



UNITED
NATIONS
MALAWI

Malawi SDG
Acceleration Fund

2021 Annual Report



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PARTICIPATING AGENCIES



CONTRIBUTORS



Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGYWs	Adolescents Girls and Young Women	MP4R	Malawi Partnership for Resilience Joint Programme
ANC	Antenatal Care	MPDSR	Maternal Death Surveillance and Response
ASRHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	MTs	Master Trainers
BTS	Breaking the Silence	MW2063	Malawi 2063
CBFs	Community-Based Facilitators	NEEF	National Economic Empowerment Fund
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access	NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
COVID-19 MPTF Fund	COVID-19 Multi Partner Trust Fund	OC	Operational Committee
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education	OHSP	One Health Surveillance Platform
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	PCC	Parent-Child Communication
CUCI	COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention	PICSA	Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture
DPs	Development Partners	PLHIV	People Living with HIV
DSWOs	District Social Welfare Officers	PROSPER	Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience
eHIN	Electronic Health Information Network	PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care	RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
ETP	Ending Teenage Pregnancy	RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	SC	Steering Committee
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets	SCTP	Social Cash-Transfer Programme
FFS	Farmer Field Schools	SDG-AF	SDG Acceleration Fund
GBV	Gender Based Violence	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GoM	Government of Malawi	SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
GRM	Grievance and Redress Mechanisms	SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus	SSSP	Shock-Sensitive Social Protection
HSAs	Health Surveillance Assistants	UN	United Nations
iCHIS	Community Health Information System	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
IDSR	Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/ AIDS
IDSR	Integrated Diseases Surveillance and Response	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IE	Inclusive Education	UNDS	UN development system
IEC	Information, Education and Communication	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control	UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
JP	Joint Programme	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
JPGE	UN Joint Programme on Girls' Education	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks
KUHES	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences	UNSDG	UN Sustainable Development Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	UW-HSS	Umoyo Wathu Health Systems Strengthening Joint Programme
MAITAG	Malawi Immunization Technical Advisory Group	WASH	Water and Sanitation
MIP-1	Malawi 2063 First 10-year Implementation Plan (2021-2030)	WFP	World Food Programme
MIS	Management Information System	WHO	World Health Organization
MoE	Ministry of Education	YFHS	Youth Friendly Health Services
MoGCDsw	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare		
MoH	Ministry of Health		



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Strategic Framework

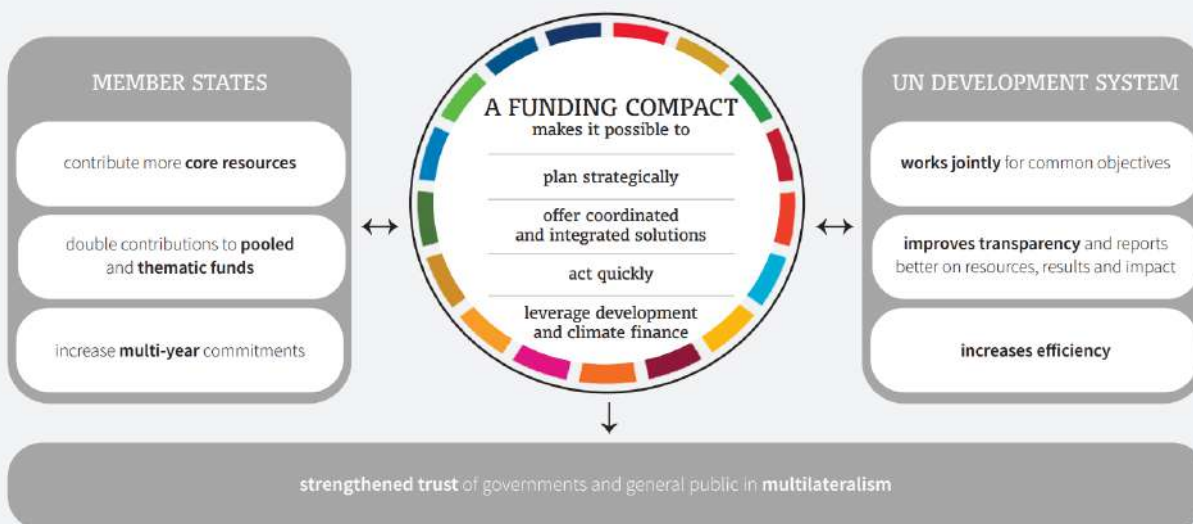
In December 2016, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for a more strategic, accountable, and results-oriented UN development system (UNDS) capable of achieving the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this effect, on 31 May 2018 the General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 72/279 and agreed to a package of reforms to reposition the UNDS. The resolution, informally known as the 'UN Reform', welcomed the call by UN Secretary-General António Guterres for a 'Funding Compact' between the UN system and Member States to address UNDS funding patterns (including a growing imbalance between core and non-core resources), and ensure a more predictable funding base to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Funding Compact is a non-binding instrument based on voluntary commitments by Member States and UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) entities in their pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It outlines two sets of parallel commitments – one for Member States, and another for UNSDG entities – each with relevant indicators to measure progress. Through the Compact, Member States commit to aligning their funding with requirements set by UNSDG entities via an increase in core resources to a level of at least 30 per cent by 2023; multi-year and flexible contributions; and the doubling of resources channeled through development-related inter-agency pooled funds. UNSDG entities, in turn, commit to accelerating results for countries on the ground by working jointly towards common objectives; improved transparency through reporting on needs, resources, results and impact; and increased efficiency and coherence. In July 2019, the Funding Compact was adopted, and its implementation is guided by ten distinct parameters which together enable the required behavior shift in funding development activities at the country level by UN Member States, and UN Country Teams together with Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), and other multilateral contributors.

“Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 calls for transformative, collaborative action. The nature and scale of today’s global challenges, from rising inequality, climate change, stresses on food systems and entrenched poverty, call for a reinvigorated multilateral response. The United Nations must be at the heart of that response by delivering cohesive and high-quality support, at scale, to Member States. For it to do so, however, a fundamental shift in behaviour is required”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2 April 2019

Why a Funding Compact? A partnership to deliver better results on the ground



Source: UN General Assembly and UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), 'Report of the Secretary General: Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019', A/74/73-E/2019/4, 15 April 2019, www.un.org/ecosoc/en/node/17356550

With the adoption of the Funding Compact, Member States have asked the UN development system to do more and better in inter-agency pooled funding. And there is good reason for it: **pooled funds bring the UN together, strengthen coherence, reduce fragmentation, broaden the donor base, allow sharing risks with partners, and tackle multi-dimensional challenges with comprehensive, innovative solutions.** While the UN has worked through pooled funds for over a decade in diverse settings and applications, a new generation of **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF)**¹ offers an excellent opportunity to further scale and improve their efficiency and effectiveness².

1.2. The UN Reform and Funding Compact to improve coordination-funding behaviour at the country level

The United Nations in Malawi has adopted both the UN Reform and the Funding Compact as strategic guiding frameworks. The tools that the Reform and the Funding Compact appeal for, call for **adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding to support a coherent response in line with national priorities and the UNSDCF**³.

What are UN pooled funds?

UN inter-agency pooled funds are a financing mechanism that provides the UN system with more flexible and predictable earmarked funding for jointly agreed priority programmes. Since pooled funds contribute to the UN system as a whole, they serve as enablers for more collective UN action. Contributions received are co-mingled (hence the term 'pooled funds'), not allocated to a specific UN agency and held in trust by a UN fund administrator. Fund allocation is made by a steering committee based on fund allocation criteria that have been agreed upon during the design of the fund. Only once a fund allocation decision is made, is the money passed through to the UN entities responsible for implementing a specific programme.

The experience has demonstrated that pooled funding mechanisms strengthen financing planning and coordination, and are a suitable tool to channel **adequate, predictable, and sustainable** funds towards the highest priority areas.

¹ General Assembly resolution 72/279 elevates the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework) as "the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)." The Cooperation Framework now guides the entire programme cycle, driving planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of collective UN support for achieving the 2030 Agenda. It also determines and reflects the UN development system's contributions in the country and shapes the configuration of UN assets required inside and outside the country.

² Guidance Note For Un Country Teams- UN Country-level Pooled Funds, A financing instrument to invest in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks 2020, UN Sustainable Development Group

³ The strategic plan for the United Nations contributing to the Malawi Government's national development priorities and actions for the period 2019-2023.

Guided by these frameworks, in Malawi the SDG Acceleration Fund -a national pooled fund- (onwards 'the Fund', or the "SDG-AF"), has proven to be key in, among others:

- o Positioning and financing key national SDG priorities under national leadership.
- o Fostering collaboration among participating UN agencies, and with other stakeholders
- o Improving the quantity and quality of Joint Programming.
- o Facilitating alignment of global streams of funding with national priorities and initiatives.
- o Raising awareness on the need for quality funding and to identify funding behavior change (more unearmarked resources, and more joint programming).

1.3. The Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund

The Fund, established in December 2018, is a financing coordination mechanism whereby 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 SDGs. It represents the commitment of its stakeholders to uphold the pledge of leaving no one behind, a principle laying at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The objective of the Fund is to support 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.

The SDG-AF is the most strategic tool currently supporting the implementation of the UN Reform and the Funding Compact, frameworks appealed by Member States for improving coordination, accountability and funding behaviour at country level.

The SDG-AF places emphasis on collective partnerships, predictable funding, innovative and transformative results; moving from fragmentation to strategic planning, improved coordination; responding rapidly to national priorities, and leveraging on the added value of UN entities in Malawi, enabling greater synergies and coherence in cross-sectorial SDG priorities.

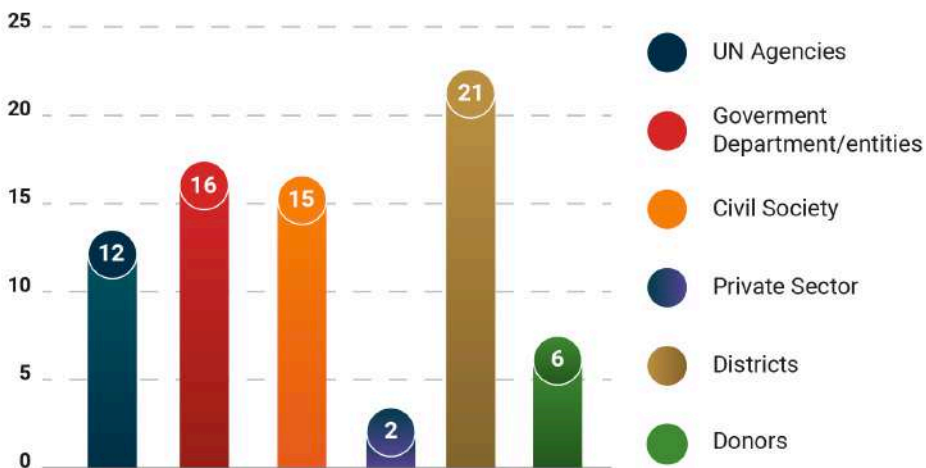
The Fund's first year of implementation, 2019, represented the year of transition from a previous coordinating financing mechanism⁴ to the SDG Acceleration Fund. In the second year of implementation, 2020, the Fund underwent a thorough review of its governance and operational structure that led to enhanced coordination and broader participation of stakeholders, with the result of an exponential growth both in terms of partners, programmes, and resource mobilization.

⁴ The One Fund, established in 2009. Under the leadership of the Government of Malawi, the One Fund supported coherent resource mobilization allocation and disbursement of donor resources. The One Fund closed on December 2018.

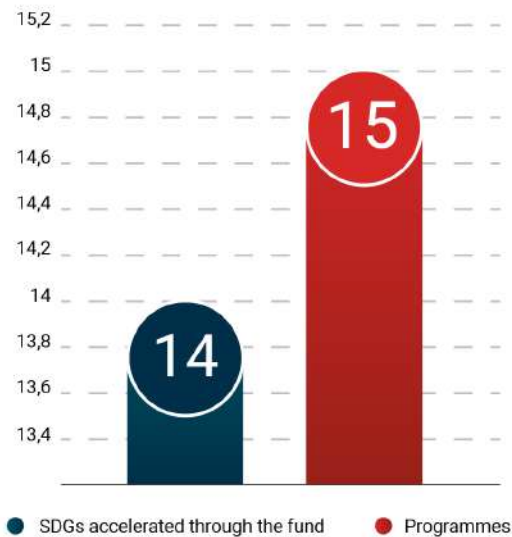


THE SDG-AF AT A GLANCE

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SDG-AF SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT

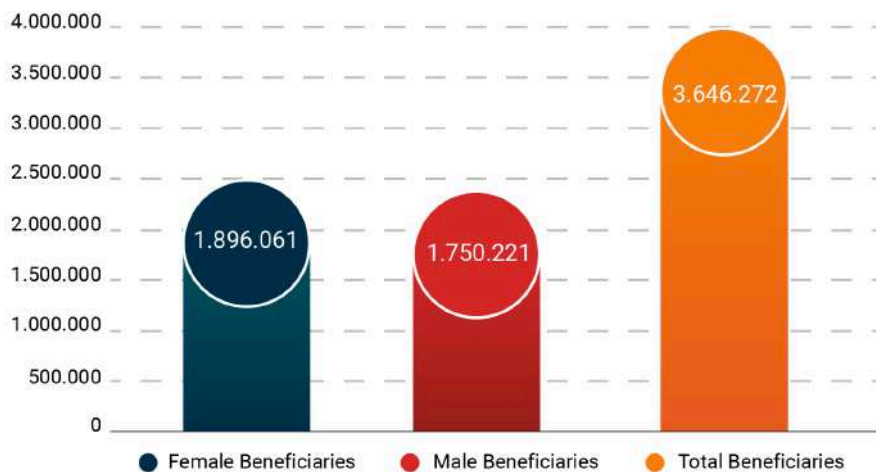


GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SDG-AF SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT



5

TOTAL BENEFICIARIES REACHED BY SDG-AF SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT



5 Up to 2021, 14 programmes received resources from the Fund. Late in 2021 an additional programme was approved and funding will be disbursed in 2022. SDGs accelerated through the fund are SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 10, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 16 & SDG 17.





