



Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund

2020 Annual Report

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Participating Agencies





















Contributors



United Kingdom



Norway



Flanders



Ireland



Romania

Acronyms

ADMARC Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation

AIP Agricultural Input Programme

APAM Association of People with Albinism in Malawi

CBAGs Community-Based Advocacy Groups

CCJP Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

CfSC Centre for Social Concern Civil Society organizations

CUCI COVID-19 Úrban Cash Intervention

DCPRPs District Covid Preparedness and Response Plans

DLNS District Land Networks

DNCCDoDMA

District Nutrition Coordinating Committee
Department of Disaster Management Affairs

Dol Department of Immigration
Development Partners

DRIMS Disaster Risk Information Management System

DRM Disaster Risk Management

FAO Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi Food and Agriculture Organization Food Assistance For Assets

FFS Farmer Field Schools
GBV Gender Based Violence

GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

GoM Government of Malawi
HCT Humanitarian Country Team

HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

Information, Education and Communication

IMU Information Management Unit

INGO International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM International Organization for Migration
MAREP Malawi Rural Electrification Program
MoAFS Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

MoEPDPSR Ministry of Economic Planning & Development and Public Sector Reforms

MoFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MogCDSW Ministry of Gender, Community Development & Social Welfare

MoH Ministry of Health

MoHS Ministry of Homeland Security

MoLHUDMinistry of Land Housing and Urban DevelopmentMoLGRDMinistry of Local Government and Rural development

MSUs Mobile Storage Units MTs Master Trainers

MVAC Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee

NAC National AIDS Commission

NCPRP National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

NICE-Trust National Initiative for Civic Education Trust

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

PICSA Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture

PMM Population Mobility Mapping

PoE Point of Entry

PROSPER Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience

QCPR Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review

RBNB Rural Basic Need Basket

RCCE Risk Communication and Community Engagement

RTF Right to Food

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV Sexual Gender Based Violence

Acronyms

SoPs Standard Operating Procedures
SRSP Shock-Responsive Social Protection

TNM Telekom Networks Malawi ToRs Terms of Reference

UN United Nations

UNAIDS
UNDP
UNDS
UNDS
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Development System

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNRCO UN Resident Coordinator's Office

UNSDCF United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of

Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

VoT Victims of Trafficking WFP World Food Programme

Foreword

As part of the Global Efforts to shape the work of the UN in Malawi to respond to the aspirations of Member States to advance a common agenda, and to respond to present and future challenges as stated in the GA/Res 75-1 Declaration on the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, the SDG Acceleration Fund has become one of the key instrument to deliver on the Decade of Action for delivering SDGs. This is an instrument in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (GARes 69/313) and illustrates partnerships for the SDGs and national ownership as a best example of the UN reform in action.

In 2020, Covid-19 increased the severity of needs among Malawi's most vulnerable people. It shocked the national economy, compromised service delivery in many sectors, exacerbated challenges in gender equality and women's empowerment, halted essential work on climate change adaptation and overall caused a back-slide on development gains previously made, directly affecting the advance on the 2030 agenda.

Aware of these challenges, the SDG Acceleration Fund focused efforts in not losing sight on the overarching goals for 2030 while enabling resources and partnerships to contain the negative impacts of the pandemic. Programmes in implementation repurposed resources to tackle the pandemic within their frameworks, while the Fund mobilized fresh resources to support new and catalytic projects to support the Covid-19 National Response Plan. However, keeping scope on 2030, the Fund also moved on implementation and approval of programmes focusing in areas of SDG acceleration such as resilience building for the most vulnerable, ensuring the realization of girls' and boys' right to education, supporting health systems strengthening for quality universal health services, among others.

Following its principle of being catalytic, the Fund has also built complementarities with global Funds such as the Joint SDG Fund or the Covid-19 Fund, by guaranteeing that the proposals approved for Malawi by this Funds, are complementary to the SDG Acceleration Fund programmatic frameworks and resources. This has enabled greater levels of partnerships within the UN and with a broad set of stakeholders.

Additionally, by collectively recognizing a need to improve, from 2019 to 2020 the Fund embraced greater efficiencies through smarter yet more participative processes. Thanks to this, the number of Development Partners contributing to the Fund increased from 2 to 5. Ireland, Norway, and Romania became the Fund's newest members, welcomed by the Fund's original donors, Flanders and the United Kingdom. The Government of Malawi, under the leadership of the Secretary to the Treasury, also saw a broader range of partners participating in the Fund, guaranteeing that the mechanism is fully driven by national priorities and in support of the development agenda set by the Government.

This broader interest from stakeholders, and that the Fund's budget more than quadrupled up to US \$140 million in 2020, is an indication of the confidence these partners have in the Fund, but it also reflects the common belief that by working together, strengthening partnerships and acknowledging each other's strengths we can do better.

Covid-19 might have caused a deep disruption all over the world, but we have learned that to tackle historical challenges, collective action and solidarity are more important than ever. The progress made in undertaking the effects

of coronavirus is encouraging, however, the effects will be wide-ranging and enduring. We must work to fully address these impacts in the long-term, not losing sight of the 2030 agenda.

It is within this context that the SDG-AF can also have greatest impact. Having such a diverse range of multi-sectoral stakeholders means the Fund is better able to advance the Leave No One Behind agenda. Malawi has committed to accelerate progress for those furthest behind first, and the SDG-AF has become one of the key mechanism in supporting this endeavor.

The outstanding advance of the Fund in 2020 has also left important lessons learned that should be applied to enhance sustainability and improve impact in 2021 and beyond. Although we are on the right trajectory more partnerships, particularly with Civil Society Organizations by allowing them broader participation in the Fund, and the Private Sector by enhancing joint initiatives on innovative financing, are needed. Further innovation to improve processes and reach the last mile will also be required every year until 2030. Further support from the Fund for stronger institutions and governance is another area where efforts should be focused.

We cannot settle for easy wins, if the Fund does not serve those farthest behind, it is not fulfilling its mandate. Here we must reiterate our collective commitment and compromise to advance in fulfilling Malawi's development goals.



Maria Jose Torres, UN Resident Coordinator



Chancy Simwaka, Secretary to Treasury



1. Introduction

1.1. Strategic Framework

The 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)¹ requested the United Nations Development System (UNDS) to support Member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a coherent and integrated manner. The review emphasized the need for a United Nations (UN) that is more strategic, accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient, effective and results-oriented. It also emphasized the need for the UNDS to have well-designed pooled funding mechanisms to support common, cross-cutting UN approaches at country level. The 2030 Agenda calls for a shift on the way the UNDS transacts its business so that the world is put on a path to sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

Prior to the QCPR, in Malawi, a first joint mobilization

effort was set up through the implementation of the One UN Fund in 2009. Under the leadership of the Government of Malawi (GoM), the One Fund supported coherent resource mobilization allocation and disbursement of donor resources. The One Fund closed on December 2018, and stakeholders agreed on the establishment of a similar coordination and financing mechanism. As a result of this agreement, and considering the QCPR recommendations, the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund was approved in December 2018.

Afterwards, in 2019, the GoM approved the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the strategic plan for the United Nations contributing to the Malawi Government's national development priorities and actions for the period

¹ A/RES/71/243, adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2016

2019-2023.

The cooperation framework incorporates the goals and principles that underpin Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that lie at its heart. It represents a strong collaborative development agenda that aims to support the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2017- 2022 (MGDS III).

In response to national priorities, the UN in Malawi supports the government in three inter-linked and mutually reinforcing strategic priority areas, or Pillars²:

Each of these pillars translate into concrete, measurable and time-bound outputs that provide clear, normative-operational linkages and enable the UN and partners to establish the attribution of the United Nations' contribution to national priorities.









1.2. The Fund

This report presents the overall operation and implementation of the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund (hereafter referred to as 'the Fund') in 2020.

The Fund is a financing coordination mechanism where the Government of Malawi (GoM), Development Partners (DPs), and the United Nations (UN) agree on joint priorities and mobilize resources for key interventions in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related national priorities. It represents the commitment of involved stakeholders to uphold the pledge of leaving no one behind and to endeavor to reach those furthest behind first, a principle at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The objective of the Fund is to support the achievement of results consistent with the current and future UNSDCF. It supports coherent resource mobilization to under-funded cross-sectoral areas where the UN has a comparative advantage in implementing together. The focus of the Fund is the mobilization, financing coordination and co-financing of catalytic interventions in support of the SDGs. *Catalytic* understood as investments that aim support strategic UNSDCF

components, to fill strategic financial gaps when there are no other resources available, that unlock or enable key investments for SDGs, and /or that support in areas where other partners cannot.

The Fund's first year of implementation, 2019, represented the year of transition from the One Fund to the SDG Acceleration Fund, including the early implementation of four³ projects that overlapped from one fund to another.

