



**Abwenzi**  
Pa Za Umoyo

Partners In Health

# PIH MALAWI

# QUARTERLY Newsletter








July - September, 2025

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## PIH Turns Skills into Livelihood for the Youth in Neno

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# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

It is with great passion and gratitude that I present to you the inaugural issue of the Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi Quarterly Newsletter, which covers our achievements from July to September 2025. This milestone marks an exciting new chapter in our journey to improve health and bring lasting change to the communities we serve in Neno District and across Malawi.

At PIH Malawi, our mission is rooted in the fundamental belief that health is a human right, not a privilege. Over the years, your unwavering support, dedication, and shared vision have enabled us to expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and innovate new approaches to healthcare delivery in the areas we serve.

This newsletter aims to serve as a bridge that will connect you to the stories of resilience and hope from the field, updates on our latest initiatives, and give you an opportunity to become even more engaged with our work. We believe that transparency and shared knowledge are vital to fostering a global community united by compassion and purpose.

In this first edition, you will read about our recent efforts to providing preferential option to health care, our collaborations with other partners, and the inspiring individuals whose lives are transformed through access to quality care. We are committed to keeping you informed and involved as we continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in global health.

\Thank you for standing with us on this journey of providing health care. Your partnership is the cornerstone of our success, and together, we are

