Malawi
Annual Report
2020
Above: Nelash and Mayamiko writing on a board at Sekeni Primary School. The two are beneficiaries of UNICEF’s school-in-a-box kit which contains learning materials.

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UNICEF advocates and works for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet the needs of children and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. To fulfill our mandate, we face the enormous challenge of endemic poverty, underdevelopment, and often the devastating impact of drought, cyclone and flood. But despite decades of experience within such a complex environment, nothing could have prepared us for the global COVID-19 pandemic. The destructive impact of this virus tested UNICEF Malawi in unprecedented ways. The socio-economic impact of the coronavirus pervaded every aspect of children’s lives, compounding their already fragile reality. Not only did the pandemic drive millions from their classrooms and led to the reduction of medical care and services, it also exposed children to increased levels of vulnerability, including early marriage and domestic violence.

At UNICEF, our 2020 work plans were upended, as we had to shift focus from regular programming to COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response. Fortunately, established systems and relationships with our many partners proved agile enough to meet the new challenge. UNICEF redirected more than US$23 million in donor funding previously earmarked for regular programmes and joint programmes with other UN agencies. We also continued as the partner of choice in many critical areas for both government counterparts and development partners. For example, UNICEF procured medical and prevention supplies worth over US$12 million on behalf of the Government of Malawi and other partners. UNICEF also led the UN’s education cluster and provided technical support to the education ministry to develop radio shows for distance education lessons and prepare guidelines for the safe reopening of
schools, which had been shuttered for five months. At the same time, UNICEF carried out an efficient and effective emergency response including infection prevention control on the borders. More than 8 million people were reached with risk communication messaging to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to the emergency response, UNICEF maintained focus on both needs and opportunities for children and supported partners to ensure continuity of essential services. As a result, mother, newborn and child health services reached 48,500 children and 120,000 mothers. More than 146,000 children were registered at birth, while 667,000 children under 5 completed three doses of the diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine. And some 76 per cent of the HIV-exposed infants were tested within two months of birth. UNICEF’s humanitarian response to non-COVID-19 related issues, including food insecurity, floods and cholera, benefited 546,000 people and 278,000 children. At the same time, the UNICEF team continued with technical support to the government’s cash transfer programme, which last year reached more than 291,000 households nationwide. And as violence against children surged, some 117,000 children aged 6 and above were able to access psycho-social support services through Children’s Corners nationwide.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact dominated our lives throughout 2020, this human tragedy also equipped us with a new resolve to help rebuild communities, strengthen resilience and ensure that the rights of children are fulfilled, no matter the circumstances. The year ended on a very positive note for Malawian children when His Excellency President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera pledged better legislation, policies and resourcing mechanisms to promote child rights in Malawi. The President made this important pledge when he hosted 60 children from across the country in an interactive session to celebrate World Children’s Day in November.

This year, as we commemorate UNICEF’s 75th anniversary we are reminded that this organization was established in the aftermath of World War II. Since then, UNICEF has been at the frontlines of humanitarian crises, armed conflict and natural disasters. In the midst of the ongoing global pandemic, we continue to work together with our partners to reimagine a better post-COVID world for every child.

And now with COVID-19 vaccines being rolled out in Malawi, and the end of the pandemic within sight, UNICEF is more determined than ever to deliver on its mission. Hopefully, we will soon look back on this difficult chapter with a sense of relief and pride. While we mourn those who were lost, we should also pause, just for a moment, to remind ourselves of the lives we saved – Together.

Rudolf Schwenk
UNICEF Malawi Country Representative
In 2020, the devastating impact of COVID-19 tested UNICEF Malawi like never before. The virus forced an estimated 7.7 million students from their classrooms, severely compromising learning outcomes. Without the safety offered by school, children were left idle and vulnerable. Last year some 13,000 cases of child marriage were recorded, according to the government. At the same time, teenage pregnancies increased by 11 per cent. UNICEF reacted swiftly to the pandemic mobilizing US$17 million for programmatic activities and US$6.3 million for procurement services. The country office also prepared a "response plan" to reinforce the health system, supporting the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other medical items as well as promoting behavioural change through community engagement. UNICEF’s COVID-19 risk communication messages reached more than 8 million people. Screening at nine critical land and air points of entry were established while more than 1 million cloth masks were procured locally and distributed to needy communities. UNICEF also helped establish two new oxygen plants in Lilongwe and Blantyre with the combined capacity to produce 1 million litres of oxygen per day.

The deprivations experienced by children in Malawi, endured regardless of the havoc wreaked by the virus. Almost 2 million Malawians remained food insecure in early 2020 despite a 26 per cent increase in the production of maize, as private traders withheld stock from the market, driving up the price. In 2020, flood waters swept through 11 of Malawi’s 28 districts, impacting approximately 32,440 households. Because of the floods, many houses were destroyed forcing families to find temporary shelter at displacement sites. While cholera is endemic in Malawi, in 2020 just three cases were recorded with zero deaths. All the three cases were detected in February in Blantyre and the outbreak was successfully controlled at source. UNICEF’s emergency response to non-COVID-19-related issues benefited 546,000 people.

In addition to an efficient and effective emergency response, UNICEF maintained focus on its long-term development plans described in the 2019-2023 Country Programme.

Last year, UNICEF worked to deliver on its strategic lifecycle approach by providing quality services for children across the "three pillars" of development and humanitarian intervention: early childhood, school-aged children and child-friendly, inclusive, resilient communities. For example, UNICEF supported 17 districts to implement a minimum package of nutrition-improvement services, benefiting more than 3 million children under 5. At the same time 48,500 children and 120,000 mothers were reached with maternal newborn and child health services. While at home from school, educational continuity was ensured for millions as emergency radio lessons were accessed by 1,918,415 primary learners and online learning served 71,552 secondary learners. Another 50,000 secondary learners received self-study materials. In the meantime, the country office continued technical support to the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), which last year reached 291,129 households nationwide. To combat increased incidence of violence, 117,787 children aged 6 and above were given access to psycho-social support services.
In January 2020, UNICEF established the landmark African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA). The academy equips young Africans with the use of drones and data to confront humanitarian and developmental challenges. In its first year, the ADDA had to quickly adapt to COVID-19 by providing its training sessions online. In 2020, 146 students graduated from the ADDA.

Innovation was a major focus for 2020, with UNICEF implementing a number of solutions mostly addressing COVID-19, focused particularly on health and youth engagement. UNICEF worked to build a deterministic mathematical model for the Health Ministry that examined COVID-19 transmission rates and estimated the number of cases, hospitalizations, intensive care unit stays, and deaths.

In 2020, UNICEF worked with the government, development partners, businesses, civil society organizations, as well as children and young people across Malawi. UNICEF strengthened partnerships with the private sector and philanthropic organizations including the Segal Family Foundation, the Baobab Health Trust and software companies GoodCitizen and ARM. UNICEF also worked with the UN Resident Coordinator’s office and other UN agencies on joint programmes under the UN’s Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. For example, UNICEF continued its partnership with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA on the Spotlight Initiative, a global programme designed to respond to violence against women and girls.