Building on lessons learned from the overall ONE Fund implementation and from the SDG Acceleration Fund's first year, and with the objective to make it more efficient and impact-driven, in 2020 the Fund underwent a thorough review of its governance and operational structure that led to enhanced coordination and broader participation of stakeholders. In fact 2020 is the year when the Fund moved to implement a new governance and operational design and, as this report will show, this development has represented an incredibly positive turnaround for the mechanism.

² The pillars respond to the identified root causes of development challenges in Malawi: 1. Poor governance 2. Climate change 3. Weak economic structure 4. Rapid population growth 5. Negative social norms

³ I) Promotion of Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable groups. (II) Joint UN Resilience Programme. (III) Enhancing Advocacy on the Right to Food. (IV) Information Management Support to Cyclone Idai Response



2. The Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund in 2020

2.1 Transition of the Fund

Learning from its first transitional year, and with new dedicated capacities within Malawi, 2020 saw the evolution and expansion of the Fund. Through a review process started in January 2020, led by the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO), with strong involvement of the Government, Development Partners, and UN agencies, the Fund restructured its Theory of Change, operational windows and its governance mechanism, towards making it more efficient.

The new Fund's Terms of Reference (ToRs), reflecting

this transformation, were approved in May 2020 by its Steering Committee.

The main features introduced after this 360° analysis were:

- Stronger alignment with UNSDCF as the Fund's guiding framework.
- Defined stakeholders (including stronger Government and donor participation).
- Clearer rules, responsibilities, and procedures for all

- stakeholders.
- Simplified yet participative governance structure.
- Stronger gender-mainstreaming.
- Humanitarian arrangements introduced (including a rapid approval process).

2.2 Operation of the Fund

With the UNSDCF as a framework, the new Fund defines three **thematic windows** (one per each pillar of the UNSDCF- the related Outcomes are listed in Annex 1), and one **ad-hoc window, see diagram:**

_	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	HUMANITARIAN WINDOW:
• -	Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 of the UNSDCF	Outcomes 4 and 5 of the UNSDCF	Outcomes 6,7,8, and 9 of the UNSDCF	For humanitarian rapid response actions
WINDOW •	Peace, Inclusion and effective institutions	Population management and inclusive human development	Inclusive and resilient growth	Humanitarian/Nexus Window
FOCUS •	Supporting the Government's agenda in addressing issues related to respect for human rights, corruption, equal access to justice for all, gender inequality and discrimination of women, children and marginalized groups.	Supporting the Government's agenda in strengthening key areas of the public sector. It comprises the areas of health and education, with a special focus on women and children.	Supporting the Government's agenda on more inclusive and resilient development, by addressing environmental and economic issues aimed at long-term transformation, and short-term humanitarian response with regard to natural disasters and food insecurity.	Supporting the Government in prioritized and rapid response actions to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity ahead, during and in the aftermath of crises and natural disasters, as well as to strengthen prevention and preparedness strategies.

2.3 Crosscutting Approaches

Building on the Fund's goal to enable transformative change, and to ensure that tailored and specific actions to achieve SDGs are programmed, the Fund now prioritizes interventions that include cross-cutting approaches that empower women and youth, and include a Human Rights Based Approach. The Fund has a cross-cutting priority to ensure no environmental damage in any of its interventions. These approaches are incorporated and evaluated in each Programme according to the characteristics of each intervention.

For the Fund it is essential to ensure the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through their participation in decision-making and to guarantee the protection of women and girls from all forms of violence. **The Fund seeks to allocate a minimum of 30 percent of its resources to activities that promote the participation and empowerment**

of women, as well as gender equality. The Fund also supports the incorporation of a gender-sensitive approach throughout all project cycles, starting from formulation, through to implementation and evaluation.

2.4 Humanitarian/Nexus window

Through its Humanitarian/Nexus Window, the Fund was instrumental in supporting the COVID-19 response in 2020. The Fund proved to be catalytic in strengthening partnerships, enhancing stakeholders' coordination, prioritizing and activating interventions and responding in the early stages of the emergency, enabling other processes to kick off. Through its rapid response action, the Fund rapidly re-programmed and allocated approximately US \$1 million in four new projects addressing urgent yet catalytic areas of the early COVID-19 response.



MERCY MAKOKO

"My name is Mercy Makoko, I'm 41 years old and was born in Chikwawa, Southern region of Malawi. I did not go far with my education and dropped out when I was a child due to financial problems following my fathers' demise. I got married at the age of 22, but my husband was unsupportive and very abusive. He left after 13 years of marriage and I have not heard from him since then. He left me with 5 children, 3 boys and 2 girls.

Following the hardships I was facing in Chikwawa, I decided to move with my 5 children to Blantyre in 2014, in search of greener pastures. Slowly I managed to get some jobs working in shops and that is how I got by.

Life became more tough in 2018, so I moved to a much cheaper house, while I kept struggling to pay school fees for my children. At this point I decided to travel to South Africa in search of greener pastures, hoping that life would be easier there. I separated from my children and left each one of them with a different relative.

In February 2019 I took the 3-day journey and stayed in a town close to Rustenburg where I had a friend. She helped me find a job as a housekeeper. When South Africa went into lockdown because of COVID-19 things got worse. My employer and I had agreed on a monthly salary of ZAR $2,500^4$ but at this point he stated that he was going to be paying me ZAR1,000 5 and if I did not like it, I was free to leave.

I chose to stay as I had nowhere else to go. Money was not enough, and I was unable to send support to my children. My employer only provided me with accommodation, but I had to find my own food. I decided to work until I had enough money for transportation back to Malawi. I worked for 6 months until October 2020 when I finally left my employer's house.

I left for Malawi with only ZAR1,4006 in my pocket I arrived at Mwanza Border where I met people from the International Organizational for Migration (IOM) that provided me with face masks, sanitizer, and asked questions about my life, my needs and my skills. They informed me that they might call if they were able to provide further assistance.

On December I was called, and we agreed on a visit for a vulnerability assessment after which I was granted with 3 bales of clothing and beddings amounting to MK285,000 / USD 370. These would support as initial input to start my own business in my country.

I was able to sell the clothes and beddings and made some profits. Business hasn't been easy because of the situation with Corona, but I am still managing to sell though slowly.

I am hopeful that once things are better my business will certainly pick up. My life is better now as I can provide for myself and my family in my own country, and I have no interest to travel to work in another country again."



PHOTO CREDIT: IOM MALAWI
Mercy with the bales that she bought
through IOM support

4 USD 170 5 USD 68 6 USD 95



Results of the Fund in 2020

Thanks to its new composition, in 2020 the Fund had an exponential growth **expanding from 2 donors in 2019 to 5 donors in 2020**, with more donors expected to join the Fund in 2021⁷. In terms of resource mobilization, the Fund grew from a US \$34 million portfolio in 2019 to US \$140 million in contributions in 2020, representing a 312% growth. The number of projects funded doubled up from four in 2019 to ten in 2020.







As a natural consequence of this expansion, the number of UN Participating Agencies, Government institutions (Ministries and Departments), Civil Society organizations

(CSOs), Private Sector, as well as targeted districts considerably increased (see Table 2). An overview of all partners in 2019 and 2020 can be found in Annex 2.

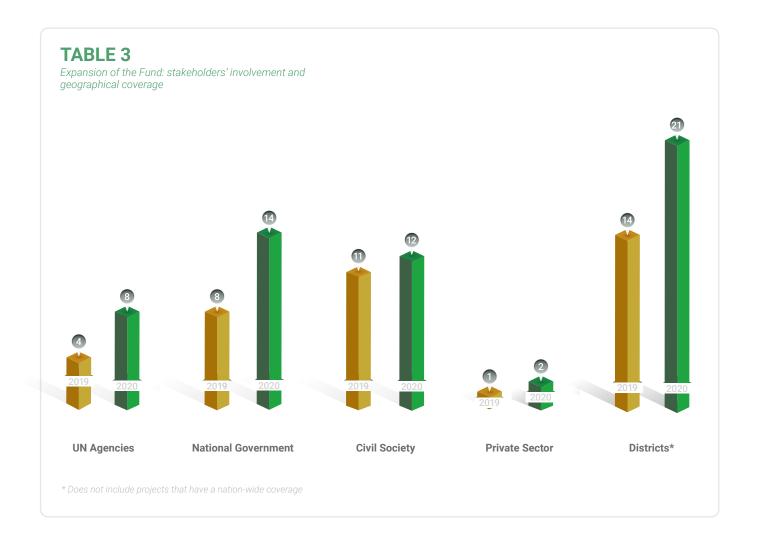






PHOTO CREDIT: WFP MALAWI

The WFP Lilongwe warehouse team loading off the PPE supplies for Last Mile Health



PHOTO CREDIT: WFP MALAWI

Tengani Health Centre – one of the health centres in Nsanje district where PPE was delivered.

