

Malawi: Key Findings

From 2022-2026, the SHINE project, led by FHI 360 and CHAD under the guidance of the Reproductive Health Directorate, documented real-world experiences with the introduction and scale up of the hormonal IUD (HIUD) in the Malawi public sector through mixed methods implementation science research.

Project Aim

Inform ongoing hormonal IUD introduction efforts across Malawi and guide future introduction of new family planning methods.

24 MONTHS

of DHIS2 data from all HIUD-providing facilities

12 DISTRICTS

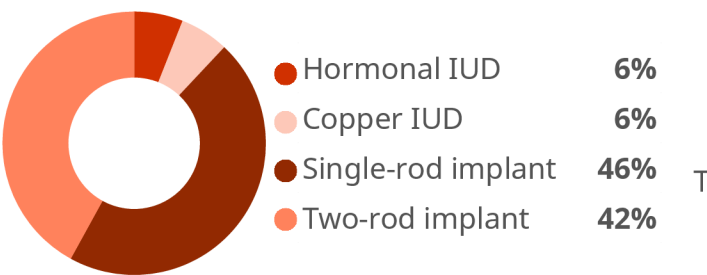
across all three regions

N=706

HIUD adopters surveyed across 16 facilities

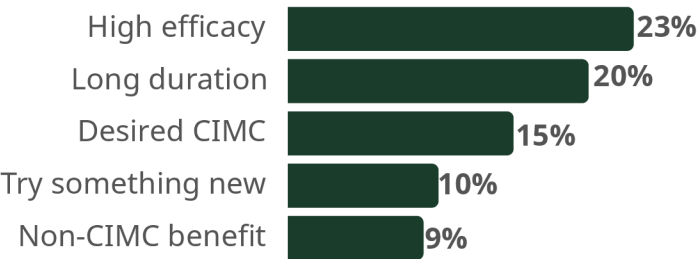
DHIS2 DATA

Both hormonal and copper IUD provision fluctuated over time, with peaks in mid-2024 and more stable trends through much of 2025. HIUDs represented 6% of all LARCs provided in facilities offering the method.



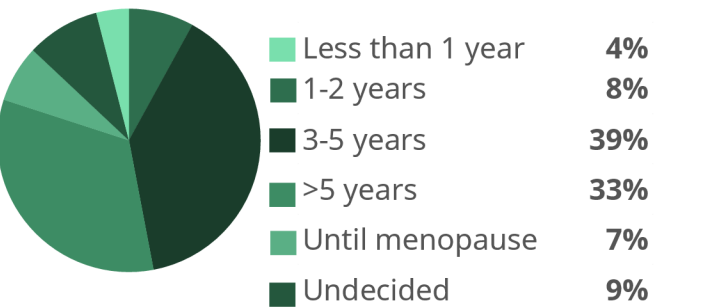
WHY WOMEN CHOSE HIUD

Most women chose the HIUD on their own. The main reasons for adoption was the high efficacy, long duration, and contraceptive-induced menstrual changes (CIMCs), specifically reduced heavy menstrual bleeding.



INTENDED DURATION OF USE

Most participants planned to keep their HIUD for at least three years.



PROVIDER-STATED DURATION

Nearly all participants received the Liletta®, Mirena®, or Avibela®, which are labeled for up to 6 years of use in Malawi. Most participants reported hearing that the method was effective for 5 years, highlighting an opportunity to align counseling messages around duration of effectiveness.

ADOPTER FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

N=24

At 6-12 months after adoption, most participants described their HIUD experience positively and said they would recommend the method to a friend. A few had the HIUD removed due to side effects that caused discomfort.

Some participants experienced side effects that often improved after six months – reinforcing the importance of clear counseling on expected bleeding changes and side effects, when they may improve, and when to seek follow-up care.

"I feel that it is a good method because I haven't experienced any challenges with it. The method is reliable; I have no concerns whenever I am moving or having sexual intercourse with my husband"

– Southern Region (32), Continued

"There is a difference because I was heavily menstruating when I first inserted the Hormonal IUD, but after three to four months, I started having a normal menstruation period up to now."

– Southern Region (40), Continued

FGDS WITH ADOPTERS

N=4

Many participants described providers as a key source of information about the HIUD. Participants commonly reported choosing the method because of its CIMCs, including more regular menstrual cycles, as well as its perceived lower side effect profile compared with other methods, and its potential for discreet use. Similar to survey respondents, FGD participants also cited the HIUD's high effectiveness and long duration as important reasons for choosing the method.

"I wasn't going to the hospital for this method, but for SAYANA Injection. When they explained about this method, I chose to insert Avibela."

– Kasungu

"You can't see it. No one knows that you are using that method. Only you know. That's what motivated me"

– Mulanje

PROVIDER IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

N=20

Providers were generally enthusiastic about the HIUD, noting advantages such as its therapeutic benefits and perceived fewer side effects compared with other contraceptive methods. Many felt that services could be strengthened by training more providers, increasing awareness of the method, and ensuring consistent availability of stock and insertion supplies. Providers also requested ongoing supportive supervision and refresher trainings.

"Refresher is necessary because it makes us not forget the procedures on how to provide the hormonal IUDs. The duration has to be enough in both the theory and practical parts because we need to go into detail about each IUD from copper and all the other IUDs. We also need to have enough time for practicals so that every participant might have time to practice the insertions"

– Northern Region Provider