In 2020, the Research, Evaluation and Knowledge Management section (REKM) continued to strengthen programming by generating evidence designed to inform and improve interventions, completing nine studies, one research paper and two evaluations. The Real Time Evaluation of UNICEF Malawi’s Response to COVID-19 Emergency was a landmark achievement. Another important paper, a Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Malawi, identified new types and highlighted the increasing number of disabilities among children. The country office was also selected for the 2020 Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation (BOURE) publication for its evaluation of the Community Led Total Sanitation Programme. At the same time, 185 positive stories about the situation of children in Malawi and UNICEF’s work were featured by national and international media organizations, including the BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, Reuters and The New York Times. UNICEF’s social media following last year increased 13 times over, growing from 38,723 in January to 518,705 by the end of the year.
SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 in Malawi

Working together with partners to strengthen the national response

The COVID-19 pandemic reached Malawi in April 2020 and spread to every district. By the end of the year, more than 12,000 cases had been confirmed and approximately 300 people had died. While the virus toll was modest compared to some countries, the secondary impacts on socio-economic conditions dealt a significant blow to the situation of children. Schools had already been closed by the time the virus reached Malawi, forcing an estimated 7.7 million students from their classrooms, severely compromising learning outcomes. Primary and secondary exams were delayed until the end of the year and because the internet only reached 13.8 per cent of the population, distance learning was limited.

Without the safety offered by school environments, children were left idle and vulnerable. Last year some 13,000 cases of child marriage were recorded, according to the government. At the same time, teenage pregnancies increased by 11 per cent compared to the same period in 2019. Throughout the year, violence against children increased compared to the previous year with more than 27,000 new cases reported. Meanwhile, health facilities across the country experienced shortages of supplies, impacting care for newborns and pregnant women. Disruptions to community health services meant many people living with HIV, including adolescents and mothers, defaulted on their antiretroviral treatment. While admissions for child malnutrition declined, as parents avoided clinics fearing virus contraction, late presentations to nutrition units contributed to under-5 mortality rates climbing well above accepted minimum standards. By mid-year some 1,400 communal water points serving the poorest households in urban and peri-urban areas started to be disconnected as water board fees went unpaid. As a result, children who lived in these homes were exposed to greater risk of contracting COVID-19 as they were unable to maintain preventive hygiene practices.
UNICEF’s Swift Response

UNICEF reacted swiftly by supporting the Government of Malawi to support and strengthen its COVID-19 national response activities in the country. UNICEF also worked closely with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, WHO, UN Agencies, and other development partners including Non Government Organizations to ensure preventative actions in communities across Malawi with risk communication, providing handwashing supplies, hygiene and medical kits to health facilities and monitoring the impact of the outbreak to support continuity of care, education and social services.

UNICEF Malawi prepared a “Response Plan” in line with plans formulated by the UN and the government, reinforcing the health system, supporting the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other medical items, promoting behavioural change through community engagement and strengthening mechanisms to ensure continuity of health care, education and child protection.

UNICEF helped the government to quickly set up the COVID-19 testing facility at the National Reference Laboratory in Lilongwe, and trained 200 health workers in case management, surveillance and IPC. This helped Malawi to kick-start testing by mid-March 2020. Within the first three months of the pandemic, UNICEF mobilised US$17 million for programmatic activities and US$6.3 million for procurement services. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), high-level support was provided to the Ministry of Health and Planning (MoHP) as well as the newly established COVID-19 Presidential Task Force.

UNICEF was also named “supply chain coordinator” for the UN country team’s joint COVID-19 response. Recognizing that demand would outpace supply, UNICEF was given the job of hosting the UN’s new supply “portal” to better harmonize procurement needs across agencies, facilitating real-time information on the availability, procurement and delivery of supplies. At the same time, UNICEF co-led the UN’s nutrition, education, WASH and protection clusters and was a key partner in the health cluster.

With strong support from donor countries and the Vaccine Alliance (GAVI), emergency maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) services were provided to 56,000 children.

COVID-19 surveillance was strengthened through real-time data collection and more than 15,000 contacts were traced and followed up. Ebola treatment units already established across the country were refurbished by UNICEF and partners into nine emergency treatment units (ETUs), for use as isolation units for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Screening at nine critical land and air points of entry were established while the country office supported the procurement of critical COVID-19 supplies. UNICEF also facilitated access to mental health and psychosocial first aid for over 2,300 returnees. More than 1 million cloth masks were procured locally and distributed to needy communities. UNICEF and partners also helped establish two new oxygen plants in Lilongwe and Blantyre with the capacity to produce 1 million litres per day. The country office also assisted the MoHP to strengthen the health supply chain system, streamlining the pipeline of drugs, medical supplies and equipment.

UNICEF’s COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) messages reached more than 8 million people through jingles, TV and radio talk shows. A partnership with more than 2,000 faith-based organizations and traditional leaders also championed community awareness on COVID-19 prevention. UNICEF assumed a leadership role in RCCE communication and supported coordination and consistency of messaging among key stakeholders, including MoHP, the Ministry of Information (MoI), the UN’s communication for development group and international non-governmental organizations. A strengthened partnership with the Ministry of Local Government
and Rural Development (MoLGaRD) and 13 district level authorities also helped drive interventions in COVID-19 hot spots. UNICEF supported the MoLGaRD to get real-time data from local authorities through smartphone applications which helped improve turnaround time on decision-making. UNICEF also developed a field monitoring tool for communities and partners to provide feedback on the effectiveness of UNICEF’s COVID-19 programming. The tool is also being used as a platform to promote accountability to affected populations (AAP).

UNICEF’s support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) helped promote distance learning and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) at schools. UNICEF and partners produced educational radio programmes, developed school reopening guidelines and helped the government secure US$10 million from the Global Partnership for Education to support the COVID-19 response across the education sector. UNICEF helped to address the secondary impacts of the pandemic through the safe continuation of the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) including distribution of WASH supplies benefiting over 22,000 ultra-poor households.

Lessons Learned

But despite best efforts, UNICEF learned difficult lessons during the pandemic. Distance learning was challenging in remote and deprived areas. It is estimated that about 64 per cent of primary learners were not able to access radio programmes and about 68 per cent of secondary learners couldn’t access online or self-study materials. Data from the MoE indicates that approximately 450 primary and secondary schools didn’t have adequate access to safe and reliable water sources, jeopardizing COVID-19 prevention measures after schools reopened. While many Malawians were reached with messaging, community participation and engagement was lackluster. AAPs also needs to be improved through identifying “change agents” at the community-level and engaging youth groups. The increased vulnerability of girls and young women during the lockdowns has also been a hard lesson and calls for protection to be prioritized during future emergency situations.
## Key Highlights of COVID-19 Emergency Response in 2020

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<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1,519</td>
<td>Health care workers trained in IPC and detection and management of COVID-19 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,760</td>
<td>Health care workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168,499</td>
<td>Women and children received essential health care services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,909</td>
<td>People reached with critical WASH supplies and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>490,284</td>
<td>Caregivers to children aged 0-23 months reached with messages promoting breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000,000</td>
<td>People reached with COVID-19 messages on prevention and access to services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>639,424</td>
<td>Families (40%) nationwide were reached with messages on positive parenting and responsive caregiving and overall awareness about COVID-19 pandemic and preventive measures for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,239,635</td>
<td>People engaged on COVID-19 through Risk Communication and Community Engagement actions</td>
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Key Highlights of COVID-19 Emergency Response in 2020

1,423,396 children supported with distance/home-based learning

29,894 children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support

1,669 children without parental or family care provided with alternative care arrangements

Below: A learner in class at Mchoka Primary School in Salima © UNICEF Malawi2020/Chagara

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A feature story

Water makes COVID-19 treatment sites safe

Blantyre is one of the worst-affected hotspots of Malawi’s second wave of COVID-19. At the city’s Emergency Treatment Unit (ETU), queues of up to 300 people, anxiously wait to be swabbed for signs of COVID-19.

For the 15 health workers and support staff deployed to the emergency centre, there is no time to rest. Rose Kajawo, 42, a cleaner at the ETU, arrives each day at around 7 a.m. almost three hours before health workers check in.

"After dusting and mopping the rooms, corridors and open spaces, I disinfect chairs, doors, walls and places where people who cannot stand in the sun sit while awaiting coronavirus testing," says Kajawo.