NEW CHALLENGES, NEW PARTNERSHIPS: WFP'S AND LAST MILE HEALTH JOIN FORCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

The SDG Acceleration Fund, in collaboration with the National Logistics Cluster and WFP have played a significant role in the humanitarian COVID-19 response by coordinating between the various stakeholders in Malawi and by supporting partners with the provision of free-to-user logistics services. In this way, existing partnerships were strengthened, and new ones were established. One example of such a new alliance is the collaboration between WFP and Last Mile Health.

Founded in 2007 in Liberia, Last Mile Health officially expanded their reach to Malawi in 2020. "Bringing a health worker within reach of everyone" – is Last Mile Health's guiding principle, and it has become even more relevant with the global COVID-19 pandemic threatening the livelihoods of the most vulnerable in countries already facing a lack of health personnel and supplies.

Supporting the *Ministry of Health* in implementing the *National Community Health Strategy*, Last Mile Health is providing essential health care to communities in rural and remote parts of Malawi where one-tenth of the population is situated more than eight kilometers from the nearest health facility.

Offering support services to its partners, the Global Logistics Cluster assisted Last Mile Health with the transportation and storage of PPE to district hospitals and health centres in Chikwawa and Nsanje district. As well as ensuring the timely supply of PPE and therefore enabling Last Mile Health to dedicate more funds to the response, WFP's knowledge and experience in inventory management has helped to build up Last Mile Health's institutional capacity as a new organisation in the country. Charity Solomon, Last Mile Health's Operations Manager, appreciates the partnership and expresses that the collaboration has "inspired and motivated the organisation towards more teamwork and collaboration with the National Logistics Cluster and other partners in Malawi".

3.1 Overall results

The Fund's projects achieved notable results during the reporting period amidst several challenges. Firstly, the political climate in Malawi, given the electoral calendar between 2019 and 2020 posed challenges and delayed processes that required political support. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic considerably affected the implementation of projects. Activities were delayed or put on halt based on the gathering restrictions imposed by preventive measures. Nevertheless, all projects made efforts to adapt and adjust to the ongoing situation.

The overall results of the 2020 implementation of the Fund can be summarized as follows:

Comprehensive and multi-sectoral emergency response and increased support to the most vulnerable population Improved
Information
Management
systems to
strengthen
linkages between
humanitarian
response and
development
activities

Enhanced Coordination





COMPREHENSIVE AND MULTI-SECTORAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND INCREASED SUPPORT TO THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATION-

The Fund's projects had considerable impact in changing the lives of the Malawian population whose livelihoods faced an unprecedent threat posed by COVID-19. Through a multi sectoral approach, the projects funded through the Humanitarian/nexus Window tackled key areas of the COVID-19 response: logistics, social protection, support to the most vulnerable populations and District coordination. The Emergency Supply Chain support to the COVID-19 Response in Malawi project was instrumental in enhancing screening, ensuring uninterrupted supply chains and the timely delivery of essential goods during the first wave of the pandemic; the **COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention** (CUCI) project set up a system to address the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in urban areas; the project Strengthening the COVID-19 capacity for frontline officials and border communities to respond to the needs of most vulnerable populations considerably enhanced the capacity of frontline workers to manage the reception of returnees. disease surveillance, detection and referral, while ensuring a continuum of care for persons living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of SGBV, Victims of Trafficking (VoT), smuggled migrants, and persons with disabilities, towards the principle of leaving no-one behind. The project Strengthening District COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans enhanced the district to national level communication in support of the implementation of the national response process to ensure more informed and prompt humanitarian interventions.

IMPROVED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO STRENGTHEN LINKAGES BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES –

Several of the Fund's projects developed tools to strengthen information management across sectors to improve timely feedback and addresses challenges in ongoing emergency responses. These were developed mainly to respond to the COVID-19 emergency but can act as a basis to strengthen the nexus between the humanitarian response and improved preparedness and development. This is the case of the PROSPER's **Resilience Dashboard** that is designed to improve decentralized implementation of services across social, economic and environmental sectors, and with realtime data and geo-references; or the new **Logistics** Information Exchange (Log:ie) platform⁸ that aims to create an interactive map that visualizes logistics capacity in Malawi and enables all stakeholders to regularly update logistics information by means of rapid data collection tools. It is also the case of the **CUCI project**, which through the setting up of a remote platform for the management of grievances and redresses and the effective monitoring of the interventions, aims to support a smooth transition from a **Call Centre** to a more permanent structure as part of the national social protection system. The **Disaster Risk Information Management System** (DRIMS) is currently used in four districts, but has the potential to act as a convener and catalyst of change in Malawi's disaster information management system by offering programmatic solutions and more informed decision-making to national leadership and the broader humanitarian community.

ENHANCED COORDINATION -

Thanks to specific coordination mechanisms among UN, Government and other stakeholders put in place specifically for the COVID-19 emergency response, interventions were effective and were able to achieve

substantial results and impact.

The development of the first ever national SoP defining stakeholders' roles and responsibilities on reception and management of returnees led to the establishment of an effective, efficient and functional coordination mechanism that led to the timely provision of information needed to prepare service delivery for vulnerable populations under the project *Strengthening* the COVID-19 capacity for frontline officials and border communities to respond to the needs of most vulnerable populations. Under the Emergency Supply Chain support to the COVID-19 Response in Malawi project, the Logistics Emergency Preparedness Technical Working Group - set up in October 2020 to update the Preparedness Action Plan and the National Contingency Plan - was instrumental in planning logistics and emergency preparedness issues with key partners.

Effective coordination mechanisms set up at district and national levels were also key to achieving results in other projects, such as *PROSPER*, where they were instrumental to effectively plan, coordinate and implement the 2019/2020 lean season response using social protection systems.

STRENGTHENED DEMAND FOR ACCOUNTABILITY -

Projects like *Enhancing Advocacy on the Right to Food* were instrumental in advocating duty bearers to fulfil people's right to food and push relevant authorities, in line with their obligation to take progressive steps in the creation of a more conducive environment where target populations can enjoy and demand their rights. The combination of discussions with duty bearers and advocacy work improved the economic and social conditions of target communities, who benefitted from more transparent systems for agricultural support, increased access to markets, greater ease in setting up new businesses and improved agricultural productivity.

The *Promotion of Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable Groups* project increased the demand for accountability for duty-bearers from women and other vulnerable people in the target communities. Raising awareness about the roles of various structures in land administration, land governance instruments and increasing the engagement of women have contributed to the recognition of land rights violations and increased people's ability to seek redress when needed through the establishment of **District Land Networks**.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY-

Most of the Fund's projects have nurtured ownership of the interventions by national institutions, thereby fostering sustainability to ensure long-term development gains. The main examples being the CUCI project that ultimately aims at strengthening the regular social protection system beyond the emergency response; and the Information Management Support to DoDMA project that set up a system - the Disaster Risk Information Management System (DRIMS)- that will be the de facto the information management system not only for disaster response, but also for preparedness, mitigation,

and recovery components in Malawi. The Fund has brought together UN agencies, national government, development partners and civil society on integrated actions to respond to the COVID-19 emergency, reduce poverty, improve nutrition and provide access to basic rights to the Malawian population, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. Ultimately, all the governance, management and coordination mechanisms put in place by the Fund's projects aim to be fully embedded within the Government's architecture, thereby increasing the capacity of national and local institutions and policy makers in managing, implementing and overseeing programs. This increases sustainability and the potential to scale up.

3.2 The Fund's projects in 2020

The number of projects supported through the Fund moved from four in 2019 to 10 in 2020, reflecting the Fund's stakeholders' efforts and commitment towards achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 1 of No poverty, SDG 2 of Zero hunger, SDG 3 of Good Health and Well-Being, all including a special focus on the needs of vulnerable groups particularly women, SDG 5.

Some of the projects have continued from 2019, while others started in 2020. The Fund was particularly instrumental in supporting COVID-19 response in Malawi. Thanks to its improved and streamlined operational and projects' approval system, specifically through a fast-track approval process for projects and programmes presented under the Humanitarian Window, the Fund was able to rapidly re-programme and allocate funds to key and catalytic areas of the early COVID-19 response: logistics, Districts coordination, social protection and support to the most vulnerable populations.

The Fund's 2020 portfolio also includes two new Joint Programmes approved in late 2020, due to begin implementation in 2021:

UN Joint Programme on Girls' Education III: Learning for All in Malawi – Ensuring the realization of girls' and boys' rights to quality, inclusive and equitable education and life skills (USD 41.5M)- Building on its first (2014-2017) and second (2018-2020) phases, the Joint **Programme on Girls' Education** (JPGE) III, now under the umbrella of the SDG-AF, acknowledges girls' education as one of the most important SDG accelerators. Through its multi-sectoral approach it will address girls' and boys' barriers to accessing quality education. This third phase recognizes the need to strengthen the focus on quality of learning and to ensure inclusive and equitable access to education, while promoting sustainable solutions. It also adopts a more gender transformative approach, maintaining a focus on girls but ensuring the needs of boys are also addressed and that they are actively engaged so they can be champions in promoting gender equality.

