**Title:** **Midwife led quality improvement initiatives in improving maternal health in Neno, Malawi.**

Authors

1. Mphatso Sayenda
2. Maria Openshaw
3. Esnath Kapito
4. George Talama
5. Martha Kutsamba
6. Isaac Mphande
7. Emilia Connolly
8. Kimberly Baltzell

Affiliations

1. Partners In Health, Neno Malawi
2. Global Action in Nursing, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
3. University of Malawi Kamuzu College of Nursing, Lilongwe, Malawi
4. Partners In Health, Neno Malawi
5. Malawi Ministry of Health, Neno, Malawi
6. Partners In Health, Neno Malawi
7. Partners In Health, Neno Malawi
8. Global Action in Nursing, University of California San Francisco, San Francisco, CA

**Introduction:** In Malawi, systems-level quality initiatives have led to improvements in provision of maternal and neonatal healthcare, yet high rates of maternal and neonatal mortality persist. Quality improvement (QI) methodology and teaching has shown to increase quality of care and patient outcomes but nurse-midwifery education in Malawi does not include formal training in QI or supportive on the job mentorship at a personal or facility level.

Objective: The objective was to evaluate if QI methodology and leadership training coupled with consistent on-site mentorship would lead to QI projects in rural health care facilities.

Methods: The Global Action In Nursing (GAIN) project was started in 2017 in Neno District where nurse-midwives are trained by experienced mentors in leadership and QI skills with continuous on-site coaching to increase knowledge of participants and help initiate QI projects.

**Results:** Experienced nurse-midwife mentors have provided four QI training sessions and 1041 on-site coaching and leadership sessions in 9 health care centers and 2 hospitals over two years. Mentees formed interdisciplinary teams in their workplaces that designed and implemented QI projects based on facility needs in 9 health care centers and one hospital.Topics included: improving immediate postpartum management; improving routine neonatal care through checklist use; and increasing early entry to first trimester antenatal care. Challenges include financial funding for ongoing projects and high client volume that limits project time.

Recommendation: Training in QI methodology and leadership coupled with continuous on-site coaching led to several interdisciplinary facility-led QI projects with the potential to improve maternal and neonatal health care. We recommend that all midwives be trained in QI with further evaluation of the potential outcomes of such projects.