



UNITED NATIONS
MALAWI



Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Delivering Results Together



Expanded DaO Funding Window



UN PARTICIPATING AGENCIES



Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGYWs	Adolescents Girls and Young Women
ANC	Antenatal Care
ASRHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
BTS	Breaking the Silence
CBFs	Community-Based Facilitators
MPTF	Multi Partner Trust Fund
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CUCI	COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention
DIPs	District Implementation Plans
DPs	Development Partners
DSWOs	District Social Welfare Officers
EHIN	Electronic Health Information Network
EMONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
ETP	Ending Teenage Pregnancy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoM	Government of Malawi
GRM	Grievance and Redress Mechanisms
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
HSAAs	Health Surveillance Assistants
CHIS	Community Health Information System
IDSR	Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response
IDSR	Integrated Diseases Surveillance and Response
IE	Inclusive Education
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
JP	Joint Program
JPGE	UN Joint Program on Girls' Education
KUHES	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAITAG	Malawi Immunization Technical Advisory Group
MIP-1	Malawi 2063 First 10-year Implementation Plan (2021-2030)
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare
MoH	Ministry of Health
MP4R	Malawi Partnership for Resilience Joint Programme
MPDSR	Maternal Death Surveillance and Response

MTs	Master Trainers
MW2063	Malawi 2063
NEEF	National Economic Empowerment Fund
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
OC	Operational Committee
OHSP	One Health Surveillance Platform
OHSP	One Health Surveillance Platform
PCC	Parent-Child Communication
PICSA	Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PROSPER	Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
SC	Steering Committee
SCTP	Social Cash-Transfer Program
MW SDG-AF	Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHIMMER	Strengthening Humanitarian Information in Malawi for Enhanced Response
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SSSP	Shock-Sensitive Social Protection
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDS	UN development system
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	UN Sustainable Development Group
UW-HSS	Umoyo Wathu Health Systems Strengthening Joint Program
WASH	Water and Sanitation
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
YFHS	Youth Friendly Health Services

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 Sustainable Development Agenda. To accomplish this, the General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 72/279 on 31 May 2018 and agreed to a various reform to align with the updated UNDS resolution. The resolution, informally known as the 'UN Reform', supported the UN Secretary-General António Guterres' call for a "Funding Compact" between the UN system and Member States to address UNDS funding patterns (including a widening gap between core and non-core resources), and ensure a more stable funding base to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The Funding Compact is a non-binding agreement based on voluntary commitments by Member States and UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) entities to achieve 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 this agreement, Member States have committed to align their funding with the requirements set by UNSDG entities to increase their core resources to a level of at least 30% by 2023 through multi-year and flexible contributions; and by doubling the resources channeled through inter-agency pooled funds for development. In return, UNSDG entities have committed to accelerating results by jointly working with countries towards achieving common objectives and improving transparency through reporting on needs, resources, results and impacts with the target of increasing efficiency and coherence. The Funding Compact was adopted on July 2019 and its implementation is guided by ten distinct parameters which enable the required shift in country level funding development activities by UN Member States and UN Country Teams, together with Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs), and other multilateral contributors.

With the adoption of the Funding Compact, Member States have requested the UN development system to do more with the inter-agency pooled funding to bring all UN agencies together through strengthening coherence, reducing fragmentation, broadening the donor base, allowing risk sharing with partners, and to jointly tackle multi-dimensional challenges with comprehensive, innovative solutions. While the UN has worked through pooled funds for over a decade in diverse settings and different applications, including standalone joint programs, a new generation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF)¹ will offer an excellent opportunity to further scale and improve efficiency and effectiveness².

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 program 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

The Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund (MW SDF AF) was established by the UN in Malawi to implement the recommendations of the QCPR. This Fund improves the quality of non-core resources to help the UNDS support the Government of Malawi in achieving the SDGs by supporting priorities related to the impact on national engagement through joint implementation. The Fund complements other funds by providing targeted resources for multi-agency initiatives that strengthen national capacities for integrated policy, developing the national SDG financing ecosystem, implementing SDG programming and investments, and ensuring result-oriented effective and sustainable development on national and sub-national levels.

1.2 The Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund

Established on December 2018 the Fund is a financing coordination mechanism for the Government of Malawi (GoM), Development Partners (DPs), and the United Nations (UN) to agree on joint priorities to mobilize resources for key interventions in support of the SDGs and related national priorities. It represents the commitment of its stakeholders to uphold the pledge of leaving no one behind, a principle 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-sectorial areas where the UN has a comparative advantage in joint implementations. The focus of the Fund is the mobilization, financing coordination and co-financing of catalytic interventions in support of the SDGs.

The MW SDG-AF aim in enabling greater synergies and coherence in cross-sectorial SDG priorities by emphasizing collective partnerships, predictable funding, innovative and transformative results; transitioning from fragmented to strategic planning, improved coordination; rapid responses to national priorities, and leveraging on the added value of UN entities in Malawi.

The Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund's first year of implementation in 2019, focused on transitioning from the previous coordinating financing mechanism³. In 2020 during the second year of implementation, 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, programs, and of resource mobilization. The years 2021, 2022 and 2023 focused more on portfolio consolidation and enhancement. The Fund focused more on implementation of approved joint programs and mobilizing resources for improved joint programs to sustain UN's approach towards supporting Malawi's progress towards SDGs goals.

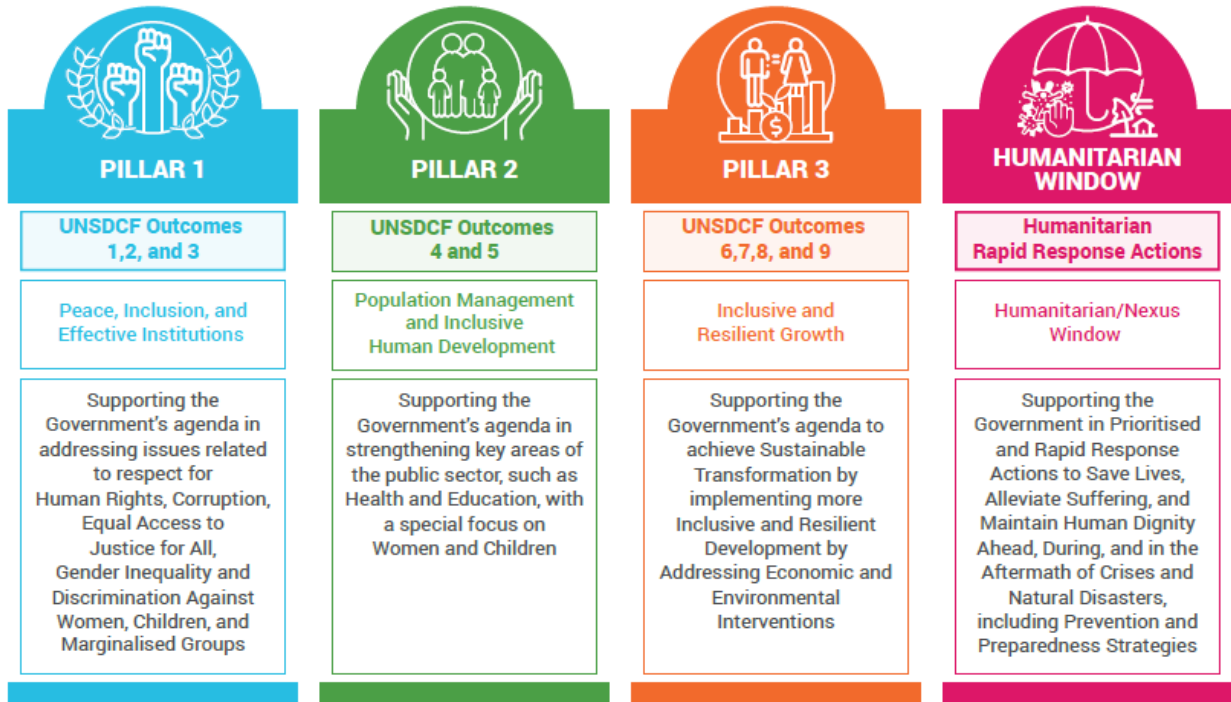
The initial duration of the Fund was five years – from December 2018 to December 2023. In 2022 the Fund Steering Committee approved an extension up to December 2027, as to align with the forthcoming UNSDCF. The fund extension was operationalized in September 2023. The main aim of the extension is to allow Joint Programmes whose activities were envisaged to go beyond the initial end date of the Fund (December 2023) to come to a natural conclusion.

