A Phased Approach to Scaling Up the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) in Malawi

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While breastfeeding rates have fluctuated, neonatal mortality declined.
BFHI is Critical to Facility-Based Breastfeeding

- Strong evidence that BFHI improves breastfeeding practices through improving breastfeeding counseling and support
- Revised WHO/UNICEF BFHI guidance released in 2018
- Malawi Ministry of Health (MOH) prioritized BFHI based on past success
Objectives of Malawi Case Study

• Discuss the phased approach to BFHI scale-up

• Describe successes, challenges, and lessons learned from phased scale-up of BFHI

• Describe next steps and the future of BFHI in Malawi
Key Approaches for Phased BFHI Scale-Up

• National level
  • Updated national BFHI training package
  • Leveraged the pool of BFHI master trainers
• Subnational level: Phased approach
  • Revitalization Phase: Rapid facility assessments and BFHI trainings conducted at 18 facilities
  • Scale-up Phase: Scaled up to 54 total facilities in all 28 districts
• Task shifting
• Established BFHI Task Forces to monitor progress
• Mentoring and supportive supervision tailored to needs
**Process of BFHI Phased Scale-Up**

**Phase I: Jan. 2016-May 2017**
- 18 hospitals
- Gained buy-in from government and local partners
- TOT with revised BFHI training package
- BCC materials revised and distributed
- BFHI task force established
- Assessed status of BFHI in hospitals
- Health workers at hospitals trained on BFHI
- Mentoring and supportive supervision

**Phase II: Jun. 2017-Feb. 2018**
- 36 hospitals
- BFHI task forces established
- TOT of 30 new master trainers
- Health workers at hospitals trained
- External assessments
- Baby-friendly certification

**Improved breastfeeding counseling and practices:**
- Early initiation of breastfeeding
- Exclusive breastfeeding
- Skin-to-skin
- Early initiation of breastfeeding
- Exclusive breastfeeding
- Skin-to-skin
Integration of BFHI with Other Health Areas

BFHI

IMMUNIZATION

FAMILY PLANNING

NEWBORN HEALTH
Achievements: Early Initiation of Breastfeeding <1 Hour of Birth, Pre/Post BFHI Roll-out

Malawi Early Initiation of Breastfeeding Rates, by Region

Early initiation of breastfeeding rates

Start of implementation

Northern

Central

Southern

Achievements: BFHI Scale-Up

- Scaled to **54** health facilities across all 28 districts
- **3** hospitals certified ‘Baby-Friendly’
- Over **80,000** women counseled on EBF
- Built local capacity:
  - **55** master trainers
  - **118** District Health Management Team members
  - **1,940** facility staff
  - **1,408** community volunteers
  - **350** Area Development Committee members

![Map of Malawi with BFHI initiatives marked]

- Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative
- Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative AND hospital certified as baby-friendly
- Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative AND underwent a successful external assessment by MOH
Key Challenges in BFHI Implementation

• Inadequate **pre-service training** curricula on BF
• Understaffed and **overburdened facilities**
• **Monitoring and evaluation** - EBF not routinely tracked in the health system
• **Data quality** management
• Strengthening **linkages** from facility to community
• Maintaining **Baby-Friendly designation**
Reflections on Sustaining BFHI at Scale in Malawi

- **Integrate** BFHI into the National Multi-Sector Nutrition Strategy, clinical protocols, and in- and pre-service training curricula
- **Improve data quality** and **routinely monitor** EBF indicators
- Routine facility-based **supportive supervision** for BFHI
- Incentivizing adherence to the **Ten Steps**
- Increased **domestic resources** for BFHI
- Improve **linkages** to the community
Thank you!