



**UNICEF**

**Delivering Results for  
Children in Malawi**

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PO Box 30375,  
Airtel Complex Area 40/31,  
Lilongwe 3, Malawi

**Contact:** [lilongwe@unicef.org](mailto:lilongwe@unicef.org)

**Website:** [www.unicef.org/malawi](http://www.unicef.org/malawi)

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**For more information, contact:**

**Fungma Fudong**

Chief of Communications,  
E-mail: [ffudong@unicef.org](mailto:ffudong@unicef.org)



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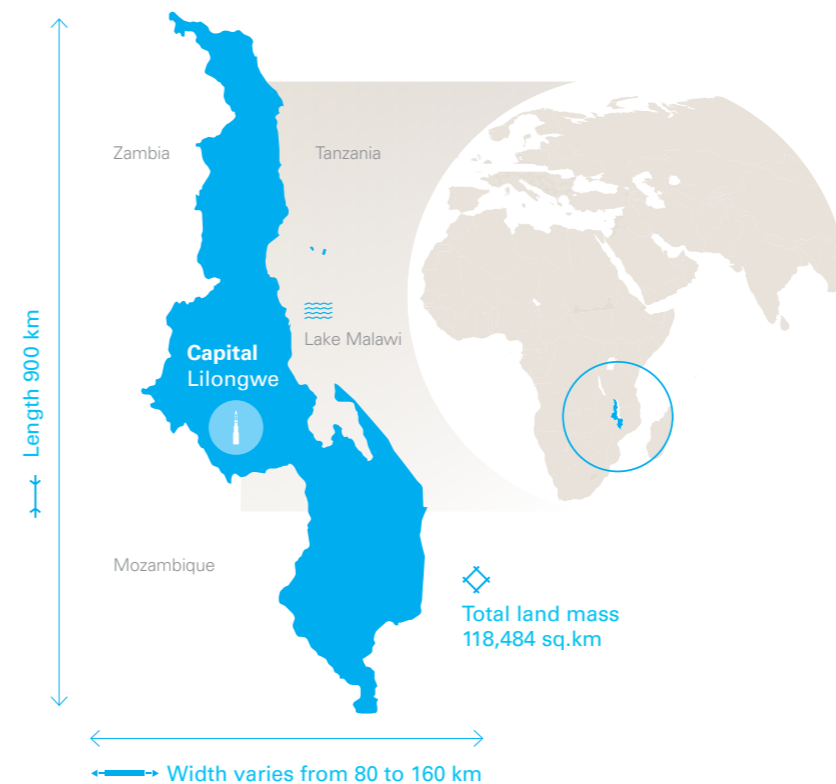
# UNICEF

**Delivering Results for  
Children in Malawi**

# Malawi, the warm heart of Africa

Malawi is a small and beautiful country in south-central Africa. It is divided into three administrative regions: south, central and north. The regions are further subdivided into 28 districts. The Southern Region is the most densely populated, while the Northern Region is the least populated.

Malawi has a remarkable range of geographical features, including mountains, lakes, rivers, woodlands, rainforests and open savannah. Most of its eastern border is formed by Lake Malawi, the third largest in Africa and one of the deepest in the world. The capital city of Malawi is Lilongwe and the main commercial city is Blantyre.





## Country Snapshot

### Population



**3**  
regions  
Northern,  
Central and  
Southern



**28**  
administrative  
districts

### Language

English  
official

Chichewa

### Religion

**77%** Christianity  
**14%** Islam



Multiparty  
democracy  
since 1994



Gained  
independence  
from the United  
Kingdom in 1964

Malawi's rapid population growth is expected to double by 2038. The main ethnic groups are the Chewa, Nyanja and Ngoni in the Southern and Central regions; the Yao, Lomwe and Sena in the Eastern and Southern Region; and the Tumbuka, Tonga and the Nkhonde in the Northern Region.

Religion plays a strong role in the country where religious and traditional leaders are well respected and as such any activity taking place under their jurisdiction requires their sanction.

Malawi is, generally, a peaceful country and has had stable governments since independence in 1964. One-party rule ended in 1993; since then multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections have been held every five years.

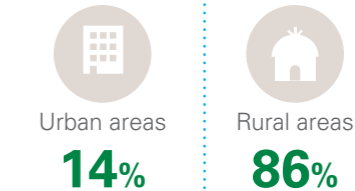
Malawi's development challenges are multi-pronged, including vulnerability to external shocks such as weather and health. Over 80 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, and only 11 per cent have access to electricity.