2. THE MALAWI SDG ACCELERATION FUND IN 2021

2.1. Overview

The third year of the Fund is a year of consolidation, whereby more focus has been given to implementation of approved initiatives, to effectively capitalize on the important investments done in the previous years. Prove of this is that **the overall beneficiaries of the Fund grew from 606,195 in 2020, to a total of 3,646,272, representing a 380% growth in the number of people that are benefiting from the Fund.**

2021 proved to be a difficult year in terms of joint resource mobilization. This was mostly driven by global cuts on ODA from Development Partners, while a strong focus on COVID-19 national responses was taking place. Despite this, in 2021 one additional donor added up and contributed to the SDG-AF, Canada. This contribution proved that, while still focusing on donor priorities, in this case COVID-19 response, its un-earmarking allowed an informed and strategic discussion among partners on key investment areas. As a result, three catalytic Joint Programmes in support of the National COVID-19 response were approved.

Additional confirmation from Iceland to add up to the Fund in 2022 was received. Other already donors to the SDG-AF also confirmed additional contributions for 2022.

2021 represented a year for continued support to the national COVID-19 response, through the Humanitarian/Nexus. Each of the new approved Joint Programmes embed strong catalytic principles, guaranteeing that while responding to the emergency needs, these initiatives are keeping track of the 2030 goals.

Strategic programmes were approved on critical areas such as a Conflict Prevention responding to potential spillovers from the conflict in Mozambique, or the approval of a new phase of a Joint Programme on Girls' Education. This demonstrates that while being effective in supporting the COVID-19 emergency response, the SDG-AF remained focused and relevant for the long-term agenda.

2021 also proved important to demonstrate the effectiveness of the institutional agreements between stakeholders reached in 2020. Thanks to the new governance and operational agreements, in 2021 the Fund saw a more empowered and active Steering and Operational Committees, showing a more proactive role of stakeholders in the implementation of the Fund.

Early in 2021, the Steering Committee defined key priority investment areas per each of the Fund windows. Efforts from all the stakeholders were fully respectful of that strategic approach, and resources mobilized were fully allocated in response to these priorities. Strong alignment and collaboration within and between Operational and Steering Committees, supported by the active role of the Secretariat, facilitated a strategic yet smooth implementation of the Fund.

In 2021, based in the recommendations from the 2020 Annual report, the Fund strengthened its alignment with the 2020 launched Malawi 2063⁶. Since 2021, all programmes approved by the Fund demonstrate programmatic alignment and delivery of impact aligned with this national development framework, strongly aligned with SDGs.”

⁶ The Malawi 2063 (MW2063) is the long-term guiding framework that reflects Malawi development aspirations by the year 2063.

DONOR BASE EXPANSION 2019 - 2021



Besides challenges on resource mobilization, quality of funding, remained as a challenge from previous years. With exceptions, most mobilized resources are still earmarked. Given the essence of the Fund, and strongly tapping into the UN reform and Funding Compact principles, development partners should enable more flexibility in the usage of resources. In fact, the spirit of this tool is its participatory and collegial decision-making process approach, whereby different stakeholders – Government, UN, and DPs- jointly agree on priorities according to the current and emerging national needs and collaboratively craft related strategies working towards the 2030 Agenda. More un-earmarking will strengthen this approach.

Despite challenges affecting flows of ODA globally, in 2021 the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund continued to advance efforts in supporting financing coordination and SDGs acceleration. **The Fund has consolidated as the most suitable mechanism to enhance collaboration, create efficiencies, and overall improve joint programming for UN entities. Since its establishment, a total of 15 Programmes have been approved by the SDG-AF, out of these, 8 are Joint Programmes.**

As shown in the graph, from 2019 to 2021 the SDG-AF moved from 2 donors to a total of 6, enhancing an overall portfolio of US \$34M to US\$ 140M. By 2021, a total of 12 UN entities have received resources directly from the SDG-AF. Moreover, the programmes supported by the SDG-AF are being implemented in 21 out of 28 Districts, while at least 16 State institutions take part on the implementation of programmes, enhancing ownership of local and national entities.

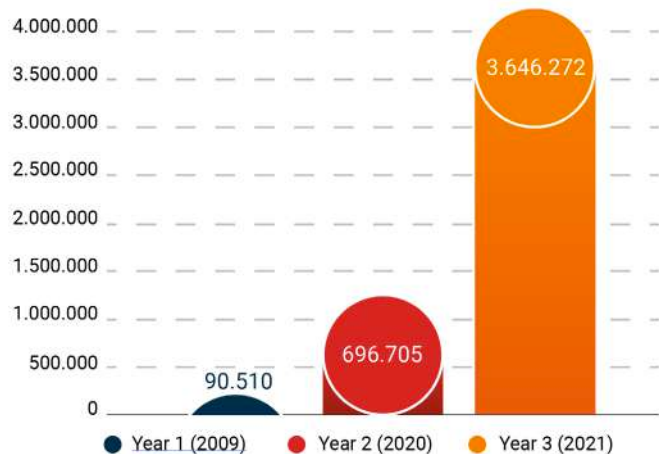
Moreover, since 2019 the Fund's programmes cumulatively reached out to 3,646,272 people from 21 districts across the country. According to graph below, the Fund has made progress in terms of coverage: in 2019 the

Expansion of Stakeholders and Geographical Coverage

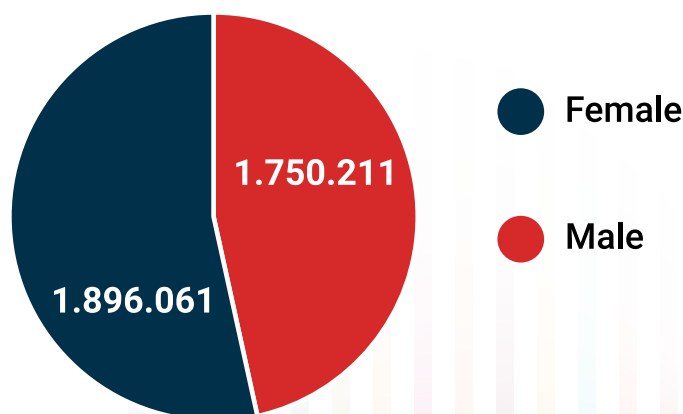


Fund's programmes reached out to 90,510 people from 14 districts and in 2020 it cumulatively reached out 696,705 people from 21 districts. Out of the total beneficiaries cumulatively reached by 2021, a total of 1,750,211 (48%) were boys or men, and 1,896,061 (52%) were girls or women. The Fund has gender mainstreaming mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls are equally benefitting from the programmes.

BENEFICIARIES CUMULATIVELY BY 2021



BENEFICIARIES CUMULATIVELY BY 2021 ACCORDING GENDER

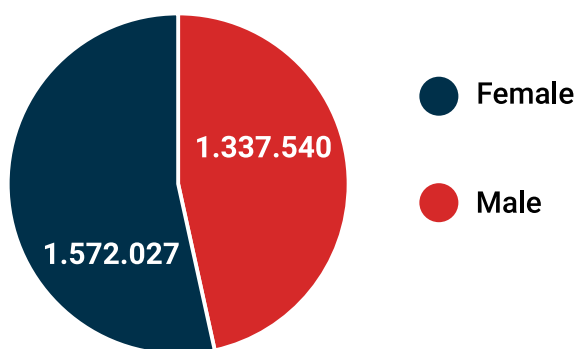




2.2. Gender equality

Building on its transformative principle, and to ensure that tailored and specific investments to achieve SDGs are taking place, the Fund prioritizes programmes that include cross-cutting approaches that empower women. 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.

In 2021, 52% of the resources are directly invested in activities that promote women’s and girls’ equality and empowerment. Two of the approved Joint Programmes are fully focused in addressing gender inequalities in the country, while the rest demonstrate strong streamlining and budget allocation to a minimum of 30%.



Total Beneficiaries 2021: 2,949,576

Graph: Among the 2,949,567 people reached by the Fund’s programmes in 2021, a total of 1,572,027, which represents 52%, were females and the remaining 1,377,540 were males.

The initiatives that the Fund has been supporting have a strong focus on accelerating gender equality, specifically by enhancing human capital through health, education, and protection, and tackling barriers that enable gender inequalities.

All the 2021 Joint Programmes have a strong health and well-being cross-cutting component related to the gender dimension, with interventions focusing on access to Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), with specific focus on adolescents and young women; interventions focusing on addressing Gender-Based Violence, child marriage, and teenage pregnancy; Water and Sanitation (WASH), Menstrual Health and Hygiene sanitation, access to psycho-social support services, among others. Long-term investments in the health of adolescents and youth,

including in their sexual and reproductive health, can help accelerate economic growth when combined with the appropriate investments in education and economic planning, enabling a virtuous cycle for development.

Education, specifically inclusive education, is another area of the Fund’s support that increasingly expanded throughout the years. Access to education is crucial to attaining development dividends. Supporting youth, and specifically girls, to stay in school and complete as many years of school as possible has implications for their human capital as well as for their sexual and reproductive health. Education is shown to be a protective factor for many SRH and economic outcomes. Additionally, schools provide the physical space and opportunity to deliver comprehensive, appropriate, and culturally sensitive sexuality education, youth-friendly SRH services and life skills development programs. Research⁷ shows that as years of education increase, employment prospects, labor force participation, and earnings improve. Adolescents and youth with more years of school, especially secondary school, are more likely to develop the skills they need to be economically productive. Additionally, increased educational attainment is associated with delayed marriage, delayed childbearing, and reduced risk for HIV.

⁷ “The Demographic Dividend in Africa Relies on Investments in the Reproductive Health and Rights of Adolescents and Youth- Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth”, Policy Brief, February 2017, Population Reference Bureau (PRB) in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC).

Supporting girls, teen mothers' education



Tiyamike and many other girls are readmitted to school after child delivery.
Photo: WFP/Francis Thawani

While the last bell at 4:20 pm sends learners into a recreation, it is Tiyamike Kalukwet's reminder of her motherly duties for her one-year-and-three-month-old baby.

"I always rush home to breastfeed my baby because she endures four to five hours without milk during school days," says the 17-year-old from Salima Village. The Standard Six learner at Sungusya Primary School starts classes at 10:00 am until 4:20 pm.

To ensure exclusive breastfeeding, Tiyamike's mother Patuma and sister Saujiwa bring the baby to the school at lunch break. The teen-mother says it is this routine that fuels her focus to work hard in school. "I use the school hours to excel with my education so that one day I'll get a job to support my mother and baby". Tiyamike, who aspires to become a secondary school teacher, says she is a victim of peer pressure during a five-month closure of schools in the country due to COVID-19.

In March 2020, government closed schools to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The schools remained closed until early September 2020 and closed again for few weeks in January 2021 until end of February. The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare reported that around 13,000 girls got pregnant, and 40,000 others married before their 18th birthday during the period.

"I thought school would never reopen again. I thought I was advancing in life just to fall pregnant which forced me to drop out of school. The boy who impregnated me denied responsibility." Tiyamike thanks a mother group at the school who encouraged her to return to school after giving birth to pursue her dream to become a teacher. "Frequent visits of the mothers, when I was pregnant, gave me moral and psychological support to go back to school".

The mother group is supported by the Joint Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE) that aims to improve access, quality, and relevance of education for learners by fighting against sexual and physical violence in schools, child marriages and teen pregnancies. Since 2014, UN agencies have been working with government in selected schools and communities providing an integrated package of education, child protection, reproductive health, and nutrition (school feeding).

Tiyamike is one of the 250 teen mothers that have been re-enrolled at the school since 2017. Sungusya Primary School Mother Group chairperson, Niya Mada, says they leave no stone unturned to keep girls in school. "We monitor girls' attendance and follow up on those who are absent from school for more than two days. We provide the girls with reusable sanitary pads for them not to miss classes during menses. We also encourage re-enrolment of teen mothers like Tiyamike".

The school's headteacher Austin Nkhoma says the initiative helps them to provide education to more children, especially girls. "We have an increased girls' enrolment from 565 [2016/17] to 941 in [2020/21]. The attendance rate is at 95 percent. While reducing teen pregnancy cases from 67 [2017] to 14 [2020/2021], we have an increased number of girls passing the end of term and final examinations from 47 to 70 percent since 2017," he explains.

Group village head Chindamba says the interventions prompted him to ban all harmful cultural practices for a girl child to thrive with education. "While the mother group monitors the girls, I am terminating child marriages and enforcing child protection by-laws for communities to support girls' right to education".

