



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Innovation for saving mothers and children in rural Malawi

Embracing Access to community Healthcare

Prepared By:
Smile Mums Foundation

Presented To:
Partner's





Innovation for saving mothers and children in rural Malawi

“Access to healthcare must be seen as an essential aspect of social justice in a community that suffers from illness and deep inequities.”



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Dear friends

Each year, we sit down to write this letter filled with gratitude and humility as we reflect on our accomplishments. We are reminded that none of this would be possible without our incredible team and stakeholders. Our dedicated staff and partners work tirelessly to implement community healthcare interventions for those who need it most, empowering the less privileged through healthcare education, the provision of essential services, and advocacy for sustainable partnerships to advance the right to quality healthcare. It is an honor to witness the remarkable work achieved this year, particularly with the long-awaited mobile clinic, which has transformed the lives of many people.

This year, despite many challenges, we have maintained our collective commitment to maternal and child health and community healthcare. At the Nsaru Health Center, SMF continues to support the facility with medication supplies to create transformative changes in care delivery and provide a model for health systems strengthening.

Looking back, I am proud that we have broken new ground as we strive for quality community healthcare. From the Nsaru Health Center to the surrounding communities, SMF staff have been learning from and supporting each other. Each community experience is woven together, and every contribution helps to form a broader narrative of impact in the communities we serve.

I am excited to share highlights from each of our interventions as well as the impact we have made on a community scale. In this report, you will read about life-saving interventions, learn how we support the Nsaru Health Center, and discover how we influence community healthcare policy, including the introduction of the mobile clinic, cervical cancer screenings in communities, and much more.

As you read each story, we hope you see how your partnership threads through all this work, redefining what is possible. Thank you for your generosity and for accompanying us on this journey to create a more just and healthier community.

In Solidarity,

Frank Jengeless Banda
Executive Director



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About Us

The Smile Mums Foundation began as a community healthcare project in 2016, known as "Save Mothers, Save Babies," founded by Frank Jengeless Banda, a former World Vision International sponsored child. Its goal was to reduce childbirth complications and encourage early antenatal care. In 2018, the organization was officially registered to enhance the well-being of mothers and children in rural Malawi through cost-effective programs developed in collaboration with the Government of Malawi, the Ministry of Health, Chingalire Growth center, Good Neighbor International, Partners for Equity and local stakeholders.

Our Vision

To create a community where every child and woman has access to quality healthcare services for survival, protection, development, and participation

Our Mission

"To inspire innovation in the provision of healthcare services for children and women, leading to immediate and lasting improvements in their lives through enhanced access to health services."



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Improving antenatal care reduces maternal mortality in hard-to-reach areas.....

Malawi has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with 439 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Additionally, the under-five mortality rate is at 41.9 per 1,000 live births. Poor maternal health can lead to premature births, reduced birth weight, and negative neonatal outcomes. Women who are pregnant or giving birth may face problems such as anemia, malaria, or lack of transportation to a health facility. Social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental factors can all influence maternal and child health outcomes.

Our proactive community health workers (CHWs) provide community-based antenatal care, aiming to offer early antenatal care in hard-to-reach areas.

With a supportive community by our side, we improve access to maternal and child healthcare.



Study circles are key in promoting positive parenting.



The Smile Mums Foundation has implemented a maternal health study circle program to provide health education to mothers, caregivers, and local leaders. The program covers topics such as early antenatal care, nutrition, breastfeeding, family planning, malaria treatment, and support.

Each study circle, facilitated by nurses, community health workers, and the foundation's team, consists of 15 participants and lasts 45 minutes. This allows mothers to seek information from healthcare experts and share their perspectives on various healthcare standards. From May to August, a total of 217 mothers in villages around Nsaru Health Center, Lilongwe Rural, Malawi, were reached through these interventions.

Outreach of antenatal care results in an increase in early admissions for antenatal care at Nsaru Health Center.



The Smile Mums Foundation has noted the positive impact of introducing outreach antenatal care in Chimbayo village, Malawi. The organization implemented outreach antenatal care at Mamie Center, which is located 17.2 km from Nsaru Health Center, to offer antenatal care services to women from surrounding villages.