## People of Malawi

### Average life expectancy



### Population by areas



Total population  
living with AIDS  
**1 million**

Adult literacy rate  
**62%**

Total population with  
access to electricity **11.2%**

Total population with access  
to the Internet **13.7%**

Total population  
(from age 5)  
living with some  
form of disability

**10%**

# Socioeconomic situation of Malawi



**Human development index**

**170**  
out of 188 countries

**Population below the poverty line** (2015-2016)



**71%**

\$1.90/day **International**

**51%**

MK 37,002/year **National**



**Ranked**

**16**

on the **environmental vulnerability index** (high-level)

**Corruption Perceptions Index** 2019



Score  
**31/100**



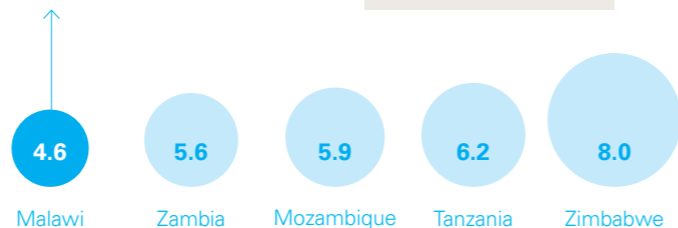
Rank  
**123/180**

**GDP Growth Rate in Malawi**

10 year average GDP growth rate (2009 – 2018) in Malawi vs. neighbouring countries



Malawi GDP per capita US\$ 367  
2019 estimate



Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite making significant economic and structural reforms to sustain economic growth, with about 51 per cent of Malawians living below the national poverty line and about 20 per cent below the extreme poverty line. The economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, employing nearly 80 per cent of the population, and it is vulnerable to external shocks, particularly climatic.

The poverty gap, or the additional annual consumption that it would take to bring an average household out of poverty is at 16.8 per cent.

Infrastructure development, the manufacturing base, and adoption of new technology are low, and corruption levels remain high with Transparency International ranking Malawi at 123/180 economies in 2019.

The annual growth rate of real GDP slightly increased from 3.3 per cent in 2015 to 4 per cent in 2018 towards 7 per cent 2030 target.



# Situation of Children in Malawi

Young people make up the largest and fastest-growing proportion of the general population in Malawi. Children below 18 years account for about half of its total population.

Over the past few decades, Malawi has made remarkable progress towards child wellbeing. There have been significant declines in maternal and under-5 mortality rates, stunting has reduced, and percentage of women giving birth in a facility increased significantly. More than 12 million Malawians have access to basic water services. The net enrollment rate for primary school is currently 90 per cent, one of the highest in the region.

## Children in Malawi

**49%** of the population in Malawi are children



**2.5 million** are **under** the age of **5**



**8.8 million** are **under** the age of **18**

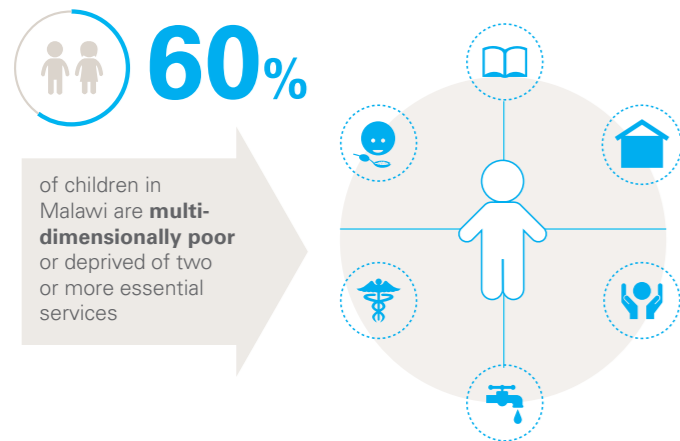


About **1.3 million** children are orphans



## Situation of Children in Malawi

Despite significant progress in the past two decades, huge gaps remain to meet the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030





# Health

## Maternal deaths declined

from 1,100 in 2000 to 439 per 100,000 live births in 2015.



Yet, maternal mortality in Malawi is among the highest in the world

Skilled birth attendance dropped to 75% from about 90% in 2019, due to people avoiding health facilities fearing COVID-19.



Only 74% of children have access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) compared to 79% for adults



**90%**

vaccination coverage was recorded nationally for five consecutive years (2008–2012), with every district having achieved at least 80% coverage.

Challenges include ensuring that children have adequate vaccines and receive the full schedule of immunizations.