1.3 Operation of the Fund

1.3.1 Structure of the Fund

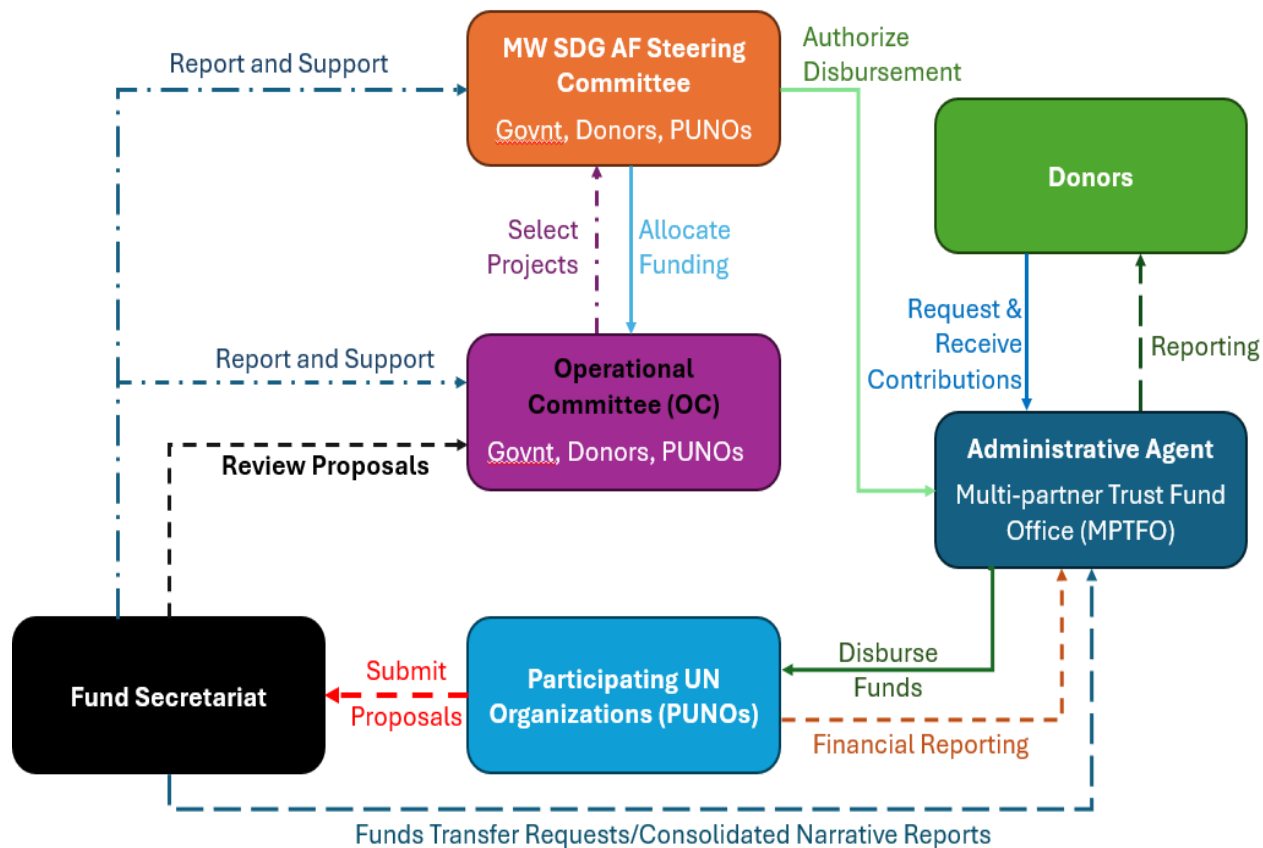
³ The One Fund, established in 2009. Under the leadership of the Government of Malawi, the One Fund supported coherent resource mobilization allocation and disbursement of donor resources. The One Fund closed on December 2018.

The structure of the Fund is aligned to the key outcome areas of the 2019-2023 UNSDCF and has three thematic windows (that are aligned with the pillars of the UNSDCF and related outcomes), and one ad-hoc window as demonstrated in the diagram below:



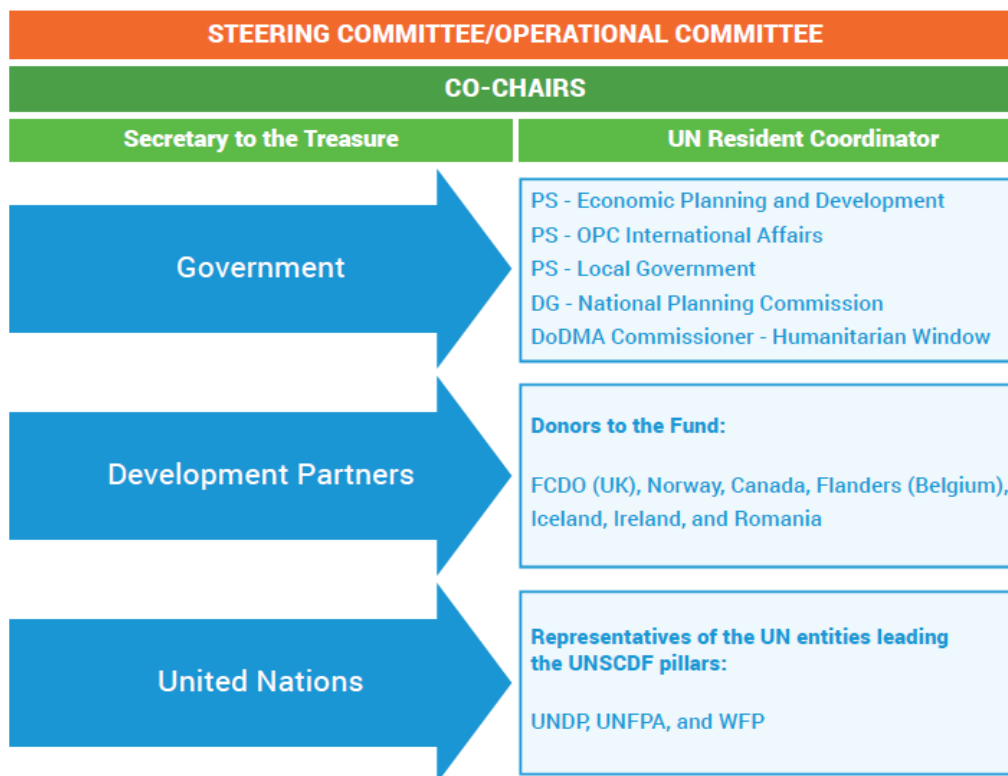
1.3.2 Governance of the Fund

The governance of the Fund has three levels: decision-making, oversight, and coordination (Steering Committee, Operational Committee and Secretariat of the Fund), design and administration (MPTF Office), and implementation (Participating UN Organizations). Diagram below demonstrates the levels of governance.



- i. **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and performs oversight of the Fund. The SC is the highest decision-making body of the Fund, and it makes decisions by consensus.
- ii. **Operational Committee:** The Operational Committee (OC) is the authority in charge of performing technical reviews and initial endorsement of projects and programs submitted to the Fund. The OC is also in charge of reviewing and approving requests for changes (scope, budget) to programs/projects in implementation that are submitted to the Fund for consideration. The UN Agencies will designate thematic experts for peer review of proposals to help ensure the programs' technical quality of the proposals submitted for endorsement.
- iii. **Fund Secretariat:** The Fund Secretariat, hosted in the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, is set up to support the Fund's operational functioning. The Secretariat provides technical, management, and administrative support to the Steering and Operational Committees and is responsible for organizing the Fund's processes related to program review, approval, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

The diagram below highlights the overall composition of the governance structures under the Fund.



