



MALAWI HEALTH EQUITY NETWORK (MHEN)

Promoting Health for All People in Malawi

BACKGROUND

MHEN is an independent, membership non-profit making alliance of over 90 civil society organizations (CSO) and a few individuals in the health sector (throughout Malawi) interested in promoting equitable access to quality, affordable and responsive health care services in Malawi. It achieves this through influencing policy formulation, review, and practice. Strategies it uses include lobby and evidence-based advocacy, research, civic education and information sharing.

VISION

All people in Malawi have access to equitable, quality, affordable and responsive essential health care services

MISSION

Advocating and lobbying for health systems that promote the delivery of equitable and quality health care services by influencing policy and practice through research, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation



MHEN's program areas

- Governance
- Essential Services

PRINCIPLES, VALUES, OBJECTIVES

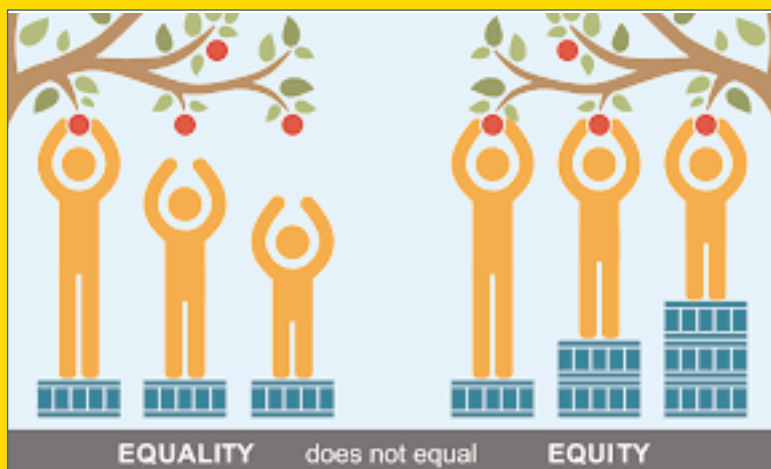
Strategic Objectives

- To advocate for strategically pro-poor health policies.
- To monitor the effectiveness of implementation of health policies with special emphasis on marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- To undertake appropriate research for advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation.
- To promote health rights for both patients and health service providers.

Principles and Values

MHEN lives by the following Guiding Principles and Values:

- **Equity:** Everyone should have equitable access to health care.
- **Accountability:** To accountably serve Malawians and promote accountability in the Malawi health system.
- **Quality:** To promote high quality healthcare service provision for all Malawians, and appreciating that quality is a product of collective effort by various players.
- **Integrity:** To serve the nation with high integrity by giving evidence-based, apolitical and balanced views as well advocating for integrity among public officers and leaders.
- **Responsiveness:** To respond to existing and emerging health issues, convey concerns of the voiceless to relevant authorities, and provide feedback to stakeholders and the public.
- **Transparency:** To be open to the public, ready to provide information as needed by stakeholders, and demand the same from duty bearers.



All communication must be addressed to:

The Executive Director

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STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The strategies which MHEN uses include, but not limited to:

1) **Evidence-based Advocacy:** MHEN's core function is conducting evidence-based advocacy on health. This advocacy is based on identified health issues at national, district and community levels. MHEN starts with contact and dialogue among others, as opposed to antagonism and militancy. It has been advocating for:

- Adequate resourcing of the health sector
- Prioritizing preventive health services and promoting high impact health interventions such as immunization.
- Stopping drug stockouts in Malawi especially the rural communities.
- Promoting health rights to both service providers and beneficiaries.
- Solving general health governance and service delivery challenges.
- Valuing health care workers as a necessary resource (recruiting, motivating and retaining).
- Honouring of regional and global health related protocols e.g. the Abuja Declaration.

2) **Health Budget Work:** MHEN conducts analysis of the national health sector budget estimates soon after the presentation of the estimates in Parliament by the Minister of Finance. The analysis reports simplify budget documents for fruitful debate by Members of Parliament (MPs) during the budget sitting in addition to informing monitoring by the civil society, MPs and other stakeholders. The findings are also used to lobby for more funding to the health sector to address identified gaps. MHEN also provides technical assistance to selected District Health Offices (DHO) on the development of district health budgets that are responsive to the needs of all people including gender groups.

