



# Strategic Plan

## 2021-2025





Bringing  
healthcare  
closer to  
where  
people live.

## Our Vision

A resilient and healthy society where people develop their full potential.

## Our Mission

To deliver health care programmes through innovative approaches that enable vulnerable populations in limited-resource communities affected by high disease burden and other health challenges to access services within their reach.

# Executive Summary

GAIA is committed to contributing towards a resilient and healthy society where all people develop their full potential for health and wellbeing. Over its 20-year history in Malawi, GAIA, in partnership with Ministry of Health and Population, has implemented programmes aimed at bridging the gaps in the health care system through interventions including delivery of essential primary care services to people living in rural communities through mobile health clinics (MHCs) and strengthening human resources for health through its health workforce development (nursing scholarship) programme. GAIA has also addressed social determinants of health through economic and psychosocial interventions targeting at-risk populations such as orphans and vulnerable children and youth, with all programmes undergirded by an emphasis on empowering communities, especially adolescent girls and young women.

GAIA's previous strategic plan (2015-2020) aligned with the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets and sought to expand GAIA's mobile clinic programme and build the nursing workforce. GAIA achieved the plan's goals, contributing to Malawi's success in achieving the 90-90-90 targets, providing 1,097,794 patient visits through its mobile services and supporting 343 nursing students with scholarships during the implementation period.

Moreover, over the past decade, GAIA has doubled its operating budget to \$3,500,000 in 2021. Within this decade, the organization has increased not only its workforce but also its profile. In addition to its efforts on health care provision in Mulanje and Phalombe districts, the organization grew its nursing workforce development (nursing scholarship) programme, continuing its provision of support for students pursuing Bachelor's degrees at Kamuzu College of Nursing. GAIA managed a \$2,600,000 cooperative agreement from USAID (2010-2016) to support students at both the Bachelor's and Nurse Midwife

Technician (NMT) levels, as well as providing in-service training for over 700 practicing nurses.

While acknowledging these positive developments, indicators at both national and district levels suggest that some health and development outcomes have stagnated for most Malawians. For instance, the country hoped to reduce new annual HIV infections to fewer than 11,000 by 2020. In 2019, however, there were 33,892 new infections, despite the national focus on HIV prevention. Extreme poverty persists, and access to health services remains a challenge for most Malawians, especially in rural areas. The latest poverty figures show the national poverty rate and incidence of ultra-poverty have remained largely unchanged in the past decade.

The 2021-2025 strategic plan presented here is premised on scaling up GAIA's work in terms of demographic spread, geographic area, and portfolio of programmes offered. The goal is to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people in limited resource communities with high disease burden and other health challenges. Nationally, the strategic plan contributes to the following key policy frameworks: The Malawi Growth Development Strategy III (MGDS 2017-2022), the draft National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS (2020- 2025) and the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP 2017-2022).





# Strategic Objectives

The plan will focus on four key strategic objectives as follows: increasing access to quality health care, reducing individual and community vulnerability, expanding GAIA's research capacity, and strengthening institutional capacity.



1

**Increase access to quality health care for all the communities in current catchment areas and expand to new districts.** Under this objective, GAIA will partner with government and like-minded organisations to design, scale, strengthen and sustain teams of frontline workers to bring high quality primary health care (PHC) within reach in the communities where people live. Additionally, GAIA will expand our partnerships to additional districts within the country through the following strategies:

- Facilitating provision of mobile health outreach clinics and promoting access to PHC
- Strengthening supply chain of health commodities
- Promoting integrated MHC services
- Facilitating provision of nursing scholarships and training to young women and men
- Promoting positive health seeking behaviour through social and behaviour change communication interventions.

2

**Reduce vulnerability at individual and community levels.** GAIA will work with communities, including children and people living with disabilities, to achieve this objective, and will focus on creating sustainable interventions that will increase uptake of health and reduce gender-based violence. The following strategies will be employed:

- Develop and implement targeted community interventions designed to increase awareness and agency of the youth and other high-risk populations around HIV, SRH, and malaria.
- Empower women and girls in high HIV burden and vulnerable communities by enhancing their right to good health and wellbeing.
- Promote interventions that would prevent new HIV infections and reduce vulnerability among orphans and vulnerable children, especially adolescent girls and young women and boys.
- Promote integration and multi-sectoral community interventions among vulnerable populations, including PLHIV.
- Facilitate community coping mechanisms among vulnerable populations affected by natural and climate induced disasters.