As implementation of the MW SDF AF continues to allow ongoing Joint Programmes to reach a natural conclusion, processes are underway to establish a another fund that will be aligned to the new 2024-2028 UNSDCF that reflects the ambitious nature of the global development goals and the need to move from funding to financing of sustainable development, and towards actions that can accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda in the country.

Overall, the new Fund will aim to complement other resources already in implementation by i) providing targeted resources for multi-agency initiatives that strengthen national capacities for integrated policy; ii) developing the country’s SDG financing ecosystem; iii) implementing catalytic SDG programming and investments; and iv) ensuring effective and sustainable development results at national and sub-national levels.

1.4 Cross Cutting Approaches

To ensure the Fund’s goal to enable transformative changes through tailored and specific actions to achieve the goals of SDGs, the Fund now prioritizes interventions that include cross-cutting approaches to include a Human Rights Based approach that emphasizes the empowerment of women and youth. The Fund has a cross-cutting priority to ensure no environmental damage in any of its interventions. These approaches are incorporated and evaluated in each program according to the characteristics of each intervention.

The Fund ensures the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women through their participation in decision-making and guarantees the protection of women and girls from all forms of

violence and aims to allocate a minimum of 30% of its resources to related activities. The Fund also integrates a gender-sensitive approach throughout all phases of the project, from formulation to implementation and evaluation.

2. Operating Environment and Results of the Fund in 2023

2.1 Overview of Country Context in 2023

In March 2023, over 2,260,000 people were affected by Tropical Cyclone Freddy, displacing more than 659,000. At least 56% of the affected are children, and 7.2% are persons with disabilities.⁴ The total recovery and reconstruction cost is estimated at USD 764 million, while the total disaster effect is USD 546.5 million. Malawi's recovery from the impact of multiple shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple climate related shocks, public health outbreaks and economic shocks, remains slow due to longstanding structural challenges, minimal economic transformation and diversification characterized by heavy reliance on subsistence and rain-fed agriculture, underdeveloped tourism, extractive and manufacturing industries, and narrow financial markets limit the country's growth potential.

The country faced significant challenges in 2023, with growth decelerating to 1.5 percent from the initial 2.7 percent projected growth. Tropical Cyclone Freddy negatively impacted agricultural output and other economic sectors of the economy in 2023. In addition, foreign exchange shortages impacted the availability of inputs, weighing down growth. Meanwhile, the restoration of energy production at the Kapichira hydroelectric power plant led to improved access to electricity for industry and services sectors. The outlook for 2024 and 2025 is fairly optimistic, with expected growth rates of 3.2 percent and 4.8 percent, respectively. This positive trajectory is attributed to improved availability of foreign exchange and significant outputs from large-scale mega-farms and anticipated growth in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, information and communication, and accommodation and food services. However, the headwinds to the outlook remain significant. The World Bank has already scaled down Malawi annual growth forecast for 2024 to 2.8 percent due to elevated cost of living, high debt burden and interest rates, heightened financing needs, increased frequency, and intensity of adverse weather conditions with the projected El Nino effect.

2.2 The Fund's programs in 2023

The Fund has been instrumental for implementing the UN Reform and advancing more and better joint programming to boost UN relevance. The coordination efforts among participating UN agencies have accelerated the progress towards the achievement of the SDG, particularly SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG4 (Quality Education), SDG5 (Gender Equality). Seven contributors- **Belgium, Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Romania, United Kingdom, along with UNICEF, Delivering Results Together and Expanded DaO Funding Window** made contributions to the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund in support of Malawi's development priorities.

The Fund's 2023 portfolio had 11 ongoing projects including a new Joint Programme that was approved in late 2023 under the Humanitarian Window. The new initiative is entitled - *Support Towards Durable*

⁴ Office of the President and Cabinet – Department of Disaster Management Affairs (March 2023), "Tropical Cyclone Freddy Emergency Response Plan"

Solutions for People Displaced by Tropical Cyclone Freddy, aims to provide lifesaving assistance to persons who remain displaced and assist 200 families to attain solutions by supporting their planned, voluntary, and dignified relocation into safer areas, contributing to their recovery and to build their resilience to future climatic shocks. The full list of projects under the Fund can be accessed on the MPTFO partner's gateway.⁵

PROMOTING MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH

The UN Joint Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE) was launched in 2014 with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The programme is supporting school aged girls, boys and adolescent (especially the most vulnerable) in Malawi to benefit from quality education to improve their life opportunities. The Programme promotes a multi-sectoral approach addressing socio economic, cultural, health, nutrition and gender barriers. It adopts gender transformative approach, maintaining a focus on girls but ensuring the needs of boys are addressed. (The purpose of JPGE III (2021-2024) is to strengthen and consolidate the gains made in the previous phases, by reinforcing the focus on quality of learning to ensure inclusive and equitable access to education, while promoting sustainable solutions.



Nkhula Primary School Feeding Programme. UN Malawi/2023/Phunyanya

2.4 Key Results for 2023

This section of the report presents the actions, relevant outputs and outcomes of each program implemented in 2023 made possible with funding from various donors through the MW SDG-AF, highlighting key areas of intervention and the changes achieved or expected from the initiative. Aside from the coordination, the results of the MW SDG-AF program have contributed to the achievement of Malawi's key priority areas, including a dedicated outcome on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The eight joint program that were implemented in 2023 with support from the MW SDG AF to ensure strengthened UN coherence, coordination and collaboration in Malawi, are highlighted below.

2.4.1 Malawi Partnership for Resilience (MP4R/PROSPER) -

Duration 2019-2023

⁵ <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/mw200>

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:	Budget USD \$ 53,548,121
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

Key areas of intervention			
Diversified agricultural production and nutrition	Access to productive resources	Reduce vulnerability and exposure of communities to risk	Increase resilience programming

The MP4R is part of a greater consortium called PROSPER – Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER). PROSPER is a multi-stakeholder resilience program scheduled to run from 2019-2024 and is currently implemented by a joint UN consortium consisting of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office in Malawi, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Children’s Fund, and the United Nations World Food Program in the districts of Balaka, Chikwawa, Mangochi, and Phalombe.

In the year 2023, the focus of the Joint Programme has been to develop exit strategies for the interventions ahead of its closure in December 2023. As such, UN partners (FAO, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP) in the PROSPER project developed joint work plans which also included joint assessments to build documents and evidence of the impact of the project. Moreover, UN partners developed a joint budget to enable the continuation of activities in the year including business grants for groups in business development, conditional cash transfers to households in asset creation activities and lean season top ups to affected households.

2.4.1.1 Overall results

- i. **Intensified and diversified agricultural production and improved nutrition for targeted vulnerable communities:** Despite the challenges in delivery this year, the percentage of households implementing Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices improved significantly to 89 percent, a 17 percent improvement on the previous year. The Programme intensified the promotion of climate smart agricultural practices through the season-long Farmer Field School (FFS) training session during the 2022/2023 rain-fed agricultural season. In addition, with the provision of mobility support through bicycles and training materials to Community Based Facilitators (CBFs) in all project locations, the programme maximised the reach to follower farmers with extension services. The Programme managed to train over 2,400 CBFs who are supporting in the provision of extension services under the supervision of the 60 Master Trainers (MTs) also trained under the programme. This led to 92.8 percent of farmers reporting

improvements in extension services received. Finally, the programme was able to significantly increase the number of hectares under irrigation support, achieving 205.81 ha against the target of 117 ha. This was due to the irrigation input support that was provided to farmers who had access to residual moisture and winter farming.

