

REPORT FOR THE FIRST  
**LAMRN WORKSHOP**  
AT CROSSROADS HOTEL  
19<sup>TH</sup> TO 21<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2013



*Invited guests and participants at the launch of the workshop*

## **REPORT ON LAMRN WORKSHOP**

By Angela F. Chimwaza PhD

### **Introduction**

The first 3 day workshop for Lugina Africa Midwives Research Network (LAMRN) for Malawi training took place in Lilongwe from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2013. The first two days of the workshop were at the Crossroad hotel in Lilongwe. Lilongwe was chosen because it is centrally located and since representatives were coming from all the three regions of the country. As for the choice of the hotel, out of the quotations that were sought, Cross Roads offered the most affordable services for our needs. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the workshop, since there were only 5 people the venue changed to Kamuzu College of Nursing.

### **Response by the Nursing and Midwifery Fraternity to LAMRN**

The response by Nurse/Midwifery leaders to LAMRN was very encouraging. There was great support from Malawi Nurses and Midwives Council, White Ribbon Alliance, and Ministry of Health as a whole including the Nursing Department and Reproductive Health Unit. There was also support from the Malawi National Commission for Research, Science and Technology.

To demonstrate how valuable the training was for the country, the Director of Nursing and Midwifery services (Mrs. Sheila Bandazi), the Chief Nursing officer for Nursing and Midwifery Education in the Ministry of Health (Mrs. Kanthiti) and a representative from the Malawi Nurse and Midwives Council (Mrs. Lipato) were among the participants. The Director of Nursing Services took some of her annual leave days to be able to participate fully in the workshop.

### **Volunteers to be Mentors**

Because of the importance that is attached to promote evidence based practice and research in reproductive/Midwifery care in the country, two experienced researchers, Dr. Maluwa (Research Director at Kamuzu College of Nursing) and Dr. Malata (Principal of Kamuzu College of Nursing) volunteered to be resource persons and will continue to help with mentoring of the Midwives

### **Workshop Participants**

There were 20 midwives who participated in the training and they came from University Colleges (8), the Ministry of Health (10), Malawi College of Health Sciences (1), and Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi (1). The seven participants from Kamuzu College of Nursing were selected based on their involvement in the teaching of Reproductive Health/Midwifery and were selected in consultation with College Management. Those from the Ministry of health were

selected in consultation with the Director of Nursing Services. The criteria for selection included that the participant be a midwives, and actively involved in Midwifery/RH care. .

In addition, to ensure representation of the whole country, the Ministry of health working zones were also considered when selecting participants. This ensured that the whole of Malawi was represented except for one zone where the participant withdrew last minute because of another engagement. There was inadequate time for consultation for her replacement so she was quickly replaced by someone from a nearby hospital. The names of the participants to the workshop are presented in **Appendix 1**. Out of the 20 midwives, 3 were selected as core team members for the project for Malawi.

There was one person (Mrs. Mbeba) who was not one of the 20 participants but she sponsored herself from Blantyre to Lilongwe to attend the workshop. She joined the group because she felt that she was going to benefit as an individual from the workshop and that it would also benefit her department because she could be their resource person. She is currently doing her PhD studies as a part time student. She fully participated in the workshop. Since in the budget for contingency there was some money, she was assisted with meals including supper. She was also given training resource materials like everybody else.

### **Demographic characteristics of participants**

The group comprised 3 males and 17 females. Age ranged from 18 to 30 years (n=2); 31to45 years (n=10) and 46 to 60 years (n=8). Years of midwifery experience working as midwives ranged from one to thirty four years. Three participants had PhD holders, thirteen have Masters Degrees, two have a Bachelors of Science in Nursing while one has a Diploma in Nursing.

### **Launch of LAMRN**

The workshop was launched by the Principal Secretary for Health (Mr. Chiunguzeni) who was the guest of honor. The ceremony was attended by some key national officers who deal with reproductive health issues in the country. The guests included the DFID representative for health and HIV and AIDS (Susan Clapham); the Health Desk , Officer for Malawi's National Commission for Research Science and Technology (Mr. Kachedwa ), Director of Nursing Services for Malawi (Mrs. Shela Bandazi, Director of Reproductive Health Unit (Mrs. Fanny Kachale ), Chief Nursing Officer for Education in the Ministry of Health (Mrs. Felistus Kanthiti), Representative from Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi (Mrs. Thokozire Lipato), Representatives from the Association of Malawian Midwives (Mrs. Christina Mbiza and Mr. Robert Chasweka ), representative from White Ribbon Alliance (Kiko Mapunda), Principal for Kamuzu College of Nursing (Dr. Address Malata), the Finance Officer for Kamuzu College of Nursing (Mr. Chakholoma), Heads of department or their representatives (Dr. Gladys Msiska,

Mr. Simwaka, Mrs. Chimango) the librarian for KCN Mr. Mapulanga and some faculty members.