UN Joint Programme on Health Systems Strengthening for Equitable Health and Nutrition Outcomes (USD

49M°) - Building on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) commitments in Malawi and acknowledging that a well-functioning health system is critical for a sustained response to public health, this programme looks beyond tackling specific diseases and towards strengthening health systems, tailored for and together with people. It is focused on reducing inequities and supporting communities and families to be able to experience good health and well-being, even when faced with unexpected volatility and shocks. The programme will work towards strengthening this fundamental system with a particular

focus on ensuring a continuity of essential health services, with a prioritization of vulnerable groups. It will also seek to understand the implications and needs that COVID-19 has brought into the health sector's response. A total of eight projects have been implemented through the Fund in 2020; three of them through the Inclusive and Resilient Growth Window, while the remaining five through the Humanitarian/Nexus Window, mainly to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. The list of projects is showcased in the following table 4:

TABLE 4

WINDOW	PROJECT TITLE	DURATION
INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT GROWTH	1/Joint UN Resilience Programme (PROSPER)	2019-2023
	2/ Promotion of Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable groups	June 2019- December 2021*
	3/ Enhancing Advocacy on the Right to Food	September- December 2020
HUMANITARIAN/	4/Emergency supply chain support to the COVID-19 response in Malawi	June- December 2020
NEXUS	5/ Information Management Support to DoDMA	2019- 2022
	6/ Improved accountability for Malawi's COVID-19 social protection response through Grievance and Redress Mechanisms and monitoring (CUCI)	June 2020- March 2021
	7/ Strengthening the COVID-19 capacity for frontline officials and border communities to respond to the needs of most vulnerable populations including migrants, Malawian returnees and deportees with focus on people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV)	June- December 2020
	8/ Strengthening District COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plans	July- November 2020

*(Extended to March 2021)

In the following section, this report provides an overview of each project, highlighting key areas of intervention and the changes achieved or expected from the initiative. The section focuses on identifying the results in the reporting period, but it also highlights challenges that were encountered and lessons that were learnt within the course of implementation.

⁹ Figure susceptible to change due to donor's budget revisions

1/ JOINT UN RESILIENCE PROGRAMME (PROSPER)











The United Nations Joint Programme for Resilience is part of a greater consortium called PROSPER – Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience – that consists of nine main partners. Four UN partners make up the UN Consortium: FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, while three INGOS: Concern Worldwide, United Purpose, GOAL, and one private contractor, Kadale, make up the Consortium. PROSPER is designed to respond to households and communities that are highly vulnerable to shocks and stresses, combined with persistent poverty, natural resource degradation, climate change and population growth. PROSPER helps households meet their immediate needs, while supporting longer term efforts to enhance natural resource management, strengthen disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, support linkages to safety nets, increase access to appropriate financial services and products, and create functional markets systems.

Key areas of intervention





Enhance access to productive resources to secure predictable household income



Reduce vulnerability and exposure of communities to risk



and subnational stakeholders to improve resilience programming

Overall results

In 2020, the programme scaled up activities to build resilience at multiple levels. **At the household level**, the programme strengthened the resilience of 306,135 people to withstand current and future weather-related

shocks. **At community level**, partners supported community-level structures that will help to build resilience sustainably, even beyond the end of the programme. Community-level structures promote

nutrition via social behavior change communication initiatives, support village savings and loans groups, restore degraded land and watersheds, and take forward village action plans. **At systems-level**, the joint programme builds shock-sensitive social protection systems, supports district government data and resilience programming, and has institutionalised a Disaster Risk Management Information System.

Specific Results

Improved adoption of nutrition practices: PROSPER supported community messaging on WASH, complementary feeding, maternal nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding and care group by training the District Nutrition Coordinating Committee (DNCC) and the care group community structures in Chikwawa, Phalombe and Balaka, reaching a total of 1,250 members. These structures support outreach to pregnant and lactating women directly via 889 nutrition care groups across communities.

Increased agricultural production, adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture, and inclusive access to quality agricultural inputs: Through Farmer Field Schools (FFS), communities are using climate information and methodologies to establish studies for their food and nutrition security. By the end of 2020, cohorts of Master Trainers (MTs) had established 121 community-based study fields across the project districts reaching 1,686 farmers.

Improved natural resource management through asset creation and protection linked to food security and sustainable natural resource-based livelihoods: Under Food Assistance For Assets (FFA), 16,716 participants received cash transfers (MK14,400/month) to address their immediate food needs, while building or boosting assets, including forestry, the construction of water harvesting structures, and the promotion of cookstoves among other activities.

The year saw an increase in FFA activities implemented without transfers and saw a purposeful targeting of FFA households (up to 75%) with complementary activities including Village Savings and Loan groups, Insurance, Climate Services and market support.

Increased access to insurance products for smallholder farmers and private sector entities engaging with smallholder farmers: In PROSPER, weather index insurance and/or subsidized area-yield index insurance is offered to participants. Overall, 23,666 farmers enrolled for insurance across the four PROSPER districts.

Improved community access to effective climate information services and community-based risk mitigation: 11,800 farmers were reached with Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA), a methodology that enables agricultural extension officers to interpret and communicate climate service information to farmers. Daily weather updates and weekly agricultural tips, including COVID-19

prevention, nutrition, post-harvest handling and losses, pests and disease control, and marketing were sent through an SMS and radio platforms. A Farmer Call Centre received and supported a total of 6,485 farmers.

Provision of Lean Season Top Ups to vulnerable households: PROSPER includes a shock response mechanism: the crisis modifier. Under this, resources were provided to jointly support 6 districts of Balaka, Nsanje, Neno, Dedza, Karonga, and Phalombe, where 15% or more of the population was classified as acutely food insecure. A total of 249,894 beneficiaries received cash-based assistance (USD \$5 million) to meet their food needs for January-March 2020.

Successful change management through increased capacity of national, district, and community institutions

- Risk Management Information System (DRMIS):
 Building upon the system put in place in 2019, in 2020 14 disaster reports were sent via the DRMIS demonstrating the gradual adoption of the system.
- Shock-sensitive social protection: PROSPER
 continued to support the government to develop
 Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) in
 2020, to respond to food insecurity, and establish
 a trajectory for increasing the predictable provision
 and coverage of social protection.

National and districts government officials planned, coordinated and implemented the 2019/2020 lean season response using social protection systems. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN supported the Government of Malawi to produce targeting tools, processes, and guidelines for the urban and peri-urban cash response.

Improved systems for resilience building among government stakeholders: In 2020, a Resilience Dashboard was designed in conjunction with district authorities. This is a stakeholder platform to strengthen the use of evidence to propel service improvements that target communities, households and people most in need. This tool is designed to improve decentralized implementation of services across social, economic and environmental sectors, and with real-time data digitalizes and geo-references both well-being indicators and service indicators.

Challenges and Lessons learnt

The main challenge faced in 2020 was the COVID-19 pandemic. The PROSPER partners put into place operational plans to prepare for potential scenarios and updated operational guidelines to support the National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. The programme also started COVID-19 messaging via radio and mobile PA systems, utilizing the community communications channels established for nutrition messaging, reaching an estimated total of 946,582 people.





PHOTO CREDIT: WFP/FRANCIS THAWANI

Mary Masamba



PHOTO CREDIT: WFP/FRANCIS THAWANI

Mpitilira Farmer Field School in



PHOTO CREDIT: WFP/FRANCIS THAWANI

Mary and fellow members of Mpitilira Farmer Field School have learnt ways to control waterflow and stop soil erosion.



PHOTO CREDIT: WFP/FRANCIS THAWANI

Thanks to Farmer Field School, today Mary can provide for her family.

FROM FRUITLESS LAND, COMES BOUNTY

For many years, Mary Masamba, 38, and her family from Chawa 1 Village in Mangochi District, had been grappling with perpetual hunger despite her area receiving good rains. Due to poor farming practices, her 1-acre piece of land could only yield 20 bags of 50 kilos of maize which could not see her through to the next harvest. "Previously, I could not harvest enough food to feed my family. We would run out of food by October every year and we relied on piecemeal work to bring food to the table until the next harvest," says Mary.

However, life changed in 2019 when she joined the Mpitilira Farmer Field School that was introduced in her area by the *Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER) programme* -.

Knowledge gained from the farmer field school has helped Mary and 30 other members of the group to change their farming practices as a result of climate information provided through extension officers and radio platforms.

"I now plant early maturing and drought tolerant crop varieties, I practice mixed cropping, use compost manure, construct water harvesting structures like box ridges and check dams, and practice conservation agriculture," says Mary.