But like all frontline health workers, Kajawo is at constant risk of being exposed to COVID-19 as the centre is often congested with people who are coming to be tested for the virus, some of whom may test positive.

“I take a swab test every 14 days. When I knock off, I remove my personal protective clothing and put on the clothes I wore on arrival. When I get home, I immediately wash my clothes with soap before taking a bath.”

But until recently, the ETU’s water and electricity supply were constantly being disrupted and adequate cleaning to prevent the spread of infection was difficult.

However, with support from UNICEF and funding from UK Aid, the ETU’s facilities have been upgraded and now include two buildings with flushing toilets and a solar-powered water system complete with three handwashing stands with liquid soap dispensers.

“Frontline workers like myself and our clients are now able to wash our hands regularly with soap so we don’t contaminate surfaces such as walls, doors, doorknobs, chairs and beds,” says Kajawo.
Situation of Children in Malawi

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. Ranked 172 out of 189 countries (the Human Development Index in 2019).

49% of the population in Malawi are children.

- 2.5 million are under the age of 5
- 8.8 million are under the age of 18
- About 1.3 million children are orphans

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

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

90% vaccination coverage was recorded nationally for five consecutive years (2008–2012), with every district having achieved at least 80% coverage.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Despite significant reduction in chronic malnutrition

Only 8% of children aged 6-23 months consume an adequate diet in Malawi.

Consumption of iodized salt reduced from 95% in 2009 to 90% in 2015-16.

60% of primary school children are zinc deficient.

Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life declined from 71% in 2010 to 61% in 2015.

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

Almost 13% of girls in the age group 15-19 years are underweight while about 7% are overweight.

of children in Malawi are stunted

of children are wasted (2015-2016)
**Malawi – Annual Report 2020**

**Education**

**Free primary education** has contributed to **90%** of primary school age children accessing primary education, but only **51%** Girls and **52%** Boys complete their primary education.

**48%** of children in Malawi accessed early childhood education (ECD) and services nationally. A 2011-15 study

**16%** of secondary school-age learners enter secondary school and only **24%** of new entrants in the last grade of secondary school complete their secondary education.

**About 4%** of children in the poorest quintile attend secondary school compared to **42%** in the richest quintile.

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

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

Each Year **thousands** of girls drop out of school due to pregnancy or marriage. Reintegrating pregnant adolescents and teen mothers into schools is challenging.
Water, sanitation and hygiene

About 69% of Malawians benefit from basic water access, yet only 26% have access to basic sanitation.

7% of under-5 deaths are caused by waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, constituting it as the second highest killer of children in Malawi.

In rural areas, 37% of households spend 30 minutes or more obtaining their drinking water, in comparison to 13% in urban areas.

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

About 45% of the traditional water systems in Malawi are reported to be non-functional.

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

1 in 5 girls | 1 in 7 boys

1/3 of all females and males under 18 experienced corporal punishment.

Only 37% of children under-5 are registered.

Over 80% of under-5 children do not have birth registration certificate.

47% of girls are married before age 18, one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world.

16% In 2015, marriage was said to account for school dropouts.

Age 10

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

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

1 in 5 girls experienced at least one incident of sexual abuse before the age of 18 in Malawi.
UNICEF’s work in Malawi

Programme Pillars

Under the Country Programme (CP) 2019 to 2023, in 2020 UNICEF worked with partners to deliver on its strategic lifecycle approach to providing quality services for children across the “three pillars” of development and humanitarian intervention: early childhood, school-aged children and child-friendly, inclusive, resilient communities. The pillar approach is designed to ensure that programming makes the greatest impact during a child’s key windows of opportunity.

To support young children in their first 1,000 days, the early childhood pillar focuses on the importance of responsive parenting as UNICEF works with the government and other partners to scale up work on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH). Under the pillar dedicated to school-aged children, UNICEF works to improve learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy, with a focus on girls and adolescents. Under the pillar covering child-friendly communities, UNICEF works to empower communities to practice positive social behaviours and become more resilient to climate change and economic shocks, as well as the implications of COVID-19.

The life cycle pillar approach

0-23 months 25-59 months 5-14 years 15-18 years

Early childhood School-aged childhood Child-friendly, inclusive, resilient communities
Pillar One
Early Childhood

To ensure every child in Malawi is given the best chance to survive and thrive, UNICEF takes a comprehensive approach to supporting young children in their first 1,000 days of life.

The early childhood pillar focuses on the importance of responsive and positive parenting to ensure that children, through age 5, receive the best possible care in a nurturing and protective family environment.

Despite the pandemic, in 2020 UNICEF worked with the government and other partners to implement programming on maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH), nutrition promotion, immunization, prevention and treatment of HIV, and cognitive stimulation through early childhood development (ECD).

UNICEF also combated malnutrition and stunting by carrying out high-impact nutrition interventions.

During the year, UNICEF supported 17 out of 28 districts to implement a minimum package of nutrition-improvement services, benefiting more than 3 million children under 5. Despite limitations imposed by COVID-19, about 90 per cent of those admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)– some 32,958 children aged 6 to 59 months – were returned to good health. At the peak of the pandemic, a total of 13,565 were admitted for treatment of SAM. UNICEF’s nutrition campaigns employed “open air” settings while “door-to-door” screening was conducted, with acute cases referred for treatment. With support from the KFW development bank, the European Union (EU), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Relief, Hunger...
Project and district councils, some 490,284 caregivers of children 0-23 months were reached with messages on breastfeeding and optimal complementary feeding within the COVID-19 context.

Some 107,783 children with diarrhoea were treated with oral rehydration salts (ORS).

However, 14 per cent of the children were referred to high levels of care because of ORS shortages at primary care clinics, indicating logistical challenges. Some 667,732 children under 5 completed three doses of the diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus vaccine. And 76 per cent of HIV-exposed infants were tested within two months of birth (against an annual target of 71 per cent) while 98 per cent of the pregnant women, who attended antenatal care and were HIV-tested, knew their status.

To improve care practices for children during the pandemic, more than 639,000 families were last year reached with messages on positive parenting and responsive caregiving, including ECD. Families were reached through various media channels including mobile phones, mobile vans, radio jingles, TV and radio talk shows. UNICEF also worked with the World Bank, Germany/KFW and UNICEF national committees, to improve advocacy for ECD leading to an increase in integrated ECD services from 13 districts in 2019 to 18 districts in 2020.

In 2020, MNCH services supported 48,500 children and 120,000 mothers. More than 146,000 children had their births registered. This represents 34 per cent of children under 5, an increase of 10 per cent from 2019 and surpassing the 2020 target of 30 per cent. However, notification of new births declined as the pandemic reduced the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled birth attendants.

Right: Three-year-old Samson Makina gets weighed during growth monitoring sessions at Migowi Health Centre in Phalombe District.

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Some 32,958 children aged 6 to 59 months, or about 93 per cent out of those admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition, were returned to good health.

In 2020, maternal newborn and child health services supported 48,500 children and 120,000 mothers.

More than 146,000 children, representing 34 per cent of children under 5, had their births registered in 2020.
Volunteers Winning the Battle Against Child Malnutrition

Tumizani Malizani’s wide grin says it all: her 2-year-old baby boy Yusuf playing on her lap is healthy, giving her more time to do household chores and tend to her crops.

The mother of seven is convinced that giving children diversified foods protects them from malnutrition, but hygiene and sanitation matter as well. And Yusuf is reaping the benefits.

“He looks much healthier, is stronger and more active than his brothers were at his age,” Malizani explains, “They were mostly underweight and often sick with diseases.”