*At the launch L to R: DFID Representative, Principal Secretary (PS2), and Director of Nursing*

The focal person gave a brief presentation about LAMRN including how LAMRN was created, the objectives of the LAMRN project, how the participants were identified, activities for the project, how the project fits into the national agenda with regards to research and evidence based practice. She explained that the core of health care is based on nursing and that the best care is evidence based. She emphasized the need to develop researchers in the clinical area and to search for evidence that can be applied to clinical practice and this is what the project was about. In their speeches, Susan Clapham (DFID representative) informed the participants about the support that they are giving to Malawi and that they will follow up on the progress of the LAMRN project. The Principal Secretary and the representative from the National Commission for Science and Technology commended LAMRN for the project. They said it is in line with the national agenda and assured LAMRN of their support. Both speakers praised LAMRN for their goal of developing researchers and provision of evidence based practice. They also commended LAMRN for being inclusive in selecting participants to the workshop, the members included; academicians, nurses from clinical practice and key nursing organizations. On the front page is a



group photo which captured people who attended the workshop and most participants. See Appendix 2 for additional pictures.

### **Workshop Activities**

The workshops ran daily 8:00 am to 5:00pm with one hour lunch break and mid morning and mid afternoon tea breaks . Sessions for the 2 days included the Delphi Technique of conducting research, what is evidence based practice and how to find evidence, hierarchy of knowledge, translating evidence into practice, narrative versus systematic reviews, conducting a literature review, and critiquing the literature. Time allocated for the presentations ranged from 30 to 45 minutes. Apart from presentations participants had hands-on sessions for example on searching for literature and how to critique a research article. All the objectives for the first workshop, as stipulated in the project document were met.

All the 20 Midwives participated fully during the two days. They were very enthusiastic. Some of the comments that were made during the workshop were that they found the workshop useful because most of them, including those with PhDs had problems on how to synthesis literature review and come up with conclusions. .

The workshop generated much interest; one participant has further developed an interest and wants to learn statistical analysis in systematic reviews. It was agreed that this will be explored with our Partners from University of Manchester to see if there can be training in this area.

### **Priority Research Questions**

In August LAMRN participants completed the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the Delphi research questionnaire to identify priority research areas for LAMRN participating countries including Malawi. : Participants were informed about the research priorities which Malawi identified and these were:

1. What are the barriers that hinder effective documentation by midwives during labour and delivery?
2. What are the experiences of men who support their wives during labour and birth?
3. How can we ensure successful implementation of the partograph?
4. What are the experiences of teen mothers during labour and delivery?
5. What are the barriers and facilitators to meeting labour and birth standards?

It was agreed that the Malawi LAMRN team would work on the second priority “What are the experiences of men who support their wives during labour and birth?”

The first priority question, “What are the barriers that hinder effective documentation by midwives during labour and delivery?” was identified by almost all the LAMRN countries and therefore, was identified for a regional research activity.

During the two days of training, participants had the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the Delphi process where the same list of research questions was used. This time participants were asked to choose only 10 priority areas. These are yet to be analysed.

### DAY 3 OF WORKSHOP

The third day of the workshop included the 3 core members. . They are; Melanie Hami. Ezereth Kabuluzi and Christina Mbiza. They will be mentored to be leaders in evidence based practice and be able to mentor the other 17 Midwives. They will learn how to do literature review and find evidence for clinical practice, how to search for information and develop research protocols, how to write scientific papers, how to present at conferences and how to publish. They will also be mentored on how to write fundable proposals.

The three had sessions on “Developing a protocol for systematic/narrative reviews.” This was followed by an intense literature review on the country’s priority research area “What are the experiences of men who support their wives during labour and birth?” Database searches such as EBSCO HOST; PER1; and PubMed were used to search for studies done in Low resource areas. All the sessions were delivered as planned Below is a picture of the 3 core participants.

*The Three Core participants to be developed as Mentors L to R: Mrs Christina Mbiza, Dr Ezereth Kabuluzi, and Dr Melanie Hami*



## WORKSHOP EVALUATION

The workshops were evaluated extremely favourably; nearly all the participants (n=18) rated the workshop as excellent. The remaining two participants rated good. All participants rated the venue as good / excellent and 19 rated the organization as good / excellent. All the participants stated that they benefited from the workshop and that the sessions were relevant.

The participants felt that the most useful topics were conducting literature review, critiquing and synthesizing literature. Topics considered most useful were; literature review (systematic reviews, literature reviewing and meta analysis) and how to critique research. In summary, the participants felt that it was an empowering activity and the selection criteria was good because it recruited members from the grass root to policy level and also included the Nursing controlling body. This way, the team will be able to support one another as they want to apply evidence to practice.