**Under-five mortality** dropped from 232 in 1990 to 55 per 1,000 live births in 2016, a remarkable decline.

**However, about 40,000 children under the age of 5 still die every year from preventable diseases**



malaria  
**7%**



diarrhea  
**8%**



pneumonia  
**14%**



neonatal causes  
**43%**

**of these**

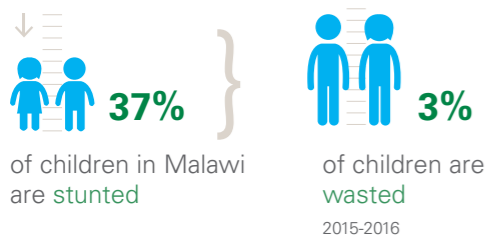
**30%** living with HIV who are not on ART will die before their first birthday while 50% by their second birthday.

**31%** of HIV-exposed infants are diagnosed within the first three months of life.



# Nutrition

 Despite significant reduction in chronic malnutrition

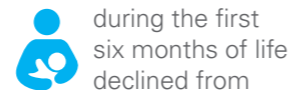



## Only

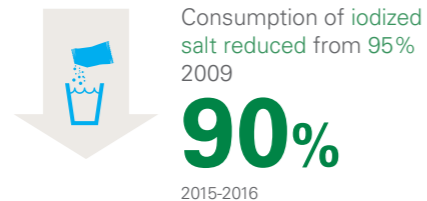
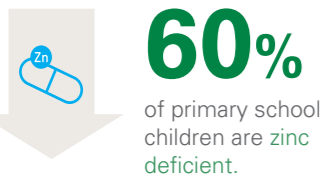


of children aged 6-23 months consume an adequate diet in Malawi.

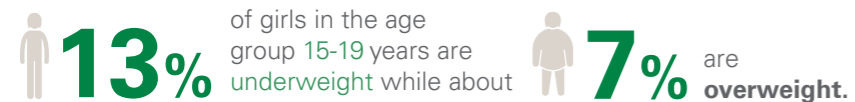
## Exclusive breastfeeding



 Affecting their growth and wellbeing and, on a wider scale, has implications for the country's long-term development.



## Almost





## Education



**48%**

of children in Malawi accessed early childhood education (ECD) and services nationally.

A 2011-15 study



Free primary education has contributed to

**90%**

of primary school age children accessing primary education, **but only**



complete their primary education.



Many children are unable to read or write by the end of standard 4.

Only about 1% of the poorest girls and boys complete secondary school.

Girls are more likely to drop out before secondary school, confirmed by a gender parity index of 0.88 in standard 8.



### Each Year thousands

of girls drop out of school due to pregnancy or marriage. Reintegrating pregnant adolescents and teen mothers into schools is challenging.



Only **16%**



of secondary school-age learners enter secondary school

and only **24%**



of new entrants in the last grade of secondary school complete their secondary education.

About **4%**



of children in the poorest quintile attend secondary school

**42%**

in the richest quintile

compared to



## Water, sanitation and hygiene



**About 70%**

of Malawians benefit from basic water access,



**yet only 24%**

have access to basic sanitation.



**8%**

Hand washing with soap is **very low** at just 10% escalating the incidence of waterborne diseases.

About **45%**

of the traditional water systems in Malawi are reported to be non-functional.



**7%** of under-5 deaths are caused by waterborne diseases



such as diarrhoea, constituting it as the second highest killer of children in Malawi.



Climate induced crisis are one of the main causes of non-functionality of water and sanitation services in Malawi.

In rural areas **37%** of households spend



**30 minutes or more** obtaining their drinking water

in comparison to

**13%** in urban areas.

# Child protection



1 in 5 girls



1 in 7 boys

experienced at least one incident of **sexual abuse** before the age of 18 in Malawi.



of all females and males under 18 experienced **corporal punishment**.



Only 37%

of children **under-5** are registered



Over 80%

of under-5 children do not have birth registration certificate



of girls are **married before age 18**, one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world.



In 2015, marriage was said to account for **of school dropouts**



making it the third most common reason for girls dropping out of secondary school after school fees (27%) and pregnancy (27%).

## Age 10

is the revised age of criminal responsibility which is below the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's minimum recommendation 12 years.

Adolescent children in Malawi are subjected to **economic and labour exploitation**, while some are trafficked within and outside the country for exploitation.



Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with 47 per cent of girls getting married before age 18. In 2020, with Malawi shutting down schools as one of the preventive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, some 13,000 cases of child marriage were recorded, according to the government. At the same time, teenage pregnancies increased by 11 per cent compared to the same period in 2019.





