

Malawi Annual Report 2022

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for every child



As I reflect on 2022, I am filled with pride and gratitude. I am pleased to present this annual report, which highlights the remarkable achievements made by UNICEF Malawi and its partners during the year.

The challenges we faced in 2022 were daunting, with economic and climate crises wreaking havoc on the lives of children in Malawi. The COVID-19 pandemic, polio outbreaks, and an unprecedented cholera epidemic threatened to undo decades of progress. The risks were real, and the consequences were dire. Children bore the brunt, experiencing learning loss, public health challenges, malnutrition, and the disturbing rise of sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse.

But in the face of adversity, UNICEF stood strong. We were determined to continue our vital work, tirelessly striving to strengthen systems and improve the lives of children and their families. Despite the multiple emergencies, we reached over 5 million children through emergency responses, ensuring their access to essential services.

We also embraced community-based health services and invested in digital solutions, guaranteeing that no child was left behind. We provided therapeutic nutrition programmes for malnourished children, offered psychosocial support, and introduced remote learning activities to mitigate the impact of learning loss. Our water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) promotion efforts helped reduce the spread of cholera and other water-borne diseases.

Collaboration was key to our success. We worked hand in hand with the government and local organizations, strengthening existing interventions and creating sustainable solutions that could be replicated elsewhere. We also ensured that vulnerable households received financial assistance, enabling them to meet basic needs and protect their children from exploitation. Through effective monitoring, we tracked progress and ensured that resources reached those who needed them most.

I extend my deepest appreciation to all those who have supported our work. Your generosity and dedication have made a world of difference in the lives of countless children. Let us continue to work together as we strive to create a country where every child can thrive.

Warm regards,

Shadrack Omol

Shadrack Omol
UNICEF Representative in Malawi



Growing up in Malawi

60%

of children in Malawi are multi-dimensionally poor or deprived of two or more essential services.

90%

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

Only **37%**

of children under 5 are registered at birth.

36%

of children under 5 are stunted.

A third

of all girls and boys under 18 have experienced corporal punishment.

47%

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

1 in 5 girls and 1 in 7 boys

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

1 in 18

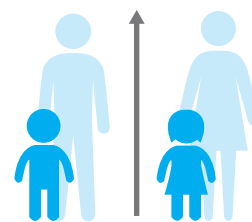
children dies before the age of 5.

About **70%**

of Malawians benefit from basic water access, but only 24% have access to basic sanitation.

34%

of schools and health facilities cannot access WASH services.



90%

of primary school-age children have access to primary education, but only 51% of girls and 52% of boys complete their primary education.

48%

of children in Malawi have access to early childhood education.

28%

of children under 5,

34%

of adolescents and

33%

of women of reproductive age are anaemic.

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Report data as of 22 September 2022 <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/MWI>; World Bank data, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview>; United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), Report 2022.



Sisters Lobina and Thandiwe Khirisitofa washing their hands using a tap installed by UNICEF in rural Lilongwe.

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Early childhood development

During the crucial early years of life, children experience rapid growth and development. Establishing a solid foundation during this period is vital for future success, leading to better outcomes for children, families, and society as a whole. In collaboration with its partners, UNICEF is actively engaged in Malawi to ensure that children between the ages of 0 and 5 receive the necessary care and support. This comprehensive approach includes providing access to essential health care and nutrition services, promoting positive parenting techniques, enhancing community-level interventions, improving sanitation and hygiene practices, and creating a safe and stimulating learning environment for young children. Through these collective efforts, we are working towards enabling every child to achieve their full potential and thrive.

“I measure my child every two weeks. The MUAC tape helps me become aware of the child’s health, whether he’s gaining weight or not. The child may develop malnutrition, but this may not be evident to the naked eye. But the tape helps us assess the child’s health.”

Esnath Nyamatcherenga, a mother from Katandika village in Nsanje, Southern Region.

[Link to story](#)



UNICEF results in 2022

78%

Coverage of an oral cholera vaccine campaign in 14 districts most affected by the cholera outbreak, using vaccines obtained through the Global Task Force on Cholera Control and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

88%+

The childhood immunization rate in Malawi results in fewer children being exposed to vaccine-preventable diseases.