The programme boosts local economies by partnering with smallholder farmers to supply locally available food to Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. Currently 45 farmers are supplying food to Sungusya and other schools in the area.

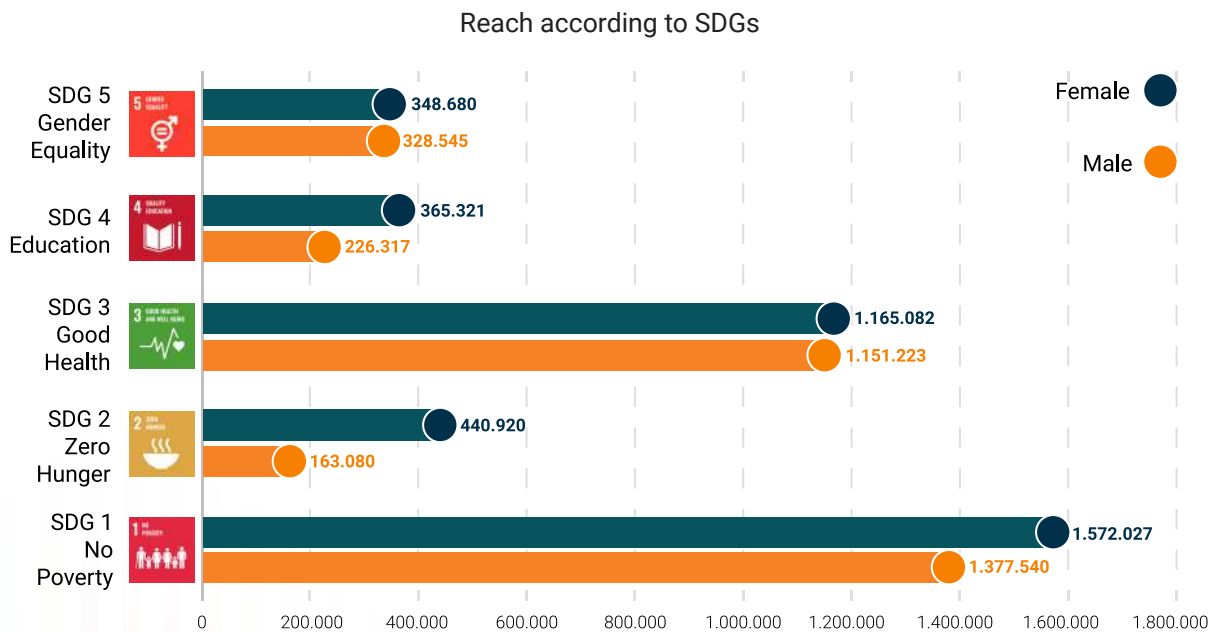




3. FUND RESULTS IN 2021

3.1. Overall Results

The Fund achieved notable results during the period amidst challenges, first the global cuts on ODA, and secondly the COVID-19 pandemic that continued to considerably affect the implementation of activities. However, all stakeholders made efforts to adapt and advance on development agendas.



Graph: In 2021 the fund's projects reached out to 2,949,567 people (52% women and girls) from 21 Districts⁸.

Fund's programmes' areas of investment focus on six SDGs: SDG 1- No poverty, SDG 2-No hunger, SDG 3-Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4-Quality education, SDG 5- Gender equality and SDG 13-Climate Change.

⁸ Rumphu, Mzimba, Ntchisi Kasungu, Chikwawa, Nsanje, Lilongwe, Nsanje, Nkhatabay, Mulanje, Blantyre, Zomba, Mzuzu, Mangochi, Balaka, Phalombe, Nkhota Kota, Dedza, Ntcheu, Mzuzu and Karonga

The overall key results of the 2021 implementation of the Fund are:

- **Enhanced efficiency of the UN and partners at country level:** Since its establishment in December 2018 and further redesign in 2020, the SDG-AF has proven to be a suitable mechanism to enhance collaboration, create efficiencies, and overall improve joint programming for UN agencies. Since then, 8 Joint programmes have been approved, bringing together the overall expertise of 12 UN Agencies⁹ in their implementation.
- **Boosted joint planning, joint programming, and collective results for SDGs.** Programmes generate greater synergies and coherence, while allow UN entities to engage in cross-sectorial SDG priorities. They are a very powerful tool to leverage the added value of UN entities at country level. With the design of the third phase of the *Joint Programme for Girls Education (JPGE)*, for instance, the structure of the results framework as well as the key indicators reflect the efforts to strengthen synergies and focus on joint results. This is particularly evident at outcome level, which has been reduced to three overarching outcomes with interlinked outputs and underlying interventions converging to contribute to common results.

The *PROSPER's* multi-consortium model and integrated approach to resilience enabled implementing partners to contextualize their activities beyond the sectoral silos and to develop activities that were comprehensive and more appropriate for their beneficiaries. It also created an opportunity for UN agencies to pool their respective expertise to build resilience in a way that otherwise might not happen as readily.

- **Improved Humanitarian/Nexus approach:** In 2021 the Fund was pivotal in supporting the COVID-19 National Response Plan through the Humanitarian/Nexus Window¹⁰. Programmes approved through this window demonstrated their ability to not only focus on the immediate needs of the most left behind, but all build upon a nexus approach that allowed a mid-term development vision to be in place.

A clear example being the CUCI project- that ended in mid-2021- that ultimately aimed at strengthening the regular social protection system beyond the emergency response. As part of the COVID-19 response, a Grievance & Redress Mechanism and a call centre for the management of complaints were established. In line with the humanitarian-development nexus, these emergency structures developed for the COVID-19 response are being supported to transition into permanent features of the national social protection system.

Also, the Malawi National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme, while supporting the GoM and partners to improve demand and uptake of the vaccine by providing technical and logistical assistance to support vaccine deployment and national COVID-19 response monitoring activities, resulted in creating a well-trained health workforce in 29 health districts in Malawi, able to respond to the current and future emergencies.

The Learning never stops Joint Programme responded to the immediate need of the Ministry of Education to ensure continuity of learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, while offering solutions that would enhance the provision of flexible, inclusive education in future crises.

⁹ A total of 12 UN Agencies have supported Joint Programmes implementation for the SDG-AF, namely: FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UN WOMEN, WFP, and WHO.

¹⁰ An ad-hoc rapid approval process to support 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.





The Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage, and Teenage Pregnancy aims to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through the provision of protection and prevention services in response to the systemic socio-political discrimination and violence during COVID-19, by building an environment whereby women and girls in Malawi are protected and empowered to live without violence and with availability of care, beyond the emergency response.

The example of the Humanitarian/Nexus Window has been considered as a good practice by an evaluation¹¹ conducted on the global COVID-19 Multi Partner Trust Fund¹² One of the recommendations in the Evaluation was to mirror the design of the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund Humanitarian/Nexus Window for prioritized and rapid response actions, as a key lesson learned has been that, in Malawi, the COVID-19 funds were efficiently and effectively deployed through this Window. The result would be therefore to merge the COVID-19 Fund – as a rapid humanitarian response mechanism window- to a global Fund, so to create a mechanism that is operationally agile and effective and that can offer fast and flexible finance well suited to meeting the shifting demands of rapidly developing and multidimensional global crisis.

- **Boosted Implementation of the UN reform and Funding Compact:** The Fund proved strategic to facilitate implementation of the Funding Compact and UN Reform, by raising awareness and enhancing advocacy about the need of implementing these frameworks at country-level funding in the most effective way. .

One example resulting from this effort is Canada, that - as latest donor added up to the in 2021 - provided a contribution of un-earmarked resources towards the national COVID-19 response. The programmes approved with this contribution, both responding to donor and national priorities, have demonstrated to be some of the most catalytic, and are proof that a funding behavior change has been getting a foothold.

"The head of one UN entity in Malawi noted that the pandemic spurred the UN Country Team to focus on creative solutions and shared analysis, and to bring UN resources together to make as great an impact as quickly as possible"¹³.

¹¹ Early Lessons and Evaluability of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery MPTF, April 2021, commissioned by the SG's Designate for COVID-19 in line with the SG's April 2020 report on the quadrennial policy review to evaluate COVID-19 MPTF as a system-wide evaluation.

¹² A UN inter-agency finance mechanism launched in April 2020 by the UN Secretary-General to support low- and middle- income countries in overcoming the crisis caused by the pandemic.

¹³ The Way Forward: Fulfilling the Potential of the Funding Compact at the Country Level, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, November 2021

- **Strengthened multi-sectoral and gender-responsive approach:** most of the programmes use a multi sectoral approach to accelerate gender equality from different angles, ranging from promoting economic growth, reducing poverty, enhancing human capital through health, education, and protection, attaining food security, strengthening resilience to disasters, and laying the basis for behavioral change in rooted cultural beliefs that enable gender inequalities.

The Joint Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE) promotes a multi-sectoral approach addressing socio-economic, cultural, health, nutrition, and gender barriers. It also adopts a gender transformative approach, maintaining a focus on girls but ensuring the needs of boys are addressed and that are actively engaged as champions in promoting gender equality.

The Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage, and Teenage Pregnancy programme managed to integrate a complete package of the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) services, provision of life skills and Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention, reporting, referral and coordination mechanisms to Adolescents Girls and Young Women (AGYWs) in a most difficult period when movement was restricted. Through catalytic interventions, several AGYWs have joined or formed economic empowerment groups and are engaging in various income generation activities. The project also strengthened capacities of national, district and community levels on gender mainstreaming in COVID-19 response programming.

The Learning never stops Joint programme enhanced access to education for children and adolescent girls in Malawi in crisis-like situations, especially for the most vulnerable children with special education needs, within a school environment able to ensure the well-being of learners.

- **Increased investments on health and well-being, as essential features for sustainable development:** by providing more efficient funding of health systems, improved sanitation and hygiene, increased efforts in capacity building and access to essential health services, significant progress can be made in building healthy societies.

To this end, the Umoyo Wathu Health Systems Strengthening Joint Programme (UW-HSS) supports a responsive and resilient health system that facilitates the simultaneous availability of the "4 Ps": skilled People, accessible necessary Products, well-maintained Places of care, and supportive Policies.

On the parallel, the Malawi National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme aimed at supporting to improve demand and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine, provide the human resources capacity required for the

deployment, augmenting the cold-chain and general supply chain, and supporting all aspects related to the vaccination roll out in 29 Districts in Malawi.

While the above-mentioned two programmes specifically focus on strengthening the Malawi health system, all the remaining programmes, even if focusing on different sectors, still have a strong health and well-being cross-cutting component: The Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage, and Teenage Pregnancy project ensured continuity of maternal and child health services during the COVID-19 pandemic; The Learning Never Stops Malawi JP strengthened access to psycho-social support services to teachers and learners and supported the development of a draft Referral Pathways for Mental Health Support at the school level; the Joint Programme on Girls' Education directly reached about 223,000 learners (51% females) in schools through improved delivery and quality of school meals, comprehensive sexuality education, and strengthened access to health services, , Water and Sanitation (WASH), Menstrual Health and Hygiene sanitation; PROSPER supported improved adoption of nutrition practices, with care groups outreach promoting complementary feeding, maternal nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding through community structures.

- **Focus on inclusive education as SDG accelerator:** Achieving inclusive and quality education for all reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development. The Joint Programme on Girls' Education, building on the gains made in previous phases, strengthened its focus on quality of learning, inclusive and equitable access to education and on promoting sustainable solutions, including support to children with special needs. Specifically, teachers and school management committee members were engaged in SRHR dialogue sessions with attention to inclusiveness to reach learners with special education needs. Screening of children to map assistive devices needs have been conducted and screening of learners with disabilities started in all the districts. The Learning never stops Joint programme aims to improve the access to education for children and adolescent girls in Malawi in crisis-like situations, especially for the most vulnerable children with special education needs. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project sought to partially fill the gaps in ongoing interventions in distance learning, offering solutions that would enhance the provision of flexible, inclusive education in future crises and mitigate the impacts of the current one, with a special focus on the right to education of marginalized and vulnerable girls and learners with special needs".

UN Joint Programme strengthens health systems for safer births

The maternal mortality rate at Ntchisi District Hospital is 57 per 100,000 live births, while the neonatal mortality rate is 16 per 1,000 live births. An average of 900 deliveries per month are recorded in the district. The direct obstetric case fatality rate was 0.9 per cent according to a 2020 Malawi Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) report.

The hospital serves a population of over 300,000 and is located in a hilly area where women travel long distances to reach. The hospital delivers around 75 new-borns per day. Most of the mothers who give birth at the hospital are referred by surrounding health centres based on signs of possible complications and stay at the hospital for extended periods for care and surveillance.

Under the Umoyo Wathu programme, health workers at the hospital are encouraged to attend mentorship sessions on various health topics, including how to identify and manage women with high-risk pregnancies. But COVID-19 presented challenges in face-to-face trainings. An online WhatsApp platform was created in 2021 to ensure the training continued. By end of 2021, the online platform reached 102 health workers, who were incentivized to attend the sessions.

Agnes Mwale, a 30-year-old expectant mother, was referred to the hospital maternity unit by a local health centre because she experienced complications in a previous pregnancy. The health centre's staff felt Agnes could not make it to full-term pregnancy without close observation

from health professionals. Agnes stayed at the hospital for two months receiving medical care.