Previously, Malizani struggled to feed her children. So she established a vegetable garden and planted fruit trees in her backyard, where goats, six fowl, chickens and scores of pigeons now live.

Malizani’s house also boasts a clean kitchen with a dish rack for utensils, a pit latrine with a cover and a handwashing facility called a “mpondagiya.”

Planting vegetable gardens, and practicing proper hygiene and sanitation, are best practices shared with families here to prevent child malnutrition. Tragically, poor nutritional practices have left one third of Malawian children stunted or too short for their age.

The changes at Malizani’s home occurred after she received counseling from a local volunteer “care group” which routinely visits pregnant and lactating women to encourage them to consume balanced diets and keep their homes clean.

The volunteers are trained by the Malawi Red Cross Society with support from UNICEF. They conduct door-to-door visits and hold communal cooking demonstrations to share tips on how to prepare balanced diets using locally available food.

The volunteer project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

It is being employed in the Malawian districts of Chikwawa, Neno, Mangochi, Mulanje, Karonga and Nkhata Bay and seeks to contribute to the improvement of the nutritional status of children under the age of 5 and pregnant and lactating women.

Mavuto Kukhoma, the Red Cross project officer in Chikwawa, says in her district alone, the project has trained 254 “promoters,” 564 “care group leaders” and 5,405 “cluster leaders.”

“The women and men in care groups have become reliable change agents in promoting the desired behavioural and social change to increase resilience in their communities,” she says.

Now with her family healthy, Malizani can spend more time earning a living as a subsistence farmer. She also doesn’t have to take her children on regular trips to the local health centre, which is 17 km away and is an expensive ride by motorcycle.

“The transport cost is enough to buy 20 kgs of maize, plus pens, notebooks and other learning material for my children.”

“Prevention is cheaper than cure. Simple things like sanitation and growing your own fruit and vegetables are a big help,” she adds.
UNICEF’s pillar on school-aged children is committed to ensuring that girls and boys acquire basic literacy and numeracy, and the life skills they need to be successful. At the same time, UNICEF works to ensure that school children are safe from exploitation, harmful social norms and violence, while benefiting from integrated social services.

However, the COVID-19 outbreak severely impacted learning for more than 7 million school students as all schools closed between 23 March and 7 September in 2020. UNICEF led the COVID-19 education response, supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) to ensure continuity of learning, reaching approximately 2.6 million learners. During the months schools were closed, UNICEF supported the development of the Emergency Radio Education Programme, which included 400 lessons in English, Maths and Chichewa. The lessons were accessed by 1,918,415 primary learners. In addition, 74,581 primary teachers were trained on remedial guidelines to support accelerated learning after schools reopened.

Approximately 71,552 secondary learners accessed online learning programmes and some 50,000 secondary learners received self-study materials.

To promote girls’ participation at the secondary level, UNICEF continued its support to scholarships benefiting 11,107 girls and helped strengthen the National Scholarship Trust Fund, ensuring better coordination and resource mobilization through partnerships with the private sector.

Every child in Malawi has the right to go to school and learn, regardless of who they are, where they live or how much their family earns.

Left: Carlorine Kamanga missed studying in a classroom. She is happy to be back at school because she can now interact with friends at Luwambaza primary school
UNICEF was last year designated as the grant agent for the US$10 million accelerated funding support from Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the world’s largest global fund dedicated to education in low-income countries, to support Malawi’s COVID-19 education response. At the same time, UNICEF helped mobilize US$325,000 from Education Cannot Wait (ECW), a UN global fund dedicated to funding education in emergency settings.

UNICEF also led the School Re-opening Taskforce which developed guidelines to ensure schools reopened safely. The guidelines were launched in June by the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 and balanced safety and health considerations with accelerated learning and remediation programmes, helping to bridge learning gaps acquired during the closures. To assist children with disabilities, UNICEF also supported the MoE and other partners to produce materials, reaching approximately 1,000 children from 13 districts with key COVID-19 messages and braille materials.

Despite best efforts, COVID-19 created an extremely challenging situation for educators and many children experienced difficulty accessing distance learning programmes. In particular, students from disadvantaged families had limited access to radio and internet as well as teacher support. It is estimated about 64 per cent of primary learners were not able to access radio programmes and about 68 per cent of secondary learners couldn’t access online or self-study materials. Furthermore, COVID-19 highlighted specific challenges faced by girls during homeschooling and more work is needed to target guardians and parents and ensure girls get the same level and quality of education as boys.

As the chair of the Education Development Partners Group, UNICEF worked with the World Bank and USAID to coordinate and finalize the National Education Sector plan (2020-30), a landmark document anchored around three thematic areas: access and equity, quality and relevance of learning, and governance and management for pre-primary, primary and secondary education levels. Following advocacy from UNICEF and partners, a commitment to develop an inclusive education policy was included in the National Education Sector Investment Plan.

Some 204,252 adolescent girls – both in and out of school – accessed iron and folic acid supplementation at schools in six districts. More than 350,000 learners also benefited from handwashing buckets supplied to 500 schools in preparation for school reopening.

Additionally, 472,673 students from the nine districts have improved skills and knowledge to prevent and protect themselves from violence through the UNICEF-supported Safe Schools Program. Some 112,924 adolescents were also reached with messages on gender-based violence prevention, child rights and participation, adolescent nutrition, HIV and menstrual hygiene management.

At the same time, young people were engaged in decision-making processes at the school-level through student clubs and councils. A total of 200 youth-led organizations were registered with the National Youth Council, providing more opportunities for young people to voice their concerns and contribute to the national dialogue about developmental issues. Almost 4,000 out-of-school clubs in 28 districts were established as a platform for youth participation at community level. UNICEF provided training and support to district-level authorities and frontline staff members, which allowed approximately 10,000 adolescents and young people to access improved youth-friendly services, including skills training and sports activities provided by the youth centres.
1,918,415 primary learners benefited from emergency radio programme.

Some 71,552 secondary learners accessed online learning programmes while approximately 50,000 received self-study materials.

More than 500,000 girls and boys were reached through integrated services including WASH, Nutrition and protection using schools as service delivery platform. The children were also reached through messaging on early marriage, safety and protection including reporting mechanisms, girls empowerment and skills.
Radio lessons give disabled children hope beyond COVID-19

Amina White, 16, was born with a deformity in her left ankle. The issue was so severe she eventually had to have her leg amputated. When she was old enough, she started using an artificial leg to help her get around.

However, during the rainy season, she was forced to stay indoors to ensure that the prosthetic didn’t get soaked through.

“I walk slightly over two kilometres to school from home, and whenever rains catch up with me it is not easy to use my leg in the mud. It gets stuck and slows me down,” says Amina.

For this reason, Amina’s school provided her and two peers, who also have disabilities, with solar-powered radios, which they use to listen to remote learning lessons.

The radios proved even more valuable when the COVID-19 pandemic led to school closures, sending more than 7 million Malawian children home.

With the assistance of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF has since provided support to the Ministry of Education to develop more learning materials for radio programming, now reaching thousands of children, both disabled and able-bodied alike. Grant funding has also been used to procure radios for the most vulnerable.

“The lessons and other programmes that we listened to on the radio encouraged us to work hard,” says Amina who wants to become a primary school teacher. “I learned a lot in English, Chichewa and maths, the subjects I like the most.”

The radio programming also promoted COVID-19 infection control measures including handwashing with soap and social distancing.

Now with her radio, Amina says she won’t feel discouraged when the rainy season returns. “If it wasn’t for the radio lessons, I wouldn’t be able to keep up with my school work. Now I have a chance to overcome my disability and follow my dream of being a teacher.”
Pillar Three
Child-friendly, inclusive and resilient communities

Girls and boys deserve the best chance to lead safe, productive and fulfilling lives by growing up in resilient, inclusive and child-friendly communities.