76,896

Girls and boys between 3 and 5 years of age accessed community-based and integrated early learning services in seven targeted districts.

38,500

Children under 5 suffering from severe acute malnutrition who were treated through community management of acute malnutrition services, representing a 84 per cent coverage rate.

2.5 million+

Children under 5 screened for acute malnutrition through community interventions and innovative approaches such as family mid-upper-arm circumference (MUAC).

3,677,488

Children under 5 reached through four rounds of a nationwide polio immunization campaign.



936,138

Children aged between 6 months to 5 years who received vitamin A supplementation as part of a preventive package to reduce all forms of malnutrition.

85%

Percentage of HIV-exposed infants who received HIV virological tests within two months of birth.

11,000

Mobile phones and 1,000 MiFi devices procured to improve data reporting to health institutions.

School-aged children

UNICEF works with partners to create an enabling environment for school-age girls and boys to access learning opportunities and achieve essential life skills. UNICEF also supports activities that focus on early adolescence, which is a critical time for young people as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Through our programmes, we strive to promote healthy decision-making, positive communication, problem-solving skills, and increased self-esteem so that all adolescents can thrive in their lives. We also support initiatives to promote gender equality and reduce violence and gender-based discrimination in educational settings.

UNICEF results in 2022

1.97 million

Children and adolescent girls and boys who accessed non-emergency services to improve learning outcomes and school safety.

947,117

Girls and boys screened for disabilities, a first-of-its-kind initiative by the Ministries of Education and Health, with 275 children referred for appropriate services and the provision of assistive devices.

656,947

School-aged adolescent girls who received iron-folic acid supplementation to reduce their susceptibility to anaemia.

10,009

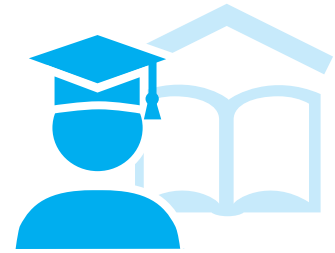
Teachers trained in improved inclusive learning and gender-responsive pedagogy, benefitting 590,000 schoolgirls and boys.

58,763

Learners who saw their literacy and numeracy skills improve through UNICEF-supported remedial programmes.

6,934

Vulnerable girls who can access secondary education through the UNICEF, Kids in Needs of Desks (K.I.N.D) and Spotlight scholarship funding, helping them reach their full potential.



5,300

Girls and boys who graduated from the UNICEF-supported Complementary Basic Education programme, with 1,557 learners (767 female) returning to primary school.

942,117

Children empowered to prevent and protect themselves from violence through several UNICEF-support interventions such as school-based complaints boxes, referral pathways and the One School One Police Officer Initiative.

“The desks have given me a reason to smile and keep coming to school Monday to Friday. I have been learning here since Standard One, and this is the first time I am sitting on a desk.”

Jacqueline Kubalasa, born with paralyzed legs, now learns in comfort in Ntunthama Primary School in Mulanje, Southern Region, thanks to the 50 desks donated by the K.I.N.D Fund in partnership with UNICEF.

[Link to story](#)



Jacqueline Kubalasa in class at Ntunthama Primary School in Mulanje.

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Social and behavioural change

Community behaviour change is crucial in safeguarding children and dismantling harmful social norms. **In 2022, UNICEF:**

- Supported eight civil society organizations and six government departments in addressing harmful social norms, particularly **child marriage**.
- Helped capacitate five district-level social mobilization committees and bring together 250,000 community members to discuss how best to tackle **harmful social norms**.
- Collaborated with the National Social Mobilization Committee to **promote COVID-19 vaccination**, increasing coverage from 6 to 18 per cent.
- Supported a major campaign on **birth registration** in three pilot districts, resulting in over 600,000 children being registered.
- Worked with faith leaders and volunteers to reach nearly 3.8 million people with **polio campaign messages**, contributing to over 2.5 million children vaccinated in 2022.
- Supported district, and community outreach for vulnerable populations, engaging 400,000 people in **risk communication and community engagement** actions.
- Ensured that over 400,000 people received **malaria prevention messages** through their religious, business and community networks.
- Helped inform 250,000 people about **preventing and reporting gender-based violence**. In addition, 4,281 children expressed their experiences with gender-based violence through art activities.