"The facilities here are helping with my pregnancy to ensure it goes well. I am confident that the birth will be safe here, and it is good to be with other expecting mothers. We share experience and support one another whilst we are here," Agnes explains. Esima Mshamboza, another expectant mother, nods her head in agreement. "I also feel much safer. I was referred here because I have high blood pressure that needs to be monitored carefully."

Following the mentorship sessions, a great improvement in health workers' performance has been seen. There has also been a reduction in maternal deaths with no maternal deaths recorded in the last three months of 2021. Before the Umoyo Wathu began, the District experienced maternal deaths almost every month. Now pregnant women receive regular advice about new-born care and well-being, as well as nutritional advice from breast feeding to hygiene. Margaret Matious, who delivered her baby safely said: "I am very relieved to give birth after a week here. The healthcare workers have really helped me and taught me a lot about looking after my baby."

Before being discharged, new mothers receive information about family planning. The hospital provides an outpatient clinic to give support. It also integrates immunizations for new-borns with family planning counselling sessions.

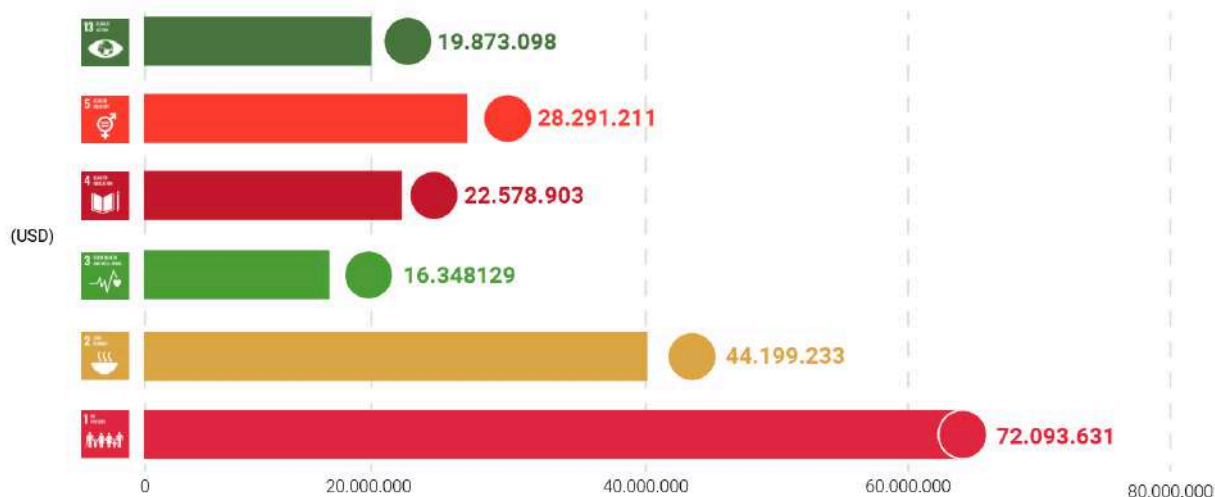


Photo credit @UNFPA/Luis Tato

3.2. The Fund's programmes in 2021

In 2021, the Fund supported implementation of 6 Joint Programmes, reflecting the Fund's stakeholders' efforts and commitment to work in a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better performing manner toward the achievement of SDGs, particularly SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG4 (Quality Education), all including a special focus on the needs of vulnerable groups particularly women, SDG 5.

INVESTMENTS ACCORDING TO SDGs



Graph: By 2021 the SDG-AF accumulated financial commitments of US \$139,828,817 and allocated a total of US \$72,093,630. Overall, advance of 14 SDGs have been supported through these investments, however, resources concentrate in the 6 SDGs here reflected. To note that calculation is not zero-sum, rather aggregated.

Most of the programmes started in 2021, while one (PROSPER) has been continuing from previous years. Two programmes closed in 2021, hence included in this report: "Improved accountability for Malawi's COVID-19 social protection response through Grievance and Redress Mechanisms and Monitoring" and "Promoting Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable groups". Results from these projects are:

PROMOTION OF SECURE LAND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

Participating UN Agencies:	FAO	Geographic scope:	Phalombe, Mangochi, Nkhota Kota, Ntcheu, Chikwawa, Dedza, Mzimba and Karonga
Government Partners:	Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development	Budget:	US \$ 142,000
Other Partners:	LandNet	SDGs targets:	SDG 1: No Poverty SDG 2: Zero hunger SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth SDG 10: Reduced inequalities
Duration	June 2019 - March 2021		

Description of the project

The project promoted rural communities' access to food through their improved land tenure security. Land represents one of the key development challenges to address if 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 in improving 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 establishment of and strengthening accountability mechanisms for land law implementation in the districts with the formation of 8 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.

Overall 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. 120 women forum leaders were reached with messages on gender related laws and 320 youth were sensitized on the new land laws. 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 increasing level of articulation among communities.

Women empowerment: Through training sessions on confidence building 320 were reached, resulting in women being 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 forums beyond their communities.

Capacity building: 38 between District Commissioners and Directors of Planning and Development were reached by Ministry of lands to review the progress of the land reform and specifically the new land laws.

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



Improved accountability for Malawi's COVID-19 social protection response through Grievance and Redress Mechanisms and monitoring (CUCI)

Participating UN Agencies:	UNICEF	Geographic scope:	National, with a focus on Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba
Government Partners:	Ministry of Gender, Community Development & Social Welfare (MoGCDSW); Ministry of Economic Planning & Development and Public Sector Reforms (MoEPDPSR)	Budget:	US \$ 50,000
Other Partners:	Telekom Networks Malawi (TNM)	SDGs targets:	SDG 1: No Poverty SDG 2: Zero hunger SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation
Duration	June 2020- March 2021		

Description of the project

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 contributed to 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 aimed at ensuring that right holders have access to safe and effective complaint mechanisms and at strengthening the regular social protection system by supporting a smooth transition from a Call Centre created for the emergency response to a more permanent structure part of the national social protection system.

Overall Results

Set-up and operate a helpline to address grievances and redresses linked to the Government COVID-19 social protection response: Thanks to the call centre, 53 CUCI Grievance and Complaint Cases have been fully resolved. The Grievance Redress Mechanisms Committee is also looking into the resolution of over 300 additional cases, prompting different actors to take action. A survey conducted among CUCI beneficiaries indicated that almost all (95%) declared that they were satisfied with the case resolution and the timelines for the provision of feedback. The call center provided a platform where transparency and accountability are promoted, while offering confidentiality to users.

Improved accountability: the CUCI call centre improved the quality and accountability of the COVID-19 Urban Cash Initiative. In addition to the collection and management of complaint cases, the CUCI call centre was leveraged to conduct beneficiary verifications, to collect additional information and to complete other remote processes that enabled beneficiaries to access their transfers. Moreover, the CUCI Call Centre was used to conduct a Post-Distribution Monitoring Survey (PDM) across the 4 cities of Malawi (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba) in record time and despite COVID-19 travel limitations.

Strengthened emergency/development nexus: As a continuation, the call centre is now being supported to transition from an emergency mode into a more permanent structure which will provide a wider array of services to a number of programmes in social sectors and emergency operations.

Strengthened Social Protection system: The call centre is a critical piece for the establishment of innovative and people-centred grievance and redress mechanisms, as well as for introducing a series of innovations into Malawi's national social protection system and its emergency response operations under shock-sensitive social protection. The call centre fits the overall UN efforts in supporting the Government of Malawi to strengthen its social protection system for improved service delivery and accountability of social support to the most vulnerable throughout the year and in response to shocks, hence it has demonstrated to be a strongly catalytic investment.

Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund Programmes in 2021

PROGRAMME	Participating UN Agencies	STATUS
Joint Programme on Girls' Education III: Learning for All in Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNFPA · UNICEF · WFP 	On-going End date-31.10.2024
United Nations Joint Programme on Health Systems Strengthening for Equitable Health Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WHO · UNFPA · UNICEF 	On-going End date-31.12.2023
Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNFPA · UNAIDS · UNWOMEN 	On-going End Date: 31/03/2022
National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNDP · WFP · WHO · UNICEF 	On-going End Date: 31/03/2022
Learning Never Stops Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNICEF · UNESCO 	On-going End Date: 31/08/2022
PROSPER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNDP · WFP · UNICEF · FAO 	On-going Ending Date: 31/12/2023
Improved accountability for Malawi's COVID-19 social protection response through Grievance and Redress Mechanisms and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNICEF 	Closed - 31 st March, 2021
Promoting Secure Land Rights for Women and other Vulnerable Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · FAO 	Closed - 31 st March, 2021
Support to Refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · WFP · UNHCR 	Start in 2022 1 st Jan-31 st June 2022
Border Districts and Community-Based Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · UNDP · UNFPA · UNODC · IOM · UN Women 	Start in 2022 1 st Jan-31 st Dec 2022

Sweet ride out of poverty



Honey making is a breakthrough to Umali's livelihoods struggle.
Photo: WFP/Francis Thawani

For many years, Umali Jiya and his wife Annie struggled to make ends meet.

The family struggled to meet the needs of their four children and almost lost hope of making it in Mussa Village, Traditional Authority Kalembo in Balaka District. Their efforts in carpentry and farming only provided for basic needs.

Umali has been taking part in resilience activities in his area including watershed management, agroforestry, village savings and loans, participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture, nutrition, insurance – all in pursuit of a better livelihood. But the insufficiency is now a thing of the past, thanks to the Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER) programme run by the United Nations and other partners.

The programme, which seeks to reduce extreme poverty and end the recurrent cycle of crises and humanitarian assistance, empowers communities with skills that will propel them out of poverty.



Annie at one of her family's beehives

Last year, I sold 250 litres of honey at MK 450,000. I will never be poor again. My life will never be the same again," says 54-year-old Umali.

Umali was trained to keep bees for honey making. Building on those skills, with the money he received from WFP's Food Assistance for Assets interventions, in 2019 he bought materials to make 15 beehives which increased to 25.

"In 2020, I got a contract to supply 50 beehives to other beneficiaries and helped them to make better beehives. I was paid MK 1,250,000. This boosted my business," says Umali.

He adds: "Out of that amount, I used MK 350,000 to buy 1.5 acres of land which I have afforested to make it conducive for beekeeping. In 2020, my business expanded to 70 beehives, and I harvested 250 litres of honey."



Umali now transports his bottles of honey to the market with ease.
Photo: WFP/Francis Thawani

From the business, Umali has bought a motorbike which he uses to ease transport for his business. "I could not support my son's education but now I have managed to send him to Ulongwe Community Day Secondary," he says. Umali has also used part of the proceeds to buy agricultural inputs, hire people to work on his farm, and has constructed a new house.

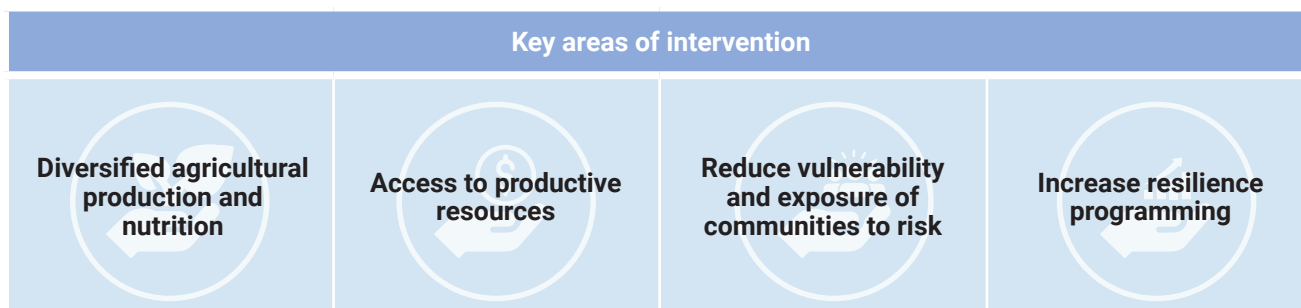
PROSPER is a multi-stakeholder resilience programme supporting the Government of Malawi to reduce extreme poverty and end the recurrent cycle of crises and humanitarian assistance. It aims at reducing the impact of climate shocks, responding to seasonal consumption needs, supporting the design of social safety nets, and generating evidence and knowledge to inform government policy.

3.3. Programmes' description

In this section, the report provides an overview of each programme implemented in 2021 under the auspice of the SDG-AF, 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. All the knowledge generated by programmes under the SDG-AF is used to create efficiencies among stakeholders and initiatives, and informs in the design and implementation of other programmes.

1 Malawi Partnership for Resilience (MP4R/PROSPER)			
Participating UN Agencies:	FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP	Geographic scope:	Balaka, Chikwawa, Mangochi and Phalombe
Government Partners:	Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Gender and Social Welfare, Finance and Economic Planning, Local Governance, Natural Resources Management, and Department of Disasters Management Affairs	Budget:	GBP 37,100,000 (*originally 59.590,000 USD allocated, subsequently downscaled)
Other Partners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium: Concern Worldwide, United Purpose, GOAL Malawi, Kadale Consultants, CUMO Microfinance • Cooperating: Find Your Feet, PLAN International, World Vision, CARE Malawi. 	SDGs targets:	SDG 1: No Poverty SDG 2: Zero hunger SDG 13: Climate action SDG 17: Partnerships
Duration	2019-2023		

The Malawi Partnership for Resilience is part of a greater consortium called PROSPER – Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER). PROSPER is a multi-stakeholder resilience programme funded by UKAID under the Building Resilience and Adapting to Climate Change programme scheduled to run from 2019-2023. For its first two years, PROSPER was implemented by a joint NGO, private sector, and UN consortium in the districts of Balaka, Chikwawa, Mangochi and Phalombe. In 2021, the programme was significantly downscaled due to UK government funding constraints and is now implemented solely by the Joint UN Consortium.