# Who we are

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents –and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we do whatever it takes to help children survive, thrive and fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

**And we never give up.**



**A unique experience** UNICEF works day in and day out, in some of the world's toughest places, to save and improve children's health, nutrition, education and protection –constantly building up our ability to apply the best solution to each situation.



**Innovative** UNICEF has pioneered and scaled up simple but high-impact interventions for decades – from the distribution of pasteurized milk in its early years to the use of mobile phones to monitor the health and nutrition of children in remote regions today.



**A long-term presence worldwide** UNICEF reaches more children and young people than any other international organization. Our local presence in almost every country enables us to take successful approaches from one place and adapt them elsewhere, driving results at a global scale.



**Impartial and politically neutral** UNICEF was established in the aftermath of World War II to help children whose lives and futures were at risk, no matter which sides their country was on. Because we don't take sides – except with children and young people themselves – we reach them in places where others cannot go.

## UNICEF in Malawi

UNICEF's work in Malawi started in 1964. With over 50 years of service, we are one of the longest-serving international organizations in the country. From 35 staff in 1992, UNICEF currently employs more than 200 experienced, proficient, and dedicated individuals.



In 1993, women wait with their children to be vaccinated, at a UNICEF-assisted health centre in the Ntchisi area, near Lilongwe, the capital.

## What we do

UNICEF supports the Government of Malawi to meet its commitment to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights in line with international conventions and standards.

[ Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III, 2017 –2022 ]

## Our vision

For all girls and boys in Malawi, especially the most disadvantaged and deprived, to realize their rights.

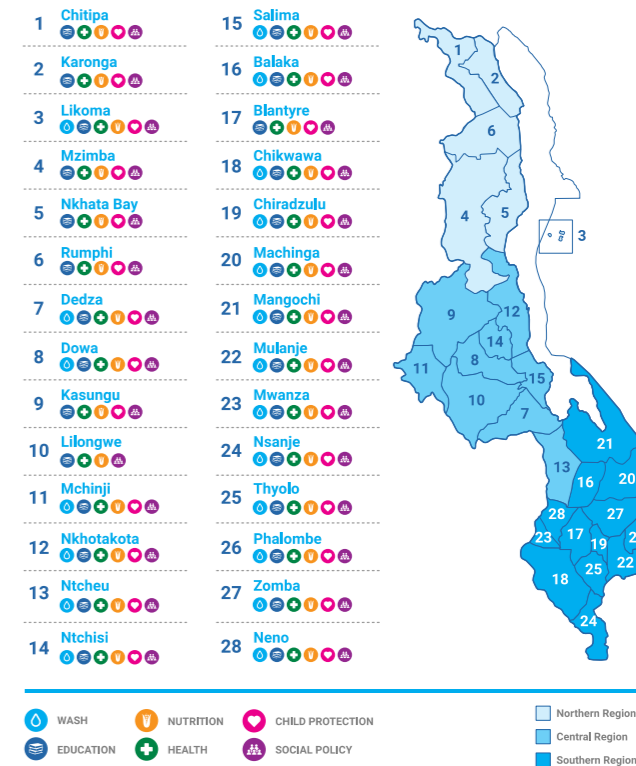
[ UNICEF Malawi Country Programme 2019 – 2023 ]



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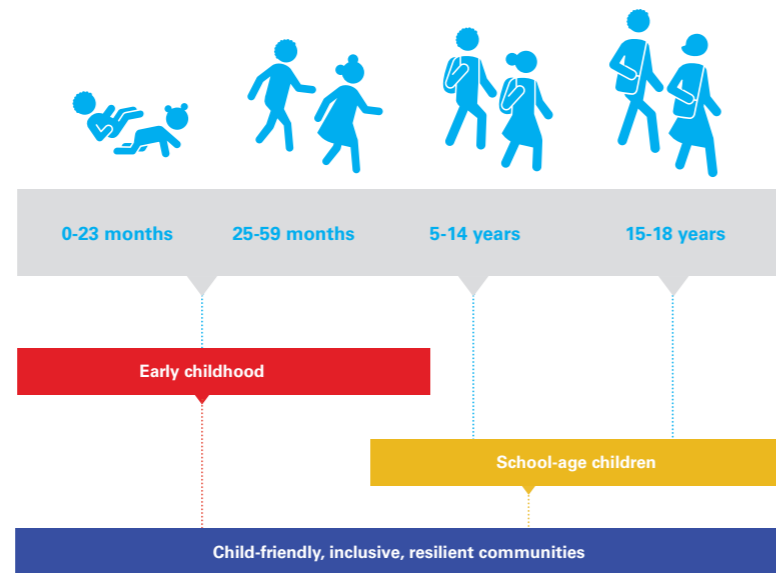
The country programme aligns with the national priorities articulated in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III, 2017-2022, which guides the Government's efforts to transform Malawi into a productive, competitive and resilient nation, progressively realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa 2063 vision of prosperity, well-being, unity and integration.