- ii. **Enhanced and inclusive access to the productive resources necessary to develop increased, secure and predictable incomes:** PROSPER continued to deliver support to people in the form of financial services such as village savings and loans which were provided to 30,135 households, 88 percent of which were women-headed, and 2,947 households who received cash payouts after late onset of rains, dry spells and floods destroyed crops during the 2022/2023 growing season.
- iii. **The capacity of vulnerable households and communities in targeted areas were enhanced to withstand shocks and hazards:**
 - a) The programme continued to help 1,065,685 people (against a target of 1,073,281) to cope with the effects of climate change. In addition, the programme is providing matching grants through a competitive process to FFS groups that have managed to come up with sound agribusiness proposals. The grants are meant to catalyse the implementation of income generation activities that are expected to enhance resilience building at both group/community and household levels. During year four, MWK 283,419,152 (approximately USD 166,717) was disbursed under 27 grants in Balaka and Mangochi.
 - b) 10,814 hectares of degraded micro-catchments or watersheds were rehabilitated this year. With the intensification of watershed activities through the FAO contracted service provider, the figure is expected to increase during the annual assessment survey, which accounts for the current underperformance against the target of 12,264 hectares.
 - c) The number of people reached during the lean season response with cash transfers, tripled compared to the previous year, with 409,239 people supported with food and cash assistance in Balaka, Chikwawa and Phalombe.
 - d) Tropical Cyclone Freddy delayed the endline assessment, which focused on both lean season transfers and flood protection (indicators 3.5 to 3.8). Operations for cash plus, lean season response and shock-sensitive social protection such as the unified beneficiary registry and national identification were combined to support preparedness and implementation at all levels (central, district and community). Messages were provided as a package. Savings on the joint operations were used to respond to Tropical Cyclone Freddy.
- iv. **Improved adoption of nutrition practices:** The program continued to provide technical assistance to district councils and national-level structures to enable the Government to take over the implementation of nutrition-sensitive activities. Community-level nutrition interventions such as care group door-to-door visits aimed at improving the feeding practices of infants and young children, maternal nutrition and wellbeing, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as dietary diversification are being continued. PROSPER also supported other traditional social behavior change communication (SBCC) approaches such as songs, theatre, mobile vans, public addressing systems, and cooking demonstrations to increase the coverage of nutrition information, reaching 82,000 people, including school children (56% of whom were girls).

- v. **Improved natural resource management through asset creation and protection linked to food security.** Under food assistance for assets (FFA), PROSPER continued supporting 16,716 households in Balaka and Phalombe Districts with land resource management, forestation, flood control measures and small-scale irrigation, among other activities, to implement integrated watershed management activities. PROSPER partners further promoted climate smart technologies (specifically manure making) in readiness for the 2023/2024 farming season.
- vi. **Increased capacity of national, sub-national and non-state actors to plan, coordinate and monitor resilience programming, including shock-responsive social protection.**
 - a) Under the urban lean season response 2022/23, over 145,000 households received their transfers via the e-payment modality of the national social protection system. This includes over 45,000 households who received their entitlements via mobile money payments thanks to the funds for Know Your Customer process and technical assistance provided under PROSPER.
 - b) The four districts have implemented a functional Disaster Reduction Management Information System. These systems are designed to enhance data collection, analysis, and reporting processes, contributing to more effective programme management and decision-making in various sectors. The successful implementation led to the expansion to another five District Council leading to 9 Councils with a functional DRMIS Disaster Reduction Management Information System.
- vii. **Increased production and use of knowledge and evidence.**
 - a) Supported the finalization of the grievance redress mechanism handbook for roll out under the floods response and to also be used for the 2023/2024 lean season response which PROSPER partners are currently supporting the Government to fundraise for with development partners.
 - b) Under the Cyclone Freddy response, PROSPER provided support to reach over 700,000 people with cash transfers in the most-affected districts of Chikwawa, Mulanje, Nsanje and Phalombe.

2.4.1.3 Challenges and lessons Learned

- i. The prevailing macroeconomic conditions limited the capacity of smallholder farmers to accelerate increased productivity due to the high prices of some agricultural inputs required, such as inorganic fertilizers, chemicals and fuel.
- ii. The impact of Tropical Cyclone Freddy affected the timeliness of the delivery of the lean season transfers and delayed the implementation of some of the targeting processes. Furthermore, the cyclone's impact also caused damage to the assets and livelihoods of smallholder farmers in three of the project's target districts (Chikwawa, Mangochi and Phalombe) limiting their productivity and incomes. The severe flooding caused by Tropical Cyclone Freddy affected the farming activities of 22 FFS groups. For instance, some FFS groups in Chikwawa lost their banana orchards including other field crops such as maize and legumes.

- iii. Joint implementation of the lean season response. Joint teams comprising of line key central-level ministries (MoG, EPD and DoDMA), were formed and engaged in activity-based implementation of the LSR in all the cities and districts supported by UNICEF. This was key as it enhanced coordination and led to improved handling of challenges that arose in the councils during implementation. The joint implementation also supported timely implementation of activities as all officers involved were able to play their roles as per SOP.
- iv. The linkages that have been created between FFS activities and Integrated Watershed Management activities are crucial for building both community and household resilience. For instance, participants of both FFS and IWM activities are benefitting from the restored community forests through additional income-generating activities such as beekeeping.
- v. The Bulk Messaging Software used to send cholera preventive under the urban lean season response program benefitted all households under this project. This was a more innovative, easier and faster method of disseminating information, and it confirmed how social protection systems can be leveraged during humanitarian responses.
- vi. Monitoring data revealed that the adopting the better practices learned from the FFS study plots resulted in a significant increase of yields and produce quality when compared with previous harvest periods when farmers relied on traditional practices. Disaster Risk Management Information Systems was successfully implemented in the four districts, and the government of Malawi has incorporated the Information System in the draft Disaster Management Bill, after realizing the capability of the humanitarian information system that reached people by addressing the full scale of needs due to increasingly intense and overlapping crises.

2.4.2 UN Joint Program 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 \$ 14,034,793
Other Partners:	Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS), Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS), Chancellor College, Christian Health Alliance of Malawi, Banja La Mtsogolo (BLM), Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Staff Development Institute (SDI), Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)	SDGs targets:	SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing SDG 5: Gender equality SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation
Duration	2020-2023		

Key areas of intervention			
Quality of Care	Integration	Resilience	Governance

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

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

2.4.2.1 Overall results

i. Improved Data-use for evidence-based decision making.

- a) **Conducted Data Validation in all reporting health facilities:** Data validation and verification played a critical role in ensuring the accuracy, reliability, and consistency of health facility records. The main objective was to compare the information recorded in reports and registers within each facility to identify any discrepancies, inconsistencies, or data entry errors.
- b) **Conducted Maternal and perinatal death audits and reporting (MPDSR):** Maternal and perinatal death audits and reporting were done on a regular basis in all six districts to Strengthened capacity of PHC facilities in target districts to provide quality health services.

ii. Strengthening mentoring and supervision systems for improved quality of care

- a) Continued supporting Professional Development (CPD) to ensure health workers continuously acquire knowledge professionally. This was done through an online platform for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) which is continuous and self-paced. A total of 576 (304, 272) from all six districts were enrolled in 2023. The CPD is bridging the knowledge and skill gaps in healthcare quality among healthcare workers in order to improve the outcomes of maternal and newborn care. The program supported the MNCH mentorship program for 228 people, an increase of 87.7% compared to only 25 people in 2021. 209 midwives and health cares have also been mentored to ensure quality, comprehensive, and dignified care for women during antenatal care (ANC), labor, and delivery, and postnatal care (PNC).
- b) District Collaborative learning sessions on Quality Improvement were held in five districts (Nsanje, Ntchisi, Kasungu, Mzimba South and Rumphi) to strengthen interventions toward better maternal and newborn health outcomes in the targeted districts. Participants 220 (127M, 93F).
- c) Conducted continuous supportive supervision on Family Planning, integrated Community Case Management, and Youth Friendly Healthy Services. The supervision served as a mentoring and continuous performance improvement assessment tool for trained health worker's capabilities of their respective service delivery skills to provide quality maternal and child health services in the district. The supervision was done at 4 facilities, including Mwazisi, Bolero, Mzokoto, and Mhuju. Mentorship was provided to 17 Mentees (6M, 11F).