Some of services include pregnancy tests, malaria screening, and the provision of folic acid tablets to prevent anemia. The outreach antenatal care was first introduced in 2023 and was expanded to include the Chimbayo Village clinic and A Mamie Center in 2024.



Dr. Lusungu Nyoni of Nsaru Health Center mentioned that the intervention has increased early antenatal care admissions from 25.2% to 35.5%, marking a 10.2% increase within the first six months, demonstrating its positive impact at total of 294 pregnant mothers through Outreach Antenatal care.



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Village Clinics Enable Under-Five Children to Access Quality Healthcare.

The government of Malawi has a community healthcare policy that mandates the establishment of a village clinic every 5 kilometers to provide healthcare services to children under the age of five. However, the implementation of this policy has faced challenges due to financial constraints.

In 2023, the people of Chingalire village, in collaboration with the Smile Mums Foundation, funded the construction of a village clinic to provide healthcare services to children from surrounding villages twice a week. The services provided include malaria testing, treatment, care for diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, nutrition assessment, child growth monitoring, and health education. Additionally, the clinic offers family planning services to mothers as a way to promote the use of modern contraceptives.



In 2024, Smile Mums Foundation scaled up the provision of medical supplies to the Chingalire village clinic to reach more children and mothers, sponsored by grants from the Segal Family Foundation.

World Breastfeeding Week Promotes Exclusive Breastfeeding.

From August 1st to 7th every year, the World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated to promote good breastfeeding practices among mothers, caregivers, and guardians. This year, the theme was "Let's Close the Gap." Smile Mums foundation, in partnership with Nsaru Health Center, organized various activities to commemorate the week. These activities included a health talk at the facility, community meetings with mothers and caregivers, and focus group discussions. A total of 385 mothers were reached during the week, and this initiative was made possible through funding from the Segal Family Foundation as part of the Maternal Health program implemented in rural Lilongwe.



Collaborating with Local Partners to Share Knowledge.

On August 26, 2024, the Smile Mums Foundation took part in the Malawi Scotland Partnership - MASP 2024 Annual General Meeting at the Bingu International Convention Center in Lilongwe. The event's theme was collaboration. During the meeting, our organization had the opportunity to showcase our work and engage with 20 other MASP members from various sectors, including health, education, renewable energy, and agriculture. Our staff member, Sharon Makolosi, presented our work and fielded questions from the audience. She highlighted that the meeting was enlightening as we learned new fundraising and project implementation approaches used by other organizations to scale up their impact.



The Celebration of Mother's Day Enables Mothers to Access Health Services.



On October 15, 2024, Malawi celebrated Mother's Day. The Smile Mums Foundation, with support from its partners, organized a Mother's Day health session at the Chingalire Village Clinic. The event aimed to improve healthcare information accessibility, provide cervical cancer screening, and facilitate interactions between mothers and healthcare professionals. The session brought together women and chiefs' wives, and Mrs. Nyirenda, the board chair of the organization, honored the event. Mothers had the opportunity to interact with nurses, participate in health talks, and undergo cancer screening. The event was organized in collaboration with Nsaru Health and Chingalire Villages, with support from the Segal Family Foundation. The board chair Mrs. Nyirenda encouraged women to always go for cervical cancer earlier for easy medications, care and support.



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Mobile Clinic Improves Access to Quality Healthcare in Villages

In 2023, we tested and scaled up a community-based Maternal Health model that improved health-seeking behaviors and health outcomes for women and children in Nsaru, Lilongwe, Malawi. This initiative has helped decrease morbidity and mortality due to preventable and treatable conditions.



Working in partnership with the Malawi Government through Nsaru Health Center, we, at SMF, collaborate with local communities and support structures to deliver quality primary healthcare in areas where services are most needed, close to people's homes. In 2024, with funding from Segal Family Foundation and Partners for Equity, we scaled up the outreach antenatal care to a mobile clinic, providing free healthcare services once a month at a Mamie center located 18 kilometers from Nsaru Health Center, covering 12 villages. During the mobile clinic, we conduct malaria tests, provide treatment care, assess nutrition, conduct cervical cancer screenings, HIV/AIDS testing and counseling, and offer family planning services.

