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ONSE HEALTH ACTIVITY

**INVESTING IN
MALAWI'S HEALTH
INFRASTRUCTURE**

MALAWI, 2016-2022



The **USAID Organized Network of Services for Everyone's (ONSE) Health Activity**, a five-year program led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) from 2016-2021 (with an extension to June 2022), supported Malawi and its MoH in reducing maternal, newborn, and child morbidity and mortality. Partnering with the MoH and national and district level stakeholders, ONSE improved access to, quality of, and demand for priority health services and strengthened the overall performance of the health system. ONSE's activities were based on three core principles to promote self-reliance: **(1) data-driven, district-specific targeting to jointly identify needs for high-impact interventions; (2) systemic capacity building, coupled with smart capacity-building approaches; and (3) mutual accountability.**



SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIVE,
EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE
INFRASTRUCTURE

The availability of good infrastructure and adequate equipment and supplies in rural communities and health facilities plays a major role in improved outcomes for maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH); family planning (FP); and malaria management and disease prevention. Underinvestment in public works projects, coupled with a growing population, has increased pressure on the existing health infrastructure in Malawi. Over its six years of support, the **Organized Network of Services for Everyone's (ONSE) Health Activity** implemented infrastructure solutions that positively impacted over half of Malawi's population.



ONSE supported **hardware investments**, such as infrastructure and equipment, that strengthened service delivery, including case management of severely ill COVID-19 cases in emergency treatment units, and improved infection prevention and control (IPC) and waste management.

Emergency obstetric and neonatal care sites benefited from the **provision of equipment**, including 68 sterilizers, more than 400 delivery packs, 222 delivery beds, and 11 simulation training sets (MamaNatalie and NeoNatalie).





Child health service delivery benefited from oxygen concentrators (250), Ambu bag resuscitation kits (48), and pulse oximeters (72).

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure interventions included the construction of ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines and improved waste management through the provision of 27 incinerators (12 mechanical and 15 brick and mortar) and 16 placenta and 20 ash pits (IPA).



Certain facilities, including **pediatric and maternity wards and health centers** damaged by natural disasters were renovated and upgraded, while seven FP units and one One-Stop Center for managing gender-based violence (GBV) cases were established. These interventions improved IPC in service delivery areas, such as maternity and pediatric care, and established service delivery spaces for FP, which were lacking in several facilities. They also created capacity for the safe treatment and disposal of infectious medical waste.

ONSE collaborated with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and its physical asset management (PAM) teams to create ownership and ensure sustainability of infrastructure work. ONSE procured and supplied construction materials and covered lunch allowances for the PAM teams during construction and renovation. This collaborative approach increased the experience of the PAM teams, provided a sense of ownership, and helped ensure sustainability. ONSE worked with the PAM teams to develop standard operating procedures and management procedures for mechanical incinerators.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVEMENTS

To address the need for adequate facilities for health care services, ONSE **refurbished and constructed FP clinics and provided prefabricated units** that created space for FP clinics. ONSE made upgrades at health facilities, including electrical, plumbing, and carpentry improvements. Over six years, ONSE:



- Constructed 15 prefabricated ONSE district offices that were co-located at district hospitals. By the end of the project, ONSE had supported the renovation of six prefabricated offices into FP clinics.
- Supplied and installed a new prefabricated office to be used as an FP clinic at Bwaila Hospital in Lilongwe
- Oversaw the renovation of health facilities and wards at the district level, including:
 - An FP clinic in Mulanje
 - A pediatric and maternity ward in Dowa
 - A roofed and reticulated (borehole, pump, tank, and water connection) water system at Chapananga maternity, which had had no water for more than 10 years
 - The renovation and introduction of a One-Stop Center for GBV at Balaka District Hospital
 - The electrification of Machinga Health Center
 - Maintenance and monthly routine service of the elevator at Kamuzu Central Hospital

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected Malawi and created challenges for the delivery of essential services, slowed renovation schedules, and interrupted the supply chain for equipment. To ensure the continuation of essential services during the pandemic, ONSE, in collaboration with district teams, supported the construction of VIP latrines in health care facilities, rehabilitated and maintained water infrastructure, and installed handwashing stations and promoted handwashing with soap.

ONSE's contributions to infrastructure improvements during COVID-19 included the:

- Establishment of emergency treatment units
- Construction of a holding shelter to decongest waiting areas at Chitipa District Hospital
- Establishment of an isolation center at Machinga District for travelers entering Malawi



WASH INFRASTRUCTURE

WASH services advocate for clean water and sanitary facilities and promote hygienic practices by providing soap and water for handwashing. Construction and renovation of WASH facilities in ONSE's 11 WASH districts improved the infrastructure in health care settings and provided access to clean water, hygienic handwashing facilities, effective wastewater collection, and stormwater drainage systems. Over six years, ONSE:

- Provided 89 facilities with improved plumbing and water availability
- Constructed 64 two-holed, VIP latrine blocks at supported health facilities across 11 districts, including one hole per unit that is disability friendly

Incineration is used for the safe treatment and disposal of infectious medical waste. Incinerator, placenta, and IPA pits contribute to efficient and clean waste management and improve infection prevention measures at health facilities. Over six years, ONSE:

- Installed seven sluice units at Kamuzu Central Hospital and one at Dowa District Hospital; Kamuzu Central Hospital had had no sluice since 2013
- Installed 12 medical waste disposal mechanical incinerators, 15 brick-and-mortar incinerators, 16 placenta pits, and 20 IPA pits across 16 ONSE-supported districts
- Constructed or renovated waste disposal facilities in all 16 ONSE districts



Equipment and Supplies

ONSE supported more than **\$1.3M worth of medical equipment**, which reached **424 public and private health facilities** in the **16 ONSE-supported districts**.

Table 1: Equipment and supplies distributed

Total	Maternal, newborn, and child health
80	Plastic fetal stethoscope
68	Sterilizer
149	Digital scale for Kangaroo mother care ward and nursery, 25kg
22	Phototherapy lamp
350	Kiwi vacuum extractor
72	Pulse oximeter
11	NeoNatalie simulation training sets
11	MamaNatalie simulation training sets
250	Oxygen concentrator
48	Resuscitation bag (Ambu bag) kit of sizes for neonates, children, and adults
222	Delivery beds
400+	Maternity delivery packs

Total	Family planning
33	Angle-poised lamp for IUCD insertions
20	IUCD insertion trainer uterus
544	Vaginal speculum (large, graves)
10	Arm model for implant insertion
20	Mini laparotomy sets
292	Height board

OTHER DIRECT SUPPORT TO HEALTH FACILITIES

- Procured and distributed water testing supplies and chlorine and provided training/orientation, including support for makeshift toilets in Karonga, Nkhatabay, Salima, Kasungu, Dowa, Lilongwe, Chikwawa, and Mulanje during the cholera outbreak
- Provided IPC materials for COVID-19 response
- Procured 80 gowns and 30 drapes for Ethel Mutharika Maternity Unit
- Repaired ward furniture and improved the work environment at Kamuzu Central Hospital: 99 tables, 214 chairs, 96 benches, 37 cabinets, and 22 bookshelves



Learn more at msh.org/projects/onse/