3) **Social Accountability:** MHEN takes note of international protocols that Malawi is a signatory to and national policies to hold duty bearers accountable. They border on financing and quality of healthcare service provision. MHEN also conducts budget and resources tracking to ensure efficiency in use of the same.

4) **Health Systems Strengthening:** MHEN supports its network members, district health offices, and builds capacity of hospital advisory committees and community based health care groups (e.g. village health committees and mother care groups) and build linkages. In this, it identifies gaps in health service provision, pilots interventions that may address the gaps and conducts advocacy on the findings of the piloted interventions.

5) **Campaigning and Popular Mobilization:** MHEN joins national health campaigns and also mobilizes communities on health issues such as immunization, HIV/AIDS, water born diseases, rabies and Non Communicable Diseases. It also conducts awareness raising activities and behavioural change initiatives.

6) **Research:** To conduct evidence-based advocacy MHEN conducts research on various health issues. It also pilots specific health interventions and make recommendations to government and other stakeholders. Traditionally MHEN conducts Service Delivery Satisfaction Surveys (SDSS) that look at satisfaction with health service by beneficiaries and service providers. SDSS is done at national level, selected districts and community levels. The information collected informs planning of health interventions by various stakeholders.

7) **Networking and Collaboration:** MHEN collaborates with various stakeholders and policy makers that include Government, Parliament, International and Local Non Governmental Organizations, regulatory bodies, sister civil society organization networks, media and the general public. It sits on a number Technical Working Groups. It is coordinating the CSO Platform on Immunization and Health Systems Strengthening, with support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance since 2013, which seeks to contribute to strengthening capacity of integrated health systems to deliver immunization by resolving health systems constraints, increasing the level of equity in access to services and strengthening civil society engagement in the health sector. It is also coordinating the National Taskforce on Social Accountability.

SOME OF MHEN'S PROJECTS

1. Health Systems Strengthening Project funded by Gavi Alliance (2018 to 2023)
2. Maternal and Child Health and HIV/AIDS Services funded by ONSE (2018-20)
3. Social accountability in the Health Sector - OSISA (2018-2020).
4. Universal Health Coverage funded by Oxfam, Christian Aid and AHF (2019 to date)
5. Equity in Access to Treatment and Accountability (Targeting PLHIV and influencing policy): - Oxfam (2011 to 2015)
6. Health Systems Strengthening Project, Gavi (through Catholic Relief Services) (2013 to 2017)
7. Enhanced Community Health through Increased and Accountable Resourcing of HIV and AIDS, Malaria, Maternal and New Born Care Services in Malawi - Christian Aid (2014-2016)
8. Gender Responsive Budgeting - UNFPA (2013-2015)
9. Every Women Every Child (EWEC) - Unicef (2016-2018)
10. Good Governance through Provision of Quality and Equal Health Service - Trocaire (2014-17)
11. Enhancement of Access to Family Planning Commodities in Malawi - Population Action International (PAI) through Christian Aid (2015)
12. Malawi Child Health Now - World Vision International (WVI) (2015)
13. Improved Services for AIDS and Basic Healthcare through Empowerment and Local Democracy (ISABEL) - EU through Edinburgh Medical Mission Service EMS (2016-2018)
14. Increasing Citizen's Demand for Accountability and Transparency (ICiDAnT) for Maternal and Child Health - Scottish Government through Christian Aid in Balaka (2015-2018)
15. Equity in Access to Modern Energy Services for Health Facilities and Accountability (EME-SHA) - HIVOS (2016-2017)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- MHEN has influenced health budget sector allocations e.g. increase of MK7.4 billion for 2014-2015 fiscal year; and of MK1 billion of a drug budget for districts in 2017-2018 fiscal year.
- MHEN is recognized by the Ministry of Health as a key stakeholders so much that it sits in several Technical Working Groups including the Health Sector Working Group.
- The Health Committee of Parliament invites MHEN to present its budget analysis findings to Committee's cluster meetings
- Being a source of comments on health to the media