

Health Systems Strengthening with a focus on Reproductive Health

SRHR Service Delivery

The challenge

Majority of the population in Malawi are young people (60%) and women of reproductive age (47%). The women and young people face a myriad of health challenges including unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, high adolescent fertility, unsafe abortions, early childbearing, high maternal and neonatal deaths, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS including sexual and gender-based violence.

It is for this reason that the Ministry of Health (MOH) developed a Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) strategy whose motto is “leave no youth behind, leave no one behind” to tackle the challenges faced by the youth, especially adolescent girls and young women. The strategy outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing the health needs of young people, with a focus on strengthening the health workforce to deliver gender sensitive and inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHR).

Our approach

In response to these challenges, the Malawi German Health Programme (MGHP) in collaboration with MOH is supporting the implementation of game changing reforms outlined in the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP3) with specific emphasis on service delivery (pillar 1) and human resources for health (pillar 4).

Harmonized Continuous Professional Development (hCPD)

At the national level, MGHP supports the Directorates of Human Resource, Quality Management, Reproductive Health and the regulatory bodies to develop a harmonized CPD (hCPD) policy with the aim to improve access and implement CPD across all healthcare providers in Malawi in an efficient and needs based approach. This will ultimately result in skilled, motivated, and competent health professionals delivering quality healthcare.

MGHP supported MOH and Ntcheu District Health Office to start piloting the hCPD approach in 2024 and lessons learned were shared with the national hCPD taskforce and informed the drafting of the national policy. The hCPD approach is gradually rolled out in the 4 target districts.



Project name	Malawi German Health Programme (MGHP)
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Project region	Malawi; Target districts: Dedza, Lilongwe, Mchinji and Ntcheu
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Health (MOH)
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Volume	EUR 9,600,000

Integration of in-service trainings / eLearning

In addition to rolling out the hCPD approach, MGHP contracted Health Focus GmbH to support MOH with strengthening the digital CPD platform with the aim to deliver integrated in-service trainings through eLearning. The team works with the Digital Health Division (DHD) of MOH to improve the functionalities of the existing MOH CPD platform and with other relevant stakeholders to develop eLearning modules that improve the skills and knowledge of health workers to deliver gender sensitive and inclusive SRHR services as well as respectful maternity care. Health professionals will be followed up to track the impact of online training courses on skills acquisition and application.



L. to r.: Nurse managers showcasing the CPD policy and senior nurse conducting a practical CPD session

Contact person	Photo: © GIZ/Wezzie Banda
<p>Paul Dielemans, Paul.dielemans@giz.de .</p> <p><i>L. to R. nurse manager teaching using patient records and health service assistants using digital tools</i></p>	

Addressing SRHR needs of users / integration of services

MGHP contracted the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) to support MOH with measuring the satisfaction of SRHR services among clients including persons with disabilities with a strong emphasis on young people. This work is done in close collaboration with the Learning Centre for Quality Management (LCQM) at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHES) and findings will inform potential Quality Improvement (QI) measures to strengthen access to and quality of integrated SRHR services.

Gender transformation

In the area of gender equality, MGHP is planning to reach out to young people with menstrual health and hygiene education to address stigma and taboos associated with menstruation and to reduce school absenteeism. It also plans to build capacity of community midwife assistants to reach out to young people with comprehensive SRHR education and services to promote bodily self-determination.

The benefits

The evolving nature of healthcare delivery necessitates the need for health professionals to undergo continuous in-service training. The commonest mode of inservice trainings is classroom based proving to be unsustainable with declining donor support. Integrating in-service trainings with a strong e-Learning component is an efficient way to sustainably maintain the skills and knowledge of the frontline health workforce in providing quality SRHR services that meet the needs of the users. It is also an effective approach to disseminate new evidence and practices to a large audience in a short period of time. By targeting young people as well as pregnant women, it will improve the wellbeing of many Malawians and eventually contribute to a decline in teenage pregnancies and a reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality.

Success factors

The program interventions are fully aligned with the national priorities outlined in the HSSP3, the YFHS strategy 2022-2030, the SRHR policy 2025-2030 and implemented jointly with MOH and district health authorities.

The programme builds on the foundation led in the previous phase where the Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi (NMCM) was supported to develop and roll out a CPD policy for nurses and midwives specifically. Over 400 CPD facilitators were trained across the country and the implementation of the NMCM CPD is used as a blueprint to transition towards a hCPD approach bringing together NMCM, the Medical Council of Malawi (MCM) and the Pharmacy Medicines and Poisons Board of Malawi (PMPBM) under the leadership of the Quality management Department (QMD) in MOH.

An example from the field

The hCPD has so far been implemented in 28 facilities across Ntcheu and Dedza districts with more than 60 CPD sessions conducted bringing together all cadres who provide patient care. Efforts are ongoing to improve the functionality of the MOH CPD platform and 250 health workers will be actively supported to do the online trainings in SRHR once the modules have been uploaded.

“Face to face trainings / classroom-based trainings are very costly, last year alone Malawi spent 32 million US dollars for in-service training, this is unsustainable. Online training is one of the solutions and as government we are looking forward to rolling out CPD through eLearning but also learning on the impact it can make on improving health outcomes”

Dr. Gerald Manthulu, Director Planning and Policy Development, Ministry of Health

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