



Smile Mums Foundation Mid-year Report

2024

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STAKEHOLDERS



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Smile Mum's Foundation
"Innovation For Saving Lives Of Mother and Children"

Welcome

Dear friends and partners

We firmly believe that mothers and children deserve the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives. The Smile Mums Foundation's Intervention in Nsaru, Lilongwe is based on this belief. Poverty is deeply rooted in many villages where we work, putting strain on families and jeopardizing the future and health of mothers and children. However, Smile Mums Foundation recognizes numerous opportunities within these communities to help families break free from poverty. Our efforts in 2024 have saved many pregnant mothers and nurtured healthy children for a promising future.

Our vision is for every mother and child to lead a fulfilling life, and our work towards that goal results from our faith. With God's sustaining power and the support we have received from the community, donors, local communities, Nsaru Health Center, and staff, we are doing more than just "helping the poor". We are unleashing human potential, which is great news!

We would like to express our gratitude to our stakeholders: the Ministry of Health through Nsaru Health Center, Segal Family Foundation, Malawi Scotland Partnership, Good Neighbour International, and Partners for Equity for their unwavering support in our work, which has transformed the lives of mothers and newborns in rural Malawi, Lilongwe.

Thank you to partners like you.

Frank 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.



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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.

T 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.



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.



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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.



Milestones Achieved.



Develop a Whistleblowing Policy and a Child Protection Policy.



660 Pregnant mothers enrolled within 15 weeks of their pregnancy



166 Pregnant mothers reached through outreach antenatal care



302 mothers attended maternal health study circles



203 under five children feed through community led complementary feeding session



263 Home visits conducted



Introduce mobile clinic to provide free healthcare services



346 lactating mothers reached during world breastfeeding week campaign



Quickbook accounting software adopted



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OUR 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. Poor



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