



THE MALAWI RMNCH SCORECARD

Background

A Call to Action

Malawi has made good progress in reducing the Under-five child mortality rate exceeding the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 target (to reduce by two-thirds the under-five mortality rate). While good progress has been made with the maternal mortality ratio, it still remains one of the highest in the region. The country has elaborated strategies that have placed essential newborn and mother care at the core of child survival and renewed national focus to achieve rapid and sustainable improvements in maternal health.

The Response

In 2012, The Presidential initiative on maternal health and safe motherhood, a country-wide initiative based in the Office of the President and Cabinet seeking to achieve rapid and sustainable improvements in maternal health was launched. The following year, the country launched the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) scorecard management tool as an accountability mechanism to enhance transparency and action on priority RMNCH interventions. Malawi had used the tool for over 1 year at ministerial level to enhance national and district performance when in August 2014, the Ministry of Health convened a 1.5 week exercise to identify opportunities to further strengthen the impact of Malawi's RMNCH scorecard management tool. With the support of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), WHO, UNICEF, and other key partners, information was collected through discussions, questionnaires and sharing of documentation and processes at national and district levels. At national level, this included the Honorable Minister of Health, Secretary for Health, Permanent Secretary, Chief of Health Services, Directors, Programme Managers and Programme staff. At district level, this included senior management and technical and monitoring staff four out of twenty-nine districts.

Progress

During the initial development phase of Malawi's RMNCH scorecard, the scorecard frequency was six-monthly; however, during the support strengthening mission, the Ministry committed to producing the scorecard quarterly and the country is in the process of updating the scorecard frequency to quarterly. The RMNCH scorecard management tool is embedded into the existing Ministry of Health management processes and accountability and action frameworks at national, zonal and district levels including support supervision, regular meetings and systematic documentation and tracking of action points.

Strengths of the Malawi RMNCH Scorecard

- The RMNCH scorecard is integrated into key processes and meetings, including the SWAP, mid-term reviews of key partner organizations, district implementation planning, and in the draft health systems strengthening strategy.
- The bottom-up RMNCH scorecard development process, with high levels of involvement of district and zonal level staff and civil society enhances ownership of the scorecard at all levels.
- Use of the scorecard by MOH at national and subnational level, and partners, in the allocation of resources to underperforming interventions, and underperforming districts.
- Access to the web platform is broad and comprehensive and includes district, zonal and national level MOH staff, as well as key partners.

Bottleneck analysis at all levels supports the identification of root causes of intervention underperformance and allows for the identification of key actions to address them. Examples include *Amayi a chinsinsi* (secret women) to encourage women to seek early antenatal care, male championships with men joining women at ANC, and the use of smartphones for support supervisions of health facilities.

Future actions

- The Ministry will introduce a budget line for the RMNCH Scorecard management tool into the MOH budget to provide resources for support to and dissemination of the RMNCH scorecard, such as regular support supervision.
- The RMNCH scorecard management tool responsibility will be incorporated into the job descriptions of key focal point staff at all levels.
- To shorten the scorecard production timeline whilst maintaining ownership of the RMNCH scorecard at all levels, the Ministry at national level will produce the draft

quarterly scorecard based on data available at national level through DHIS2, LMIS, and other sources and share with districts for their review before finalization.

Conclusion

The RMNCH scorecard is an integrated action oriented accountability tool that managers at national and sub-national levels use to track progress of priority indicators. It is therefore a strong foundation for Malawi to build on as it transitions from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will require focus on accountability and outcomes for maternal and child health at all levels of implementation.