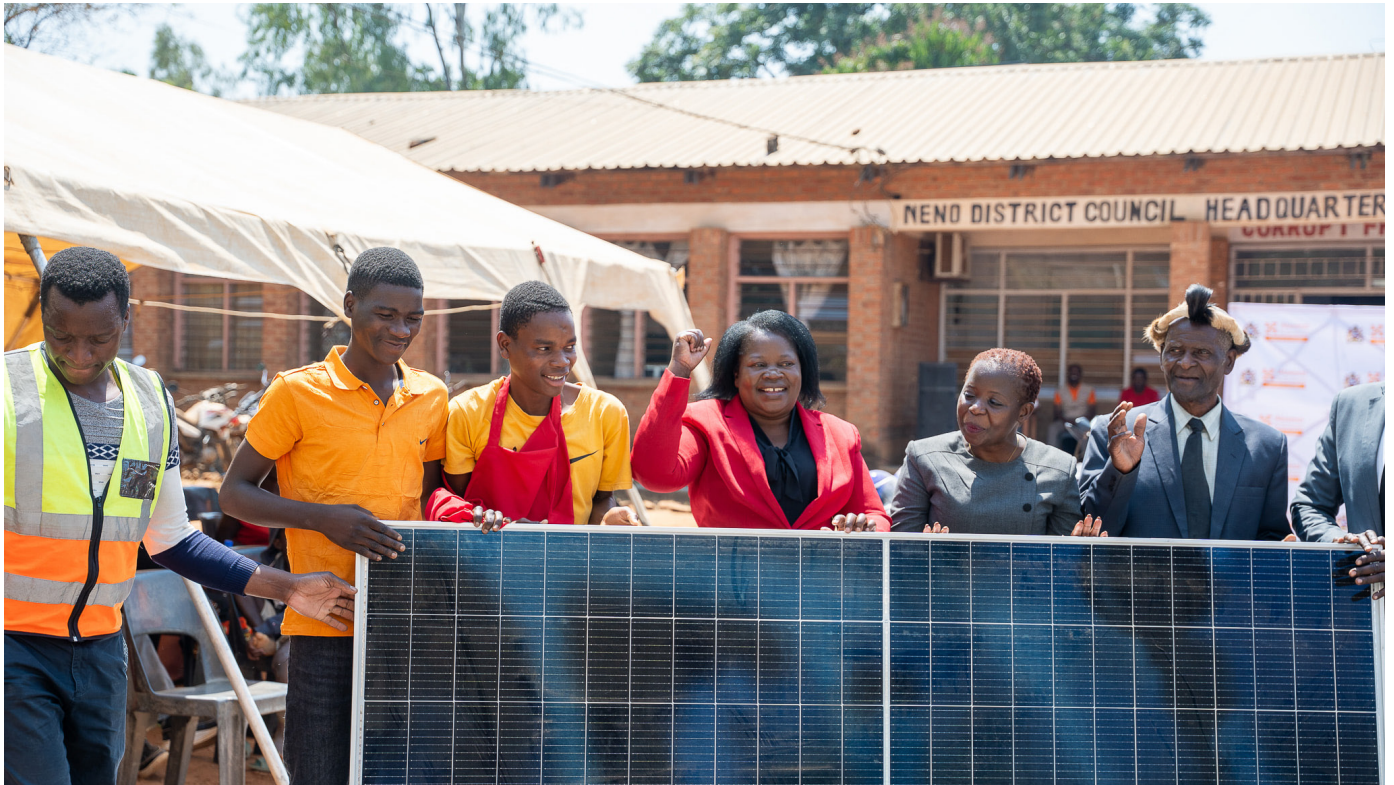


creating a healthier and more equitable world. We look forward to sharing many more stories and milestones with you in the editions to come

Enjoy the read!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Mbwadzulu'.

Janet Mbwadzulu  
*Communications Manager -*  
Partners In Health Malawi.



*PIH Malawi ED (2nd from right) and Neno DC (3rd from right) pose for a photo with some of the youth*

## PIH Turns Skills into Livelihood for the Youth in Neno

On 5th September, 2025, Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi officially handed over start-up materials to 39 graduating youths in Neno district that were procured under the ASPIRE Project with financial support from Julius Baer Foundation (JBF). PIH Malawi is implementing this project in collaboration with different government line ministries including the Ministry of Health (MoH), Youth and Sports, Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare.

The project began in October 2022, and currently, PIH Malawi is working with approximately 530 young people in Neno District who are using the guidance they receive from mentors on how to take care of their health. The handover of the start-up materials came after the youth had undergone an intensive six-months training with skilled artisans at Matandani Vocational Training Center in Neno and Andiyamo Technical College in Balaka.

The youths were provided with a range of professional-grade equipment, including five motorbikes for transport services, comprehensive kits for tailoring, salon services, barbering, welding, carpentry and joinery, and bricklaying valued at MK54 Million. Through this initiative, PIH aims at ensuring that the youths not only have the hands on skills, but also receive the critical entrepreneurship business management tips, and resources needed, to turn those skills into livelihoods.

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## One Little Push goes a Long way

Through this project, one of the former beneficiaries, Patrick Francis (22), from Soka Village, T/A Symon who was equipped with tailoring skills and supported with start-up materials for his tailoring business in 2024, commended PIH for the support attributing his business success to the project and the continued mentorship.

"I completed my training in 2024 and received all the materials I needed to start my tailoring business," said Francis. "Since then, I've expanded my business, which is now thriving. From the income I earn, I have managed to purchase 15 bags of maize, livestock, fertilizer, and a motorcycle. I am also planning to buy another sewing machine to further expand the business and increase my income. Additionally, I am now training other youths in my community."

He added that he is also using his business to support his family including his elderly grandmother. Through his business, Francis hopes to establish his own empire that will create even more job opportunities in his community and become a beacon of hope to other youths in need of similar opportunities. He encouraged his fellow youths to utilize the opportunity that PIH presented to them and use the skills to impact more people in their communities.

In her remarks during the event, the PIH Malawi Executive Director, Basimenye Nhlema, disclosed that the project came about following the increasing number of youths living in deep poverty, lacking even the most basic necessities, with many having dropped out of school and facing a future without hope.

"As an organization committed to health and human dignity, we know that poverty is a root cause of illness, and we cannot truly address one without confronting the other. That understanding, led PIH, in collaboration with the other government ministries in the district to establish this initiative", said Nhlema.



Neno DC during the symbolic handover of the motorcycles



Some of the motorcycles that were handed over to the youth

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*One of the Youth who received a solar panel to start his own Barbershop business*

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The Guest of Honour for the event, the Neno District Commissioner, Rosemary Nawasha, commended the initiative describing it as a timely and impactful intervention. She noted that the support would help address many challenges that the youth are facing in Neno, particularly the lack of opportunities to develop skills essential for economic empowerment.

**“This support from PIH has come just on time. As a district, we are still working on ensuring that our youths have access to opportunities to upgrade their skills and become economically independent. We hope that this initiative will continue so as to benefit even more youths across the district”, said Nawasha.**

Among other milestones under the ASPIRE project, PIH has supported 28 students with school fees and essential learning materials in secondary schools and 4 promising youths pursuing diplomas and degrees in Community Nursing, Community Development, Clinical Medicine, and Public Health.