Partnerships

Partnerships are vital for achieving positive outcomes and well-being of children. In 2022, UNICEF collaborated with various organizations and institutions to address the polio outbreak in Malawi. These partners included the Ministry of Health, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Health Organization (WHO), and Lilongwe Technical College. Additionally, partnerships were formed with district health offices, media, academia, faith leaders, political leaders, and WHO for social behaviour change communication, which played a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of both the polio and COVID-19 crises.

Collaboration with the National Registration Bureau, Ministry of Health, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was beneficial in helping increase children's birth registration in Malawi. Education expansion efforts in the country were also supported through partnerships with the European Union, UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), USAID, and the World Bank.

The mid-term review of the Malawi National Social Support Programme and the impact evaluation for the Social Cash Transfer Programme were jointly supported by UNICEF, the European Union, GIZ, the Government of Ireland, International Labour Organization (ILO), KfW Development Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

In 2022, UNICEF and its partners mobilized US\$38 million for humanitarian and emergency interventions in Malawi. The major donors for the country programme in 2022 included FCDO, Irish AID, USAID, KfW, the European Union, GIZ, Gavi – the Vaccine Alliance, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the Government of Japan, and the Royal Norwegian Embassy. Partnerships with the United Nations included the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), among others. UNICEF collaborated with 78 implementing partners in 2022, consisting of 51 government partners and 27 civil society partners.

Child-friendly, inclusive and resilient communities

UNICEF strives to create communities that enable both boys and girls to flourish in a secure, healthy environment, while also promoting sustainability and inclusivity – empowering them to break out of the poverty trap. We work with our partners to strengthen the capacity of local communities and national systems, ensuring that all children have access to essential services and protection.

UNICEF results in 2022

583,174

Children living in more than 303,800 households reached by monthly cash transfers through Malawi's Social Cash Transfer Programme.

3,376

Women and men cash transfer beneficiaries participating in village savings and loan associations positively affected their livelihoods and economic participation.

947,117

Girls and boys with improved skills to prevent violence.

3,351

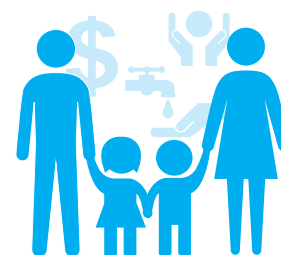
Children with disabilities (1,554 girls) with improved skills to prevent violence.

44,252

New cases of violence against children and women assisted by child protection service points and case management.

374,480

Children provided with protection services through 2,171 Children's Corners – community safe spaces for children aged 6 to 18 – across Malawi.



195,202

People reached with safe water across targeted districts.

83,887

People who gained access to basic sanitation services across targeted districts.

232,134

People who benefitted from basic hygiene services across targeted districts.

Innovation

UNICEF supported a **flood forecasting project** using aerial imagery to assist approximately 3.5 million people in flood-prone areas.

With UNICEF support, the Ministry of Education created a **learning management system** for teachers, accessible through low-level smartphones.

UNICEF and UNHCR, in partnership with the Jesuit Refugee Service, launched **Connect My School**, a project aimed at expanding digital education opportunities and ensuring inclusion and participation in education for disadvantaged children – reaching over 7,000 children.

A total of 105 young people graduated from the UNICEF-supported **African Drone and Data Academy**, which builds 21st-century skills among African youth. Since its establishment in 2020, 913 individuals have graduated from the programme. Drones are used in Malawi to collect and deliver laboratory samples, vaccines, medicines, and other essential commodities.

Gender

Gender integration is essential to upholding the rights of children. **In 2022, UNICEF:**

- Produced the **Gender Programmatic Review Report**, which helped shape the country programme document development process and laid a solid foundation for UNICEF to create the Gender Action Plan.
- Supported efforts in the health, education, nutrition and WASH sectors to prioritize **adolescent well-being and gender mainstreaming**.
- Equipped young parliamentarians, UNICEF staff, and implementing partners with **skills in gender transformative programming**.
- Supported the Ministry of Education to develop national guidelines and a training manual on **menstrual health in schools**.
- Helped motivate, mentor and coach 257 adolescent girls who are beneficiaries of the **UNICEF's scholarship**.