In 2020, UNICEF worked to empower communities to practice positive social behaviours and prepare for economic shocks, climate change and the implications of COVID-19. To strengthen community resilience, UNICEF’s 2020 interventions supported systems that provide children an equitable chance in life, focusing on comprehensive WASH, social protection, communication for development (C4D), local governance and child protection services.

UNICEF through the Government of Malawi’s Social Cash Transfer Programme reached more than 291,000 ultra poor households nationwide with social assistance – an unconditional monthly cash transfer of about MK 9,000 to help them meet their basic needs. Additionally, the programme also benefited about 38,900 shock-affected households during the lean season with additional top-ups. UNICEF supported the design and operationalisation of the government-led COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI). This helped the government to effectively expand its social protection system to accommodate increased needs from the pandemic. Under the CUCI, 199,640 households were registered in 2020. UNICEF continued to engage...
with Malawi’s Parliament to strengthen its budget oversight function and with the Ministry of Finance, the National Local Government Finance Committee and International Finance Institutions to reinforce the country’s public financial management system. As a result, the national budget allocation was increased for vaccines, secondary education, early childhood development, and the country’s Social Protection system was expanded to cover urban areas.

The level of violence against women and children in Malawi has unfortunately remained the same the past five years. COVID-19 lockdowns and school closures are believed to be partly responsible for an increase in child marriages compared to the previous year.

In 2020, approximately 58,000 new cases of violence against girls, boys, and women were reported through UNICEF-supported services. The most common form of violence was neglect (27.6%) followed by child marriage (24%). UNICEF combats violence by supporting safe places known as Children’s Corners.

In 2020, 117,787 children aged 6 to 18 had access to psycho-social support through these community-owned safe spaces, which also offer life skills education and child rights empowerment.

More than 12,000 child protection training guides were distributed in the spaces, while 450 Children’s Corner kits were distributed in 15 districts. In 2020, victim support units were supported in six districts to assist women and children experiencing violence.

In 2020, UNICEF, as part of its commitment to creating child friendly and resilient communities, worked on empowering faith and traditional leaders towards ending negative social norms by identifying local and context-specific solutions. For example, UNICEF Malawi used digital and interpersonal media to mobilize over 3,000 traditional and faith leaders to end child marriages in 8 districts. UNICEF also continuously strengthened collaboration across community, district and national level structures empowering the National and District level Social Mobilization Committees and the Public Affairs Committee in leading the global movement for Faith and Positive Change for Children in Malawi.

In 2020, UNICEF ensured continuous access to WASH for vulnerable people benefiting 391,510 people with safe water, 36,500 people with emergency sanitation and about 1.9 million people through hygiene promotion campaigns. UNICEF partnered with the Northern Region Water Board to install 400 prepaid water meters at public water points ensuring more reliable and affordable access to safe drinking water for poor households. Last year, UNICEF also piloted innovative, scalable and climate resilient water supply systems for rural communities. This included market-based sanitation services that were used in rural areas, providing 24,000 people access to basic sanitation services. At the same time, 13 solar water schemes were constructed serving more than 57,000 people including school-going children. Furthermore, UNICEF developed strategic partnership with the World Bank and the European Investment Bank to promote safe and sustainable urban sanitation services.

In 2020, UNICEF started supporting the review of the National Decentralization Policy as well as a comprehensive review of the fiscal decentralization systems in Malawi, working towards the creation of a functional framework for the reforms and investments necessary for Malawi’s decentralized systems to thrive and deliver. This while UNICEF’s local governance and decentralization efforts continued to put the child at the centre of all local government planning, budgeting and programme implementation.
particularly at local level. In 2020, UNICEF continued to work closely with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGaRD) and rural district councils to advance the concept of child-friendly communities. For example, UNICEF supported development planning processes and training for decentralized structures in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. UNICEF also supported the Local Government Ministry to establish an innovative dashboard system for effective planning, coordination and decision making, especially for the COVID-19 response.

In 2020, UNICEF supported the government to strengthen its preparation and mitigation mechanisms for emergencies, and improve district-level coordination in preparation for possible disasters. UNICEF helped disseminate lessons learned from previous emergency responses, engaging with the Department Disaster Management Affairs and Red Cross at both the national and district levels. UNICEF also contributed to the government’s National Resilience Strategy, working to link humanitarian response plans with long-term resilience building and development programming, while also developing a community engagement and resilience manual for the village development committees.

Community engagement remains integral to promoting sustainable positive behaviour change. In 2020, UNICEF engaged more than 1.1 million people through interpersonal, community mobilization and mass media efforts with integrated messages, mainly on COVID-19 prevention and disaster preparedness. UNICEF strategically worked with thousands of faith and traditional leaders to ensure vulnerable populations, including adolescents, young women and children with disabilities, are reached with critical information, including ending of child marriage. In the flood-prone districts of Balaka, Chikwawa and Zomba, UNICEF developed a community resilience roadmap that outlines collaborative, community-focused and participatory approaches to build resilient and child-friendly communities.

Major Achievements

In 2020, UNICEF through the Government of Malawi’s Social Cash Transfer Programme reached more than **291,000 ultra poor households nationwide with social assistance**.

**117,787 children aged 6 to 18** had access to psycho-social support through Children’s Corners, which also offer life skills education and child rights empowerment.

UNICEF’s COVID-19, flood and WASH emergency work benefited about **400,000 people** with safe water, **36,260 people** with emergency sanitation and **2.1 million people** through hygiene promotion campaigns.
On a sunny Friday morning, 14-year-old Clara Charles, and a dozen children at Namyala Primary School in Nsanje District are starting their day by drinking clean water from a recently installed tap.

For the almost 1,300 children at the hilly school, the sweltering sunshine typical of the Shire Valley on Malawi’s southern border has always been oppressive.

But now the sun is a welcome relief. Their school has glistening new solar panels that turn sunlight into electricity, powering a submersible pump that draws water from a deep borehole into two large tanks mounted on the adjacent hill.

The water from the tanks is treated with chlorine to kill germs before it flows to the taps the children drink from.

“With the taps close to our classes, we drink clean water when we need it,” says Clara. “We no longer walk long distances or miss classes. It has also become easier to clean our classrooms, kitchen and toilets.”

The new drinking water system was installed by UNICEF Malawi with funding from UNICEF’s Spanish National Committee and energy company Energias de Portugal and provides a climate-resilient water supply for the school and the surrounding community.

The school’s salty borehole broke down in 2016 and for the past five years, students have spent their breaks from class walking to an overcrowded communal water pump a kilometre away.

“Many times, we returned to class after going to the water pump to find lessons were winding up. We were missing a lot,” Clara recalls.

The solar-powered system has also reduced the risk of waterborne diseases, especially diarrhoea which often forces students to skip classes.
Humanitarian action

Malawi – Annual Report 2020

Humanitarian action
Humanitarian action

Almost 2 million Malawians remained food insecure in early 2020 despite a 26 per cent increase in the production of maize, the major food staple in the country.

Notwithstanding an abundance of grain, people went hungry because private traders withheld stock from the market, driving up the price. The high price of fuel also reduced the purchasing power of vulnerable households. In the meantime, a poor winter harvest caused by high temperatures, a fall armyworm infestation and poor rains in the south compounded the situation even further. A national food insecurity response plan was developed covering the food security, nutrition, protection and education sectors. UNICEF co-led the education, nutrition and child protection efforts, supporting the government to coordinate the response. UNICEF also provided technical support to health workers, implementing partners and community volunteers to treat malnutrition among children. Some 477,982 children under the age of 5 were screened while 22,077 children found with SAM were admitted for treatment.