Additional comments provided by the participants:

- ‘Need more mentorship’
- ‘Such an empowering activity’
- ‘Well done’
- ‘Workshops to continue at local level’
- ‘How to write a good dissertation’
- ‘Need to think more about the topic we have chosen, we need interventions to make a difference’
- ‘Eye opener to systematic reviews’
- ‘Well organised, loved the idea of mixed cadres from the grass roots to the policy makers, thankful to be a part of LAMRN’
- ‘Time was limited, but if stuck in the future we will help each other’
- ‘Better if whole process done by whole team’ (ie the 20 midwives not just the 3)
- ‘Went well’
- ‘More time for discussion’ n=2
- ‘Database for references (Zotero) knowing about it was good’
- ‘Workshops fabulous but time limited’
- ‘More time on critiquing the literature’
- ‘Workshops been an eye-opener, learned lots. Will help me as an individual and Malawi. Will improve maternal, neonatal and child health in the country’
- ‘Well organised and relevant’
- ‘More time for hands on’
- ‘Research priority question not very relevant to Malawi, as the impact of the results will be long term. Consider changing the topic’
- ‘Workshops to continue’

- ‘Accommodation booked in advance so not staying in isolation’ (There was one (1) Midwife who was staying at a Lodge alone because the 2 places where the others were staying were full. It was actually a challenge to find accommodation because there was a major political activity during the days of the workshop involving all the heads of states and Ministers of the Southern part of Africa)

### **Way forward Agreed by the 20 Midwives**

- 3 participants were to start developing protocol for systematic and narrative review the following day.
- To have teams, one in each of the three regions of the country to continue to work together.
- This will be after the second workshop in November.

### **Closing Remarks for the 2 days workshop for the 20 Midwives**

- The closing of the workshop was done by the country’s Director of Nursing Services, (Mrs. Sheila Bandazi). Before her comments, Dr Rebecca Smyth also gave a few remarks. In her remarks she expressed that she was overwhelmed with the enthusiasm that participants had. She encouraged participants that the end goal is to put Malawi on the research map
- The Director of Nursing Services’ commended LMRN for the workshop. She also stated that historically research has only been associated with those in education but at least this time those in the service delivery were considered. She explained how the participants were selected with regards to the Ministry of Health’s working zones, ensuring that the whole Malawi was represented. She Further recognised that nursing-midwifery is advancing in Malawi noting that in the past, the highest nursing-midwifery qualification was at certificate level and shortly it will be at PhD. She then stated that there is capacity to improve the area of research capacity and in particular the expertise in carrying out systematic reviews, so as to provide evidence based practice. There is also capacity to write local books for midwifery based on Malawian context.

She thanked the University of Manchester for allowing Dr. Rebecca Smyth to come to Malawi. She was also grateful that something is being done in remembrance of Helen Lugina-who, during her life time, did a lot in relation to Midwifery. She ended her remarks by thanking everybody and their management for allowing them to attend the training.

### **Way Forward for the 3 Midwives.**

As stated above, the 3 core Midwives had one additional day of training. At the end of the third day, they agreed on a way forward as follows:



- continue with the literature search
- complete literature searching, analyse the papers, synthesize the literature
- write a paper for publication by November, 2013
- To divide the 17 midwives into 3 working groups so that they can also have hands-on experience on how to do systematic reviews. This will be done after the second workshop in November 2013.
- To inform the office of the Director of Nursing services about what is happening. The 3 Midwives agreed to develop a work plan to guide themselves for the tasks that they are to do before November 2013
  
- The 3 shared responsibilities as follows: (Names of the three midwives in Malawi highlighted in yellow).
  - Dr. Ezereth to take leadership
  - Mrs. Christina Mbiza to do introduction and background.
  - Dr Melanie Hami to do methodology
  - Dr. Ezereth Kabuluzi to do the results
  - Discussion to be done by the 3 midwives
  - Dr. Chimwaza will oversee the whole process

### **Conclusion**

It can be stated that the workshop was very successful. All offices that deal with RH/Midwifery care in the country are pleased with LAMRN project and are eager to support LAMRN.

### **Vote of Thanks**

Our thanks go to DFID UK, for support with funding, DFID Malawi for their local moral support, to the University of Manchester for mentoring Malawian Midwives and sending Dr.Rebecca Smyth to come to Malawi.

## APPENDIX 1

### WORKSHOP RESEARCH BUILDING CAPACITY PARTICIPANTS MAY 2013

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**Appendix 2 :**

**Additional Pictures from the Workshop**



*L to R: Mr. Kachedwa, Dr. Rebecca Smyth, Mrs. Felistus Kanthiti (behind Rebecca), Mrs. Maria Chikalipo (in pink) and Mrs. Thokozani Lipato far right.*



*Dr. Rebecca Smyth and Dr. Angela Chimwaza during one of the workshop discussion*

APPENDIX 3

## Workshop Evaluation Form (August 2013)

How would you rate the workshops overall? (Please circle)

**Very poor**                      **Poor**                      **Average**                      **Good**                      **Excellent**

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How would you rate the venue for the workshops? (Please circle)

**Very poor**                      **Poor**                      **Average**                      **Good**                      **Excellent**

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How would you rate the organisation of the workshops? (Please circle)

**Very poor**                      **Poor**                      **Average**                      **Good**                      **Excellent**

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Has attending the workshop benefitted you? Yes/No (please circle)

Were the workshop sessions relevant? Yes/No (please circle)

*Please turn over*

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**What did you find most useful from attending?**

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**What did you find least useful from attending?**

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**Is there anything you would have liked more of?**

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**Is there anything you would have liked less of?**

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**Any other comments about the workshop?**

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