Through climate services information, members of the Mpitilira farmer field school can also predict the number of days it will rain in a year and this helps them to make right farming decisions like buying and planting early maturing seeds.

"Apart from improving my farming practices, I received seeds of maize, mustard and tomatoes. Growing these vegetables has helped to improve my household income. I have used proceeds from selling vegetables to buy a goat and to support my children's education," she says.

"All these have resulted in increased production. From the same piece of land where I was harvesting 20 bags, in 2019-2020 growing season I harvested 58 bags of maize," she adds. "I sold part of the harvest, 20 bags, to buy farm inputs and other family needs. The remaining 38 bags will see me through March 2021, the next harvest period."

The programme also aims to increase access to finance and markets and support an enabling environment for small-scale enterprises to improve the livelihoods of marginalised groups in line with Malawi's National Resilience Strategy.

2/ PROMOTION OF SECURE LAND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS













The project promotes rural communities' access to food through their improved security of land tenure. Land tenure represents one of the key development challenges to address if the most marginalized groups in Malawi are to achieve their Right to Food, particularly women farmers. Raising awareness of the current Land Law and its application to improve tenure security contributes to the achievement of the Right to Food by empowering women to claim their rights and at the same time creating the demand for accountability from duty bearers. This has been achieved through the establishment and strengthening of accountability mechanisms for land law implementation in the districts with the formation of the District Land Networks (DLNS) and support the Ministry of Lands in ensuring gender considerations in the new processes introduced by the land laws. The project also intended to ensure that women forums are strengthened in preparation for the roles they would play in the implementation of the new land laws.

Key areas of intervention



Access to information for, and participation of rural communities in policy and institutional delivery relating to land law implementation and realization of the right to food



Strengthening accountability structures in the implementation of the new land laws.

Overall Results

From January to December 2020, the project continued to work with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in ensuring gender streamlining in the implementation of the land laws. In line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and the Guidelines for the Realization of the Right to Adequate Food,

training sessions for land clerks, chiefs and customary land committees were provided. The project provided support to 40 CSOs in the target districts in promoting women's right to land. Women in the target districts have continued to interact with the CSOs in managing land issues faced by women and raising awareness of the land laws through community radios and interaction in the communities.

Specific Results

Increased access to information on land laws: The project has continued to ensure access to information to members of communities, focusing on women and youth. The project has disseminated IEC materials describing the new land laws and the land registration processes in target districts.

Community engagement with chiefs and other relevant structures in the communities has helped the increase understanding of the new land laws and their articulation by communities.

Women empowerment: The previous year's training sessions on confidence building for women has seen women elected in the land administration structures in the target districts and increasing support for each other when faced with land issues. Women in Mzimba, a strong patrilineal context, have been able to raise their voices on land and other issues in fora beyond their communities, including at District Executive Committee meetings.

Capacity building: The project has trained 20 land clerks, 48 chiefs and 32 customary committee members from the 8 districts in VGGT and land administration to help them understand the link between gender and land.

Strengthened demand for accountability: The project

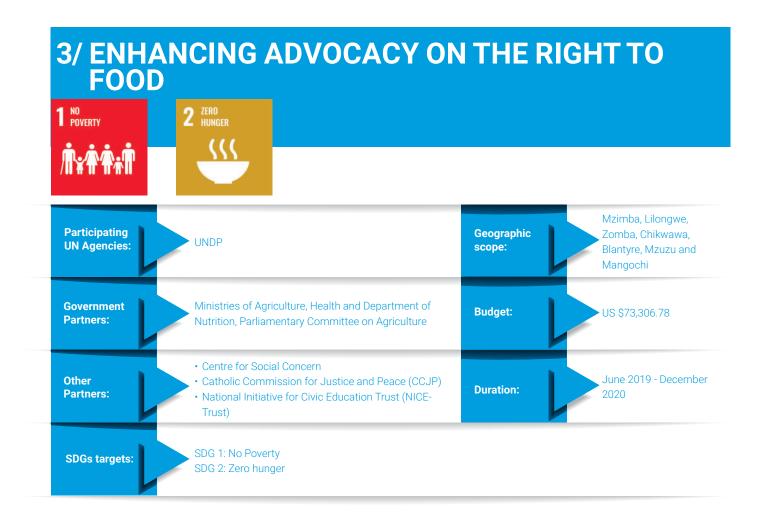
has increased the demand for accountability of duty-bearers from women and other vulnerable people in the target communities. Raising awareness about the roles of various structures in land administration, the national and local land governance instruments and the agency of women, have contributed to the recognition of land rights violations and how victims can seek redress. A cumulative 160 Civil society organizations, with 40 reached in 2020 have formed district land networks in the 8 districts and continue to support women and other vulnerable groups to claim their rights in their communities.

Challenges and Lessons learnt

The project was considerably affected by the consequences of the elections in 2020, making community engagement difficult and by the effects of the COVID-19 restrictions which did not allow large gatherings and regular travel.

In addition, after fresh elections, the government announced that all land laws would be reviewed and sent back to Parliament, bringing a halt to most activities involving communities. Despite these challenges, progress has still been registered in ensuring gender considerations in law implementation, especially through training sessions and community engagement through CSOs based in the districts.





The project advocates for the progressive realization of the right to food through building capacity of communities in order to have a fruitful interface between them and the duty bearers. The objective is to advance the agenda on the right to food for its progressive realization. To achieve this, the project supported Civil Society Organizations to carry out upstream policy work focusing on duty bearers at national level and downstream policy work focusing on rights holders at group-village levels. The upstream policy work involves research, dialogue, advocacy, and monitoring on the right to food, while the downstream policy work involves building capacity for people at the grassroots level to demand their rights.

Key areas of intervention



Overall Results

The Right to Food (RTF) project has registered several achievements at national, district and community level. Through advocacy with Community-Based Advocacy Groups (CBAGs) the project achieved results ranging from the improvement of roads and bridges; dismissal

of corrupted officials in ADMARC; support in the adoption of the National ID by target beneficiaries under the Agricultural Input Programme (AIP); availability of Agricultural Extension Workers in Rural Areas where there was not coverage; rural electrification in areas that were previously not reached; establishment of police units in Chikwawa and Mzimba to reduce crimes such

as the theft of livestock and agricultural produce; to supporting households Food and Income Budgeting to help them make more efficient use of money and food, and avoid waste.

Specific Results

'Interface-advocacy discussions' between CBAG members and duty bearers have achieved notable results in several areas: lobbying for the setting up of more fair and transparent systems for national agricultural support (e.g. adoption of the new Agricultural Input Program and removal of corrupted practices in ADMARC); revamping of community structures (e.g. Kamilaza dip tanks) and infrastructure projects (e.g. roads and bridges in the target districts) to facilitate and increase access to markets; deployment of Agricultural Extension Workers (e.g. in Manyamula Extension Planning Area); electrification of some rural areas that have now been reached by the Malawi Rural Electrification Program (MAREP); and strengthened security through the construction of Police Units to reduce crimes.

These interventions have helped improve the economic and social conditions of communities, by benefitting from more transparent systems of farmers support, providing access to markets and setting up new businesses (improvement of infrastructures and rural electrification), improving farmers' agricultural productivity through new skills and day-by mentoring by Agricultural Extension Workers.

The project has contributed to the realization of the right to food since the government had made efforts to take progressive steps in the creation of a more conducive

environment for the target population to enjoy and demand their rights.

Food and Income Budgeting: The project uses the Rural Basic Need Basket (RBNB) tool to collect information about food consumption, monthly income, expenditure, kilocalorie intake and the cost of living. Since selected households are involved in the research, they are now able to plan and prioritize their food and income budgeting and make more efficient use of resources by drastically reducing wastes.

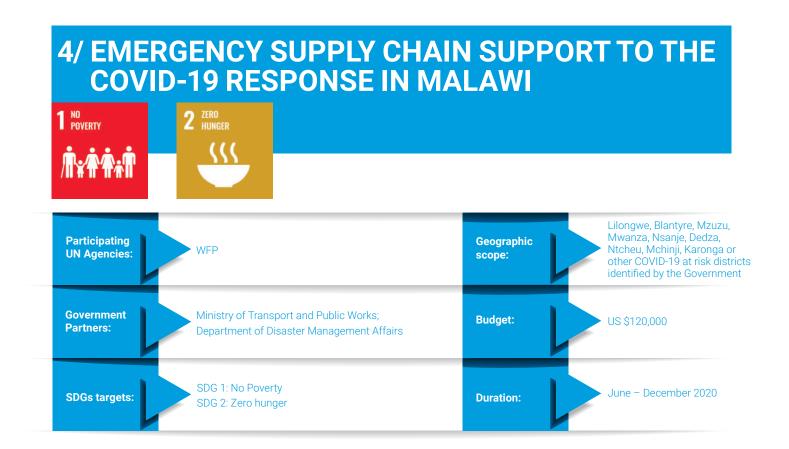
Challenges and Lessons learnt

A critical challenged faced by the project has been the low literacy levels among women in most of the areas where the project is being implemented, as only few women are represented in CBAGs, despite being the most relevant group working in agriculture and most of them find it difficult to access agricultural inputs.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the project implementation, due to restrictions for interface meetings. However, the project made efforts to adjust to alternative strategies to ensure that issues raised by right holders should reach duty bearers. For instance, CBAG members invited journalists to record their concerns and have them delivered to individual duty bearers to give their feedback also through recording.

