

**Community-Based Family Planning and HIV/AIDS Services Project Trip Report**  
**Margot Fahnestock, Constella Futures**  
**July 14 – July 25, 2008**

**Background:** USAID/Malawi’s Community-based Family Planning and HIV & AIDS Services (CFPHS) Program provides a much-needed opportunity to assist the GOM in its efforts to improve the lives of the largest segment of its population. Management Sciences for Health (MSH) and its subcontractors—Population Services International (PSI) and Constella Futures (CF)—offer proven technical approaches and tools to work with the Ministry of Health to reposition family planning and improve/increase HIV & AIDS services in rural communities of the eight target districts. It is expected that by 2010, the project will have increased the use of integrated, high-quality, accessible family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH) and HIV & AIDS services. The target groups include Malawian women, men, and young people. Program activities span across all four intermediate results (IRs) of USAID’s strategic objective (SO) of “increased use of improved health behaviors and services.”

**Purpose of Trip:** Margot Fahnestock traveled to Malawi to orient the new Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, Olive Mtema and b) to attend the stakeholders meeting at the Crossroads Hotel on July 15 regarding the provision of injectable contraceptives in the community.

**Activities:**

- 1) *Project Manager Travel to Lilongwe, Malawi.*

Margot Fahnestock, Project Manager for the CFPHS Project for Constella Futures, traveled to Lilongwe, Malawi on July 13, 2008 to accomplish two primary objectives:

- Orient Olive Mtema, the new Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor, to the CFPHS Project.
- Attend a stakeholders meeting regarding the provision of injectable contraceptives by paraprofessionals at the community level.

- 2) *Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor*

In April 2008, Constella Futures placed advertisements for the Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor position in the two Malawian daily newspapers. After interviewing four candidates during her visit to Lilongwe in May 2008, Ms. Fahnestock made a successful offer to Mrs. Olive M. Mtema. Mrs. Mtema started in her new position at the MSH offices in Lilongwe on July 14, 2008. Ms. Fahnestock and Mrs. Mtema spent the two weeks of Ms. Fahnestock’s visit getting oriented to the CFPHS project, USAID projects and contracts, Malawi family planning and HIV/AIDS policy issues and local policy priorities. Mrs. Mtema and Ms. Fahnestock used their time to develop a detailed timeline and action plan through September 2008 regarding the development of guidelines that will allow Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) to administer DMPA at the community level. The two also began drafting the Year Two workplan for Constella Futures’ contribution to the project, due to USAID in Malawi on September 1, 2008.

- 3) *Stakeholders Meeting Regarding Provision of Injectable Contraceptives at Community Level*

Based on the Malawi Ministry of Health’s decision in March 2008 to allow HSAs to administer injectable contraceptives, Constella Futures and the USAID | Health Policy Initiative (HPI) facilitated a stakeholders meeting on July 15, 2008 at the Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Disseminate HPI research findings regarding national stakeholder and community views about community-based distribution of DMPA
- Share lessons learned from the June 2008 Madagascar study tour on community-based distribution of DMPA.
- Build consensus on guidelines for the provision of DMPA by paraprofessional providers at the community level.

Both Ms. Fahnestock and Mrs. Mtema attended the stakeholders meeting. The next steps and “way forward” crafted at the July 15 meeting will have a direct impact on the policy aspects of the CFPHS project – Mrs. Mtema is responsible for collaborating with the Reproductive Health Unit (RHU) to draft guidelines for HSA provision of DMPA at the community level. Participants at the stakeholders meeting stated they wanted to see draft guidelines for this new policy circulating among the Family Planning Subcommittee members by the end of August 2008. Mrs. Mtema will be coordinating with key CFPHS staff (Chief of Party and the Family Planning Coordinator), the RHU and other members of the Family Planning Subcommittee to assess where in national policy the guidelines should be inserted, what provisions (supervision, training, etc.) need to be developed and the process for building consensus around the new guidelines for community-based distribution for DMPA. The CFPHS project will use the approved guidelines in the pilot this fall in nine districts in Malawi of HSA provision of DMPA.

**List of Annexes:**

1. List of Persons Met

**Annex 1: List of Persons Met**

1. Lilly Banda-Maliro, Cognizant Technical Advisor, USAID
2. Dr. Chisale Mhango, Director, Reproductive Health Unit, Ministry of Health
3. Fannie Kachale, Deputy Director, Reproductive Health Unit, Ministry of Health
4. Jean Mwalabu, Family Planning Coordinator, Reproductive Health Unit, Ministry of Health
5. Dr. Maureen Chirwa, consultant