

# GAIN Initiative: Implementation of the WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist in Malawi

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## Purpose

In 2017, the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), School of Nursing and Partners in Health/Abwenzi Pa Za Umoyo (PIH/APZU) formed a partnership to decrease maternal/neonatal morbidity and mortality in Neno district, Malawi.

**The Global Action to Improve Nursing & Midwifery Care (GAIN) Initiative** equips nurse midwives with the clinical and leadership skills to provide women and their babies safe and respectful childbirth. The intervention is composed of two principal activities:

- 1) Intensive Safe Childbirth & Leadership training
- 2) One year of bedside mentoring by expert nurse midwives

The intervention prepares nurse trainees to increase the use of 28 essential practices promoted by the WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist (SCC).



### Skills Practice

Enipher Nakhwala, GAIN trainee, speaks to a mother in Neno District Hospital NICU, during the skills practice session on neonatal assessment.

## Methods

### Intervention: Safe Childbirth & Leadership Training

- 6 – 10 day course, every 6 months
- 15-20 nurse midwife trainees per cohort
- Facilitators from UCSF, PIH, and Ministry of Health
- Pre-post knowledge testing

### Intervention: Mentorship

- One year of site-based mentorship
- Trainees at 2 referral hospitals & 6 health centers
- 1 US nurse mentors, 1 Malawian nurse mentor, 1 Malawian mentor-in-training

### WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist (SCC)

- 28 evidence-based practices to prevent or treat complications in low resource delivery settings.
- Lecture, role play, and simulation during training.
- Bedside teaching and in labor wards during site-based mentorship by expert midwives.
- Large SCC posters created as visual tools posted throughout maternity wards at all facilities.
- Observation of deliveries for evaluation of SCC practice performance.
- Ongoing planning with district-level Ministry of Health and Maternity Interest Group to embed SCC in Ministry protocols.



### 2018 Cohort

GAIN Trainees include 30 nurse midwives working at 8 hospitals and health centers in Neno District. The second cohort received their certificates of course completion in March 2018.

## Curriculum Components

**Leadership Module:** Tools to improve communication, teaching, mentoring, and management skills.

**Midwifery Module:** Skill building in evidence-based practices in maternal health including: emergency maternal care during labor and delivery, preventing pre-, intra- and post-partum complications, and Kangaroo Mother Care. Emphasis on SCC practices.

**Quality Improvement Module:** Methodologies for nurses/midwives to identify root causes of adverse events, and to lead team efforts to improve the quality of maternity healthcare delivery in the hospital and outpatient setting.

**Neonatal Care Module:** Skill building in care of the newborn, including physical exam, resuscitation, low birth weight infant issues, and recognizing sepsis. Emphasis on SCC practices.



### Simulation

Luka Mala, GAIN Trainee, and Mary Berger, training facilitator, practice newborn resuscitation during a simulation in a community hospital labor ward.

## Evaluation

The evaluation uses mixed methods to determine uptake of the WHO SCC, including staff acceptance, commitment, and implementation. Evaluation methodologies include:

- Pretest and posttest of nurse participants' knowledge related to the SCC.
- Observations of provider performance of SCC practices, recorded on tablet via Commcare software.
- Focus groups to understand participant experiences and perspectives on the implementation of the WHO SCC.
- Facility-level maternity patient data analysis related to maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

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