In 2020, flood waters swept through 11 of Malawi’s 28 districts, impacting approximately 32,440 households. Because of the floods, many houses were destroyed forcing families to find temporary shelter at displacement sites. In some cases, roofs of school buildings were blown off during the storms while other critical infrastructure was damaged. About 400,000 flood-affected people were reached with safe drinking water as boreholes were treated with shock chlorination and households were offered water treatment assistance. At the same time, approximately 64,000 people whose toilets were destroyed in the floods were provided with rolls of plastic sheeting to construct temporary latrines. More than 90,000 people were reached with hygiene messages at sites for internally displaced people, as well as in areas surrounding the flood waters.

To help avert malaria outbreaks, 52,900 long-lasting insecticidal nets were distributed and prepositioned in 17 districts with traditionally high burdens of malaria.

UNICEF also supported the establishment and strengthening of child friendly spaces or Children’s Corners providing psycho-social support to about 26,600 children. Furthermore, UNICEF provided 500 desks...
UNICEF also supported a preventive oral cholera vaccination campaign in the districts of Nsanje and Phalombe, targeting 355,000 people. Concerns about cholera in the wake of the floods prompted UNICEF to procure and pre-position medical supplies including diagnostic kits and transport media, capable of treating 100 cholera patients in potential hotspots. In November, the MoH detected a number of suspected measles cases in the Phalombe district and quickly initiated specimen collection for laboratory analysis. Seven cases were confirmed, three believed to have been contracted in neighbouring Mozambique and four in Phalombe.

With almost 2 million people remaining food insecure, 477,982 children under the age of 5 were screened while 22,077 children found with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were admitted for treatment.

UNICEF supported the establishment and strengthening of child friendly spaces or Children’s Corners providing psychosocial support to about 26,600 children.

UNICEF supported a preventive oral cholera vaccination campaign targeting 355,000 people in the wake of floods, which also promoted UNICEF to procure and pre-positioned medical supplies.
Surviving the lean season

For Filesi Singano, the end of every year is not about Christmas and New Years celebrations, but the beginning of the struggle with food scarcity.

The lean season spans almost six rainy months, too long for the 46-year-old mother of four to sustain food stocks between harvests.

“Food scarcity bites hard from October to March, and food prices rise every week. Hunger kicks in just when we are supposed to buy seed and fertilizer in time for the growing season,” says Singano.

But as a recipient of Malawi’s Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), known as Mtukula Pakhomo, Singano at least has a cushion for her family to fall back on. Currently, the family receives MK 6,400 (about US$9) under the SCTP.

The cash transfers go to vulnerable groups, including women-headed and child-headed, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and chronic illness as well as those who cannot work anymore.

“The payment amount gets us a 20kg bucketful of maize during the hunger period and twice as much during the rest of the year,” she says.

Filesi has been supporting her children singlehandedly since she and her husband separated in 2009. Her family consumes a bucketful of maize within 10 days, and they require two more in a difficult month.

The food shortage leaves Filesi hopping from one village to another, doing low-paying jobs in homes and farms of other villagers. “During the growing season, I spend more time doing piecework in the fields of my neighbours than I do in my fields at home.”

This is a common challenge for many SCTP beneficiaries. Filesi says she is constantly torn between sending her children to school or keeping them home to help her earn money.

“I want them to learn until their dreams come true. I didn’t achieve my aspiration to become a teacher because I dropped out in Standard 8,” she says.

A 2020 UNICEF study – the Impact of Yearly and Seasonal Price Changes on SCTP Beneficiaries in Malawi – found in rural Malawi, poverty and ultra-poverty rates increased by 9 per cent and 5 per cent respectively in the sowing and growing months compared to the harvest and post-harvest seasons.

The study also found children are almost 15 per cent more likely to be engaged in child labour during Malawi’s sowing and growing seasons compared to the harvest seasons, and there was a clear and statistically significant increase in reported child deaths (+10% between the growing season and post-harvest season.

Because of the seasonal price spikes, an effort to make the SCTP more sensitive to climate shocks is underway with support from UNICEF, WFP, the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and the Joint SDG Fund.

“With more money during the growing season, we can afford daily meals and invest in our crops to increase our harvests and beat chronic hunger so no child quits school to marry or do casual work,” says Singano.
Innovation
Matching today’s challenges with tomorrow’s solutions

To respond to the humanitarian needs of children, UNICEF implemented a number of innovative solutions in 2020, mostly addressing COVID-19, focused particularly on health and youth engagement in the country.

At the same time, one positive consequence from the pandemic emerged: the opportunity to urgently develop these solutions with the added support of the government, public sector and private sector, which were all eager to combat the virus.

For example, the MoH needed predictive data to rapidly equip decisions-makers with evidence on how a surge of COVID-19 cases could impact scarce medical resources. With UNICEF support, consulting firm Cooper/Smith built a deterministic mathematical model that examined COVID-19 transmission rates and estimated the number of cases, hospitalizations, intensive care unit (ICU) stays, and deaths. The model was designed to predict case numbers within age brackets. The model has also simulated the pandemic at the local level, calculating location-specific outbreak start dates based on observational data and data from mobile phone networks that shows the movement of people around the country.

In June, the COVID-19 Youth Innovation Challenge was hosted by UNICEF in partnership with Segal Family Foundation and the Social Impact Incubator Malawi,
In 2020, 146 students graduated from the African Drone and Data Academy equipped with skills on drone construction, piloting and geographic information system (GIS) know-how.

A total of 6,248 people aged 14-35 years participated in the COVID-19 Youth Innovation Challenge, submitting ideas on how to fight COVID-19. Ten finalists went on to participate in a 21-day social impact incubation and mentorship programme.

With UNICEF support, consulting firm Cooper/Smith built a deterministic mathematical model that examined COVID-19 transmission rates and estimated the number of cases, hospitalizations, ICU stays, and deaths in the country.
Reimagining education: Sam proposes an app to keep all children learning during COVID-19

Sam Masikini isn’t just any inventor. He’s an award-winning inventor. He’s won accolades for coming up with a voice and gesture-controlled home security system. And for building a machine that can tell if a banknote is genuine or not.

It was this knack for inventing that led Masikini to become a member of the Malawi Polytechnic COVID-19 task force charged with designing and developing products to fight the virus. It also led him to take part and grab the winning spot in the COVID-19 Youth Innovation Challenge.

More than 6,248 inspirational Malawian youth aged 14 to 35 took part in the Challenge. The challenge was organized by UNICEF in partnership with the Segal Family Foundation and the Social Impact Incubator Malawi, via Cartedo, an experiential learning platform that helps youth develop employability and entrepreneurship skills through innovation challenges.

Masikini’s winning idea for the challenge was to figure out how to make e-learning feasible in a country with low digital literacy. The winners in Malawi received funding and coaching to support scaling up of their ideas.

“Even before the pandemic, education in Malawi was in crisis,” says Maskikini. “Only about 35 per cent of children complete their primary education and only 8 per cent of those who progress to secondary school actually finish.”

“So imagine how devastating the impact of COVID-19 will be, particularly for children and young people in disadvantaged and remote communities.”

Because only a small fraction of the population has access to the internet, Masikini says e-learning would have to be conducted offline. He proposes using an app which runs on low cost devices such as KaiOS technology in combination with radio communication.

He says the app could even reach children and young people in remote villages.

“The idea is to reimagine education in Malawi and offer equal opportunities for continued learning to a boy or girl in a remote village.”
In 2020, UNICEF rolled out positive initiatives to confront gender bias and challenge outdated ideas that confine women to traditional roles or expose them to harmful social norms. Specifically, UNICEF focused on secondary education and skills, adolescent nutrition, pregnancy care, HIV and HPV prevention and gender-based violence in emergencies. However, promoting gender equity proved challenging as COVID-19 kept girls from the safety of the classroom and put them at greater risk of discrimination, abuse and violence. An assessment made by the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW), which compared 2020 and 2019 data, concluded that school closures increased cases of gender-based violence, teen pregnancy and child marriage.