Overall Results

In year 3, the programme directly strengthened the resilience of 234,995 people to withstand current and future weather-related shocks and stresses, advancing their independence from humanitarian assistance over the long term. In programme areas, agriculture production has increased, and food security and nutrition indicators have improved. Regreening efforts are bearing results and satellite pictures show that there is an overall improvement in vegetation. Most participants report increased yields and improved ability to resist natural disasters such as floods and drought. PROSPER partners strengthened social protection systems to respond to shocks and supported a digital disaster response system. Implemented in a coordinated manner, the interventions have improved livelihoods by creating healthier natural environments and reducing the risks and potential impacts of climate shocks.

Specific Results

Improved adoption of nutrition practices: Despite scaling down due to budget restrictions, care group activities have been sustained to the extent possible. Care groups outreach on complementary feeding, maternal nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding continued through community structures. An independent midline evaluation found that households receiving nutrition information had a statistically significant improved household dietary diversity score, with highest impacts for female and poorer households. Also, the program's sanitation and hygiene related activities have had far reaching health benefits, including the reported reduction in waterborne diseases, such as cholera.

Increased agricultural production, adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture, and inclusive access to quality agricultural inputs: the programme continued implementing Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to support agricultural livelihoods. A second cohort of 60 Master Trainers (MTs) and community-based facilitators (CBFs) graduated with improved knowledge on good agriculture and climate change resilient practices to implement during the rainy season. A total of 121 FFS groups were trained in post-harvest handling to increase the quality of the harvest. The groups reached out to 21,404 households with post-harvest handling information. To boost incomes sustainably, support was provided for Income Generation Activities. The adopted FFS practices led to a significant increase of yields and quality of produce, compared with previous harvest periods in which farmers relied on traditional practices. Overall, households' crop production in Balaka and Phalombe is improving among Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) participants.

Improved natural resource management through asset creation and protection linked to food security and sustainable natural resources-based livelihoods: Under FFA, 16,716 households in Balaka and Phalombe were supported with land resource management, forestation, flood control measures and small-scale irrigation, resulting in improved households' crop production and improved water availability for irrigation and domestic usage. A total of 2750 people from participating households received cash-based transfers to cover immediate food needs and others received technical assistance to build or maintain assets, to participate in VSLs for financial inclusion and to adopt post-harvest handling technologies and market support for sales. Thanks to watershed and management of forestry trees and land activities, there has been an overall increase in vegetative cover in the project areas.

Increased access to insurance products for smallholder farmers and private sector entities engaging with smallholder farmers: During the 2020-2021 farming season, 67,276 farmers insured crops to protect their incomes from harvest losses by either paying a portion of their premium in cash or participating in building

community assets. After drought and pests destroyed crops during the 2020-2021 growing season, over 66,000 farming households in Malawi received cash pay-outs from agricultural insurance activity out of which 36,422 came from PROSPER districts. Amounting to US\$2.4 million, it is one of the largest crop index insurance pay-outs ever in Africa.

Improved community access to effective climate information services and community-based risk mitigation: The project scaled up the Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) to reach 5,840 households through extension officers and lead farmers, who received weather and climate information using different channels including extension services, radio and mobile. The changes they made following climate services trainings positively impacted their food security and income, leading to higher yields, greater income and strengthened capacity to cope with the effects of climate and weather-related challenges.

Provision of Lean Season Top Ups to vulnerable households: the 2020/21 response targeted both rural populations affected by food insecurity and district urban (boma) populations economically affected by the impact of COVID-19. In Balaka, the response reached 39,600 people in the rural and 10,688 people at the boma with cash-based transfers. In Mangochi, a mixed modality was implemented where 162,023 people in rural areas were reached with in-kind maize transfers, whilst 14,909 people in the boma were reached with cash-based transfers. In Chikwawa district, the response reached 82,733 rural population with in-kind maize whilst in Phalombe 63482 people were reached with cash-based transfers in the rural.

Increased capacity of national, sub-national and non-state actors to plan, coordinate and monitor resilience programming, including shock-responsive social protection: in 2021, PROSPER partners worked to build the government's capacity to use social protection systems to anticipate and respond to needs during shock periods. Technical support enabled vertical expansion of the Social Cash-Transfer Programme (SCTP) in both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 lean seasons and increasing capacity for Government to lead horizontal expansion. The programme helped to institutionalize communication strategies, targeting using the Unified Beneficiary Registry, setting up procedures for inclusive National ID use for identification, supporting the government to use the SCTP Management Information System (MIS) to target, disburse and track progress, training new District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) on Shock-Sensitive Social Protection (SSSP) with peer learning across districts, licensing an M&E dashboard with the Government of Malawi for programme learning.

Improved Disaster Risk Management Information System (DRMIS): the system was put into place in the first two years of the programme and consolidated in 2021. This has resulted in collation of geographic distribution of the data resources with timeliness and accuracy, advancing standards for integration of static and dynamic data and the coexistence of massive amounts of heterogeneous data..

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Hotspots Acceleration Initiative: In 2021, the programme supported the development of a data management system for Phalombe District. The system includes an SDG dashboard and heatmaps that provide visualization for monitoring of prioritized indicators across sectors at the council. The District Council data management system should empower district official in decision-making, results-tracking and poverty eradication efforts.

Challenges and lessons learned

PROSPER supported its participants to build their adaptive capacity to climate-related shocks and stressors and contributed to resilience: positive impact on crop diversification, increased crop sales, increased livestock assets and reduced use of negative coping strategies. PROSPER is also credited with improving VSL functioning and participation rates. PROSPER participants used significantly fewer negative coping strategies and this effect was largest for poorest households. These results are in line with, or better, than what would be expected given the timeframe, budget constraints and early curtailment of elements of the programme, that had as a result the closure of the NGO consortium and consequently significant impact in downscaling interventions.



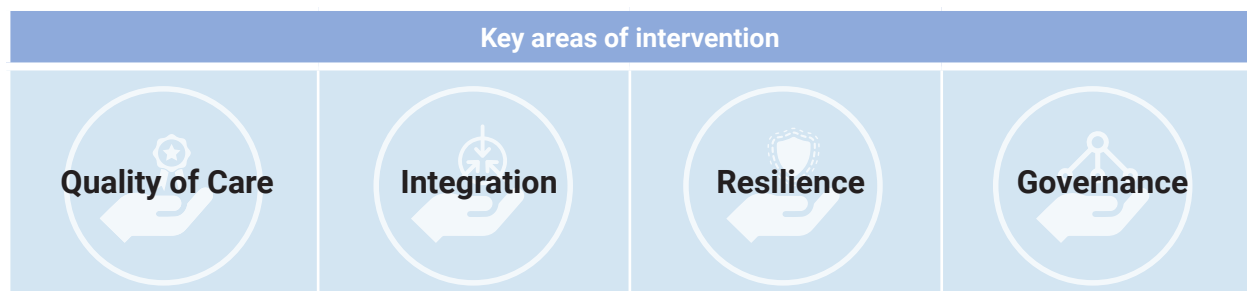
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UN Joint Programme on Health Systems Strengthening for Equitable Health Outcomes

Participating UN Agencies:	WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF	Geographic scope:	Rumphi, Mzimba, Ntchisi, Kasungu, Chikwawa, and Nsanje
Government Partners:	Ministry of Health	Budget:	US \$ 8,249,329
Other Partners:	Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS), Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS), Chancellor College, Christian Health Alliance of Malawi, Banja La Matsogolo (BLM), Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Staff Development Institute (SDI), Clinton Health Access Initiative	SDGs targets:	SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation
Duration	2020-2023		

The Umoyo Wathu Health Systems Strengthening Joint Programme (UW-HSS) aims to build a responsive and resilient health system, improve the quality of health services, attain Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and integrate service delivery at the sub-national level through decentralized governance mechanisms and stakeholder engagement. It supports a package of system strengthening initiatives at the district level across maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) services as well as a component to strengthen preparedness and response to health shocks, such as COVID-19.

The primary objective of the programme is to develop a responsive and resilient health system that facilitates the simultaneous availability of the “4 Ps”: skilled **People**, accessible necessary **Products**, well-maintained **Places** of care, and supportive **Policies** and governance that will provide quality, people-centric, integrated health services through a prioritized Essential Health Package (EHP), in line with the Universal Health Coverage aspirations.



Overall Results

To improve the quality of care obtained by people in Malawi the programme supported the development of an online quality of care continuous development platform and built the capacity of the 129 members of the Quality improvements support teams. The programme supported Malawi Emergency Obstetric Care Assessment to identify capacity and gaps in services and helped with the design and development of a Network of Care model and Centres of excellence to improve emergency services. The programme supported the adoption of One Health Surveillance Platform (OHSP), a digital health platform to improve Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR).

Specific Results

Improved Quality of Care: Key interventions included capacity building initiatives for improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health through online learning platforms, training, coaching and mentoring; Strengthening MPDSR (Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response) through integrated efforts between different departments and units in Ministry of Health. For instance, by scaling up the MATSURV, an online dashboard to monitor maternal deaths, to all facilities offering MNH service; and improving data quality for decision making, by conducting quality reviews in 40 health

facilities, capacity building activities to measure the delivery of the essential health care package and supporting the design and pilot of an integrated and intelligent Community Health Information System (iCHIS).

Enhanced Integration: the programme supported the strengthening of integrated service delivery at District and rural hospitals, primary and community health services by developing a national Self-Care Packages for sexual and reproductive health, and an integrated service package in the provision of services along the life cycle of child and mother for implementation at the community level. The programme is also supporting the design and a multi-year plan for the EmONC Network of Care and Centres of Excellence with support from Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

In addition, the number of health facilities providing post-abortion care has increased, as well as health facilities provided with waste management equipment and trained staff in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC). The programme strengthened the capacity of 259 and 1147 health workers from 95 health facilities in post abortion care and waste management respectively.

Strengthened Resilience: this component is anchored around strengthening the capacity of districts to build resilience in health emergencies. The programme supported the planning coordination and development of national plan of action on health security, supported Ministry of Health to intensify COVID-19 contact tracing and screening, with 44,805 people screened and developed messages on promoting COVID-19 vaccination. It also worked towards

the development of a National Safeguarding Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

The programme has also been supporting the Ministry of Health to develop the One Health Surveillance Platform (OHSP) as the key digital health platform for disease surveillance including eIDSR operationalization. The OHSP is expected to improve real-time reporting and transition the country from paper-based to digital Integrated Diseases Surveillance and Response (IDSR) reporting.

Governance: the programme has been supporting the strengthening of the health sector planning, budgeting, coordination, and implementation at the sub-national level and improving accountability for improved health outcomes, at health facility level.

Challenges and lessons learned

The programme experienced a delayed start mainly due to the COVID-19 related restrictions as the country experienced challenges in service continuity. Budget reductions of more than 50% impacted programme implementation.

Despite being at the beginning of the implementation, the programme showed greater ownership at the sub-national level and the rollout of activities filled key gaps in strengthening the health system at the district level. The skills provided to health staff through the mentorship programme have had a major impact. The health workers are more motivated and provide quality service with confidence which led to positive outcomes. In turn, communities gain confidence in the health workers, with more women agreeing to await delivery at the hospital.



“We Shall Go to Them” - Taking COVID-19 vaccines to farthest people

Health workers in Malawi have left no stone unturned to vaccinate as many as possible against COVID-19. Among others, they use mobile health clinics to bring the critical vaccines close to people in farthest areas. The health workers even visit crop fields and brick-making sites to inoculate people and ensure no jab is wasted.

Clad in sky-blue uniforms, community health workers have accelerated COVID-19 vaccinations. Most of the vaccines were received through the UN-coordinated COVAX facility to boost efforts to save lives and overcome the pandemic. To increase vaccine uptake, the Ministry of Health, with support from different UN Agencies and in partnership with Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHES), deployed 30 vans and cooling props nationwide to take vaccines close to where they are needed.

“Instead of waiting for people to come to the nearest health facility, we shall go to them,” said Kingsley Chisuse, a seasoned health surveillance assistant who supervises Chisi Health Centre in Zomba. The centre also provides services to people in fishing villages along Lake Chilwa in the district.

However, the remote communities in and around Malawi’s second-largest lake could not be reached using a 10-tonne van that has helped expand access to COVID-19 vaccines in trading centres and other roadside spots. To make inroads, Chisuse and his team made boat trips and uphill walks on rocky islands. The travels take the team into the thick of the lake’s vegetation to vaccinate migrant fishers in floating huts. A week before Christmas in 2021, his team vaccinated 107 people in the area within five days. The vaccinated 107 included 23 of the 30 fishers who initially told them off. “When we meet them, we tell the fishers to express their fears. We explain the benefits of

the vaccine before we start vaccinating those who are willing,” said Chisuse.

The accelerated vaccinations in Lake Chilwa area reflect the progress that health authorities have made nationwide thanks to the COVID-19 vaccine express programme. This helped save vaccines from being wasted. All doses with immediate expiry dates were utilized. Zomba District Immunisation Coordinator Simion Chizimba says: “Before the funding for the express, we were vaccinating about 250 people a day, but the van alone increased that by 400 to 500 inoculations per day. We were able to vaccinate 800 to 1,000 people with the whole vaccination express package, including the boat rides to Lake Chilwa.”