To promote self-reliance, the organization has also equipped 20 young people with vocational training, and previously provided 14 of them with startup materials in tailoring, auto mechanics, and bricklaying which has consequently opened doors to sustainable livelihoods.

The initiative is a strategic investment in local economic development, designed to empower a new generation of skilled professionals. The investment also goes beyond materials; it’s an investment in sustainable community development. By empowering the young entrepreneurs, PIH is helping in job creation in the district, stimulating the local economy, and shaping a brighter future for Neno.

Suffice to say, the impact has also extended beyond youth empowerment. In the fight against hunger and poverty, PIH also extended direct cash assistance to 200 vulnerable households under the same project, helping them secure food and meet basic needs. Education access was further enhanced by providing new school uniforms to 100 children, ensuring they return to school with dignity and confidence.

PIH Malawi is implementing the ASPIRE Project under its Program on Social and Economic Rights (POSER). Through POSER, PIH Malawi is responding to people’s needs beyond disease treatment based on the premise that medicine and medical interventions alone are not adequate for resolving complex issues that patients and their households face in settings of poverty. It strives on a daily basis, to interrupt the cycle of poverty and the burden of diseases by addressing the social inequalities that place vulnerable clients at increased risk of illness in Neno District.



# Portable X-ray Machines Boosting TB Diagnosis in Neno

For many years, some community members in Neno have endured travelling long hours on rough roads to receive X-ray services. Recognizing this critical gap, in 2024, Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi in collaboration with Neno District Health Office (DHO) secured funding from the Embassy of Japan to procure a mobile X-ray machine designed to bring essential diagnostic services directly to communities in need.

The portable X-ray machines, stationed at Neno District Hospital is transforming healthcare by considerably reducing the time, cost, and hardship that community members face when seeking medical attention. Instead of traveling long distances to distant hospitals in the district, patients can now access crucial diagnostic services nearby,

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saving lives and easing burdens on families already struggling with limited resources.

One heartfelt story involves a family from Mtengula Village. In the family, an under five-child was diagnosed with TB at Neno DHO in the Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit (NRU). The entire household of seven was advised to consider a 30-kilometer journey to Lisungwi Community Hospital for screening.

Thankfully, due to the presence of the portable X-ray machine the family managed to get tested locally, and all six members tested negative. This quick accessible screening not only spared them a challenging journey but also provided vital health advice, helping them protect themselves and prevent the spread of TB within their community.

Beyond individual cases, the availability of mobile x-ray services will strengthen the overall healthcare system in Neno. Health workers will



*Japanese Ambassador handing over the X-ray machine to Neno DC*

be able to perform accurate diagnoses on-site, reducing the need for referrals and ensuring patients receive appropriate care faster. This improved accessibility encourages more community members to seek help early, fostering healthier communities, reducing preventable disabilities, and offering hope for a brighter, healthier future for Neno’s residents.



**MoH Radiographer Simon Gama conducts an X-ray on Tiyanjane Shaibu in Neno**



## Food Insecurity Claims a Life in Neno

Tragedy struck Nyakoko Village in Neno District on September 10, 2025, when 8-year-old James Julius died from suspected food poisoning whilst his two siblings were admitted at Neno District Hospital. The incident highlighted the dangers that vulnerable communities face regarding food safety, especially during times of food insecurity.

According to a preliminary investigation by the Neno DHO, James' family of five, prepared and ate nsima made from cassava peels on September 9. Early the following morning, the children began experiencing severe symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of consciousness, prompting immediate medical intervention.

After the incident, the family was rushed to Ligowe Health Center but James was pronounced dead upon arrival. His 12-year-old brother and 8-year-old sister were stabilized and referred to Neno District Hospital's High Dependency Unit (HDU). Thanks to prompt medical care.

The hospital's medical team provided critical care, administering B12 injectable as antidote to counteract poisoning from the cyanide exposure linked to the cassava peels. Their swift response was vital in saving the siblings' lives, demonstrating the importance of accessible emergency healthcare in rural areas.

PIH Malawi in collaboration with the Ministry of Health constructed the HDU at Neno DHO under its Transforming Care for the Critically Ill Project, and officially handed it over on 9th May 2025. This facility aims to improve access to

life-saving emergency and critical care services for remote communities, where such resources are often limited.

This tragic incident underscores broader issues surrounding food safety and food security in Malawi. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, some districts in the Southern region of Malawi, including Neno, are expected to experience severe food shortages between September 2025 and January 2026. Maize prices are projected to increase which will make basic food staples unaffordable for many families and deepening the country's ongoing hunger crisis.