UNICEF responded by working toward getting girls back to school and ensuring they complete their education. For example, UNICEF supported the government’s work to implement a “re-admission policy,” which encourages pregnant girls, and girls rescued from child marriages, to go back to school. The policy is designed to dispel negative attitudes and hostile behaviour directed at returning girls by their peers. As a result of the policy, a total of 626 girls have returned to school in the life of the programme and 40 of them have since completed their secondary education. UNICEF has also equipped 345 Teacher Training colleges and secondary school teachers in gender responsive to 11,107 girls contributing to improved access and gender parity at the secondary level.

In 2020, UNICEF also supported the Safe Schools Program, which focuses on school-related, gender-based violence and ensures schools are safe for both boys and girls. A total of 212,262 students (105,301 males and 106,961 females) who took part in the programme in 2020 were taught to recognize sexual and
gender-based violence and report it to relevant authorities. As a result, 941 cases of child marriage were identified and referred to authorities. Additionally, 2.7 million stakeholders were educated about the rights of girls and gender-related laws through UNICEF-supported radio programmes and television jingles.

In 2020, UNICEF supported government efforts to provide adolescent girls with the human papilloma virus or HPV vaccine, protecting them against cervical and other cancers. In January, 206,676 girls were given the first dose of the HPV vaccine while another 199,414 girls got their second dose. UNICEF also supported government interventions on folic acid supplementation as 322,525 adolescent girls received iron and folic acid supplements to protect against anemia across six target districts. As part of HIV prevention programming, 2,026 adolescent girls and boys were educated on HIV through community radio platforms. UNICEF also supported interventions targeting adolescents living with HIV who experienced improved adherence and viral load suppression.

In 2020, UNICEF continued to train professionals to provide services to vulnerable children while also working to shift social norms that condone violence and people from speaking up against violence. As a result, over 58,000 new cases of violence against girls (26,201), boys (16,165) and women (15,772) were reported through UNICEF Malawi-supported services in 2020. UNICEF also trained over 100 partners and 70 staff members in gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse in emergency response. UNICEF also facilitated gender integration in key national policy frameworks in the education and the early childhood development sectors.

**Major Achievements**

A total of **212,262 students** who took part in the Safe Schools Program were taught to recognize sexual and gender-based violence and report it to relevant authorities.

UNICEF equipped 345 secondary school teachers in gender responsive teaching methodology and provided education support to **11,107 girls** contributing to improved access and gender parity at secondary level.

Some **322,525 adolescent girls** received iron and folic acid supplements to protect against anemia across six target districts. Similarly, 206,676 adolescent girls received their first dose of HPV vaccine while 199,414 girls got their second dose, protecting them against cervical and other cancers.
Schoolgirl Shakes Off COVID-19 Regret

On 23 March 2020 came news about the sudden closure of schools across Malawi to push back the coronavirus pandemic. The standstill left children idling at home for six months, not sure when they would safely return to class. Sixteen-year-old Lucy fell pregnant for a second time.

The first came at the age of 14 in 2018 when she had to drop out of school for a year to give birth. The pregnancy dimmed her dream to become a nurse. “I was gutted. The first pregnancy left me a year behind my agemates. Then coronavirus disrupted everything all over again,” Lucy explains.

“My 19-year-old neighbour and I agreed to marry because we thought schools would never reopen again,” recalls Lucy, a second-born in a family of four in Khomani Village in Mitundu, south of Lilongwe City.

According to the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, about 13,000 girls got pregnant and 40,000 married before their 18th birthday during the emergency school closure. The surge came three years after Parliament unanimously outlawed marriages involving boys and girls aged below 18. It confirmed that children are safer in school.

Lucy regrets sneaking out of her parents’ home in the night to marry a fellow teenager, now repeating Standard Eight at her school. “On 22 July 2020, I packed my clothes in a plastic bag and left. I thought marriage was rosy, but it wasn’t—because both of us were young and jobless,” she explains. The boy remained in school while the pregnant girl stayed home.

The couple depended on their parents for everything. They separated within a month after members of a mother group persuaded Lucy to return to school after a miscarriage.

In January 2021, she re-enrolled in Standard Six despite being in Standard Seven when she left. Learning stopped once more in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19, but she remained resolute. She says she is working hard to achieve her dream of a better life. “I don’t want to slip again. Marriage is no solution to poverty.”

“During the brief marriage, I lived in a little shop that could not accommodate a single bed. My husband beat me, I was starved and the shame of begging and slavish piecework in neighbouring fields was too much. I’m still too young to marry.”

Lucy salutes the child protectors who encouraged her to leave and told her that she was safer in school.

Empowering adolescents and young people with sexual and reproductive health information

At school, Lucy gives her peers friendly advice against premarital and transactional sex, which fuels dropout rates, teen pregnancies, child marriage and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

For her, the spike of early pregnancies and marriages during the emergency school shutdown is a wake-up call for the government and its partners to sensitise parents and community leaders to safeguard young people during emergencies.

“Knowledge is power. If you give girls accurate information, they will stay in school, share experiences, delay their sex debuts and beat peer pressure which landed me in trouble,” Lucy explains.

Nearly half of all girls in Malawi are already married by the age of 18 while a third of those aged 15-19 have begun childbearing, accounting for a quarter of all pregnancies (Malawi Demographic Health Survey 2016). A third of all new HIV infections in 2018 were among young people aged 15-24.

Limited sexuality education, prevailing myths and misconceptions associated with contraceptive use derail efforts to address adolescent fertility in a country where adolescent fertility is high.
With support from the Swedish Government, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNAIDS and the Government of Malawi are delivering an integrated package of sexual and reproductive health services, HIV sensitive interventions and sexual and gender-based violence prevention. This joint programme is being implemented in areas where teenage pregnancy, HIV, sexual and gender-based violence are high to help young people like Lucy make informed decisions about relationships and sexuality as well as provide care and treatment to adolescents living with HIV.

Lucy’s mother, Bertha Masina, says parents have a primary responsibility to safeguard young people.

She says: “Teen pregnancies and child marriages were already rampant before the pandemic, so we need to educate most parents to value girls’ education instead of pushing them to marry.

**Sexual violence almost a norm**

The twin problem or child marriage and teen pregnancy constitutes the most tolerated form of sexual violence against girls below the marriageable age.

A 2013 national survey supported by UNICEF revealed that one in five girls experiences sexual abuse before her 18th birthday.

UNICEF supports the Government of Malawi to train district social welfare officers and community child protectors to swiftly manage cases of child abuse, rights violations and exploitation.

Bridget Mwale, assistant social welfare officer in Lilongwe, says the case management skills became handy when thousands of girls quit school for marriage during the school break.

“The pandemic has shown us that parents, schools, community leaders and child protection workers should do more to protect young people and keep them in school. Had we acted swiftly, the boy wouldn’t have impregnated the girl twice,” she says.

Lucy is one of three teen mothers at her school. Seven girls who got pregnant during the lengthy school closure did not return.

“When I discussed Lucy’s situation with the mother group members, they made follow-up visits and persuaded the couple to separate. She obliged and teachers advise her to focus on her future,” headteacher Rose Gwande explains.

She is concerned that five in every 100 girls quit school due to poverty, parental indifference and cultural expectation for girls to marry and bear children.

“As a woman, I’m their role model. When a girl learns, she can become what she wants. The readmission policy gives teen mothers and other re-admitted learners a second chance,” she says.