In October, one mother was diagnosed HIV/AIDS positive and was referred to Nsaru Health Center to start ART treatment. The mobile clinic, which serves an average of 165 patients per day, helps increase access to healthcare services for people around the Mamie Center.



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Nursing Home Visits Transform Maternal Health

Every pregnant mother deserves access to quality maternal healthcare for her own well-being and that of her baby. Through our maternal health project, we promote Focused Antenatal Care (FANC), a comprehensive approach that provides holistic care before, during, and after pregnancy. Our nurses conduct home visits to reach mothers directly in their communities.



Skilled nurses and Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) deliver essential services, including malaria testing and prevention, anemia screening and treatment, multivitamin distribution, group health education, and postnatal care. These interventions ensure the health of both mothers and babies.

The Smile Mums Foundation implements nursing home visits with financial support from the Segal Family Foundation and partners for equity, specifically targeting pregnant and lactating mothers and their children.



According to the nursing in-charge at Nsaru Health Center, the organization has been commended for its interventions, as they help mothers and children access essential antenatal care.



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The Smile Mums Foundation team hosted board members during a field visit.

On December 11, we had the honor of hosting our Board Chairperson, Mrs. Nyirenda, along with management. They visited the MoM Center during one of our outreach clinic sessions to gain firsthand insight into the work we do. During their visit, they also engaged with staff members from Nsaru Health Center, our valued partners, to better understand the impact of these outreach clinics. This visit aimed to inform and shape future plans to enhance our services. The Board Chair commended the organization for introducing the much-anticipated mobile clinic, which will help people in surrounding areas access free healthcare services. She advised the management to ensure that we purchase medications that will benefit the community. The mobile clinic is being implemented with financial support from the Segal Family Foundation and partners for equity.



Early Cervical Cancer Screenings in Communities Promote Timely Treatment

The Smile Mums Foundation is committed to providing quality health services to communities near Nsaru Health Center, focusing on awareness and advocacy for mothers and children's healthcare. Cervical cancer poses a significant health challenge in Malawi, being the most common cancer and the leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women. It accounts for 40% of all female cancers, with the highest global incidence rate of 75.9 cases per 100,000 women. In response, the foundation has supported government initiatives to reduce the burden of cervical cancer through screening, treatment, and vaccination programs. The awareness and screening campaigns at Nakuwawa, Chingalire Rural Growth Center, and the MoM Center, reaching over 59 women screened



Transforming Lives Through Community-Led Nutrition Initiatives

Meet Winnie Jerald: A Beacon of Hope

In Gwirize village, located in the heart of Lilongwe rural, the story of 4-year-old Winnie Jerald exemplifies the transformative power of community-led interventions in tackling child malnutrition. Not long ago, Winnie displayed signs of stunted growth, a condition that deeply concerned her family. Her mother, Chimwemwe Mateyu, recalls feeling helpless as she watched her daughter's health stagnate.

Everything changed when Winnie became part of the Complementary Community-Led Feeding and Learning Sessions facilitated by Smile Mums Foundation. This program aims to improve the nutritional health of children under five by screening their nutritional status, offering health education to parents and guardians, and providing a nutritious porridge prepared by the community.

Along with other children, she attended 12 consecutive days of feeding sessions, where she received nutritious porridge daily. Her mother learned about balanced diets, hygiene, and other practices that promote her daughter's overall well-being.

Sustained Progress Through Growth Monitoring After six months, Winnie's progress was remarkable

The journey to eradicate child malnutrition is far from over, but stories like Winnie's inspire us to keep pushing forward. Winnie's success story represents hope and the power of collective action. Through the Child Growth Monitoring program, a component of the Uchembere Wa Ngwiro initiative,

Nsaru Health Center continues to monitor the health status of children like Winnie, ensuring sustained growth and providing critical support for those still battling malnutrition.