- d) Work Improvement Teams committee members in Kasungu, Ntchisi and Mzimba South were mentored on quality issues to equip health workers address deficiencies in the quality of care. Associated factors that contributed to the maternal deaths were healthcare worker factors and administrative factors such as delay in deciding to refer, initial assessment incomplete, inadequate resuscitation, partograph incorrectly used, prolonged observation without action; delay in starting treatment, inadequate monitoring; lack of antibiotics and essential equipment.
- e) Conducted Infection prevention control (IPC) training for health care workers and cleaners on new guidelines. The main goal of the training was to improve awareness and knowledge of health care workers and cleaners on IPC/WASH guidelines being a priority in ensuring safe and quality care. Ultimately improving prevention and reducing disease transmission to people who use health services and those who provide them are especially important during this prolonged Cholera outbreak. Participants Rumph: 11 (5M, 6F) Kasungu: 30 (14M, 16F).

iii. Ensured continuation of essential health services during health outbreaks

- f) Strengthened referral systems: Four mobile teams (each comprising 9 people) were mobilised in Nsanje and Chikwawa districts to meet the health needs of the internally displaced populations due to floods (Cyclone Freddy). 60% of Primary Health Care (PHC) staff were sensitized on referral pathways and community linkages. Operational support provided to all 6 districts for ambulance/vehicle maintenance and fuel to improve referral transportation.
- g) Conducted outreach clinics in hard-to-reach areas to bring integrated health services to hard-to-reach areas monthly which otherwise can't be accessed by routine health-based services. About 1,287 (387M, 900F) people were assessed for Family Planning, ANC, Cervical cancer screening and HIV prevention and treatment services. 3,387 (1,856M, 1,531F) under-fives accessed care and treatment (Immunization, Vit A, growth monitoring and consultation).

ii. Strengthened the capacity of district health authorities in target districts to predict, prepare and respond to health emergencies in a timely manner:

- a) Training On Disease Surveillance Rapid Response: Community health workers briefing on Community Based Surveillance and Response to priority diseases, conditions, and events of public health importance was done in Kasungu. The aim was to strengthen the capacity of the community and health facilities to promote and improve public health surveillance and response in dealing with priority diseases, conditions, and events of public health importance. Participants: 62 (29M, 33F).
- b) Prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse (PSEA) and harassment: Participants in Rumph were equipped with knowledge and skills on PSEA and strengthened the effective monitoring and reporting of PSEA cases. Participants: 30 (17M, 13F).
- c) Conducted inventory of physical assets in all government health facilities: conducted a district-wide asset inventory to list down all assets-furniture and equipment held by Rumph DHSS for purposes of equitable re-distribution. All health facilities in the district were visited.

iii. **Effective coordination, policy implementation and accountability mechanisms in support of quality service delivery of Sexual Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health services in all target districts:**

- a) 2023/24 District Implementation Plan (DIP) development workshop: As part of the DIP development process, the District Health Office conducted a DIP write-up workshop in all UNJP districts to develop the DIP into a strategic document that can be utilized by various stakeholders including the DHMT for resource mobilization.
- b) HCIG (Health Centre Improvement Grants) Training: The training was conducted in all health facilities in Rumphi district to provide knowledge and guidance to the HCMC members on planning for and managing a health centre improvement grant, additionally, the training covered the content of the Health Centre Management Committee (HCMC) manual. Refresher training was also done for HCMC members who had been previously trained. Participants Initial Training: 76 (49M, 27F) Refresher Training: 55 (32M, 23F).

iv. **Strengthened integrated service delivery at district and rural hospitals, primary and community health services.**

The program increased the capacity of health workers (facility and community workers) to provide Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) and Integrated Community Case Management (iCCM) services respectively. Messages on safe motherhood services have reached approximately, 316,000 people in Nsanje and Chikwawa, including Family Planning, Antenatal Care, Obstetric Care, Postnatal Care, Prevention of Mother-to-Child transmission of HIV (STI and HIV control). Messages emphasizing the importance of male involvement in reproductive health issues were also shared. As part of an integrated package, the program improved the availability and access to health services in forty hard-to-reach areas. A total of 1,688 people (353 men and 1,335 women) accessed ANC, cervical cancer screening, HIV testing services, and STI consultations. Vaccination services were provided to 3,186 children (1,375 boys and 1,811 girls) across three districts.

v. **Resilience and health systems strengthening.**

- a) The program continues to support the Ministry of Health in implementing the One Health Surveillance Platform (OHSP), a digital health platform that has improved IDSR weekly and monthly IDSR reporting target of 80% on weekly reporting timeliness. The program also strengthened the capacity of healthcare workers and cleaners from 134 health facilities on infection prevention protocols using the practical WASHFIT tool, which was critical during the prolonged Cholera outbreak that affected all the 29 districts in Malawi.
- b) The program has also been supporting Malawi's new health commodity logistics system, which has reduced stock-out rates, improved inventory management, and ensured that national standards are being met. A human resource functional review of leadership and management was conducted in the Chikwawa district to improve the availability, accessibility, and motivation of health workers. The UNJP has also contributed in improving the use of health information in program planning and management.

vi. **Strengthening health sector planning, budgeting & implementation.**

The program continues to support the sub-national level health sector planning, budgeting, coordination, and implementation, while improving accountability for improved health outcomes at the health facility level. The program specifically supported the DIP and HMIS reviews which contributed to improved health information to guide planning and management, increased the capacity of evidence-based planning and resource management, conducted on-site coaching, increased the capacity of governance structures to execute leadership and governance roles, and contributed to improving the use of health information guide program planning and management.

2.4.2.3 Challenges and lessons learned

- i. The program’s start was delayed primarily due to the multiple revisions, which impacted the program’s scope of work and the alignment of funds. As a result, the thematic scope of the program has been revised multiple times to accommodate the reduced finances, causing the program to become activity focused instead of being strategically focused, which is challenging for a system-strengthening program. Monitoring and evaluating the program outcomes and impacts also became challenging as several activities implemented in the first year were cancelled due to funding issues.
- ii. Due to the program being fragmented, results-based reporting became challenging because tangible results cannot be attributed to the program due to the approach of implementing activities in a disjointed manner.



FCDO Team appreciating the work that the British Government is supporting at Chinthembwe Health Center. Chalusa/WHO/2023

2.4.3 UN Joint Program 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 \$ 37,414,905
Other Partners:	Malawi Girl Guides Association (MAGGA); Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM); Ujamaa – Pamodzi.	SDGs targets:	SDG4 - Quality Education SDG3 - Good Health and Well-being SDG5- Gender Equality SDG2 Zero Hunger SDG17 Partnerships
Duration	March 2021-October 2024		

Key areas of intervention			
Education results	Equity and Inclusiveness	Community Involvement	Sustainability

The program began in 2014 and is now 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 under the umbrella of the Malawi SDGs Acceleration Fund, acknowledging girls’ education as one of the most important SDGs accelerators for the country.

The program promotes a multi-sectorial approach to overcoming socio-economic, cultural, health, nutrition, and gender barriers. It also adopts a gender transformative approach, focusing on girls while also ensuring the needs of boys so that they can become champions for gender equality together.

2.4.3.1 Overall results

- i. The JPGE targeted the enhancement of inclusive quality education through integrated services, achieving remarkable success. All 199 targeted schools met the minimum National Education Standards, focusing on inclusivity for students with special needs, fulfilling 100% of the planned target. Teacher training in inclusive education methods, although slightly below the anticipated figures, still showed substantial achievement with 87.4% of male and 82.3% of female teachers

trained, against a planned target of 1652 males and 1458 females. Encouragingly, the application of diagnostic assessments and structured pedagogy in foundational literacy and numeracy by teachers exceeded expectations, with 116.8% for males and 113.5% for females surpassing the target. Furthermore, all targeted schools provided structured mentorship and coaching for teachers, aligning perfectly with the planned goal. The percentage of primary school-age children who dropout during standard 5 - 8 in the target areas, increased from the baseline that was set at the beginning of 2020 for both intervention and non-intervention school, with consistently higher rates for non-intervention schools.