The vaccinators, including teams on the truck branded with an image of President Lazarus Chakwera getting a second jab, visit marketplaces and other places where people gather. “Just like that, many got vaccinated without enduring long travels or extra costs. But we had to change the strategy to suit our tricky terrain in the Lake Chilwa basin,” says District Environmental Health Officer Innocent Mvula.

“The good thing is that the support from the Malawi National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme allows us to implement vaccination strategies that suit our environment,” Mvula explains.

He adds, for instance, he vaccinated some gravediggers on the way from replenishing vaccines at a rural health centre. “I was passing a cemetery on a motorcycle. When about 10 young people who were digging a grave saw my vaccine carrier, they asked to be vaccinated because they were tired of burying people dying from coughs suspected to be COVID-19. I obliged and vaccinated them,” he explained.

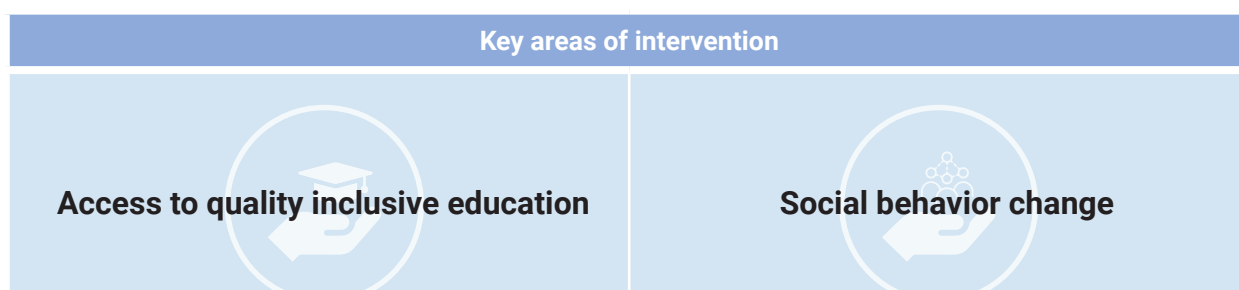


3

UN Joint Programme - Learning Never Stops Malawi

Participating UN Agencies:	UNICEF, UNESCO	Geographic scope:	National level and reach all six education divisions
Government Partners:	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare	Budget:	US \$ 700, 000.00
Other Partners:	Centre for Therapeutic Services and Social Change	SDGs targets:	SDG4: Quality Education SDG5: Gender Equality
Duration	April 2021 - August 2022		

The Learning never stops Joint programme aims to improve the access to education for children and adolescent girls in crisis-like situations, especially for the most vulnerable children with special education needs, within a school environment able to ensure the well-being of learners. The project responded to the immediate need of the Ministry of Education to ensure continuity of learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project sought also to partially fill the gaps in ongoing interventions in distance learning, offering solutions that would enhance the provision of flexible, inclusive education in future crises and mitigate the impacts of the current one, with a special focus on the right to education of marginalized and vulnerable girls and learners with special needs.



Overall Results

The Learning never stops programme enabled learners, especially girls and those with special needs, to access quality learning opportunities through distance learning programmes and materials at school-based platforms, during the COVID-19 emergency. The Ministry of Education (MoE) was supported to develop Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) materials which have improved its readiness to ensure continuity of learning in the likelihood of any other emergency. Further, 20,200 learners (50% women) now have access to psycho-social support services as a result of the capacity development of 1,591 teachers (52% women). The programme has also improved the education sectors' capacity to provide social behaviour change communication messaging on COVID-19 prevention, management, and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH), Ending Teenage Pregnancy (ETP), and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), as well as awareness, through role modelling activities and TV documentaries, radio drama, and jingles. All these strengthened the resilience of the education systems to ensure it can provide continuity of learning and build back better.

Specific Results

Improved coverage and quality of distance learning programmes for all, including those with special needs: Four hundred Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) programmes for term two for primary schools in English, Chichewa, Maths, and Science were developed. The programme has enabled Ministry of Education to have radio programs that cover the whole

primary school year and would enable continuity of learning through radio should schools close at any time. A Life Skills Education radio lessons for Forms 1 and 2 was also developed and additional lessons for Life Skills Education will ensure continuity of learning during school closures. The programme has been also supporting the development of a package of COVID-19 prevention and control, Sexual Reproductive Health, Ending Teenage Pregnancy, and Gender Based Violence messages.

Strengthened education system's capacities to provide psychosocial support to teachers and learners:

To enhance the psychosocial and mental health of learners, capacity building activities addressed to 1,711 (866 females, 845 males) between headteachers, PEAs and teachers were conducted from 80 selected primary schools in five targeted districts: Lilongwe, Mzimba, Mwanza, Nkhatabay, and Blantyre. Capacity building activities for 38 teachers (16 females, 22 males) of learners with disabilities on inclusive methods of delivering lessons were also conducted, through the Breaking the Silence (BTS) approach, an evidence-based curriculum-implementation approach targeting the delivery of Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), parenting support, and community engagement for learners with disabilities in and out of schools. Additionally, a draft Referral Pathways for Mental Health Support at the school level was developed.

Strengthened support to vulnerable and at-risk girls for their safe return to schools:

High-level role modeling activities have been conducted in primary and secondary schools, empowering and motivating girls to remain in school. Approximately 2,000 adolescent girls have been empowered and over 105,000 people have been reached on readmission policy, continuity of education, gender

equality, sexual gender-based violence, and COVID-19 prevention. This component will be reinforced by the current development of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, such as posters, flyers, radio jingles, short videos, radio drama translated in vernacular languages and will support the scaling up of awareness activities around continuity of learning. Multimedia messages are expected to reach over 1,000,000 people across the five districts and even spill over across the country.

Challenges and lessons learned

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on education worldwide. In Malawi, between March – September 2020 and January - February 2021 schools were closed for prolonged time causing enormous disruption and loss of learning. The immediate and continuing need therefore was to provide additional support to children and teachers to recover from the losses. This included training to teachers to provide remedial support and remedial learning including targeted instruction and small group tutoring, including guided learning to learners. The third wave of COVID-19 between June and August 2021 proved to be a challenge, slowing down implementation of activities.

The lessons on COVID-19 are that school closure and the response in terms of continuity of learning requires new ways of delivering learning, particularly through digital learning and internet enabled learning platforms. This calls for urgent action for the education system to ensure the digital transformation and application of technologies in teaching and learning is strengthened as part of policy and practice including budgetary allocation to realize a new vision for education.



Equipping Teachers with Psychological Support Skills



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When a student at Lilongwe Girls Secondary School tested positive for COVID-19 after the second wave hit Malawi in January 2021, the Ministry of Health decided to do a mass screening exercise at the school. The result was – 322 students and six teachers tested positive for the virus.

“There was a lot of panic among students, teachers, and parents. Some parents came to collect their children because news of the outbreak was all over social media. Schools had previously been closed for more than six months during the first wave of COVID-19, and we were doing our best not to close for a second time,” explains Bridget Nungu, the headteacher at the school.

According to Bridget, the school closures during the first wave had a detrimental effect on learning. Some girls dropped out and got married, and others fell pregnant. Access to online (digital) and radio learning is a luxury for many rural Malawian girls. As such, anxiety gripped them on how they will progress with their studies.

“As a teacher, staying idle killed my zeal for the job I love. I

missed the students who have formed my circle of friends and family, including my fellow teachers. It led to low levels of reading and research, which is an integral part of the teaching profession,” Bridget explains.

In preventing a similar situation from occurring during the second wave, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health, with support of the UN Joint Programme - Learning Never Stops Malawi, stepped in to stabilize the situation.

Learning Never Stops, stepped in to stabilize the situation. “We received support on decongesting the hostels and classrooms and were provided with washbasins and soap for good hygiene practices.” The programme trained teachers at the school on psychological first aid, building their capacity to understand COVID-19 effects on the wellbeing of teachers and learners. The training equipped them with skills to identify signs of stress or discomfort among the teachers and learners. Referral pathways were also shared during the training.

Bridget attests that the training extensively equipped her with skills and knowledge to assist students in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. “After the training, we arranged training sessions within the school where nine more staff members were trained. When the fourth wave came with the Omicron variant, the school managed to control the spread without causing any alarm,” she says.

With over 20 years of experience in the education sector, Bridget believes the psychological first aid training has brought resilience and a spirit of survival at the school.



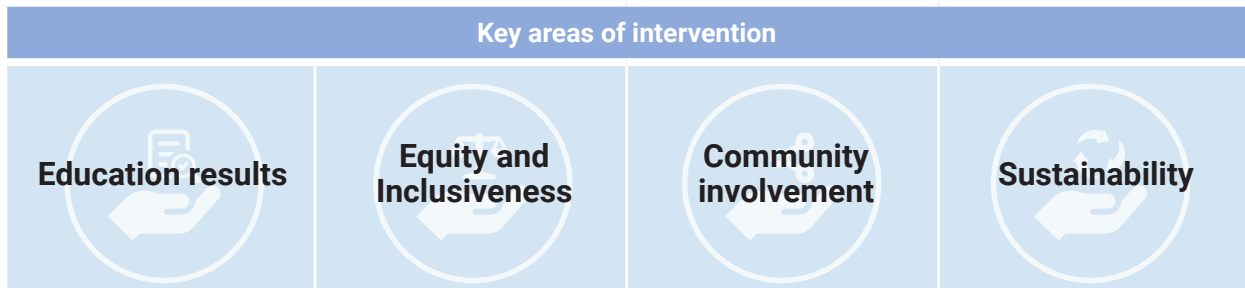
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4	UN Joint Programme on Girls' Education III: Learning for All in Malawi		
Participating UN Agencies:	UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP	Geographic scope:	Dedza, Kasungu, Mangochi, Salima
Government Partners:	Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Youth and Sports; Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Information and Communication; Malawi Police Services; District councils	Budget:	US \$ 40,561,450
Other Partners:	Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA); Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM); Ujamaa – Pamodzi.	SDGs targets:	SDG2: Zero Hunger SDG4: Quality Education SDG3: Good Health and Well-being SDG5: Gender Equality SDG17: Partnerships
Duration	March 2021 - October 2024		

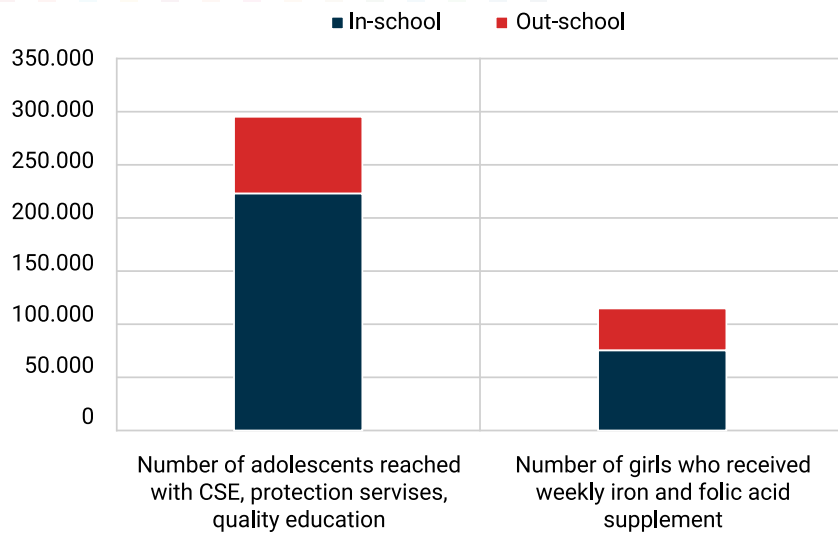
The JP on Girls' Education (JPGE) started in 2014 and is currently in its third phase (2021-2024). The JPGE III "*Learning for All in Malawi – Ensuring the realization of girls' and boys' rights to quality, inclusive and equitable education and life skills*" was included in 2021 under the umbrella of the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund, acknowledging girls' education as one of the most important SDGs accelerators for the country.

The programme promotes a multi-sectoral approach addressing socio-economic, cultural, health, nutrition, and gender barriers. It also adopts a gender transformative approach, maintaining a focus on girls but ensuring the needs of boys are addressed and that they are actively engaged so they can be champions in promoting gender equality. The goal of the JPGE III is to ensure that school aged girls, boys and adolescents (especially the most vulnerable) benefit from quality education thus improving their learning outcomes and life opportunities.



Overall results

In 2021, JPGE continued to be implemented in 169 primary schools. The programme reaches 53 health facilities, that are within the targeted schools' catchment areas. In terms of coverage in the three districts, JPGE reaches 24 percent of schools and 56 percent of the health facilities. A total of 31 primary schools out of 379 have been selected in Kasungu district, which will bring the total number of schools targeted by the programme to 200 once the expansion to a fourth district is completed in 2022.



