



Save the Children



Malawi. Save the Children 2016.

Integrating Kangaroo Mother Care into Health Systems

Improving Kangaroo Mother Care Through Human-Centered Design

INNOVATION @  Save the Children®

The Problem

Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) is an inexpensive, evidence-based, life-saving intervention for pre-term infants, whereby the body temperature of the newborn is maintained through constant skin-to-skin contact with the mother or father. This approach has failed to scale due to the physical space needed to house caregivers. In addition, the pre-term infants who would benefit most from KMC are often placed in a separate Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for close monitoring, which is not conducive to 24/7 parent presence or breastfeeding. Full-scale adoption of this approach has been incredibly difficult for low-resource health facilities.



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Our Innovative Idea

We are using human-centered industrial design practices to create furniture and floorplans customized for KMC to reduce the physical footprint needed for this approach and to integrate NICU monitoring equipment more effectively. Ideally, our designs will benefit from the billions of dollars projected to be spent on healthcare infrastructure in the coming decade. We believe our designs will make KMC a more viable approach in low-resource health centers.

Our Progress to Date

We are piloting this innovative approach in Malawi with Purdue University's engineering department. We have identified our test site hospital and aligned with key stakeholders there who have supported our scoping visits, floorplan mapping and focus group assessments. We've created a customizable KMC crib, chair, and mobile nursing station and have optimized the NICU layout. We are now embarking on the prototyping phase for each design and are developing a plan to begin construction in our test facility.

Become an Innovation Investor

Partnerships are vital to all of the work we do at Save the Children. Our partners provide the skills, networks and resources we need to develop, test, replicate and scale the most promising innovations for children.

Invest Time or Skills: With the prototyping and manufacturing phase of our work on the horizon, we seek to enlist partners with manufacturing expertise or those who can provide advisory support on how to launch or collaborate with locally-owned enterprises that might be able to fabricate our furniture in a sustainable way that invests in the local Malawi community.

Accelerate the Pilot: We are continuously looking for ways to improve KMC's life-saving interventions in Malawi and beyond, creating the most ideal environments for newborns and their families to not only survive, but thrive. Through your financial contribution, we will be ready to adapt and adopt the learnings from our 2018 pilot. Based on our results, your support can help us:

- refine and enhance the prototype furniture,
- recruit local consultants and data collectors to conduct research and/or
- expand and replicate the work from our test facility.