

# [GAIA] global health

## Annual Report 2025



25th Anniversary Edition!

# A Year Like No Other

Well, 2025 was quite the year. It was GAIA's 25th, but definitely unfamiliar territory.

On the one hand, the sudden and unexpected dissolution of USAID wiped out one-third of our program budget overnight. The immediate impact was throwing more than 100 nursing scholars and fellows into a panic about their futures. Ripple effects followed more broadly as partner organizations pulled their services back (or shut their doors) due to their own loss of revenue.

On the other, GAIA's donors and program staff stepped up in an extraordinary way. Within weeks, our supporters plugged the USAID-inflicted hole in our budget, and the news was shared with beneficiaries, reassuring that GAIA's financial support would carry them to graduation. In fact, support was so quick that GAIA was able to step in at mobile clinics and provide partner services that had been abandoned.

It was a scary and disappointing time that shook GAIA (and more importantly, our clients and beneficiaries) to our roots. But it was also GAIA's finest hour. I trust that you are all proud of your quick and generous action that made our response possible.

Moving forward, against all odds, the momentum created by our Stabilization Campaign has inspired a new effort – GAIA's Expansion Campaign – to grow our programs to meet growing need, even while development assistance appears in retreat. Stay tuned to learn more.

We learned a lot this year. Progress is fragile. Need doesn't disappear when we're distracted. True partners step up.

GAIA's programs in Malawi have continued during this time of uncertainty, stronger and wiser than ever.



Todd Schafer, Executive Director



# The End of USAID



The abrupt dismantling of USAID in 2025 rocked beneficiaries of U.S. foreign aid, as hundreds of millions of dollars of development assistance funding was cancelled, tens of thousands of jobs lost, and people lost access to critical health programs including emergency food aid, HIV prevention, malaria, and maternal and child health programs. While the reckoning is still not completely understood, it is clear that the U.S. lost hard-earned credibility as a trusted development partner and contributed to an estimated hundreds of thousands of unnecessary deaths (Center for Global Development, Dec. 2025).

In Malawi, the impact of USAID's dismantling has been felt deeply. U.S. foreign aid previously supported over \$350 million annually in sectors like health, agriculture, and education, putting Malawi at a crossroads in its development efforts. GAIA's USAID grant accounted for a **third of our operating budget**, forcing a quick pivot to finding new funding streams at one of the most competitive moments for philanthropic NGO support.

## Exciting News! Malawi hits the 95:95:95 HIV Targets ahead of the Deadline



Amidst the year's global health funding chaos, Malawi miraculously hit UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets for ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030, one of only a handful of nations in Africa. GAIA is proud of our role in this progress — **new infections have declined by 79% since 2010** — and committed to ensuring funding cuts don't jeopardize these achievements going forward.

### Malawi

**95%**

of people living with HIV know their status

**95%**

of people that know their status are on treatment

**95%**

of people on treatment have achieved viral suppression

Source: UNAIDS

# Zambia

In 2025, GAIA, in partnership with Lusaka College of Nursing and Catholic Relief Services expanded the nursing scholar and fellow programs to Zambia. Designed to address critical shortages of skilled maternal and newborn health providers, the Nursing Scholar Program expands access to professional nursing and midwifery education for Zambian students, while the Nursing Fellow Program bridges the transition from graduation to employment by deploying licensed nurse-midwives to rural, high-burden health facilities. Fellows placed in underserved facilities provide lifesaving care, increase access to and the quality of Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health services at the facility level, strengthen the health workforce capacity, and reduce maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality. By investing in both education and early-career clinical training, the programs build a sustainable pipeline of skilled nurse-midwives for Zambia's health system.

## 2025 Key Achievements

- Supported **15 scholars** specializing in midwifery.
- Deployed **10 nurse-midwife fellows** to five high-burden health facilities through 13-month fellowships.
- Deployed **one nurse anesthetist and one operating theater nurse** to support a newly established operating theater.
- Trained **10 fellows in Emergency Obstetric Care**.
- Fellows provided **antenatal care to 1,172 women**.