Research, evaluations and knowledge management

In 2022, UNICEF collaborated with the National Planning Commission and National Commission for Science and Technology to develop the first-ever National Research Agenda in Malawi. This ground-breaking work aims to support evidence-based decision-making and policy development, helping the country achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and become an inclusively developed and self-reliant nation by 2063. In addition, UNICEF supported the University of Malawi in organizing a national consultation of Vice Chancellors from all public and private universities. The goal was to bridge the gaps between research and evidence by creating a joint plan of action to support Vision 2063 and the National Research Agenda.

During the year, 14 studies and evaluations were completed, with more underway, including the Country Programme Evaluation. UNICEF Malawi also led efforts to enhance national capacities in evaluations and research, training 33 junior researchers from seven universities and conducting workshops to build awareness and skills in research and evaluation. Additionally, UNICEF partnered with the University of Malawi to share knowledge from its evaluation and research reports through a dissemination workshop based on the Fun and Funky Fusion model, led by young university artists targeting the government, university students and NGOs.



“The social cash transfers brought a huge relief to my family. They helped me learn in peace. Previously, we were skipping classes to help mom do piecework. We often went to school hungry, didn’t have uniforms, and wore dirty clothes because we couldn’t afford soap. We couldn’t concentrate on our lessons because there was no hope that we would find food when we return home.”

Frank, a beneficiary of the Social Cash Transfer Programme in Kaziputa Village, in Ntcheu District, Central Region.

[Link to story](#)

Communication and advocacy

UNICEF made significant strides in advancing child rights and amplifying the voices of children and youth in 2022. One notable achievement was the signing of the Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action, which demonstrates Malawi’s strong commitment to prioritizing children’s rights and participation in climate action. Another notable achievement was the publication of ‘Child Rights Reporting Guidelines’ for ethical reporting on children together with the Malawi Institute of Journalism. Furthermore, the UNICEF-supported *M’mera Mpoyamba* (Early Moments Matter) campaign reached approximately 14 million people with messages on early childhood development.

UNICEF’s proactive media outreach resulted in 443 news stories published in national and international media, effectively highlighting the situation of Malawi’s children and UNICEF’s work. Through digital campaigns, UNICEF also reached about 133 million people on key child rights issues. Additionally, UNICEF gained nearly 300,000 digital supporters, including 54,000 new U-Reporters. The website also experienced an 86 per cent increase in new visitors.

Humanitarian action

In 2022, Malawi faced multiple climate shocks and emergencies with torrential rains and flooding from Tropical Storm Ana and Gombe devastating water and sanitation systems, resulting in a cholera outbreak. The outbreak claimed 486 lives, including 38 children, with 11 million people needing humanitarian aid. UNICEF provided supplies to districts affected by cholera, including acute watery diarrhoea kits and infection prevention control supplies, and supported the oral cholera vaccination campaign in 14 highly-affected districts.

Additionally, the government declared a national public health emergency in February in response to an outbreak of wild polio virus with an integrated response plan launching a four-round immunization campaign supported by UNICEF.

During the emergencies, UNICEF also provided technical assistance to the government and supported delivering life-saving services to vulnerable children. As cluster co-lead for Malawi's education, nutrition and WASH sectors, UNICEF worked with other partners to swiftly provide humanitarian assistance.

“Cholera has spread fast because people have been practising open defaecation due to an absence of sanitary facilities, especially along the lakeshore. They also drink untreated water, especially from the lake.”

Karonga district health official, Raymond Jereni.

[Link to story](#)

UNICEF results in 2022

485,478

Girls and boys who continued to learn after accessing emergency supplies in response to the cholera outbreak and tropical storms Ana and Gombe.

446,203

Children and families in displacement sites who benefitted from emergency water trucking.

1.39 million

Children and families affected by cholera and floods received critical assistance.