## Where we work





## The Life Cycle Approach



In Malawi, UNICEF employs an innovative country programme design focusing on the “life cycle” approach and service delivery platforms.

This pillar-approach is designed to ensure programming makes the greatest impact during the key windows of opportunity of a child’s life.

To support young children in their first 1,000 days, the early childhood pillar focuses on the importance of responsive parenting as UNICEF works with the Government of Malawi and other partners to scale up work on maternal, newborn and child health. Under the pillar dedicated to school-age children, UNICEF works to improve learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy, with a focus on girls and adolescents. Under the pillar covering child-friendly communities, UNICEF works to empower communities to practice positive social behaviours and become more resilient to climate change and economic shocks.







05

# Early Childhood Development

### Every child survives and thrives

UNICEF and partners are working together to ensure that girls and boys aged 0 to 5 years in targeted districts benefit from early caring, nurturing, and learning through integrated and high-impact interventions.

## Interventions



This means ensuring that young children under the age of five are:

- 01 **Vaccinated** across Malawi including hard-to-reach places
- 02 **Well-nurtured** to prevent all forms of malnutrition
- 03 Benefiting from inclusive, resilient and sustainable **health care services and facilities**
- 04 Growing in a community that **practice healthy behaviour**
- 05 Growing with **the right food, stimulation and care** and in a community-based childcare centres for the best potential start in life



06

# School-age Children

## Every child learns

UNICEF is on the ground with partners to ensure that school-age girls and boys, especially early adolescents (10 to 14 years) in targeted districts, achieve essential life skills and learning outcomes, are safe from exploitation, harmful practices and violence and benefit from integrated social services.

## Interventions



This means ensuring that school-age children in Malawi are:

01

Learning foundational life skills in safe Primary Schools

02

Accessing quality education and completing Secondary Schools with enhanced learning outcomes

03

Getting complimentary basic education and alternative, non-formal, second-chance learning, especially for those who are out of school and are teenage mothers

04

Accessing quality health, nutrition, child protection and water sanitation and hygiene services including menstrual hygiene management in their schools

05

Enjoying safe and non-violent school environment

05

Getting access to HIV testing and retention in care

05

Informed and empowered to stop child marriage

05

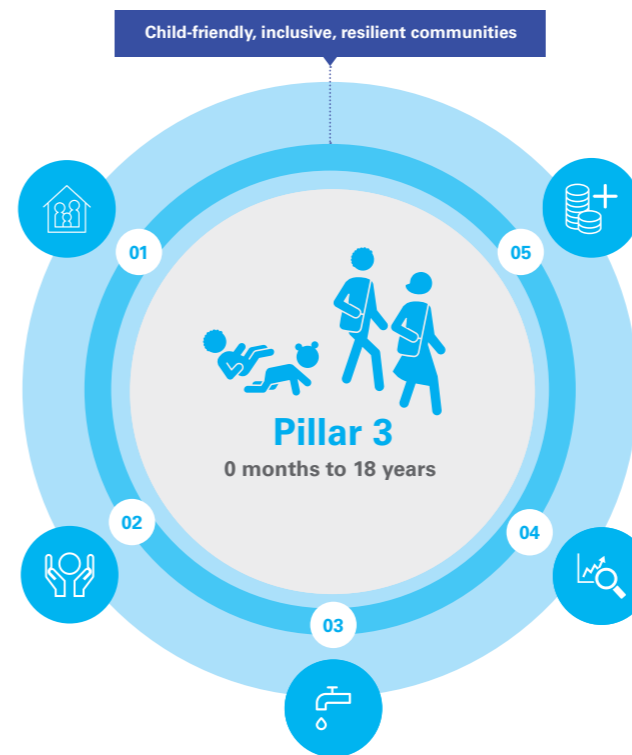
Becoming agents of change in their schools and communities including on environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation

# Child-friendly inclusive, resilient communities

## Every child grows up to their full

UNICEF is committed to helping build a resilient, inclusive and child-and environmental-friendly communities that enable girls and boys to grow up to their full potential.

