

Women and Children First

Improving the health of pregnant women and children in Malawi



Communities supported
144
Lives saved
99
Women, children and adolescents benefiting
35,546

Problem

At the time of the project Malawi had an under-5 mortality rate of 85 /1000 live births and maternal mortality ratio of 510 /100,000 live births.

Approach

[WCF MNH tool](#)

- 144 groups established with 25,421 members
- Developed local answers including: breastfeeding clubs, emergency funds, income generation, kitchen gardens, village bylaws, health education campaigns, bicycle ambulances, WASH activities.

Other community approaches

- Health promotion campaigns with members, men and leaders in 144 villages
- Community reviews of 90% of all maternal and neonatal deaths
- Volunteer led growth monitoring and referral for 44,935 children under-5

Health systems strengthening

- Training and face-to-face and remote mentorship of 55 facility health workers
- Provision of essential medical equipment to district hospital
- Support for delivery of 12 mobile ANC clinics in remote areas

Results

- Large improvements in care-seeking: early antenatal care (10%), delivery with a skilled

attendant (42%) and seeking postnatal care within 7 days of delivery (44%)

- Large improvements in quality of services: 47% of babies receiving KMC if indicated (2% at baseline), 71% reporting satisfaction with services (54%) and 89% of children receiving all vaccinations (67%)

Lessons learned

- Community ownership and engagement is key
- Orientation of community leaders and men in mother and child health is essential
- Quality and accessibility of services must take place in parallel to community engagement, but is often compromised by inadequate systems, resourcing and governance

www.womenandchildrenfirst.org.uk

Partner

Perinatal Care Project and Malawi Ministry of Health

Funder

Comic Relief (£584,532)

Dates

2010 – 2015

Project population

80,900

Ntcheu District, Malawi



Figure 1: MNH group membership

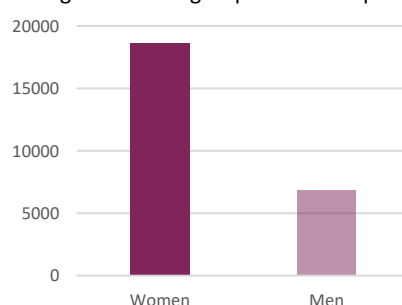


Figure 2: Care seeking-practices

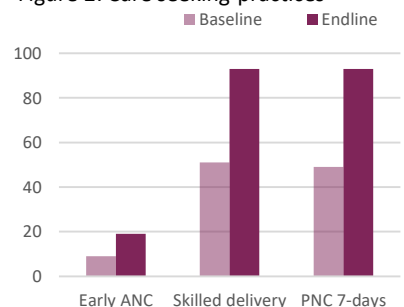
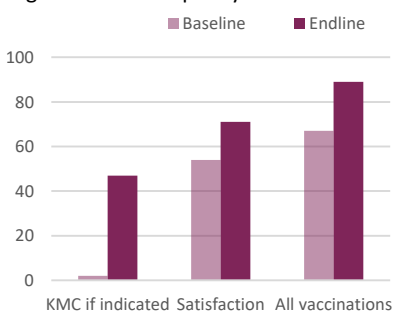


Figure 3: Service quality



Mother from local community

"In the past women gave birth right here in the village or on the way to the facility. When they developed complications, say retained placenta, transport was a problem and a woman would die on the way to the hospital on an oxcart. This time, now we have the groups, at eight months' pregnant, we go to the clinic to wait until delivery. So, I see that there is a big change"