GRAPH: In 2021 JPGE III directly reached 223,009 learners (51% girls) in schools through improved delivery and quality of education, school meals, comprehensive sexuality education, safety and protection services. Over 346,000 young people (aged 10-24 years) benefitted from Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS), and 72,439 out of school adolescents (86% girls) were engaged with trainings on life skills, alternative learning, adolescent nutrition support.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to negatively impact the education sector in the country during this year, specifically in terms of enrolment and dropout rates. In the JPGE supported schools, dropout rates were stabilized at the previous year's level (6 percent for both girls and boys);

attendance continued to be consistent and even increased from 87.4 percent in 2020 to 89.9 percent in 2021; and there was a slight improvement in the reduction of repetition rates (from 22.7 percent to 22 percent).

Specific Results

Strengthened capacities of teachers to provide quality inclusive education: Over 220,000 learners from 169 schools access innovative ways of learning following training of 2,404 teachers (38% females) focusing on inclusive, gender responsive, child centered teaching and learning methods; holistic assessment to assess student learning outcomes; remediation in foundational literacy and numeracy; provision of individual support to children with special education needs; digital literacy for research and teaching. Teachers and school management members were also engaged in SRHR dialogue sessions with attention to inclusiveness to reach learners with special education needs. Teachers were trained in and oriented on use of braille for teaching Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). Screening of children to map assistive devices needs for learners with disabilities have been conducted.

Provision of integrated services in and through schools: 217,960 learners (52% girls) received diversified nutritious home-grown school meals since October 2021 after been suspended since March 2020. For the school term April-June 2021, 208,797 learners received cash take-home rations instead of in-school meals and each parent/guardian received 5,000 MK (about 6 USD) per learner. Monitoring showed that take-home support was effective as safety net and to ensure access to food at home. As part of the integrated services package the following results were achieved: the risk of anemia reduced for 115,374 girls, between in school and out of school, who received weekly iron and folic acid supplement, and 1,352 adolescent girls and boys were reached in schools with training on nutrition and cooking demonstrations to impart skills on preparation of nutrient dense diversified diets; access to school health services was enhanced, through SHR information among adolescents and health sessions conducted by a team of health specialists; 3,611 girls received one dose of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine and 1,729 received second dose; and 249 schools have mechanisms for prevention, detection, referral and response of violence and bullying in schools.





Increased enrollment and participation of out of school children and adolescents in quality complementary alternative learning and life skills programmes: 6,000 young people (14 years and above) where 95% were girls, enrolled in functional literacy programme, a 9 month non formal programme for those that have never been to school or dropped out early. In addition, 24,826 adolescents (aged 10-24 years) were supported with life skills and Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR) mentorship programme. About 295 mentors were newly recruited and trained, and 98% of the girl mentors graduated from the programme.

Increased availability of integrated SRHR, safety, health and nutrition services for out of school adolescent girls and boys: About 100 health care workers were supported with on-job sessions on minimum package for integrated Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) including HIV and SRHR services, while at the supported health facilities 346,727 young people (45% females) accessed YFHS. Also, the mapping of 54 health facilities in terms of assets, ASRHR services provided by each facility, quality of data being reported, resources and capacities including trained service providers at facility and community level on YFHS and SRHR is ongoing.

Stronger engagement of parents and communities: 1,881 parents were engaged through Parent-Child Communication (PCC) sessions to improve communication gap between parents and adolescents including issues of sexuality and reproductive health rights. 24 radio programmes were produced via community radio stations covering topics such as SRH information and availability of services in the area, resulting in an increase in uptake of SRH services across the services delivery points. Also, 31 percent of targeted farmers started to sell produce to the schools with the resumption of the home-grown school feeding in October 2021¹⁴.

Challenges and lessons learned

Based on lessons learned from previous phases, to strengthen ownership, coordination at the implementation level has been led by the District Councils. JPGE has promoted a strengthened coordination and ownership at national level of the multi-sectoral approach. In 2021, joint design, planning and coordination of implementation between the partners at District level has continued to be a distinctive operating modality of the JPGE. However, a critical lesson is that overall coordination mechanisms for multi-sectoral education interventions, still require to be institutionalized and better linked with structures beyond the JPGE, as the intention is to move beyond a project-based approach.

New components are being implemented under JPGE III and lessons have started to emerge, for example with the focus on Inclusive Education (IE). Assessment of learners for disabilities and other health conditions was conducted. Thanks to partnership with the District Health offices in addition to the screening some learners were able to access treatment for mild conditions. The inclusion of IE in the new phase of the programme has been a key success in the year because it is helping to identify and address conditions which if not addressed could result in worse conditions in future, such as visual or hearing impairments.

In 2021, the programme implementation continued to be adapted to COVID-19 and supported efforts for its prevention, response, and mitigation of impacts.

¹⁴ The programme targets farmers groups through a series of activities for capacity strengthening, however the proportion of individual farmers that will sell to the school can vary from term to term, as it depends on the procurement process.

5

Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy

Participating UN Agencies:	UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNWOMEN	Geographic scope:	Lilongwe, Nsanje, Nkhatabay, Mulanje
Government Partners:	Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Health, National AIDS Commission, Department of Disaster Management Affairs, District Councils	Budget:	US \$ 1,804,304
Other Partners:	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) Malawi Interfaith Association (MIAA) GENET, FPAM; PAM, Market Link and Support; African Institute for Cooperate citizenship (IACC); Mzimba Community Radio, Plan international, Female Sex Workers Association, CADECOM	SDGs targets:	SDG3: Good Health and Well-being SDG5: Gender Equality
Duration	April 2021 - March 2022		

The Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage, and Teenage Pregnancy aims to advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls through the provision of protection and prevention services in response to the systemic socio-political discrimination and violence during COVID-19. This project aims at improving the health conditions of adolescent girls and women through provision of health services, and prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV), teenage pregnancies through broad scale Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), GBV information and services.



Overall results

Despite the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 response, adolescent pregnant women and girls continued to access quality maternal and child health through the provision of outreach community services and last-mile care. Safe spaces for girls to enhance their life skills were strengthened and scaled up, with provision of additional sexual and reproductive health services and information. Further GBV and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) monitoring, reporting, referral and coordination mechanisms were strengthened. The expanded space for adolescent girls promoted prevention of violence against women and gender equitable social norms. Within the same space, there was notable improved awareness, knowledge and access to HIV prevention and care among adolescent girls, women, and People Living with HIV (PLHIV). This initiative integrates a complete package of the SRHR services to adolescents in a most difficult period when movement was restricted.

Specific Results

Continuity of maternal and child health services during COVID-19: While there was an anticipation that Antenatal Care (ANC) visits would decrease during the COVID-19, thanks to the programme support these were not affected in the target districts, with average 90% attendance. 22 mobile SRHR services outreach clinics were conducted, and 2,328 female beneficiaries reached with family planning and maternal and neonatal health services. The refurbishment of a maternity unit in Milonde Health centre allowed a total of 15,287 populations to benefit of clean water resulting in the reduction of COVID-19 infections.

Expanded safe spaces for girls to strengthen life skills, with scaled up provision of SRHR services:

Adolescent girls and young women (AGYWs) were equipped with key life skills, including SRHR, GBV prevention and response. As a result, participating girls shown empowerment, making key decisions about their lives, including decisions to access family planning services to prevent teenage pregnancies and early marriages, decisions to go back to school, and decisions not to get married. In addition, at community level, mentors and focal persons have been linked to service providers, opening opportunities for AGYW to engage and hold duty bearers accountable and resulting in 12 underage girls rescued from child marriage and abusive relationships. Using the knowledge gained during mentors training, several AGYWs have joined or formed economic empowerment groups and are engaging in various income generation activities. The AGYW interested in income generating activities will be linked to economic opportunities like NEEF (National Economic Empowerment Fund) and other finance services.

Strengthened GBV and SEA monitoring, reporting, referral and coordination mechanisms:

The programme has created an enabling environment that allows women and girls feel protected from all forms of violence through GBV prevention, mitigation, and response interventions. With the availability and functioning of reporting and referral pathways (Case Management and Psychosocial Support, Medical Support services, Social Protection services, GBV Prevention/Response Coordination services, Justice and Prosecution services) women and girls, including those leaving with disabilities, can report different forms of violence, particularly domestic violence that has intensified due to COVID-19. MoGCDSW further conducted a mapping exercise to support girls that have been withdrawn from child marriages and referred them to existing referral pathways, including counselling and readmission to school.

Strengthened focus on gender equitable social norms, attitudes and behavior change:

Through male engagement strategy using the Barbershop and HeForShe tools, men and boys play a key role in addressing GBV, early marriages and teenage pregnancies. 135 male champions engaged as agents of change in promoting positive masculinities. In turn, they have scaled up the initiative and

reached out to other groups of men in their communities through community dialogues and awareness campaigns. A total of 270 men and boys have been reached directly while over 1,000 men and boys have been reached indirectly. Further, parental and adult committees, an addition to community and faith leaders, were trained in their roles and responsibilities in preventing and addressing GBV, teenage pregnancies and child marriages. Since the onset of the programme there has been an increase in readmission of adolescent girls who had drop out of school and reduced dropout rate.

Strengthened capacities of national, district and community levels on gender mainstreaming in COVID-19 response programming:

Capacity building activities included collecting sex, age and disability disaggregated data, conducting rapid gender analysis, women participation in COVID-19 response and recovery, PSEA and GBV in emergencies. At national level, 82% of clusters (Health, Education, Protection and Social support, WASH, Coordination, Food Security, Search and Rescue, Transport and logistics and Shelter and Camp management) now have the capacity to mainstream gender and GBV in COVID-19 response. At district level, 108 members of the humanitarian stakeholders' committees were trained, as well as 80 Area and Village Civil protection committees at community level.

Challenges and lessons learned

The social sector remains underfunded, resulting in failure of scaling up successful initiatives. Safe space remains one of the most strategic interventions to keep girls empowered, in school and avert early and unwanted marriages. As such, District councils will focus on community solutions to sustain the interventions. To this end, the programme also developed community partnerships with youth groups, community-based organization and linked the mentors. Dealing with communities to address gender inequalities needs proper strategies, as cultural and religious beliefs that endorse gender inequalities are in some contexts deeply rooted. Engaging men and boys to end practice of child marriages, teenage pregnancy and early marriages yield great results quickly and is vital and strategic to be scaled up across the country, with the potential to change the negative trends in GBV.



It takes so little for a smile



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The Milonde Health Centre in Mulanje district is one of the health facilities targeted by the *Joint Action addressing GBV, Child Marriage, and Teenage Pregnancy* programme funded by the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund.

The health centre has a catchment population of 15,287 people. Of these, 3,765 are women of childbearing age. The centre is expected to provide care for about 818 pregnancies and around 688 live birth every year, translating into about 50 deliveries per month.

The health centre had a non-functional water system for some time. Several appeals by health workers at the facility to get the system repaired were unsuccessful, resulting in worsened challenges with adherence to infection prevention protocols, especially during deliveries. Some women even opted for home deliveries due to the water problem. This further exacerbates the morbidity and mortality rates experienced among pregnant women and newborns. With the COVID-19 outbreak, enforcement of preventive measures such as handwashing among staff, patients and guardians became difficult at the health centre.

However, with support from the programme, Milonde Health Centre piped water system was restored in 2021, bringing a safer environment to its users, in particular pregnant women. The support further restored dignity of pregnant women who depended on guardians to draw water for their hygiene following delivery.

When it comes to continuity of maternal and newborn health services, often focus is given to trainings of staff to improve their knowledge and skills in caring for the patients. While this is commendable, at times focus on interventions that improve patients' morale and promote their dignity during care is overlooked, yet these are done at low cost.

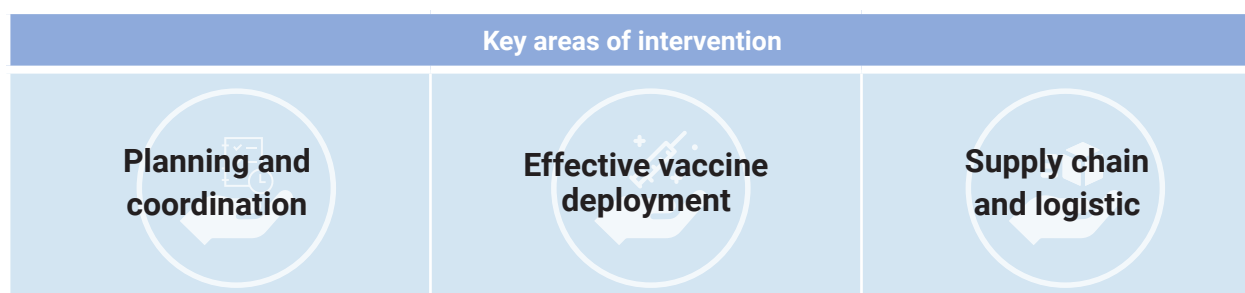
This initiative not only brought a smile to patients and staff, it also contributed to addressing the infection prevention needs of the health facility, which reduced maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

6

Malawi National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme Support

Participating UN Agencies:	WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP	Geographic scope:	Nationwide
Government Partners:	Government of Malawi, Ministry of Health	Budget:	US \$:2,100,000
Other Partners:	College of Medicine, University of Malawi	SDGs targets:	SDG3: Good Health and Well-being SDG17: Partnerships
Duration	April 2021 - March 2022		

The Malawi National COVID-19 Vaccine Programme Support provides technical and logistical assistance to vaccine deployment and national COVID-19 response monitoring activities. The project supported the national deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine to directly lead to the vaccination of 3.8 million people from specific priority groups over the course of one year. The aim of the programme is to support the GoM and partners to improve demand and uptake of the vaccine, provide the human resources capacity required for the deployment, augmenting the cold-chain and general supply chain, and supporting implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning of the vaccination roll out.