3

**Expand GAIA's capacity to generate robust evidence through monitoring, evaluation, research and learning,** with the aim of producing new information that contributes to developing knowledge and innovation in the health sector and strengthens health systems and care. GAIA will achieve this objective by:

- Promoting and enhancing monitoring and evaluation functions
- Developing a research and knowledge management strategy and a framework for operations
- Facilitating knowledge sharing among implementers
- Establishing partnerships with credible research institutions
- Designing and conducting research and disseminating findings

4

**Strengthen institutional capacity.** GAIA will mobilise financial resources to help the government bridge the gaps in the health workforce through the following strategies:

- Enhancing the board governance function
- Strengthening partnerships with like-minded organisations
- Promoting local resource mobilization
- Improving capacity development and staff retention at all levels



# Our Core Values

GAIA's Strategic plan will be guided by the vision, mission, and core values, and we will implement our activities in line with the organizational Theory of Change.



**Respect and dignity.** GAIA employees shall have the professional expertise to treat people with respect and dignity and will maintain their clients' privacy at all times. The professionals shall discharge their activities with a caring heart, compassion and without discrimination based on age, race, religion, tribe, gender and disability.



**Team work.** Employees will respect the contributions of each and every member of the team, members of the Board, donor community and stakeholders, realizing that strong teams build a strong system and strong nation.



**Adaptable and responsive.** The GAIA team will respond in a timely way to the emerging issues in the communities GAIA serves and adapt its services to changing conditions.



**Integrity and transparency.** The GAIA team will recognize the importance of accountability in tackling social and health problems affecting vulnerable people in the communities GAIA serves. It is through being accountable that the organization hopes to maintain the credibility and integrity it has earned over time. GAIA collaborates with other stakeholders and partner organizations within the country and abroad and transacts its affairs in an open manner.



**Equity.** GAIA employees respect the dignity and uniqueness of every person regardless of religion, beliefs, race, gender, disability or political affiliation.

## GAIA's Theory of Change

Our theory is that if rural communities have access to easily available and acceptable healthcare of high quality, and we create an enabling environment for people to utilize those services, they can optimize their health and thrive. See GAIA's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning Strategy to learn more.

GAIA provides **community-based healthcare** through

1. Community outreach and education
2. Mobile health clinics

GAIA provides **health worker training support** through

1. Pre-service and in-service health worker training
2. Deployment support for health workers

Rural communities have access to quality healthcare that is **accepted locally**

Young people, especially women, are **empowered** socio-economically

The **availability** of qualified health workers increases

**Health literacy** improves

Preventative and health seeking **behaviors** increase

**Health systems** are strengthened

Morbidity and mortality due to preventable and treatable conditions are **reduced**

People in rural communities **thrive**, living healthier and more productive lives



# Acknowledgements

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George Chagaluka, Technical Committee

Ellen Chirwa, Board Chair

Andy Chitete, Chair of Finance Administration, Audit and Development Committee

The late Peter Kazembe, former Technical Committee Chair

Esther Kip, Technical Committee

Phindile Lupafya, Technical Committee

Jones Masiye, Technical Committee

Josiah Mayani, Chair of Technical Committee

Alfred Nhlema, Vice Chair

Jean Priminta, Finance Administration, Audit and Development Committee

Ellen Schell, US representative

## Stakeholders

Ministry of Gender, Mulanje and Phalombe

Ministry of Health, Mulanje and Phalombe

Ministry of Youth, Mulanje and Phalombe

Ministry of Social Welfare, Mulanje and Phalombe

Local leaders, including Traditional Leaders, Village Headmen, and Faith Based leaders in Mulanje

Principals of Kamuzu College of Nursing Lilongwe and Blantyre Camp



## Geographic Focus

GAIA partners with the local governments and Ministries of Health to determine priority services and sites, to share costs, and to ensure we adapt to changing local needs and emerging challenges.







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