## Interventions



This means ensuring that all girls and boys in Malawi are:

01

Growing in resilient households and communities that are prepared for climate and economic shocks – thanks to a shock-sensitive national social protection system that can address the needs of the poor and vulnerable across the life-cycle.

02

Safe from exploitation, harmful practices and violence through child protection-friendly services across home, community, schools, health facility and juvenile justice settings

03

Accessing climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services at home, school, community and health facilities

04

Growing in a child-friendly, inclusive community that is well-informed and against harmful practices and social norms necessary for them to survive and thrive

05

Benefiting from decentralized social services and adequately funded social sectors

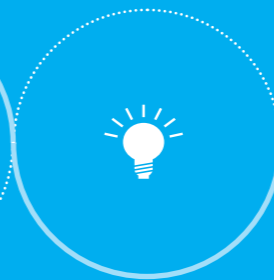


# Ensuring Programme Effectiveness to Deliver Better Results for Children

Dedicated experts and professionals in UNICEF Malawi work extensively to ensure efficient, effective and quality delivery of results for children by supporting the realization of the programmatic goals of UNICEF in Malawi.



Through systematic **monitoring mechanisms**, bottlenecks and barriers are continuously identified, and solutions developed to make corrective adjustments in programming throughout the programme cycle.



**Innovations in programming** are applied to chart new pathways to fill development gaps, collect data and reach remote populations.



Evidence-based **advocacy**, public and private **partnerships** and external **communications** are consistently employed to drive change by winning the support of decision-makers and the wider public calling for them to take meaningful actions for of children in the country.



Strengthen programming through cutting-edge **data, research and evaluation** mainly by generating evidence designed to inform and improve interventions, ultimately helping to improve the lives of children in Malawi.



The **operations** function ensures the effective and efficient achievement of organizational results for children by enabling **management excellence approaches and the optimization of Organizational resources**.

## Emergency Response in Malawi

Malawi is prone to natural disasters and climatic shocks, such as severe drought and floods, and disease outbreaks with cholera being the most frequent. Therefore, resilience building, including risk-informed programming and emergency preparedness and response, will continue to be a key component of UNICEF's work in the country.

Guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF Malawi has been committed to a strategic, coordinated and effective response to humanitarian emergencies in Malawi for decades. With its dual humanitarian and development mandate and strong field presence,

UNICEF has a strong comparative advantage in addressing the humanitarian needs of children in Malawi. This is accomplished by working in close cooperation with the government and partners to deliver the services through multi-sectoral responses and ensuring that the needs of the affected population are addressed holistically.

**COVID-19: Supporting the National Response** From the beginning, UNICEF has been supporting the Government of Malawi to strengthen its COVID-19 national response activities in the country. UNICEF is also working with other partners to ensure preventative actions in communities across Malawi with risk communication, providing handwashing supplies, hygiene and medical kits to health facilities, monitoring the impact of the outbreak to support continuity of care, education and social services, and the procurement and supply of vaccines and immunization supplies.



# Who do we work with

UNICEF recognizes the power of concerted action and the importance of partnerships in co-creating and implementing sustainable solutions. We are inclusive – empowering and supporting others in our mutual efforts to achieve positive change.

Government  
Civil Society  
Organizations

Academia  
Knowledge Partners  
Youth groups  
Media



UN Global  
Programme  
Partners

Public and  
Private donors

UNICEF Malawi works closely with other **United Nations (UN) agencies in the country** to deliver results for children through the UN Joint Annual Work Plans. UNICEF participates in eight out of twelve joint UN programmes in Malawi. UNICEF also works with various national and international partners who continue to support our efforts to deliver better results for children in Malawi.

You help  
us make a  
difference in  
young lives.

# Zikomo!



# Thank you

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from the  
UNICEF  
MALAWI  
team!

UNICEF Malawi PO Box 30375  
Lilongwe, Malawi.  
Tel: +265 (0)1 770 770  
Email: lilongwe@unicef.org

[www.unicef.org/malawi](http://www.unicef.org/malawi)

For every child  
Whoever she is.  
Wherever he lives.  
Every child deserves a childhood.  
A future.  
A fair chance.  
That's why UNICEF is there.  
For each and every child.  
Working day in and day out.  
In 190 countries and territories.  
Reaching the hardest to reach.  
The furthest from help.  
The most excluded.  
It's why we stay to the end.  
And never give up.

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