The 2025 Global Report on Food Crises also paints a bleak picture for Malawi, revealing that over 6.8 million people, more than a third of the population, cannot meet their basic food needs. It says severe food insecurity is pushing families to adopt harmful coping strategies, as around 5.7 million Malawians are classified under IPC Phase 3, indicating a critical level of hunger and vulnerability.

The persistent crisis, driven by recurrent droughts, storms, and cyclones, exposes the deep-rooted challenges Malawi faces in securing food and protecting its vulnerable communities. While PIH Malawi's POSER is supporting some households with food and cash transfers, the demand is overwhelming and needs the effort of different stakeholders to support the government. This tragedy underscores the need to strengthened healthcare infrastructure, community awareness on food safety, and expanded support to prevent further loss of life.



Minister of Gender Hon. Jean Sendeza visiting PIH's pavillion at NGO Day

# PIH Malawi Flaunts Digital Health Revolution at NGO Day

On 29th August 2025, Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi joined fellow Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Malawi commemorating the 2025 NGO Day at Mzuzu Stadium under the theme: Harnessing Local Resources for Sustainable Development; Advancing the Impact of NGOs Towards Malawi Agenda 2063. The event was graced by the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Honorable Jean Muonaomuza Sendeza.

The commemoration commenced with a solidarity march, symbolizing the unity and dedication of NGOs to collaborate with the government in areas such as health, youth empowerment, agriculture, and family planning.

During the event, PIH Malawi highlighted some of its interventions in Neno and provided free screening services for NCDs including Diabetes and hypertension.

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PIH's Malawi COO, Annie Chipaka presenting to the minister on PIH's stand at the event



PIH's Malawi HIV/TB Officer, Charles Phiri (4th from right) during a solidarity walk

**“These digital health platforms facilitate clinical decision-making at the point of care, enable tracking of patients who miss appointments to improve retention, monitor disease control indicators, and strengthen programmatic data management,” Thengo explained.**

Additionally during the event, PIH Malawi’s Medical Informatics and IT Manager, Limbani Thengo, showcased a number of digital health initiatives that PIH is supporting the government with through the Ministry of Health. Notably, he highlighted the deployment of OpenMRS, an open-source electronic medical records system implemented in Neno District, which currently manages data for 8,531 HIV patients and over 4,412 NCD patients.

The NGO Day event underscores the importance for PIH Malawi to remain actively engaged, align our initiatives with national priorities, and contribute meaningfully to Malawi’s development agenda. It also reinforces our commitment to building a sustainable future in line with Agenda 2063.



## Malawi's Young Diabetes Warriors Learn to Thrive

For people living with undiagnosed non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including Type-1 diabetes (T1D), the absence of information can be as dangerous as the disease itself. Without proper diagnosis and medical guidance, individuals face serious, life-threatening complications. This reality demands an urgent question: Can anyone truly manage a life-threatening condition without knowing they have it?

The answer lies in proactive care. Effective management of NCDs begins with awareness of one's own health status. This early awareness and early diagnosis lays the foundation for everything that follows: medical treatment, necessary lifestyle changes, and regular health monitoring.

However, a formal diagnosis is only the first step. For children and adolescents, the journey requires more than just medical instruction; it requires a strong support system. This is where the role of community becomes essential.

According to Ophelia Nabeta, Regional Director for the Sonia Nabeta Foundation (SNF), children and teenagers are a particularly vulnerable group. "Unlike adults, children often have less structured schedules," she explained.

"Erratic eating habits, spontaneous physical activity, and sleep irregularities make it challenging to accurately calculate insulin doses. Furthermore, children and adolescents with T1D are at a higher risk of developing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. The fear of needles, public scrutiny, and long-term complications can further complicate their ability to adhere to treatment, which can lead to dangerous blood sugar fluctuations."

Bearing these challenges in mind, a collaborative effort was launched to empower these young individuals. The Malawi Ministry of Health, Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi, and the SNF, with support from the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF), organized a four-day T1D camp at Mzuzu Academy. The goal was to teach children with T1D called "warriors" safe care management of their chronic condition at an early stage in their lives.

This was the second camp of its kind, following an initial event in Lilongwe for warriors from the central region. The Mzuzu camp, named "Chikanga," a Tumbuka word for courage, perfectly reflected the resilience needed to manage T1D. The camp actively helped children and teenagers navigate the complexities of adolescence while living with a chronic illness.