# GAIA Mobile Health Clinics

Community-based, quality health care for rural Malawians



In 2025, GAIA's mobile clinic program continued its strong track record of increasing access to quality health care while supporting the Ministry of Health's success in achieving UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets and putting the country on the path to **ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030**.

GAIA's new perinatal healthcare program in the Mangochi district continues to grow exponentially with increasing impact. In 2025, the team provided **5,613 antenatal and postnatal visits**, added new postnatal and follow-up care services, and additional portable ultrasound scanners that are providing critical diagnostic help to clinicians and reassurance for pregnant clients. And our data is backing up what our clients have said: **quality, community-based healthcare is critical to their health**. Pregnant mobile clinic clients initiate antenatal care in their first trimester at much higher rates than their district counterparts, and consistent testing and treatment are helping to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis-B.

## Malaria

In a dramatic shift, malaria cases at the Mobile Health Clinics (MHCs) **declined 70% in 2025** (from 45,845 cases in 2024 to 13,279 in 2025). The decline in malaria cases was nationwide and resulted in an almost **30% decrease in deaths from malaria!** Officials credit the new vaccine (administered to young children), new government spraying, and bednet distributions, treated with a more effective insecticide.

GAIA board chair, Jim Cashel, visited a malaria vaccination clinic early this year and marveled at this progress:

*"To the moms, this was just another childhood immunization. To the kids, it was another unwelcome stab from a stranger. But to me, this was a miracle, for I knew that this vaccine had required 60 years of research, development, and testing. It traversed countless setbacks. It required billions of dollars of investment. And here, finally, it is...So perhaps the bigger miracle isn't the existence of a new vaccine. It's that it, and so many other medical breakthroughs, can actually reach patients who otherwise would have no access to healthcare at all. For that to happen, it requires decades of effort, and billions of dollars of investment - and for GAIA to reach the end of the road. It's a miracle."*

## Stories from the Field: Martha's Story

Martha, a 25-year-old from rural Sosola village in Mangochi district, came to a GAIA mobile clinic in mid-May for an antenatal checkup. A scan using GAIA's portable ultrasound revealed she was expecting twins, with one baby in a breech position. Given the risks, she was advised to go to Monkey Bay Community Hospital to await delivery.

When a GAIA nurse followed up the next week, Martha was still at home, unable to afford transport and unable to walk nearly 10 km at her stage of pregnancy. GAIA arranged transport using the mobile clinic vehicle, and she safely delivered both twins via cesarean section.

Two weeks later, a home visit confirmed that Martha and her babies were doing well. The nurse provided nutrition guidance, reinforced exclusive breastfeeding, reviewed danger signs, discussed family planning, and reminded her to bring the twins for immunizations and growth monitoring at six weeks.



## 2025 Mobile Health Clinic Achievements

**210,142** clinic visits

**103,000+** clients – **40% of whom** were children under 13

most common visits

**64,619** visits for respiratory conditions

**30,942** hypertension & other chronic conditions

**17,537** sexual reproductive health visits

**13,279** visits for malaria, a 70% decrease from 2024

**3,926** HIV tests conducted – with **2% testing positive** and linked to lifesaving treatment

**159,000+** attendees at health education talks on malaria, cholera, and HIV and other topics





# GAIA Health Workforce Development

*Building a well-trained and resilient health workforce*

In early 2025, GAIA faced the unexpected loss of two USAID grants, totaling \$1.8 million. The sudden loss of the fully obligated funding threatened support for 95 scholars still completing their studies, 84 graduates preparing for licensure exams, and eight fellows completing service commitments – as well as the livelihoods of our beloved GAIA Malawi staff. However, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our supporters during our 3-month Stabilization Campaign, every scholar remains supported through graduation day! (Likewise, all fellows have been retained as well for the full period of their fellowship.) The campaign's success has also allowed us to stay on track with our initial goals for 2025, recruiting a **new cohort of 20 scholars and a new cohort of 16 fellows**. We were also able to move forward with a key 2025 achievement: **the operational launch of our Health Workforce Development Program in Zambia!**