Holding duty bearers accountable and expecting them to fully respond to issues affecting right holders is not an easy task. Building capacity of communities is the first tool to hold duty bearers accountable, bringing in their behavioral and performance changes.





This initiative, led by the National Logistics Cluster, has facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance by increasing logistical support in line with the government-led COVID-19 Preparedness and Response plan¹⁰ and thereby significantly contributed to mitigating the effects of COVID-19 in Malawi. The primary objective has been to ensure the timely and uninterrupted delivery of essential and lifesaving relief items to the beneficiaries in affected communities, even under conditions impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key areas of intervention



Overall results

Between June and December 2020, WFP supported 41 organizations¹¹ in Malawi, including key government entities, to ensure an efficient COVID-19 logistics response. The key operations have been divided into Service Provision and Logistics Coordination as the two focal areas.

Specific Results

Timely and uninterrupted Service Provision: In close collaboration with the Government and other members of the National Logistics Cluster in Malawi, WFP has provided three core services to logistically support the COVID-19 response:

¹⁰ Malawi National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response plan (March-June 2020)

¹¹ Department of Disaster Management Affairs; Ministry of Transport and Public Works; Ministry of Health; Malawi Defence Force; Roads Authority; Malawi Police Service; Marine Department; National Food Reserve Agency; Airport Development Limited; Department of Civil Aviation; Partners in Hope; Welthungerhilfe; Adventist Development and Relief Agency; Oxfam; Save The Children; Médecins Sans Frontiers; ActionAid; Concern International; Concern Worldwide; Plan International; United Purpose; Tearfund; Care Malawi; Evangelical Lutheran Development Services; Shelter Box; Department for International Development; Last Mile Health; Catholic Relief Services; Clinton Health Access Initiative; Eagles Relief Development Programme; Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organizations; Adventist Health Centre; Dee Yang Luke Hospital (UN Clinic); Malawi Red Cross; WFP; UNICEF; UN OCHA; UNHCR; FAO; UNRCO; WHO

Storage – In order to store personal protective equipment (PPE) and other COVID-19 supplies to be used in health facilities and by Malawian returnees, partners, including the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, UNHCR, Last Mile Health and the Malawi Red Cross Society, were able to utilize over 600 square meters of common storage space in Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Transportation – A total of 48.9 metric tons of cargo was transported by WFP Malawi during the COVID-19 response: 39.9 metric tons of cargo was transported by road to 13 districts¹²; 9 metric tons of light cargo were transported for other UN agencies and NGOs by air to Kamuzu International Airport from WFP's regional and international humanitarian logistics hubs established under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan; with approval from the Malawi Government for operating humanitarian passenger flights, WFP Aviation successfully facilitated 22 flights to and from Lilongwe and other countries in the region¹³.

Light engineering - In partnership with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), the Ministry of Health, the Health Cluster and other key stakeholders, the project provided engineering support through the:

- Deployment of 22 Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) at border posts¹⁴ for screening and isolation for the reception of returnees; at health centers¹⁵ and the Dzaleka Refugee Camp for the isolation and quarantine of COVID-19-infected patients.
- Installation and upgrading of 6 tents in cooperation with the Department of Civil Aviation and Airports at Kamuzu and Chileka International Airports, that were used as centers for screening and temporary isolation during the re-opening for commercial flights.
- Development of a concept for converting shipping containers into mobile COVID-19 laboratories to expand the testing capacity of the Ministry of Health. The handover of the first container labs site occurred in December and initiated the process of installing five container lab units in the districts of Dedza, Karonga, Mwanza, Mchinji and Chitipa.

Logistics Coordination and Supply Chain Information Management- Weekly online logistics coordination meetings were organized. These meetings enabled partners to discuss transport planning, storage needs and district-level assessments. To facilitate increased information sharing and enable operational planning between National Logistics Cluster partners, a dedicated COVID-19 logistics webpage was utilized, and 55 information management products have been shared via this platform.

Furthermore, a **Logistics Emergency Preparedness Technical Working Group** was set up in October 2020 to update the Preparedness Action Plan and the National Contingency Plan and to actively discuss logistics and emergency preparedness related topics with eight key partners¹⁶.

Another key accomplishment was the pilot launch¹⁷ of the new **Logistics Information Exchange (Log:ie) platform** for Malawi in cooperation with the Global Logistics Cluster. Data on partners' capacity in the country were collected and uploaded to the system. The goal is to create an interactive map that visualizes logistics capacity in Malawi and enables all stakeholders to regularly update logistics information by means of rapid data collection tools.

Challenges and lessons learned

The imposed COVID-19 restrictions regarding social gatherings as well as the recommendations for remote working challenged the operation of logistics coordination and supply chain information management.

The storage of vaccinations presents a major logistical challenge in Malawi due to a lack of cold chain infrastructure, equipment and personnel trained for the handling of vaccines. Therefore, discussions on Malawi's cold chain capacity with government entities and other partners were initiated to plan for the storage of the COVID-19 vaccine during contingency planning for 2021.

¹² Blantyre, Dedza, Karonga, Lilongwe, Mangochi, Mchinji, Mulanje, Mwanza, Mzimba, Ntcheu, Nsanje, Chikwawa and Zomba.

¹³ The last flight was conducted in September 2020 since airports reopened as per Government directive

¹⁴ Dedza, Karonga, Mwanza, Ntcheu and Mchinji

¹⁵ Kamuzu Central Hospital in Lilongwe, Partner in Hope Medical Centre, Mzuzu Central Hospital

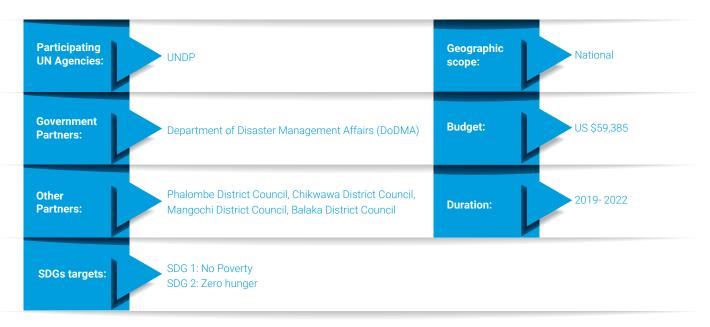
¹⁶ MSF Belgium, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, MSF France, the Department of Civil Aviation, Concern Worldwide, Last Mile Health, FAO and UNICEF

¹⁷ The official launch of Logie was scheduled for January 2021. In the meantime, the test version is accessible here: https://logie-mwi.netlify.app/

5/ INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TO DODMA







The Government of Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) is the lead agency in responding to the emergency crisis with the support of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, through the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and the National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee. Despite significant inroads made in the development of relevant Disaster Management policies and strategies, there remain many gaps in coordination and the flow of information to guide emergency responses. The flow of information is not consistent and regular and needs to flow in two directions, from districts and clusters to the central level and then back. To address these challenges, this project strengthens and institutionalizes capacities, reporting mechanisms and accountability of DoDMA among Cluster leads and Co-leads and district councils. It provides an opportunity to improve timely feedback to crises and address the challenges in ongoing emergency responses. The project acts as a first step towards strengthening the connections between the humanitarian response and linking to improved preparedness and development.

Key areas of intervention





Overall Results

During the reporting period, the DoDMA Information Management Unit (IMU) has set up a Disaster Risk Information Management Unit (DRIMS) whereby incident reporting is processed online and designed to automatically generate infographics. The DRIMS is currently being used in four districts, with potential for expansion; it builds on key indicators by cluster, makes use of data collection tools with controls, and will be the de facto information management system for DRM in Malawi, thereby enhancing accountability of the sector. Currently, most of the information collected relates to disaster response, but it is expected that the new system will host information on preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery.

Specific Results

Better-informed humanitarian decision making by the Government and HCT- DoDMA established a cadre of four trained Information Management analysts to bolster its information management capacity to provide consistent, comprehensive and reliable analysis of disaster humanitarian needs and priorities, including needs assessments, making the best use of information and communication technologies through the DRIMS. This information is provided to national leadership, as well as to the broader humanitarian community to improve decision-making.