- ii. The percentage of girls enrolled in targeted schools who have fallen pregnant during the school year has decreased to 1%, surpassing the 2% target set for 2024. The significant reduction, observed as of 2023, indicates the achievement of this indicator across all target schools. This reduction is indicative of the effectiveness of the interventions implemented within the targeted schools. Through digital CSE, access to SRHR information and access to referral services within the schools through the qualified nurse who visits the target schools once a month, access to contraceptives from the Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) facilities, Community-Based Distribution agents (CBDAs), mobile van outreach clinics and stationed health facilities services, the project has successfully mitigated the risk factors contributing to adolescent pregnancies.
- iii. The objective of ensuring a minimum package of integrated services, including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), health and nutrition, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services, and diversified nutritious meals in targeted schools, has been met. The target was to implement these services in 199 schools by 2024. However, by the end of 2023, all targeted schools had successfully integrated JPGE interventions, such as digital Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), provision of life skills, establishment of school clubs, and conducting refresher training for teachers in digital CSE.
- iv. In 2023, a total of 256,216 students, comprising 51% girls and 49% boys, benefitted from diversified and nutritious school meals. As part of the home-grown school feeding initiative, each student received a balanced hot meal daily, crafted from a mix of locally-sourced cereals, legumes, vegetables, tubers, and fruits. These ingredients were procured directly from small-holder farmers organized into groups, ensuring not only the nutritional needs of the students were met but also supporting the local agricultural community.
- v. A total of 6,033 farmers, including 2,478 men and 3,555 women, engaged in the sale of a wide array of food commodities such as grains, roots, tubers, legumes, fruits, and vegetables, generating a total revenue of MWK 4,838,846,507.04. These farmers received comprehensive training in various aspects of agricultural business management. Topics covered included school business management, group leadership and dynamics, record-keeping, post-harvest handling, crop protection, and collective marketing strategies. This training aimed to enhance the quality of their products and improve their competitive edge in bidding for commodity contracts.

- vi. To facilitate discussions on sex, sexuality, and barriers to education among adolescents, the project empowered them with relevant and accurate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) information, including access points for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services. As part of outcome two, the project employed behavior change tools and conducted interviews with 7,600 adolescents, comprising 4,777 in-school and 2,823 out-of-school participants within the project's catchment areas. The findings revealed that 75.2% of girls and boys aged 10-24 exhibited positive behaviors and attitudes towards SRHR in the targeted districts. Moreover, a comparison between in-school and out-of-school participants indicated that a higher percentage of in-school girls (29.2%) and boys (18.1%) demonstrated positive SRHR behaviors compared to their out-of-school counterparts (girls: 15.2%, boys: 12.7%). Overall, the results underscored that both in-school and out-of-school girls demonstrated greater knowledge of SRHR compared to boys. By building on the momentum generated by this achievement, the project will further empower girls to make informed decisions about their reproductive health and well-being, ultimately contributing to their educational attainment and overall empowerment. The target for this indicator is 80% of girls and boys aged 10-24 demonstrated positive behaviors and attitudes towards SRHR annually but in 2024 the project envisions to surpass this annual target.
- vii. The project successfully reached 44,452(89%) in-school girls (30,036) and boys (18,016), enrolled in the life skills program within targeted areas, all of whom completed the program. To enhance data accuracy and timeliness for out-of-school life skills initiatives, the project introduced digital data collection methods for safe space activities. Consequently, the project extended its reach to 23,476 out-of-school girls through safe spaces, with an impressive completion rate of 99.8% (23,418). Among these girls, 20,845 are enrolled in school, while 2,573 are out of school. A further disaggregation of out-of-school girls revealed distinct age brackets, with 62 falling within the 10-14 age range, 808 within the 15-19 category, and 1,703 falling within the 20-24 age bracket. Notably, the majority of out-of-school girls in 2023 belong to the 20-24 age group, constituting 66.2% of the total out-of-school girls reached.

2.4.3.3 Challenges and lessons learned

- a) There are significant delays in opening complaint boxes, resulting in challenges to addressing learners' concerns in a timely manner. Such delays can discourage the use of the complaint mechanism, as users may feel that their grievances are not being addressed promptly. Additionally, the limited number of trained inclusive teachers poses a challenge to the effective delivery of inclusive education. Moreover, the delayed delivery of alternative learning interventions, particularly Functional Literacy programs, is attributed to the inefficiencies within the delivery mechanisms of the Ministry of Youth. These factors collectively impact the effectiveness and accessibility of educational interventions.
- b) In 2023, the prices of essential goods and services were on a continued upward trajectory, Malawi continues to experience a general rise in the prices of essential goods and services as evidenced by the surge in the rate of inflation. During the year, there was devaluation of the local currency by 45 percent which led to increased inflation of both food and non-food items. WFP rigorously

monitored the market conditions and replenished funding for food procurement to maintain the entitlements to school children. Nutrition officers in district councils were also able to advise and work with the schools to adjust and identify substitutes in the menus. In coordination with the ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health, plans are underway to review all the menus across all four districts and align with seasonal food availability within the catchment areas.

- c) On the SRHR front, JPGE districts encounter difficulties with the Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), leading to data not being transmitted to the national level from health facilities. This challenge manifests in two main ways: firstly, the data transmission can be untimely, causing significant delays in data availability. Secondly, there is a concern regarding the overall quality of the data that is transmitted. To address these issues, it is imperative for the agency to commit to initiatives aimed at ensuring the data's accuracy and timeliness.
- d) The initiation of research focused on Teenage Pregnancy has experienced setbacks due to funding delays. This predicament necessitates the granting of a no-cost extension to the consulting firm responsible for the research. Such an extension will allow for the completion of the assignment without additional financial implications, ensuring the thorough and comprehensive execution of the project as planned.
- e) Increased coordination at the district level significantly enhances the delivery of integrated education services, providing a more cohesive and effective educational environment. The Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) program emerges as a vital safety net in times of emergencies as experienced during cyclone Freddy, offering crucial support to communities in need.
- f) Improving access to comprehensive family planning information and services for young people in the districts, the program has effectively leveraged community-based distribution agents (CBDAs). By adopting a door-to-door service delivery model, these agents have successfully engaged a wider youth audience, offering detailed guidance on family planning options while also addressing prevalent myths and misconceptions. This personalized approach has significantly enhanced service uptake.
- g) Additionally, the implementation of weekend youth-targeted outreach clinics has played a pivotal role in extending the program's reach. By organizing gatherings at central locations for multiple youth clubs and networks, the program has facilitated the delivery of integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services and information. This strategy has not only fostered a more inclusive environment but also spurred an increased engagement among the youth, further driving the uptake of these critical services.

Napache, the model school



The United Nations (UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP) are working together with the Government of Malawi under the UN Joint Programme on Girls Education (UN JPGE) to improve access to quality education with support from the government of Norway. The intervention started in 2014 and is implemented in four districts: Dedza, Kasungu, Mangochi and Salima. Napache school in Salima is one of the 189 schools supported under this intervention. Overall, there is a track record of improved indicators in education, nutrition and sexual reproductive health in JPGE supported schools. In Napache specifically, drop-out rates for boys decreased from 10 to 3 percent and transition rate to secondary school increased from 47 to 79 percent.

Ms. Helen Chibwana has been a teacher in Napache school since 2014 and she echoes her joy of how the JPGE has greatly improved education at Napache, *“Since the JPGE started in the in 2017 parents are more interested in their children’s education which is clearly shown from the increased enrolment and attendance in classes. We used to have very few girls in Standard 8, these days we have boys too. In addition, as a young teacher I had to learn to feel respected. I received several trainings through the JPGE to learn better teaching methods, I truly feel empowered.”*

Another highlight of Napache school is the story of Pemphero Karonga who dropped out of school due to unplanned pregnancy. Through the Support from JPGE, she returned to school and was pursuing her secondary school at Ngodzi Secondary School. She had to say this in her own words; *“Thanks to the support of the mothers' group and my family, I would like to become a nurse, so that I can provide for my child. It was difficult to find the motivation to go back to school, because I thought being a mum and having a career are incompatible”. Pemphero is the only child in her family who has reached secondary school level, and she is very proud of this achievement.*

On the nutrition side of the JPGE, Fevester Mbinga is a member of the Mwai Wathu cooperative supplying fruits, veggies and cereals for the daily school meals children get before class at Napache. Who is grateful to the support that the school gives him through the procurement of his products which has greatly boosted his finances, he is dedicated to food diversification so that the children are getting all the needed nutrients.