A 12-Day Journey of Transformation

Winnie's journey began with a comprehensive assessment of her height, weight, and MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference).



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Milestones Achieved 2024 FY



Develop a Whistleblowing Policy and a Child Protection Policy.



193 Pregnant mothers reached through outreach antenatal care



267 under five children feed through community led complementary feeding session



1,271 people reached through newly introduced mobile clinic



49 mothers participated in cervical cancer screening during a community cervical cancer campaign.



Adopt QuickBooks accounting software and conducted an audit of our accounts.



Our team has grown by hiring a community nurse and a programs coordinator.



603 Pregnant mothers enrolled within 15 weeks of their pregnancy



302 mothers attended maternal health study circles



263 Nursing home visits conducted



346 lactating mothers reached during world breastfeeding week campaign



315 mothers were reached through a birth outcome survey after they gave birth.



195 children participated in the child growth monitoring program.



Through Segal Connect 2024, we partnered with Partners for Equity, to scale up our interventions

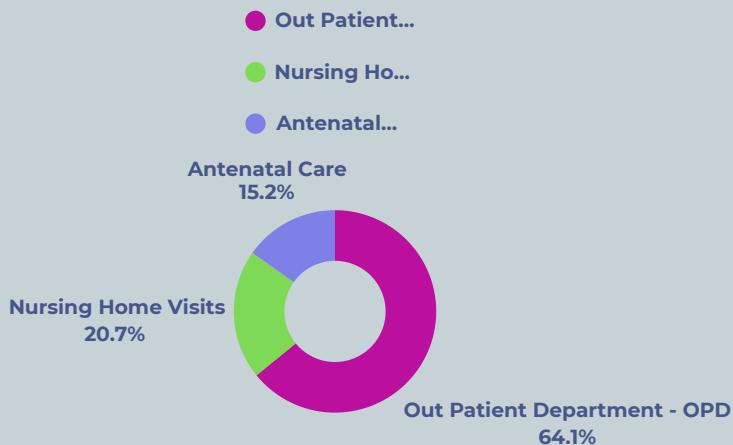


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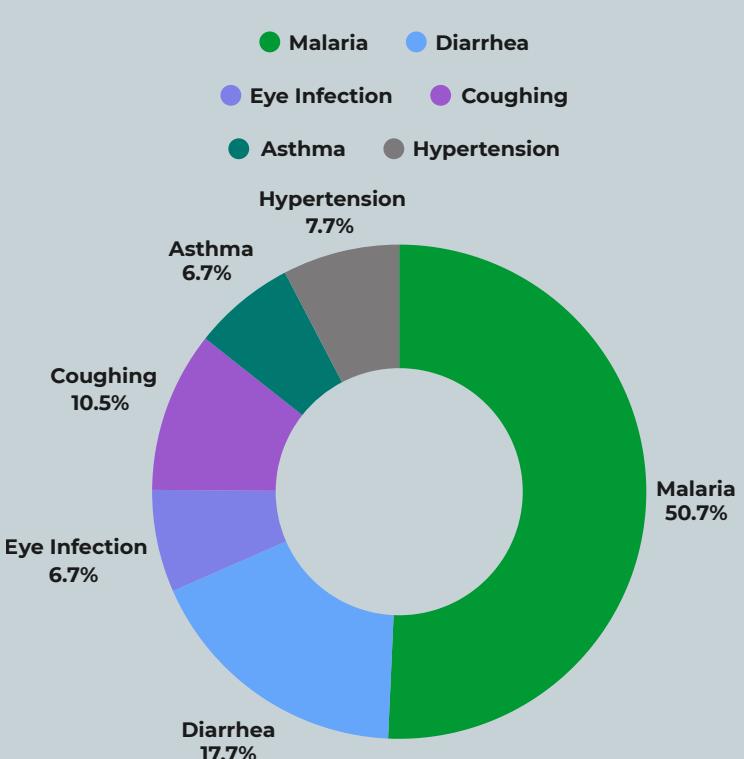
Impact Data