More responsive and adaptable Disaster Information Management System- The IMU acted as a convener and catalyst of change in the disaster information management system by offering programmatic solutions to ensure the disaster information system remains adapted and relevant to changes. Presently the turnaround time to solve issues is a few days compared to weeks with the old paper-based system.

Challenges and lessons learned

The IMU recruitment processes were considerably delayed mainly due to internal discussions. This was eventually overcome by a full endorsement by the Government and a consequent functional review process, whereby the IMU will become a fulltime permanent unit within DODMA. The IMU will continue to invest in tools to access, share and utilize data and information underpinning coordination, decision-making and advocacy through the DRIMS, thereby effectively processing, organizing, storing, and disseminating information required for disaster response and recovery. The DRMIS, though the use of open platforms and informative dashboards, common data standards and emerging technologies will encourage all partners to undertake meaningful gender analysis as part of the overall analysis of needs and response, including the collection and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data.



6/ IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MALAWI'S COVID-19 SOCIAL PROTECTION RESPONSE THROUGH GRIEVANCE AND REDRESS MECHANISMS AND MONITORING









This initiative has supported the Government of Malawi in conceptualizing and preparing for the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI), a government-led initiative to address the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 in urban areas. UNICEF, among other efforts, contributed by setting up a remote platform for the management of grievances and redresses, and the effective monitoring of the intervention. The objective of this support has been to ensure that the Government of Malawi receives the required technical and operational assistance to effectively address grievances and monitoring needs arising from the CUCI. Ultimately, the project aims to ensure that right holders have access to safe and effective complaint mechanisms and to strengthen the regular social protection system by supporting a smooth transition from a Call Centre created for the emergency response to a more permanent structure that will be part of the national social protection system.

Key areas of intervention





Overall Results

The implementation of the CUCI response has faced substantial delays due to a number of reasons, including the Presidential Elections, refinements of the COVID-19 National Response Plan, as well as a series of technical challenges requiring substantial system adaptations. Government anticipates payments will commence on 1st March 2021.

From June to December 2020, significant progress was made in terms of ensuring that all the critical elements of the CUCI Call Centre were solidly established and the Call Centre is ready to start operations following the rollout of CUCI payments to the 4 cities: Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba.

Also, consultations and planning meetings for less immediate action areas also took place, including the development of monitoring tools and the planning of the handover process for the Call Centre to continue rendering GRM, case management and monitoring services for regular social protection programs after the emergency response.

Specific Results

Set-up and operate a helpline to address grievances and redresses linked to the Government COVID-19 social protection response - the operation of the Call Centre was awarded to TNM for delivering CUCI payments to beneficiaries. Key strategic equipment and further capacities to develop new functionalities and maintenance of the CUCI MIS were set in place.

UNICEF supported the Government in the preparation of the Grievance and Redress Mechanisms (GRM) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for CUCI, including the design of a Referrals Map. The GRM procedures embed the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) as a repository that will not only help Call Centre operators to promptly provide people with information through the Call Centre; but can also be used to provide briefings to referral points for CUCI (e.g. Police, Financial Service Providers, GRM Committees, etc.). Also, a **Communications Plan** and relevant communication messages (both in English and in Chichewa) to improve the awareness of and access to the Call Centre were developed.

Design and operationalize a handover process for the Call Centre- the project supported the Government with the operationalization of the Call Centre to complement GRM, case management and monitoring of regular social protection programmes. The Call Centre is located at the premises of the MoGCDSW and a handover process aims to ensure Government uptakes the responsibility to build the required capacity to ensure that the Call Centre is adequately maintained and utilized to its full potential.

Challenges and lessons learned

Overall, the project has managed to make significant progress despite COVID-19 restrictions and other limitations. The partnership with the government counterparts has been overall positive. Some challenges have been faced in terms of communication and engagement, in the light of the multiple commitments to operationalize the COVID-19 social protection response. Further, a more dynamic approach to data quality assurance should be undertaken, ensuring that 'spot-checks' and other verifications take place as close as possible to data collection, to reduce potential discrepancies and to fast-track overall data validation processes.



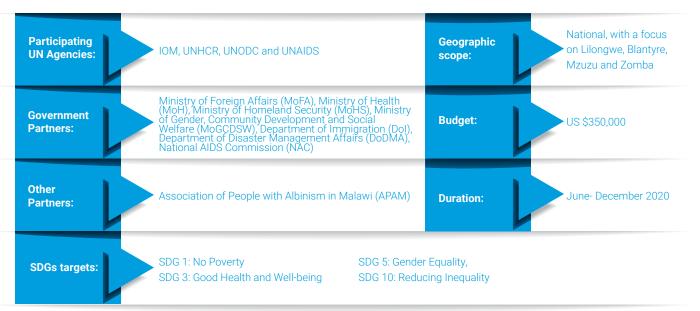
7/ STRENGTHENING THE COVID-19 CAPACITY FOR FRONTLINE OFFICIALS AND BORDER COMMUNITIES TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS











The objective of the project is to strengthen the COVID-19 capacity for frontline officials and border communities to respond to the needs of most vulnerable populations including migrants, returnees, deportees, people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants and survivors of gender-based violence.

Key areas of intervention







Overall results

The initiative enhanced capacities in Points of Entry (PoEs) to detect and refer travelers suspected of having COVID 19, improved surveillance, inclusion of mobile populations, migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrant groups in Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) efforts, border assessments to determine migration trend due to COVID-19 and identification of key mobility axes and areas of congregation to describe mobility characteristics and recommend public health measures for COVID-19 prevention and containment.

Specific Results

Effective coordination- The development of the first ever national SOP defining stakeholders' roles and responsibilities on reception and management of returnees led to establishment of an effective, efficient and functional coordination mechanism that led to the timely provision of information needed for preparing for service delivery for vulnerable populations. The SoPs have been designed to be adaptable to future similar emergencies.

Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) and Rapid Assessment –carried out at the 10 busiest Points of Entry¹⁸ informed gaps in capacity to detect, refer and manage suspected COVID-19 cases and to consistently provide SRH, HIV, GBV and Victims of Trafficking services to migrant population amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Partner agencies intervened by strengthening institutional and human resource capacities at the PoE to respond to the pandemic.

Strengthened infection Prevention and Control- 733 PoE frontline border officials and civil society personnel were trained on disease surveillance, detection, referral and management and provision of SRH, HIV/AIDS, SGBV, and VoT services. Furthermore, they were provided with Infection Prevention and Control materials.

Information sharing- Timely sharing of information on returnees by the MoFA and the Foreign Mission made preparation and planning for returnees and delivery of services by relevant stakeholders possible.

Strengthened protection and referral of Victims of Trafficking and Smuggled Migrants- leading to the uncovering of some trafficking syndicates thereby rescuing victims of trafficking.

Continuum of care- While the response targeted COVID-19 prevention, the program ensured continued provision of SRH services and continuum of care for persons living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of SGBV, VoT, Smuggled migrants, and persons with disabilities as best practices to help leave no-one behind.

Knowledge Empowerment- Empowering migrants, refugees, returnees, communities and stakeholders with information on COVID-19 and how to prevent it from spreading through sensitization sessions, radio jingles, distribution of leaflets, brochures, and billboards, contributed to behavior change that helped mitigate the spread of the virus.

Vulnerable populations participated in community engagement activities some of which were led by the Association of Persons with Albinism (APAM).

Challenges and lessons learned

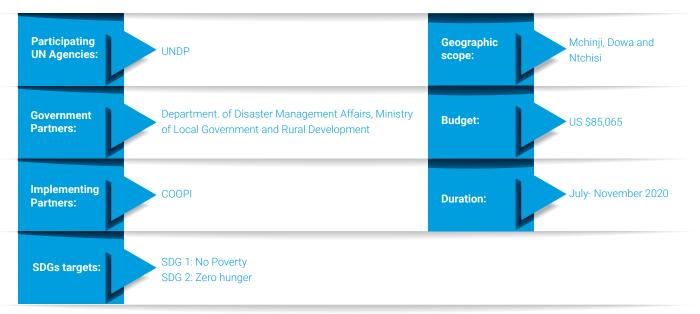
Thanks to effective coordination amongst partner agencies to expedite the implementation of activities, the programme did not experience delays. However, despite its successful implementation, the programme faced some challenges, specifically in the delay in receipt of information on returnees from South Africa that impacted service delivery to the returnees, especially women and children who needed special attention; establishment of reception centers with functional facilities that could host the unexpected large numbers of returnees; and a lack of resources for reintegration support for those returnees who had lost their sources of income. The programme successfully managed to address these challenges through further engagement with relevant authorities and stakeholders and linkages with other projects that could support some of the returnees with reintegration assistance.