Finally, Mary Benjere is a single mother of three children enrolled at Napache school. She is one of the volunteer cooks who are usually committed parents who wake up every morning at dawn to prepare school meals before classes. Since the school is using local produce and recipes, it is also an opportunity to promote healthy diets at home.

Overall, there is a track record of improved indicators in Education, nutrition, and sexual reproductive health in JPGE supported schools. In Napache specifically, drop-out rates for boys decreased from 10 to 3 percent and transition rate to secondary school increased from 47 to 79 percent.

2.4.5. Border Districts and Community-Based Conflict prevention and Peace Building in Malawi

Participating UN Agencies:	UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, IOM. UNWOMEN	Geographic scope:	Mangochi and Mulanje
Government Partners:	Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture; Ministry of Homeland Security; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; Ministry of Youth and Sports	Budget:	US\$ 837,312
Other Partners:	Public Affairs Committee non-state actors, including civil society organizations	SDGs targets:	SDG 5 -Gender equality SDG 16 -Peace, justice & strong institutions
Duration	September 2022- August 2023 (Phase 2 in the pipeline)		

The project aims to provide support in two border districts in areas of institutional, professional, and community resources to identify, mitigate, and respond to violent conflict or risk of conflict, including radicalization and terrorism, as well as the potential for Islamic radicalization directly from Mozambique, which plays on existing latent religious tensions at the community level. This includes strengthening border security management and increasing the capacity of the national peace architecture by supporting community networks as well as increasing conflict identification, mitigation, and prevention measures.

Key areas of intervention			
Mitigation	Prevention	Strengthening Border Security Management	Community Involvement

2.4.5.1 Overall Results

- i. Strengthened National Peace Architecture. The program strengthened the technical capacity for monitoring, coordination, and community outreach of DPCs, including linkages between DPCs and MPLCs. Training sessions were conducted at the district and TA level, including gender training to DPUC members during the peacebuilding and conflict prevention training. The programme also supported DPUC members' work in conflict resolution which resulted in DPUC members successfully mediating a community conflict at Cape Maclear in Mangochi.
- ii. Increased the capacity of border security agents, immigration officials and community police, including specific focus on treatment of women. National training on border security, Counter Terrorism (CT), foreign terrorist fighters (FTF's), and addressing Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) were held for security actors at TA-level training on border in Mangochi and Mulanje. The programme also conducted peace building trainings for Women and Persons with Disability in Mangochi and Mulanje
- iii. Improved the capacity of community-level leaders and mediators to address small scale conflicts and prevent them from escalating. Conflict analysis and mediation training were conducted to strengthen community capacity for conflict resolution, the training benefited 9 T/As in Mangochi and Mulanje.

- iv. Supported conflict monitoring through the development of robust, community-level early warning systems to detect potential threats / drivers of conflict. Youth conflict monitors in Mangochi and Mulanje were trained on how to effectively collect early warning signs as one way of responding to conflict.
- v. Strengthen data collection and management on conflict drivers, cross border migration, counterterrorism, human trafficking, SGBV and SRHR issues, ensuring women’s participation in community-based conflict monitoring mechanisms and structures. A mapping exercise was conducted to map existing women's groups on conflict prevention and peace building and orient women groups on women's movement building for conflict prevention and peace building. Mobility mapping exercises were conducted to identify key mobility axes and areas of congregations and flow monitoring. To ensure gender equality and mainstreaming youth empowerment for the project’s implementation specifically on service delivery and community empowerment, safe space mentor trainings were held in both Mangochi and Mulanje districts (69 F in Mulanje and 40F, 10 M) mentors trained.
- vi. Supported gender transformative initiatives at the community and grassroots level as peace building and prevention of conflict measures. The Programme supported community forums for dialogue on discriminating social and cultural norms to create platforms where the communities would discuss the socio-cultural norms and beliefs that fuel conflicts, promote GBV and discriminate against women and girls in the 4 TAs in Mulanje. A total of 282 (111 M, 171 F) participated in the dialogues.

2.4.6. Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture in Malawi

Participating UN Agencies:	FAO, UNDP	Geographic scope:	Kasungu (Mkanakhoti and Kaluluma EPAs) Mzimba (Eswazini and Champhira EPAs)
Government Partners:	Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) Mzimba District Council Kasungu District Council The Ministry of Trade and Industry’s (MoTI) Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) Ministry of Youth and Sport	Budget:	US\$ 2,965,064
Other Partners:	Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS)	SDGs targets:	SDG 1: No Poverty SDG 2: Zero hunger SDG 13: Climate action SDG 17: Partnerships
Duration	September 2022 to September 2025		

Key areas of intervention		
Enhancing Agricultural Production and Productivity	Improved Access to Markets	Technical support

The ‘Empowering of Women and Youth in Agriculture in Malawi’, hereinafter “the Project”, is a flagship under the Inclusive & Resilience Growth Window aimed at increasing the proportion of women and youth contribution to the production and commercialization of important and promising value chains in line with the Malawi’s development agenda MW2063. More specifically, this will be accomplished through the promotion of advanced technologies, increasing access to capital finance, and by providing high quality extension and advisory services in Kasungu and Mzimba districts. This project will be implemented with the goal of increasing agricultural productivity and improving the performance of the selected key value chains.

2.4.6.1 Overall Results

- a) The Project stakeholder engagement workshop was organized to share the project design document with all the key stakeholders for their buy-in and support during the project implementation phase. It was jointly organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).
- b) Inception workshops at the district level were conducted at both the Kasungu and Mzimba District Councils. It was jointly organized by FAO, UNDP, the District Councils, and the MoA. The district inception workshops were organized to share the Project design document with relevant stakeholders at the district level and to attain their buy-in and seek the endorsement of the Project by the two district councils.
- c) A value chain prioritization exercise was conducted in all of the targeted impact areas of the two districts. Value chain assessment was done where districts selected their preferred and profitable value chain. The following are the value chains the district will work with, Tomato, common beans, apiary and poultry. The value chains will be targeted for support and ultimately commercialization, among the beneficiary FOs within the two districts.
- d) Multidisciplinary technical capacity has been enhanced. Technical officers have been identified at the country office, regional and headquarters levels to provide support. For example, a gender focal point has been identified and gender tools are being formulated. Furthermore, FAO will utilize agribusiness experiences learnt from managing past projects which were implemented in the two districts such as the European Union funded KULIMA and Afikepo programmes, FAO Digital Village Initiative and Government of Flanders funded Market Capacity Building project and the Flanders International Cooperation Agency (FICA) project.
- e) Processing of small grants has commenced, and a technical team has been instituted. Targeting of the beneficiaries is on-going with Kasungu- 480/500, (Adults 384, 307 women, 74 men, youths-96), Mzimba- 187/500 (Men=37, women 149, youths-74).
- f) Instituted and held a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting in December 2023 with representation from all partners, including FAO, UNDP, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Gender, and the NAIP not yet registered. The PAC reviewed and approved the project workplan and budget.
- g) Letters of Agreement (LoAs) have been drafted for each partner to implement their activities in reference to their workplans and agreed-upon outputs.

- h) Continued engagement between FAO, UNDP, the two district implementing partners of Mzimba District Council, Kasungu District Council and the Ministry of Agriculture regarding workplan and budget development and implementation. Processing of small grants has commenced.

2.4.6.2 Challenges and lessons learned

- i. Mode of transferring the funds to the implementing partners like Department of Agriculture Extension Services, Ministry of Agriculture, M’mbelwa and Kasungu districts has delayed the whole implementation as individual requests are not honored. Therefore, FAO has resorted to the use of Letters of agreements to finance the districts who have subject matter specialists to support capacity building.

