



PHOTO ESSAY

INVESTING IN MALAWI'S HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Adequate infrastructure plays a critical role in the delivery of quality health care as it ensures appropriate space and an environment for dignified and respectable care while supporting implementation of infection prevention measures.

In May 2017, ONSE conducted a Health Facility Assessment of 424 public and private-for-profit health facilities in the 16 supported districts, identifying crucial service delivery gaps, as well as the root causes of those gaps, including poor facility infrastructure and insufficient equipment, supplies, as well as commodities. Since then, the ONSE Activity, led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), has collaborated with the Ministry of Health and District Health Offices to identify needs and conduct hundreds of improvements across facilities in the country.

The USAID ONSE Health Activity



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On October 1st, 2021, The Ministry of Health in Malawi and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) held a ceremony celebrating the significant improvements to the country's health infrastructure and the symbolic handover of the new and renovated health facilities. Malawi's Honorable Chrissie Kalamula Kanyasho (pictured left), Deputy Minister of Health, and Melissa Francis (pictured right), USAID's Acting Mission Director, celebrated the foundational improvements, which over the past five years have totaled US \$3.8 million (MK3.4 Billion).



Many of the infrastructure works were accomplished by teams from the Physical Asset Management (PAM) unit, a division under the Health Technical Support Services (HTSS) department in the Ministry of Health. This approach contributes to the government's ownership and to the policy agenda on "Jobs for the Youth," as some of the PAM staff engaged were drawn from vocational schools like Malawi's Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) Authority.

"I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation towards maintenance and extension of Dowa District Hospital labor ward. The labor ward is one of the busiest in the district and it is a huge relief to have it rehabilitated and extended as this will go a long way in improving the quality of maternity services that the district offers. Our initial challenges included inadequate delivery beds; environment not conducive to mothers or staff; privacy was an issue; the ward was short in meeting the required IP standards in regards to sanitation; mothers using outside toilets and bath rooms before and after delivery. However, today, thanks to ONSE, the facility has 10 delivery suites with washing facility, infection prevention standards are now met, we now have a sluice room, 2 bathrooms equipped with geyser and a toilet" **Dr Peter Makoza**
Director of Health and Social Services, Dowa District Hospital



Availability of good infrastructure and adequate equipment at a health facility plays a major role in improved outcomes in the areas of maternal, family planning, neonatal and child health, malaria, nutrition and WASH. These will contribute towards improving infection prevention and access to quality priority health services, which is in line with the MoHP agenda.



ONSE has refurbished and constructed family planning clinics in Lilongwe, Chitipa, Zomba, Chikwawa, Mulanje, Nkhosakota and Kasungu, acknowledging that access to family planning information, services, and commodities is essential to protecting the health and well-being of women, families, and societies as a whole.

The Bwaila Family Planning clinic in Lilongwe, is slated to increase essential services in one of Malawi's fastest growing cities and heavily populated business areas, where 1 in 5 women continue to report unmet family planning needs and where the population is estimated to increase by [97% between 2020 and 2035](#).





“The first time I came to this health center I had a hard time using the toilet due to the state they were in. However when I came this time I heard that an organization called ONSE has constructed modern VIP latrines here, I am so excited knowing that I will be using a new hygienic and improved latrine”.
Commented Salah Bauleni, a patient at a Health Center in Lilongwe

To manage hazardous waste, ONSE has constructed incinerators, placenta and ash pits in 13 health in Mchinji, Chikwawa, Zomba, Lilongwe, Dowa, Mulanje and Karonga.



“This support means a lot to us in terms of Health service delivery in the district councils. People seeking health care used to shun our services because of deplorable conditions in our health facilities due to poor Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities. There is no doubt that in the course of receiving care in poor environments, some patients and guardians get infected within hospital premises. With the coming of this support, many clients are patronizing the services and are not afraid of getting infected within hospital premises”

District Commissioner for Lilongwe, Lawford Palani

Apart from the VIP latrines and placenta pit that you can see here, ONSE is planning to set up an incinerator in the coming few months as waste management is also a problem at Bwaila Hospital” commented **Dr Ann Phoya** as the team toured the waste management site area.



“We will forever be thankful to ONSE for the incinerator. Here at Salima district hospital, our waste management system was very poor. For many years we basically used to dig a pit where we threw all our waste management but instead of solving the problem, we created environmental pollution. Thankfully we don’t have to worry about that now” Salima DHO





“The United States Government is cognizant of the challenges faced by the Government of Malawi in meeting the health needs of the nation. ONSP, our health flagship program, has invested in creating a conducive and a therapeutic environment for service delivery. For example, through renovation works at Dowa District Hospital, a pediatric ward has been transformed into an airy, bright ward with proper ventilation, treatment station, and a nurses’ office with proper furniture. A maternity ward in the same hospital, which had a very tiny labor room, torn ceiling boards, and a floor with potholes, has now become a place where women can be assured a safe and clean delivery,” **Melissa Francis, USAID’s Acting Mission Director**

“Appropriate infrastructure is one of the building blocks of any health system. These foundations are critical for meeting the health needs of every nation. Our current Health Sector Strategic Plan outlines infrastructure development as a priority intervention for Malawi to deliver its essential health package that is focusing on reducing high numbers of morbidity and mortality facing the country,”

Honorable Chrissie Kalamula Kanyasho, Deputy Minister of Health in Malawi





Women attendees at the event dancing to a song narrating a woman's plight in forgoing family planning method where due to it she would be pregnant, at the same time have a child at the back which others run underfoot stressing her while she does household chores. The Health Education Band through this song encouraged women go for family planning where they would have a manageable family.



Francis, Acting Mission Director for USAID Malawi handing over the Bwaila prefab family planning clinic key to the Deputy Minister of Health, Kanyasho