The story of 17-year-old Madalitso from Mahowe in Nthalire, Chitipa District, exemplifies these struggles. Living with diabetes, she has to travel more than 140 kilometers from her village to reach Chitipa District Hospital for insulin. Yet even after such long trips, insulin is not always available due to irregular supply chains, leaving her vulnerable and uncertain about tomorrow. Her hardships deepened when a severe cataract nearly blinded her, forcing her to abandon Miwanga Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) and leaving her world in darkness. For three long years, her dreams of education seemed out of reach, casting a shadow over her future.

However, hope arrived on 3rd August 2025, during the DT1 Camp "Chikanga" at Mzuzu International Academy. Thanks to the camp, Madalitso was noticed by one of the coaches and she was referred for a life-changing eye surgery at Mzuzu Central Hospital where her sight was restored. She expressed her joy, saying, "It feels like being reborn!" With her vision restored, she was now eager to return to school. But, one haunting question remains: where will she consistently find the insulin she needs to stay alive and explore her newly bright future with possibility?

PIH Malawi is supporting MoH to bring essential services closer to communities in almost all districts in Malawi. Among others, it distributes glucometers, glucometers, weighing scales and urine dipsticks in health facilities.

Through its NCD Mentors, PIH Malawi also strengthens clinical capacity, data systems, and quality of care in district health facilities through hands-on mentorship, targeted trainings, and bedside teaching. The mentors guide teams in managing complex chronic conditions including hypertension, diabetes, heart failure, asthma, epilepsy, and chronic kidney disease among others. PIH is also involved in development of NCD protocols, technical review of national guidelines, and contribute to research and program development at national level.

Madalitso's story underscores the urgent need for systemic change including decentralization of NCD care. Her journey illustrates that with the right support and resources, no child can be forced to choose between health, education, and survival.

# A Journey of Hope:

## Madalitso Mtambo's Fight Against Diabetes and Blindness

According to the 2025 World Health Organisation report, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are the leading causes of death globally, responsible for over 43 million deaths each year, including 18 million premature deaths. Despite these alarming figures, NCDs are largely manageable with early diagnosis and proper treatment. However, in many developing countries, the inconsistent availability of essential resources for managing NCDs has led to preventable loss of life.



# Bringing Mental Health Care where it's needed the most

Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi in partnership with Neno District Health Office has been conducting mental health trainings for various stakeholders including nurses, clinicians and faith leaders.

The trainings aimed at equipping the different groups of stakeholders with knowledge about common mental health disorders, promote mental well-being, recognize early signs of mental health conditions for timely referral, and reduce stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental illness.

A total of 73 nurses and clinicians have been trained on enhanced skills for conducting mental health assessments, diagnosing and managing common mental disorders, providing quality care, and fostering positive attitudes to reducing stigma and discrimination among people with mental illness.

Additionally, 114 faith leaders from Neno district have been trained on understanding mental health, addressing myths and misconceptions about mental illness, but also recognizing and managing common mental health conditions within their localities.

Currently, efforts are underway to include other stakeholders like traditional healers and police officers in these trainings. Further sessions will also focus on how nurses and clinicians can screen for depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire, perform Psychological First Aid and deliver Problem Management as a psychological intervention for depression.

These initiatives align with PIH's mission to accompany the MoH in advocating, designing, and implementing a universal health system centered on community empowerment, equity, and social justice

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Participants pose for a group photo during a mental health training

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PIH Malawi has a fully fledged Mental Health Team that provides mental health care to all people in need of mental health services in Neno District in coordination with MoH. Among others, this team has managed to train nurses, clinicians, counselors, on how they can help in assessing and managing depression and mental health illness in the health facilities, including Psychological First Aid (PFA) in preparation for disasters and emergencies.

It has also conducted mental health awareness programs for clerks, the police, traditional healers, village heads, and teachers to ensure they help in screening depression but also prevent abuse against people with mental illness even in times of emergencies and disasters.

Join us in investing in mental health as we strive to help individuals reach their full potential and improve quality of life.

# DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ **Partners** In Health Malawi is now available on all major social media platforms
- ▶ **GET TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WE ARE DOING AND THE IMPACT WE ARE MAKING IN THE COMMUNITIES**
- ▶ **Like and Follow US**



# WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

In the month of September, the world commemorates Suicide Prevention Day. The day stands as a global moment to reaffirm our shared commitment to suicide prevention and to highlight that suicide is preventable. The 2025 triennial theme, 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide', urges individuals, communities, and institutions to challenge harmful myths, reduce stigma, and foster open, compassionate conversations that create environments where people feel safe to speak up and seek help

## Understanding & Recognizing Warning Signs

Raising awareness of the warning signs of suicide is vital. A widely used mnemonic '**IS PATH WARM**' is the easiest way to remember them;

- **Ideation:** Talking about wanting to die or seeking methods.
- **Substance abuse:** Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- **Purposelessness:** Feeling there's no reason to live.
  - : Agitation or significant sleep disturbances.
- **Trapped:** Feeling like there's no escape.
- **Hopelessness:** Believe the future holds no improvement.
- **Withdrawal:** Pulling away from loved ones and activities.
- **Anger:** Uncontrolled rage or seeking revenge.
- **Recklessness:** Taking dangerous risks without apparent cause.
- **Mood changes:** Sudden or dramatic shifts in mood.

Additional indicators include talking about being a burden, giving away prized items, or making final arrangements even when someone is not terminally ill.

## How to Support Someone in Crisis

1. **Start a conversation, interrupt suicidal thoughts:**  
Even simple inquiries like "Are you thinking about harming yourself?" can make a powerful difference many survivors say that someone reaching out stopped their suicidal thoughts in that moment.
2. **Listen with empathy: Hold space without judgment.**  
Let the person know they are heard, respected, and that their feelings matter. Avoid dismissive remarks and self-focused comparisons.
3. **Encourage professional help and create a safety plan:**  
Gently suggest reaching out to mental health professionals or crisis helplines. Help remove means of self-harm if there's immediate risk, and work with them to define a safety plan. Even small, supportive steps can save lives.
4. **Build and maintain connection:** Regular check-ins; through texts, calls, or visits. Reaffirm that someone cares. Small gestures can sustain hope and resilience.

This year's theme 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide' invites us to replace stigma with empathy and open conversation. Let's be the change: speak kindly, listen deeply, and reach out with hope. It is okay not to be okay, together we can end suicide.



# BUILDING HOPE

## PIH Mw collaborates with FDH Bank on Midzemba maternity wing

A major milestone in effort to improve maternal health care in Neno District was reached on July 2, when Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi joined different stakeholders to officially launch the construction of a new maternity ward with a ground-breaking ceremony at Midzemba

Health Centre. The initiative marked a critical step in addressing the longstanding challenges faced by expectant mothers in the area, including limited access to quality maternal services and overcrowded health facilities.

Basimenye Nhlema, PIH Malawi’s Executive Director described the development as a major milestone citing that that the infrastructure will not only be a building but an investment in the health and future of people in Neno and beyond.

“The facility aligns with PIH Malawi’s 2022-2026 strategic plan and addresses a critical gap, noting that the Midzemba catchment area is home to around 13,000 women, with over 3,000 of childbearing age.

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*FDH Bank's Senior Manager in Corporate Banking, Eugene Chinkhandwe making his presentation*

This is significant to us as more women will get access to quality care" she said.

Once completed, the ward will include delivery rooms, prenatal and postnatal care, and essential medical equipment. Currently, some women in the area travel up to 25 kilometres to access maternal health services.

The event was attended by local leaders, health officials, and development partners, marking the beginning of a facility expected to bring vital maternal care closer to the community.

PIH Malawi lobbied for funding for the project, and the effort attracted the support from FDH Bank, which contributed MWK 150 million to fund the first phase of construction.

Speaking at the event, FDH Bank's Senior Manager in Corporate Banking, Eugene

Chinkhandwe, said the bank felt compelled to support the initiative.

"When we heard that women were walking such long distances to give birth, we knew we had to step in," he said. "We believe the children born here could one day become our employees and customers." said Chinkhandwe.

The current work marks Phase One of a four-phase project. Future phases will include a waiting home for expectant mothers, staff accommodation, and expanded services. PIH Malawi is now actively seeking additional funding for the remaining stages.

The project is being hailed as a milestone for maternal health in rural Malawi, offering hope for safer births and better access to health care for women at Midzemba area.