In low-income countries, like Malawi, nurses form the backbone of health service delivery. With only seven nurses per 10,000 people and public sector nurse vacancy rates of 40%, Malawi has a chronic nursing shortage – straining health systems, particularly in rural areas, where 82% of the population lives. Despite shortages, many nurses cannot find work due to constrained government funding to absorb new graduates into the public health workforce. GAIA's Health Workforce Development Program builds long-term health infrastructure by funding the next generation of frontline health workers through nursing scholarships and fellowships.

Since 2005, GAIA has provided scholarships to **879** Malawian nursing students (74% female; 46% lost one or both parents), with **747** graduates to date. To bridge staffing gaps across Malawi's rural, public health facilities, GAIA has also deployed **358** graduate nurse fellows in Malawi since 2016.

## 2025 Key Health Workforce Development Achievements

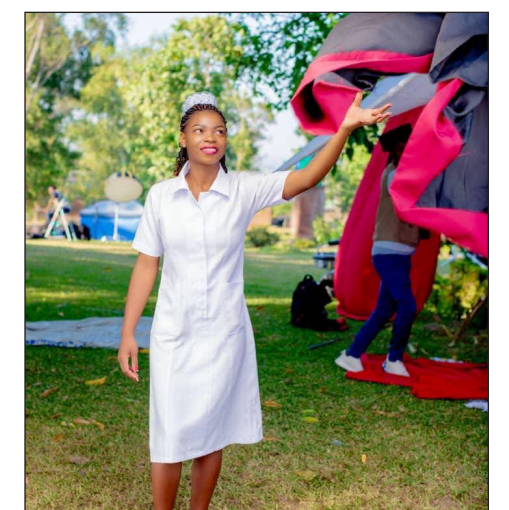
- A total of **907 nurses** supported to date, including both currently enrolled and graduated scholars.
- Awarded scholarships to **35 new students**.
- **Deployed 34 nurse fellows** to public health facilities **across eight districts**, bringing our total fellows deployed to **370** to date.
- At present, **96%** of scholars have **completed their academic programs**, with **99.5%** of scholars **successfully licensed**.
- **99%** of scholar graduates have **remained working in Malawi**.
- **98%** of all scholars **completed their post-graduation service commitments**, incentivizing qualified health workers to remain in-country.
- **82%** of deployed scholars are **employed in the public sector** serving the most vulnerable populations.
- **61%** of deployed scholars have held **leadership positions**, **13%** are working as **nurse educators**, and **17%** have pursued **advanced education or training**.

## Stories from the Field: Wezzie Nyirenda

Wezzie Nyirenda, one of seven children, grew up in a small rural village in Malawi, where she witnessed firsthand the barriers women face in accessing quality maternal health care. Motivated by these experiences, she earned her Nurse Midwife Technician degree and now serves in the maternity ward at Simlemba Health Centre in Kasungu. As a GAIA Fellow, she is strengthening her clinical skills while growing as a leader and mentor. She has supported numerous deliveries, including high-risk cases, and has seen how skilled, compassionate care can mean the difference between life and death for both mother and child.

Through the GAIA Nursing Fellow Program, Wezzie has been able to fully dedicate herself to her work, gaining financial stability and access to professional development opportunities that have expanded her knowledge and confidence.

