve quality of care with the aim of reducing maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity

...and in stories

The annual survey using accreditation standards at Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH), the national referral hospital in Lilongwe, showed a serious gap in the provision of emergency and critical care services. The QI project proposed to hire a highly competent firm from South Africa to train trainers at KCH who can subsequently train other colleagues. One of the 15 trainers drilled in Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) stated. *"I have gained a different perception about patients who just collapse and the unconscious ones. Previously, I didn't know how to effectively respond but with this training, I am more capable and confident to provide resuscitation to such patients"* Ella Kaira, nurse.

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