## PIH Scoops ICT Award for Advancing Health Through Technology

Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi was honored with the “Best Use of ICT in Health” award at the 2025 ICTAM International ICT Expo and Corporate Awards, held at Bingu International Conference Center (BICC) in Lilongwe. The recognition affirms PIH’s continued leadership in leveraging technology to improve health outcomes and advance equitable health care in Malawi.

The 2025 ICT Expo brought together the brightest minds and changemakers from Malawi’s digital ecosystem including innovators, policymakers, private sector leaders and development partners. The conference was held under the theme “Accelerating

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Malawi's Digital Economy Through Innovation", and it served as a powerful platform for showcasing how technology is transforming lives across different sectors.

The Expo also featured interactive exhibitions, keynote speeches, and high-level panel discussions. One notable session was led by young tech fellows who showcased a new food delivery application inspired by services like Changu Food.

The discussion highlighted both the promise and the challenges of deploying digital services in rural areas, including issues of network coverage and digital trust.

During the event, participants also explored emerging tools such as portable server environments and strategies for avoiding digital burnout in the modern work environment. These insights are expected to shape ongoing innovations within Malawi's growing digital ecosystem.

For PIH, the award is more than a trophy; it is a celebration of its bold commitment to using digital tools to improve health outcomes in some of the country's most underserved communities. From digitized patient records and supply chain systems to real time data management and remote service delivery, PIH has proven that technology can be a lifeline for those who need care the most.

PIH's journey is a powerful reminder that digital transformation is not just about gadgets and software. It is about people. It is about bringing dignity, access and opportunity to places often left behind. Winning this award is a testament to the impact that is possible when innovation is driven by compassion and purpose.

As Malawi's tech future continues to evolve, the recognition of PIH's work serves as a beacon of what is possible. It is a call to dream bigger, collaborate deeper and continue building systems that serve everyone everywhere.



# PIH hosts Annual Wellness Day event

In a vibrant display of its commitment to employee well-being as a cornerstone of its mission, Partners In Health (PIH) Malawi hosted a comprehensive Staff Wellness Day at Neno Stadium.

The event, held under the theme “Life Beyond the Desk,” transcending the conventional notion of a day off, serving as a strategic and heartfelt investment in the organization’s most valuable asset: its people. The initiative reflects a profound understanding that the demanding work of delivering health care in resource-limited settings requires not only dedication but also deliberate, structured to prevent burnout and sustain passion.

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*PIH Malawi Executive Director Basimenye Nhlema making a presentation during wellness day*

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By creating a space for staff to focus on their mental, physical, and social well-being, PIH Malawi reinforces a core principle: to care for others effectively, one must first be cared for. In her opening address, PIH Malawi Executive Director, Basimenye Nhlema, encouraged staff to not only engage in physical activities, but also take steps to improve their financial health through saving, investing, or starting small businesses.

She highlighted how these practices contribute to overall physical, mental, emotional, and economic well-being. "Let's commit to incorporating wellness practices into our daily routine, including utilizing the Wellness Wednesday which the organization provides on Wednesdays every week," she said.

Her remarks underscored the organization's innovative approach to staff support, recognizing that financial stress and personal fulfillment are intrinsically linked to professional performance and overall well-being.

During the event, staff enjoyed a diverse array of activities carefully curated to embody this holistic philosophy. Staff participated in group fitness sessions, health screenings for indicators like blood pressure and blood sugar, and interactive workshops on mental health awareness and stress management techniques.

A unique and celebrated addition was a financial literacy seminar, which provided practical guidance on personal budgeting and saving strategies, directly addressing Nhlema's call for economic

empowerment. The stadium atmosphere buzzed with camaraderie as teams engaged in friendly competitive games, sharing meals and laughter, which strengthened social bonds and built a deeper sense of community among colleagues.

The Wellness Day is not an isolated event but a key component of PIH Malawi's broader, ongoing strategy to prioritize staff retention and operational sustainability. It complements existing benefits like weekly "Wellness Wednesday" initiatives, which grant staff dedicated time for self-care. This comprehensive commitment ensures that PIH's frontline workforce remains supported, healthy, and resilient.

Ultimately, by nurturing the well-being of its staff, PIH Malawi fortifies its capacity to deliver compassionate, high-quality care to the communities of Neno and beyond, embodying the true meaning of its mission: to provide a "preferential option for the poor in health care" by first valuing those who serve them.



*PIH staff accessing health screening at services at the event*



*PIH staff at the event*



**Abwenzi**

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