84,000+

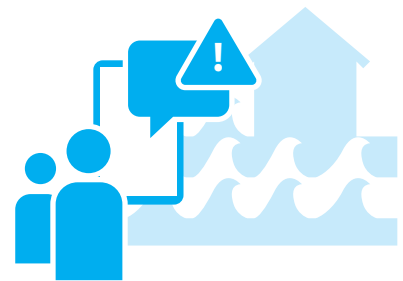
Children supported by child protection workers to reduce trauma and were active participants in school activities during tropical cyclones.

330

Frontline workers trained by UNICEF partner, Malawi Red Cross, on epidemic control, leading to improved surveillance during emergencies.

10 million

People reached with life-saving messages on COVID-19, cholera and polio, with 400,000 engaged in feedback.



252,164

People reached with early warning message alerts through community radio stations, empowering their communities to take anticipatory actions to minimize the impact of floods.

3.5 million+

Children under 5 vaccinated in a nationwide polio immunization campaign, bolstering immunity against wild polio virus.

Finances

The generosity of our donors is helping empower UNICEF to create impactful change for children and their families in Malawi. In 2022, UNICEF Malawi allocated and utilized US\$70 million from various development partners to achieve results for children.

Figure 1: Allocation and utilization by funding type (in US\$ million)

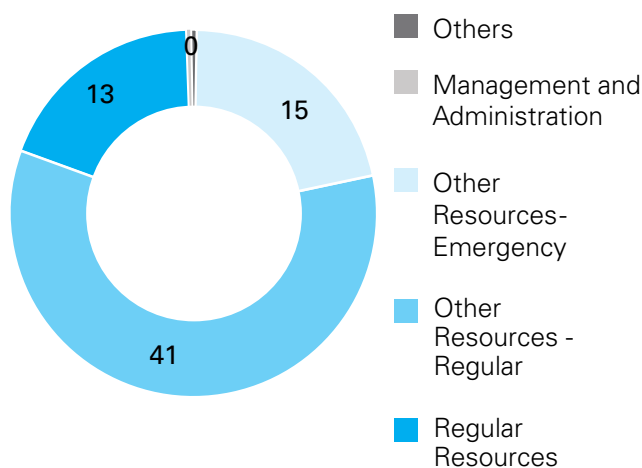
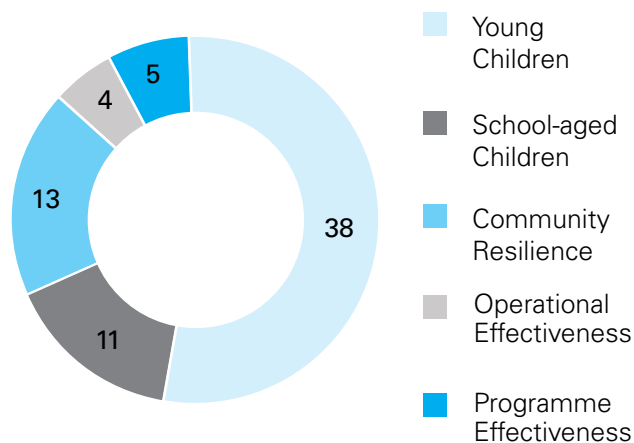


Figure 2: Utilization by pillar/outcome (in US\$ million)



Operations and supply

UNICEF Malawi successfully implemented the 2021 Peer Review recommendations, ensuring the timely completion of the June 2022 Audit. Key to achieving results for children in Malawi were risk-informed programming, supply planning, and monitoring. Resources were effectively managed through consistent application of procedures and diligent monitoring of balances, items, premises, and assets. Additionally, ICT infrastructure and systems were provided to staff and maintained for efficient working solutions.

Notably, the Supply Unit led the business sector mapping exercise and private sector meetings, resulting in 30 private businesses harnessed to drive results for children. In addition, support was provided to revise the Master National Supply Chain Transformation plan for Malawi, which aims to improve the country's health commodity supply chain. To address the climate change crisis and promote sustainable procurement, the Supply Unit incorporated environmental and social aspects into the tender evaluation processes. Lastly, to ensure the success of supply provision, UNICEF conducted end-user monitoring activities in different districts across the country.



Health worker Thokozile Chivunga with three-year-old Shyreen Batson at Chiwamba health Centre in Lilongwe.

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Cover Image:

Happy children in Nkhulambe Village in Phalombe district.

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