Overall results

The programme supported the government in the related COVID-19 vaccine planning and coordination, technical leadership, financing, supply chain and logistics, the COVID-19 vaccination related services and demand creation activities. It directly supported the Malawi Immunization Technical Advisory Group (MAITAG), as well as the development of training materials, training of trainers for vaccine roll out, and training of health workers in 29 health districts, supportive supervision of health workers in all districts, and monitoring supply chain.

The activities had a direct impact on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic by improving service delivery and creating well trained health workforce. Over 8,000 health workers have been trained for COVID-19 vaccine roll out.

Specific Results

Improved capacity: The programme supported installation of two cold rooms at the National Vaccine Store, increasing the capacity by 20,000 m³. This also provided support to procure and install ultracold chain equipment at the national and subnational levels to create capacity for the country to introduce Pfizer vaccines..

Strengthened supply chain of COVID-19 Vaccines: The programme continued supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) to distribute COVID-19 vaccination across districts to ensure full utilization. This was facilitated by the availability of real time data on vaccine storage and use through the deployment of the Electronic Health Information Network (eHIN) platform. The platform was deployed to 861 locations where vaccines were being managed and over 1,600 health workers managing vaccines were trained to use the mobile based system to report on availability, batches, and general inventory. The system was used to identify soon to expire products which were immediately redistributed for use. As a result, all vaccines were fully utilized by with no waste of batches.

Increased vaccine roll-out and demand creation: The country registered an increase of people receiving both first and second doses of the vaccine to a total of 156,000 people fully vaccinated, representing 28% increase. The importance of the COVID-19 vaccination express program showed incredible achievements, including decrease of COVID-19 cases and mortality among the vaccinated population. The pulling out of the mobile branded vehicles have supported the districts vaccination performance by increasing the COVID-19 vaccine daily utilization and consumption from about 3,000 to only 15,000 (3 times more consumption and utilization). The programme supported the adoption of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) strategy which led to the development of the RCCE dashboard. It also supported mapping and evidence informed programming of demand generation. Remote training content on vaccine uptake was co-created with community leaders, including faith actors and shared to 1,199 community and youth leaders.

Challenges and lessons learned

The global COVID-19 pandemic brings challenges and stress to health workers, as they balance personal and work responsibilities, and face risks to their own health and safety. Introducing a new vaccine meant new targeted populations, safety concerns from communities, and increased staff workload. This was addressed by continuous supportive supervision and holding reviews. Multisectoral involvement and coordination is important when managing an emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic. Fund expenditure flexibility is very important to meet the evolving needs.





4. CONCLUSIONS

The experience of the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund is demonstrating that, when adequately developed, pooled funding mechanisms strengthen financing planning and coordination, and are a suitable tool to channel adequate, predictable, and sustainable funds towards the highest priority areas.

In its only three years of life, the SDG-AF has proven to be a suitable mechanism to enhance collaboration, create efficiencies, and overall improve joint programming for UN agencies, fostering cross-agency synergies and multi-stakeholder approaches that drive powerful and transformative initiatives.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund has demonstrated its added value by being agile and adaptable to the context, and allowed for the formulation and implementation of quality programmes in line with growing and evolving needs of the government and populations.

It has also been key in raising awareness on the need for more quality funding and to identify funding behavior change (more unearmarked resources, and more joint programming), with Canada being a decisive example that a funding behavior change is possible.

The UN system has put in place holistic strategies for more coordinated, comprehensive, and transformative responses to host country development needs and the increase in number of Joint Programmes is the natural result and proof of evidence. However, while institutional change has been occurring (roll out of a national pooled fund, strategized joint programming), the quality of the funding in the big picture has changed little. There is still a wide lack of awareness both on the Reform and the Funding Compact and continued high levels of earmarking and ad-hoc project support.

While the UNRCO Malawi is putting efforts in bringing attention to these strategic frameworks, complimentary efforts from Member States, host governments, private sector, and civil society are required to leverage strategic -and much needed- resources for the SDGs. For example, thanks to the support of partners such as the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation¹⁵, there are ongoing efforts to raise awareness. To achieve this, more real commitments, and the effective implementation of the Reform and Funding Compact needs to happen on the ground with the concurrence of all.

Lastly, it is worthy to highlight that embracing one of the recommendations addressed in 2020, the Fund in 2021 not only ensured that all the approved programmes allocated at least 30 percent of resources to activities that support gender equality, but pushed the boundaries: in 2021, 52% of the resources were directly invested in activities that promote women's' and girls' equality and empowerment. This is a practice that is making a difference in SDGs acceleration, regardless of the sector the Fund is supporting.

¹⁵ The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation report: The way forward: Fulfilling the potential of the Funding Compact at the Country Level, issued in November 2021, includes Malawi and the SDG-AF as a case study: <https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/dhf-funding-compact-2021-web.pdf>



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

For 2022, it is recommended to:

Develop an overall M&E strategy focusing in supporting the Malawi Vision 2063: Based on the recommendations from the 2020 Annual report, the Fund strengthened its alignment with the 2020 issued *MW2063*, which is the long-term development agenda reflecting the aspiration of transforming Malawi into a middle-income country.

Since 2021, all programmes approved by the Fund show programmatic alignment with this framework, in line with SDGs aspirations. However, for the alignment to be truly effective, an overall M&E strategy with strong focus in supporting MW2063 and its First 10-year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) 2021-2030 should be developed.

Mobilize more unearmarked resources: “As stated by the Fund’s Steering Committee, one aspirational goal is to mobilize more unearmarked resources to enable a broader informed discussion and participatory decision-making process among stakeholders. While institutional change has been occurring in Malawi (rollout of the SDG-AF, strategized joint programming), the quality of the funding in the big picture has not reached the desired level. There is still a wide lack of awareness both on the Reform and the Funding Compact and continued high levels of earmarking and ad-hoc project support. Given the essence of the Fund, and strongly tapping into the UN reform and Funding Compact principles, development partners should aim at more flexible and multi-annual resources, while at the same time complimentary efforts from Member States, host governments, private sector, and civil society are required to leverage strategic -and much needed- resources for the SDGs.

Continue to support projects that channel urgent yet catalytic solutions, with focus on the triple humanitarian/development/peace nexus: Programmes in 2020 and 2021 have showed capacity to not only support the most urgent humanitarian needs, but also to serve as catalyzer for mid and long-term responses, in line with the humanitarian/development nexus. The nexus approach should be expanded and enhanced considering the possibility to implement activities around the triple-nexus, referring to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors. The Conflict Prevention and Border Control Joint Programme approved in 2021 and ready to kick off in

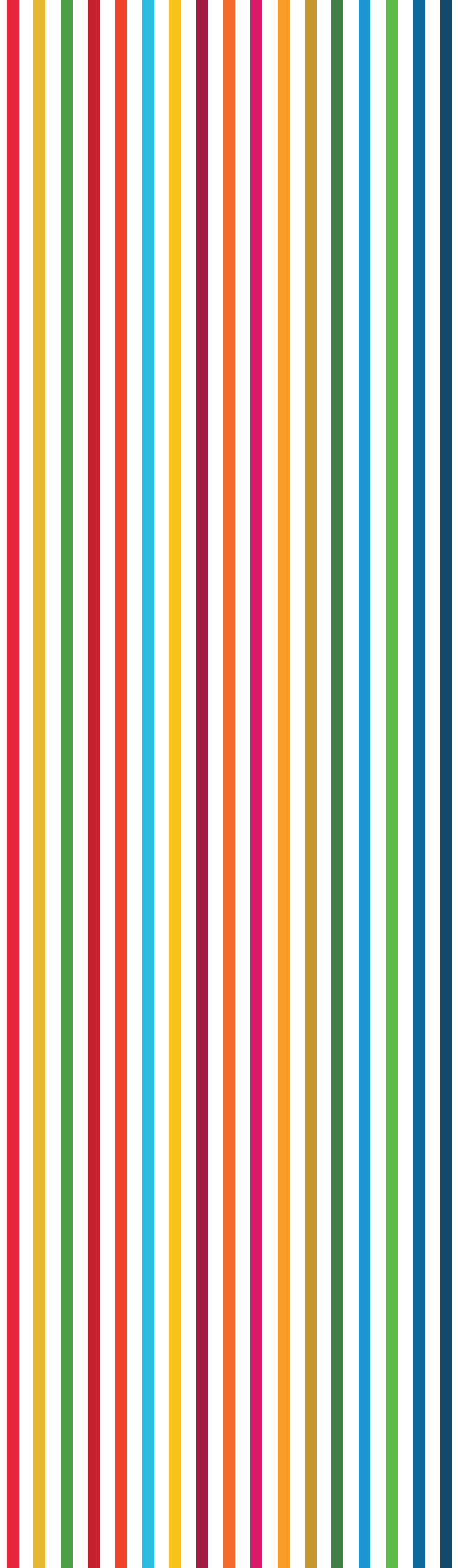
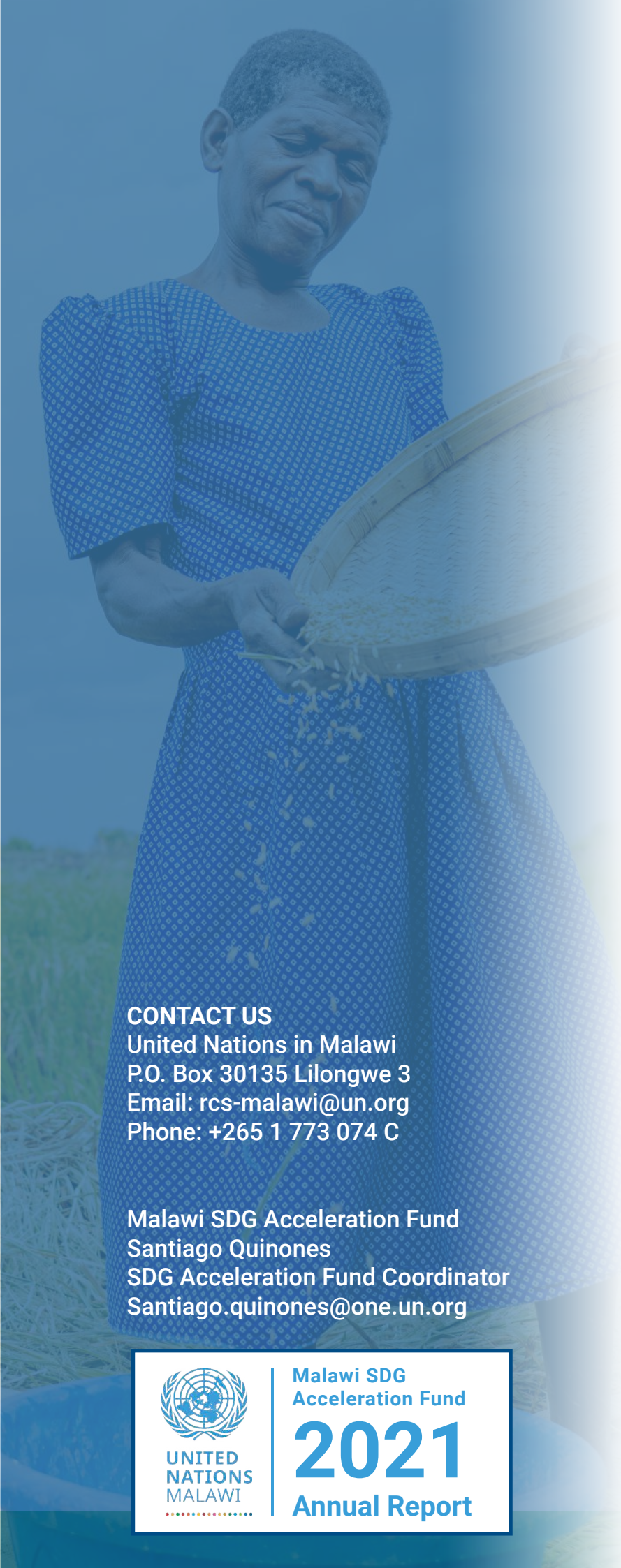
2022 shows efforts in this direction, by tackling critical areas such as a conflict prevention and responding to potential spillovers from the conflict in the bordering areas.

Continue to support the COVID-19 Socio Economic Recovery Plan: Considering its strategic position to support the Socio-Economic Recovery Plan – after being pivotal in supporting the immediate response - the Fund should remain vigilant in supporting the pandemic recovery efforts, ensuring that additional efforts are re-aligned to the development agenda, with focus on the most vulnerable particularly girls, women and youth, in line with the Leave No One Behind principle that lays at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

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 was recommended for 2021, however not enforced. It is recommended to take action in 2022, as it will widen the participation of key stakeholder for the SDGs agenda.

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, as recommended in the 2020 Annual Report. The Fund should consider moving forward with this provision and take steps towards its realization.

To continue efforts to advance gender equality: Embracing one of the recommendations addressed in 2020, the Fund in 2021 ensured that all the approved programmes allocated at least 30 percent of resources to activities that support gender equality. This is a positive practice that is making a difference in SDGs acceleration, regardless of the sector the Fund is supporting. However, more efforts would be required to advancing M&E measures able to identify results and progress, including knowledge management of the investments (i.e., good practices and scalability)..



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