2.4.7 Strengthening Humanitarian Information Management in Malawi for Enhanced Response (SHIMMER)⁶

Participating UN Agencies:	WFP	Geographic scope:	<i>Phalombe, Chikwawa, Mangochi, Balaka and Nsanje</i>
Government Partners:	<i>Department of Disaster Management,</i>	Budget:	USD 154,999
Other Partners:	<i>OCHA ROSEA, iMMAP</i>	SDGs targets:	SDG 2: Zero hunger SDG 13: Climate action SDG 17: Partnerships
Duration	January 2023 -March 2024		

Key areas of intervention		
Coordination	Response	Data Management

This project aims to address these challenges by strengthening the capacities at both the IMU and the clusters’ levels and through working with all partners implicated in the improvement of the IM systems at the country level.

2.4.7.1 Overall Results

- i. **Supported the Government through the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) to conduct the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for acute food insecurity analysis processes.**

⁶ This project was approved but was not funded at the issuance of this annual report. It is included in the report for informational purposes

- a) An IPC analysis workshop determined a total of 4.4 million food insecure people that were classified in Phase 3 and above of acute food insecurity requiring humanitarian assistance during the lean season period from October 2023 to March 2024.
 - b) A total of 23 MVAC members were supported during the analysis workshop. The findings of the workshop have informed the development of the 2023/2024 Food Insecurity Response Plan by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected food-insecure population to save lives and livelihoods during the lean season.
- ii. **Assessment Processes and Tools.**
- a) Completed existing IM Tools review and consultation process with stakeholders.
 - b) Developed interactive NDRF dashboard for sub-sector analytics.
 - c) Provided continuous IM Support to DoDMA and Sectors/Clusters in preparing the NDRF report (data consolidation, analysis, charts, maps, and interactive dashboard)
 - d) Provided IM support to DoDMA in preparing the TCF 2023 AAR report, and work plan (data consolidation, analysis, charts, maps, and interactive dashboard).
- iii. **Support to Government of Malawi’s Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) to conduct the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) to undertake the acute food insecurity analysis process.**
- a) Conducted an IPC analysis workshop which determined a total of 4.4 million food insecure people that were classified in Phase 3 and above of acute food insecurity requiring humanitarian assistance during the lean season period from October 2023 to March 2024.
 - b) A total of 23 MVAC members were supported during the analysis workshop. The findings of the workshop have informed the development of the 2023/2024 Food Insecurity Response Plan by the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) to provide humanitarian assistance to the affected food-insecure population to save lives and livelihoods during the lean season.

2.4.7.2 Challenges and lessons learned

- i. Sub-contractor, iMMAP initially withdrew support to the project due to internal constraints working in Malawi. This caused a 3-month delay in initiating the project which missed the emergency response support phase (Jan-March) which was further delayed due to Tropical Cyclone Freddy hitting Malawi on March 13th and reducing capacity to launch SHIMMER until May 2023 after the initial response phase had subsided.
- ii. IM Trainings and capacity building sessions have been more difficult to launch against the proposed plan, given that District officials have been occupied delivering emergency assistance for Tropical Cyclone Freddy 2023 and subsumed with numerous competing priorities.

- iii. iMMAP's national consultant responsible for the district training component resigned the week that he was planned to initiate field visits. This has caused a one-month delay, as scoping work no longer made sense with a staff member leaving his post.
- iv. Working on areas with numerous actors requiring coordination takes substantially longer to implement and requires more consultant management and project oversight, than discrete pieces of work. In the future, more effort should be made to align available resources (time, people) with the level of effort of the work.
- v. Disaster Risk Information Management System requires further vetting and testing before being considered a reliable disaster reporting solution for emergencies, even in districts where it is formally or partially deployed.
- vi. While shortcomings and difficulties facing the existing Disaster Risk Information Management System (DRIMS) were identified during the Information Management-Needs Assessment capacity review exercise, the emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Freddy and After-Action Review (AAR) have highlighted the lack of quality and consistency of the disaster data arriving from the districts.
- vii. Continuation of Information Management-Needs Assessment support in other southern districts is required to enhance their capacity.
- viii. Enhance Information Management capacity of Information Management focal persons from ministries/departments and Information Management Unit (IMU) of DoDMA

3. Conclusions

In its fifth year of implementation, the MW SDG AF continues to support implementation of high-quality and impactful joint programmes aimed at accelerating progress towards the achievements of the SDG. The Fund was initially scheduled to conclude in December 2023. However, the Fund operating period was extended to 2027 to consolidate and ensure sustainability of results and to provide an opportunity for joint programmes that had received additional funding commitments from donors to come to a natural conclusion. Key areas of achievement for the Fund include:

- i. **Strengthened coherence** – In 2023, the UN implemented 6 joint programs managed by the SDG-AF, placing significant emphasis on coherence and complementarity among development, humanitarian, and peace building efforts despite multiple emergencies. Efforts were made to strengthen coherence between the planned activities of UN entities and non-UN partners.
- ii. **Enhanced efficiency of the UN and partners at country level:** The SDG-AF continued to strengthen joint programming for UN agencies. Joint programs generate greater synergies and coherence, while allowing UN entities to engage in cross-sectorial SDG priorities. Joint programs are a very powerful tool to leverage the added value of UN entities at country level.

- iii. **Boosted joint planning and programming with better collective results for SDGs:** The close collaboration and coordination among UN partners has resulted in improved collective results and also provided grounds for more joint planning amongst UN partners. For instance, the joint program on Health Systems Strengthening (UNICEF, UNFPA, and WHO) which brought together technical expertise that provided the leadership and technical assistance required for the program of this nature.
- iv. **Boosted Implementation of the UN reform and Funding Compact:** The SDG Acceleration Fund continues to build donor confidence as one way of mobilizing additional resources for financing coordinated SDG interventions. The year 2023 has mobilized additional resources to increase the impact of joint programmes. For instance, the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund received a contribution of USD 174,416.26 (EUR 159,666) from Flanders and 350,000 Euro from the Government of Ireland to support the second phase of the Border Security Conflict Prevention for an additional year (January-December 2024)

4. Recommendations

For the next year, it is recommended to:

- i. **Development of a new Country Level pooled Fund:** Work will commence on the development of a successor SDG Acceleration Fund that will be aligned to the 2024-2028 UNSDCF. Building on the UN Malawi's 14 years' of experience in implementing country level pooled funds, the successor pooled fund to the Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund is expected to focus on key SDGs that are proven to accelerate progress in Malawi and unlock achievements in a wide range of sectors and will focus on un-earmarked funding and bringing in new partners (including the private sector) for development. The Fund will also be used as a focused instrument, supporting inter-agency or cross-cutting agency priorities including the transformative entry points or key transitions that can have catalytic and multiplier effects across the SDGs and an outsized determinant impact for achieving the Goals which include food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
- ii. **Enhance Ownership:** Although all stakeholders are aware of the fund, there is still room for improvement Governance especially co-leadership of governance structures of the MW SDG AF. The government has been critical in helping to support the priorities but has been proactive in engaging and co-leading the funds governance structures. This has contributed to the delay of critical processes including allocation of funding to joint programmes.
- iii. **Increase resource mobilization efforts:** Intensify the mobilization of resources locally and internationally to support Fund priorities. This should include identification of different types of partnerships to be engaged through the Fund. This will also include exploring mechanisms to develop, collect and channel resources from innovative financing instruments.
- iv. **Cooperation and Partnerships:** UN agencies should proactively seek opportunities for collaboration with the private sector who also have vested interest in the achievement of SDGs. While appreciating that the private sector has faced some challenges due to economic hiccups as

well as impacts of COVID-19 and Cyclone Freddy, they can still be a catalytic partner to accelerate the achievement of SDGs. The UN should create an enabling environment for the private sector to contribute to SDGs by raising awareness on Agenda 2030 and SDGs.

- v. **Continue efforts to advance gender equality:** In 2023, the fund has continued to advance gender equality by ensuring that at least 30% of all approved program resources are allocated to activities that promote gender equality. Most of the joint programmes reported success in this area but there is still need to highlight the successes being registered in advancing gender equality through the pooled fund.