¹⁸ Chileka International Airport, Biriwiri, Dedza, Mbilima, Mchinji, Muloza, Mwanza, Nkhatabay, Kamuzu International Airport, and Songwe

8/ STRENGTHENING DISTRICT COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANS







Since the outset of the COVID-19 emergency, gaps in coordination between the national and the districts have been identified as one of the biggest bottlenecks for the harmonization and effectiveness of the implementation of the Government of Malawi's National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (NCPRP).

The project aimed at strengthening the NCPRP Coordination structure through the development and adoption of systematic planning and data collection formats targeting the District Authorities and their respective District COVID Preparedness and Response Plans (DCPRPs) in critical sectors, such as coordination, information exchange and progress monitoring so to enable authorities to effectively make informed decisions during the emergency response.

Key areas of intervention





Overall Results

The project supported the Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) to more effectively coordinate the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the district level, in particular, by improving

the district to national level communication in support of monitoring the implementation of the process. The project provided an analysis of 21 existing DCPRPs¹⁹ for the period March – June 2020 and developed a new standard planning and monitoring tool for the next period (July – December 2020). The initiative served as

¹⁹ Nkhata Bay, Karonga, Dowa, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Nkhotakota, Ntcheu, Ntchisi, Salima, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Mangochi, Machinga, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Phalombe, Thyolo, Zomba

a basis to transfer the proposed tool into an e-tool that will complement the DoDMA Disaster Risk Management Information System (DRMIS) and capture emergency information in near real-time, with a particular focus on the COVID-19 crisis and improving the provision of updated information to DoDMA and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

Specific Results

Strengthened COVID-19 preparedness and response at district level- The project supported the development of District Multi-Hazard Response Plans for Mchinji, Dowa and Ntchisi districts, provided training and computer equipment for improved preparedness and response planning.

Improvement of DCPRPs planning procedures- The proposed standard reporting tool developed by the project partners and based on a thorough analysis of the first DCPRPs, provided relevant inputs to the DoDMA formats offered to the Districts for the second round of DCPRP development.

Monitoring of critical DCPRPs' indicators- Proposed monitoring indicators were developed by the project partners and provided to DoDMA. The envisaged countrywide roll out of a standard monitoring tool was not achieved to its full extent due to shifting mandates

between DoDMA and the Presidential COVID-19 committee.

Set up of an effective framework to support District Authorities (DAs) in planning and managing the response- Three districts²⁰ under the project and an additional three²¹ under an ECHO-funded intervention benefitted from capacity building measures including an introduction to the COVID-19 reporting tools. This has contributed to a more efficient response in the six districts.

Challenges and lessons learned

The analysis of existing first DCPRP's and recommendations made to DoDMA on possible improvements for the next plans are considered a successful part of the project. However, developing a new e-based tool with participatory engagement of all stakeholders in a short time period was too ambitious, also considering that DoDMA and the District Executive Committees (DEC's) were highly burdened with COVID-19 response activities and coordination. Digitization and use of ICT tools to improve the visibility, transparency and accessibility of information remains an unfinished priority to improve the quality of service delivery, coordination and tracking of COVID-19 preparedness and response measures.



²⁰ Mchinji, Dowa and Ntchisi

²¹ Mzimba North, Dedza, Lilongwe rural and Lilongwe urban



4. Recommendations for 2021

For the next year, it is recommended to:

- i. Align the Fund with the Malawi Vision 2063: In 2021 the Government of Malawi will launch the Vision 2063, which is the long-term development agenda embedding the aspiration of transforming Malawi into a middle-income country. The Fund should align its programmatic framework to this vision, guaranteeing that the initiatives supported are adding to this national agenda.
- ii. Ensure Gender provisions at the heart of the new revised Fund: Both the Operational and Steering Committees of the Fund should guarantee that all

projects allocate at least 30 percent of resources to activities that support gender equality and women empowerment. This is a positive practice inspired by 7-point action plan by the Secretary General on Women's Participation, however the Fund Steering Committee has agreed to enhance gender equality by raising the percentage from 15 to 30. This practice. Bcan make a difference in SDGs acceleration regardless of the sector the Fund is supporting. Projects supported in 2020 did not necessarily reflect this provision, in 2021 the Fund should drive efforts to ensure gender equality promotion in all its projects.



- iii. Mobilize more unearmarked resources: As stated by the Steering Committee of the Fund, one aspirational goal is to mobilize more unearmarked resources to enable a broader informed discussion and participatory decision-making processes among stakeholders. In 2020, at least 90 percent of resources mobilized by the Fund were earmarked, particularly for Joint Programmes. Stakeholders should be aware of each Development Partners priorities, while Development Partners could also acknowledge the benefit of having an informed discussion with Government and UN stakeholders prior to allocation decisions.
- iv. Continue to support projects that channel urgent yet catalytic solutions: Projects in 2020 have showed capacity to not only support the most urgent humanitarian needs, but also to serve as catalyzer for mid and long-term responses. This nexus approach should be maintained and enhanced in 2020.
- v. Support the COVID-19 Socio Economic
 Recovery Plan: Aligned with the above, beyond
 the Humanitarian Window response, the Fund is
 well positioned to support the forthcoming SocioEconomic Recovery Plan, building on the gains and
 lessons learned from 2020. The recovery phase
 should be aligned with the SDGs agenda, which is
 the Fund's main purpose, giving attention to the
 revitalization of livelihoods and economies, with
 a focus on the most vulnerable, particularly girls,
 women and youth.
- vi. Enhance action through Window 1: Despite the impressive transformation of the Fund from 2019 to 2020, there is still space to enhance support to those UNSDCF outcomes under the window 1: Peace, Inclusion, and effective institutions. Strategic Governance areas such as Anticorruption, Human Rights and Peacebuilding can be supported by the Fund in 2021. In 2020 the Fund did not approve any project under this window.
- vii. Enforce the decision of having Civil Society and Private Sector represented in the Steering Committee: As part of its transformation, in 2020 the Fund included provisions for guaranteeing participation of Civil Society and Private Sector in the Steering Committee. A decision on moving forward with this provision is recommended for 2021 as it will facilitate opening up more opportunities for resource mobilization and will widen the participation of key stakeholder for the SDGs agenda.
- viii. Consider channeling resources directly to CSOs: noting that in Malawi there are several CSOs with operational capacities in place for the immediate implementation of projects, the Fund should consider a mechanism to directly allocate resources to these.

ANNEX 1

UNSDCF Strategic pillars and related Outcomes

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME
Pillar 1- Peace, inclusion and Accountable institutions	OUTCOME 1: Rights holders in Malawi access more accountable and effective institutions at the central and decentralised levels that use quality disaggregated data, offer integrated service delivery and promote civic engagement, respect for human rights and rule of law.
	OUTCOME 2: Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Malawi is enhanced.
	OUTCOME 3: Malawi has strengthened institutional capacities for sustaining peace, inclusive societies and participatory democracy
Pillar 2- Population	Outcome 4: Children 0-5 years will have increased access to comprehensive quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) services.
management and inclusive human development	Outcome 5: Girls and boys 6-17 years, particularly the most marginalized, benefit from an integrated package of quality education, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS and protection services
	Outcome 6: All men, women and adolescents access high impact comprehensive sexual and reproductive and HIV and AIDS health rights
Pillar 3- Inclusive and resilient	Outcome 7: Households have increased food and nutrition security, equitable access to WASH and healthy ecosystems and resilient livelihoods.
growth	Outcome 8: Malawi has more productive, sustainable and diversified agriculture, value chains and market access
	Outcome 9: Malawi has strengthened economic diversification, inclusive business, entrepreneurship and access to clean energy

ANNEX 2

List of partners in 2019 and 2020

SECTOR	2019	2020	
Government	Department of Disasters Management Affairs (DoDMA)		
		Department of Immigration (DoI)	
		Department of Nutrition	
	Ministries	of Health (MoH)	
	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS)		
	Ministry of Economic Planning & Development and Public Sector Reforms (MoEPDPSR)		
		Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)	
	Ministry of Gender, Community Development & Social Welfare (MoGCDSW)		
		Ministry of Homeland Security (MoHS)	
	Ministry of Land Housing and Urban Development (MoLHUD)		
	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD)		
	Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment		
		National AIDS Commission (NAC)	
		Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture	
CS0s	CARE Malawi		
		Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)	
	Centre for Social Concern (CfSC)		
	Concern Worldwide		
		COOPI	
	CUMO Microfinance		
	Find Your Feet		
	GOAL Malawi		
	Land Net		
		National Initiative for Civic Education Trust (NICE-Trust)	
	PLAN International		
	United Purpose		
	World Vision		

ANNEX 2

(CONTINUED)

SECTOR	2019	2020
UN Agencies	FAO	
		IOM
		UNAIDS
	UNDP	
		UNHCR
	UNICEF	
		UNODC
	UN WOMEN	
	WFP	
Private Sector	Kadale Consultants	
		Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM)



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