Outreach clinic

Outreach Clinic Intervention 2024



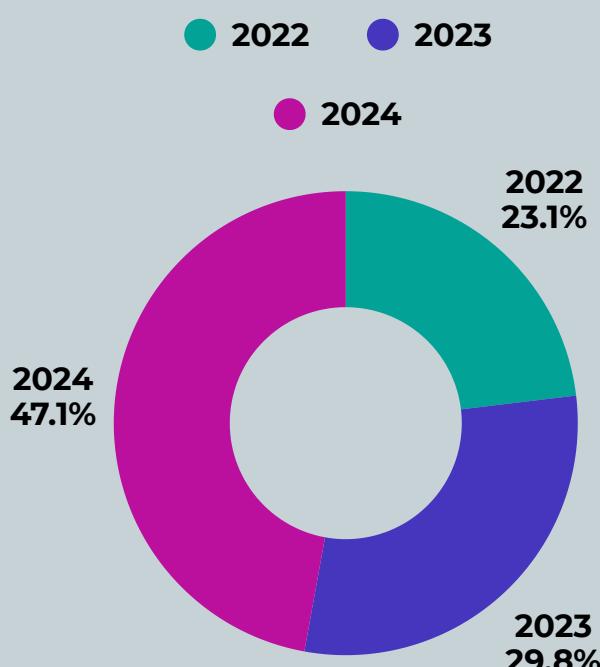
Condition Treated 2024



A total of 1,271 people were reached through the Outreach Clinic for pilot phase

Antenatal Care

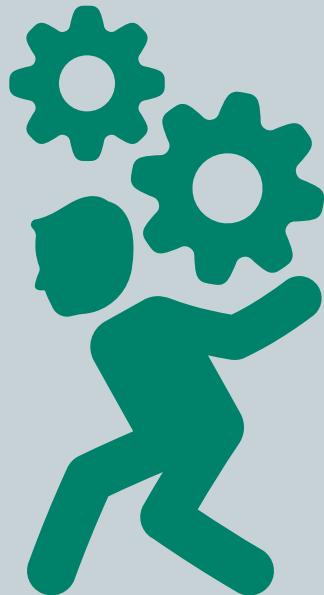
Pregnant Mothers Admission within 15 weeks



Challenges

High Inflation in Malawi

Malawi has seen significant inflation increases, with year-on-year rates rising to 34.3% in September 2024 from 33.9% in August. This inflation is causing price instability for goods and services, raising costs for our programs and complicating long-term planning. Suppliers are frequently adjusting prices and sometimes withholding stock to sell later.



Limited Funding for Small Organizations

Our organization has grown from a small nonprofit to a mid-sized one with a budget over one hundred thousand dollars. However, finding funders interested in supporting organizations of our size has been challenging. We hope to attract more funding opportunities as we continue to grow.

Talent

Smile Mums Foundation is at a stage of growth, which means we need to nurture raw talent to achieve our mission. However, once this talent is developed, they often move on to larger organizations. This situation is bittersweet: while it validates our efforts in cultivating their skills, it also leaves a gap in our work, forcing us to start the process over again.

Poor Transportation

We struggle to deploy our staff and health personnel to communities due to high transportation costs. Hiring motor vehicles costs us \$90 to \$110 a day, making it challenging to implement our planned interventions.



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Looking Ahead

The Smile Mums Foundation is continually exploring ways to expand our reach and ensure that everyone has access to high-quality healthcare.

In 2025, we plan to:

1. Increase access to essential health services for all.
2. Enhance community participation in maternal healthcare programs.
3. Strengthen initiatives focused on maternal and adolescent health.
4. Improve mobile clinic operations by doubling the number of scheduled visits.
5. Upgrade sanitation at the Nsaru Health Center maternity wing by constructing additional toilets and bathrooms.
6. Hiring two nurses to assist in providing community health care.



Smile Mums In Pictures 2024



<https://youtu.be/f87LhwA7xtg?si=-86ZelZmHekn982V>

Special thanks to our partners



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