She aspires to become a Registered Nurse Midwife and establish a community-based maternal health program in underserved areas. Her goals reflect the long-term impact of investing in frontline health workers. She shares, **"Empathy is the foundation of healthcare, and I am grateful to be part of a profession that embodies it. GAIA's Nursing Fellow Program has empowered me to pursue my dreams and make a difference in my community."**



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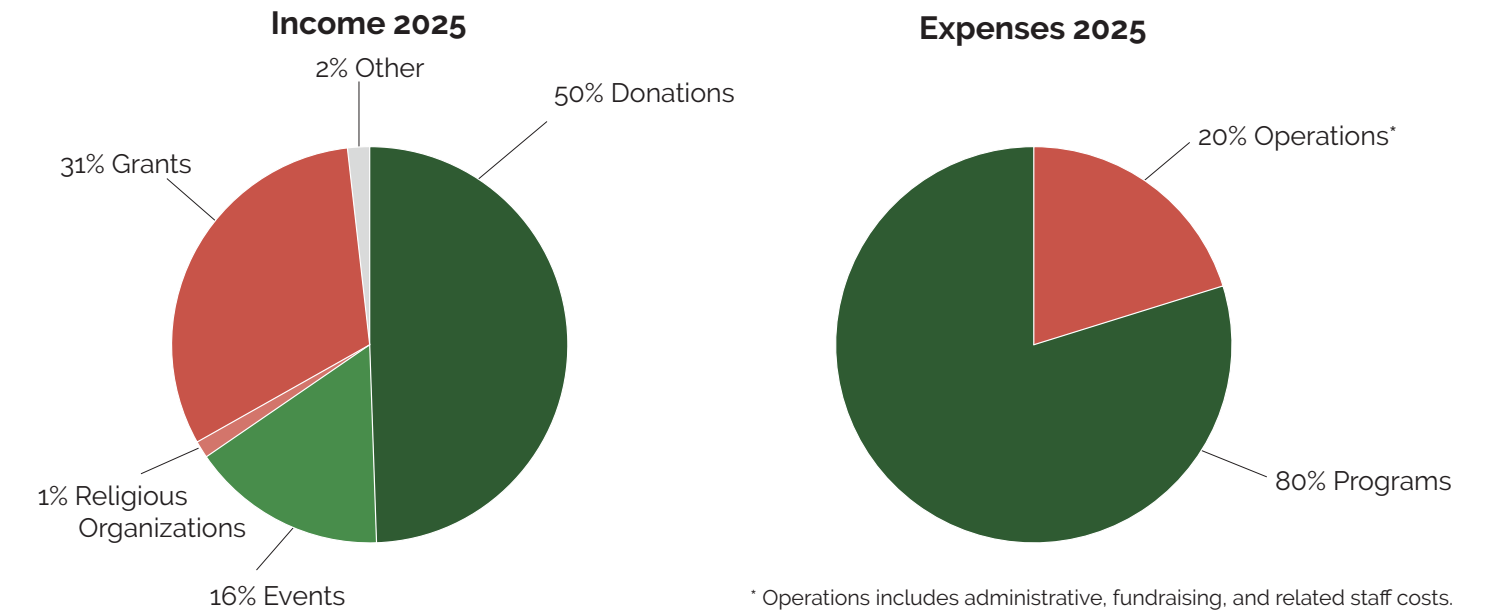
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If you have questions about adding GAIA to your will and would like to join GAIA's Legacy Circle, please contact Cristin Klein: [Cristin@gaiaglobalhealth.com](mailto:Cristin@gaiaglobalhealth.com) | 415-461-7196



# 2025 Financials

In 2025, GAIA's income totaled \$4.58M (including Campaign funds committed for 2026) and expenses totaled \$3.09M (unaudited). The 2025 audit report will be available at [www.gaiaglobalhealth.org](http://www.gaiaglobalhealth.org) later in 2026.



## GAIA Staff and Trustees

**Malawi Leadership Team:** Joyce Jere, Country Director • Nelson Khozomba, Programs Manager • Billy Kandoje, Finance and Administration Manager • Lucy Munthali, Deputy Programs Manager

GAIA currently employs 58 Malawi-based staff

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