And Lucy’s ex-husband encouraged her to start using contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancy.

“We were too young to marry, and we couldn’t feed ourselves. Now we are just friends. We encourage each other to work hard in school for our own good and our daughter’s sake,” he explains.
In 2020, UNICEF continued to communicate and to advocate to drive change for children in Malawi and build a more coordinated, consistent and an integrated approach to the Country Office’s advocacy, communication, partnership and resource mobilization strategies.

In 2020, the government’s COVID-19 restrictions posed barriers to public engagement, media outreach and campaigns. However, UNICEF employed strategic communication tools and tactics to raise awareness about key issues affecting the children and UNICEF’s response to those issues. As a result, UNICEF reached over 13 million people and engaged an audience of more than 1 million internet users on child-related issues. Importantly, UNICEF leveraged its brand and messaging to advocate for the safeguarding of children’s rights and those at risk of being left behind. For example, UNICEF successfully partnered with various media outlets, including the country’s leading Zodiac Broadcasting Station, the Malawi Institute of Journalism and community radio stations, to focus on the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable children and their families. UNICEF’s advocacy work with social influencers paid dividends as Sangie, a UNICEF champion and popular local reggae artist, produced a chart-topping song containing lyrics on COVID-19 prevention. UNICEF also partnered with cabinet ministers and traditional leaders to produce videos encouraging people to wear masks.

While political unrest and COVID-19 prevented in-country visits, the country office hosted a virtual visit with partners in
Below: A child participating in the World Children’s Day celebrations at the State House

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Finland and continued to engage remotely with the National Committees from the US, UK, Norway, Italy and Switzerland. UNICEF also successfully produced about 3,000 compelling multimedia content items, focused primarily on the impact of COVID-19 on children.

Strategic communication efforts also focused on UNICEF’s work on the groundbreaking African Drone and Data Academy, generating global visibility and highlighting the critical need to equip young people with skills to succeed in an evolving job market. Stories on prize-winning innovative solutions proposed by Malawi’s youths to fight COVID-19 secured wide coverage beyond Malawi. A total of 185 positive stories about the situation of children in Malawi and UNICEF’s work were featured by national and international media organizations, including the BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, Reuters and The New York Times.

At the same time, UNICEF’s social media following increased 13 times over, growing from 38,723 in January to 518,705 by the end of the year. Visitors to the country office website also spiked by 163 per cent compared to 2019, with 131,414 new users reaching the site pages. In 2020,
UNICEF’s youth-targeted messaging platform recruited 47,984 U-Reporters bringing the total number to 229,220. The platform carried out 29 surveys. The results have not only helped the country office and its partners assess young people’s attitudes on critical issues but also helped mobilize Malawi’s youth to engage in meaningful action in pursuit of positive social change. Similarly, the Internet of Good Things, a site that hosts mobile-packaged content designed to make life-saving and life-improving information available for free, received more than 111,000-page views.

The 2020 commemoration of World Children’s Day provided a pivotal moment as advocacy for child rights was raised by UNICEF and its partners with the President’s office. Malawi’s new president, Dr Lazarus Chakwera, engaged with Malawian children in an interactive session hosted at the State House and broadcast live throughout the nation. The President pledged better legislation, policies and resourcing mechanisms to promote child rights in Malawi.

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In collaboration with the Government of Malawi, and partners on child rights issues, UNICEF Malawi commemorated World Children’s Day (WCD) 2020 by taking advocacy for child rights to the President’s office.

The main highlight of the WCD commemoration was an interactive session between a selected group of children representatives from all over Malawi and the newly elected President, His Excellency Dr Lazarus Chakwera under the theme “Re-imagining the Future”.

During the event, children asked the President the status of the six pledges that were made to children during the 2019 WCD commemoration.

In his response the President, who started his address by acknowledging that “it must never be imagined that children do not have ideas of the kind of future they envision for themselves and their country” committed through his public statement, seven child rights actions that the government will focus on in order to build a better Malawi for children.

On behalf of the government, the President committed to: increasing the national budget allocation to child related issues, to harmonize all laws related to children, to ensure that all services and resources for children are coordinated, to operationalize the National Children’s Commission Act- which is an oversight act for all issues relating to children, to increase children participation in decision making processes through rolling out children’s parliament country wide, to build the capacity and increase the number of child protection workers and ensure that all children in Malawi have an identity by rolling out the mass birth/child registration exercise.

Prior to the main commemoration event, children, the youth and UNICEF staff took part in various build-up events. These included, children-led radio programmes on three community radio stations. U-Reporters sent short videos to UNICEF Malawi on the type of future they imagine for themselves. Key messages from the radio programmes and videos were incorporated into the interactive sessions with the President.
In addition, UNICEF staff conducted motivational talks in rural secondary schools where there is a lack of female role models. They encouraged students to work hard and reach for their dreams. The ideas and concerns that children expressed during these sessions were incorporated into the interactive session with the President.

In his remarks at the event, Rudolf Schwenk, UNICEF Malawi Representative, who spoke on behalf of all the partners that were involved in the event, committed to redoubling efforts to ensure that all children learn, have access to quality services, are protected physically and mentally and are not left trapped in poverty, inequality, disasters and displacement. He highlighted that UNICEF and its partners are committed to “leave a lasting impact on the children of Malawi as we jointly reimagine a better world with them and for them.”

To reach as many people and as many children as possible with WCD messages, the event was broadcast live on two national radio and televisions stations and their online platforms. This event opened an opportunity for interaction between children and duty bearers as highlighted by one child representative, Comfort Kayuni, who concluded the interactive session by informing the President that, “We will organize ourselves and continue to follow up on the pledges made today.”
Research and Evaluation
Harnessing the Power of Evidence

In 2020, UNICEF continued to strengthen programming by generating evidence designed to inform and improve interventions, ultimately helping to improve the lives of children in Malawi.

Despite the pandemic, last year UNICEF completed nine studies, one research and two evaluations as part of its evidence generation efforts covering nationally significant topics including child development, health, education, nutrition, social policy and WASH.

The Real Time Evaluation (RTE) of UNICEF Malawi’s Response to COVID-19 emergency was a landmark achievement. The RTE helped to rapidly inform UNICEF decisions-making by learning key lessons, identifying challenges and bottlenecks, and adapting emergency response activities as the pandemic unfolded. Being the only country in the East and Southern Africa region to undertake a comprehensive RTE, the country office generated valuable evidence that was shared with UNICEF programmes, implementing partners, government, other UN agencies, civil society partners, UNICEF’s regional office and headquarters. In another milestone, the evaluation of the Community Led Total Sanitation Programme was selected for the 2020 Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation (BOURE) publication. The evaluation proved highly useful for concerned programme and implementing partners, which used key findings and recommendations to improve programme implementation and enhance effectiveness.
In research, Malawi’s key accomplishment was not to lose the focus on filling gaps in knowledge around long-term developmental interventions while COVID-19 dominated emergency response and programming in 2020. A nationally significant study, Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Malawi, highlighted the increasing number of disabilities among children. It proved ground-breaking in establishing that there are many other significant disabilities affecting children other than albinism that has been regarded as a key disability in Malawi. The analysis exposed diverse types of disabilities and a range of challenges faced by children affected by them. Three studies examined the government’s SCTP, for rural ultra-poor and labor-constrained households in Malawi bringing forth significant insights on how adjustments to the SCTP can counteract cyclical fluctuations in prices, poverty and well-being. They also provided answers on strengthening approaches to address lifecycle vulnerabilities, targeting marginalised groups such as the elderly, the disabled and female-headed households and improving school enrolment and outcomes among children and young people. Another study on deprivation looked at how children are affected in the lean season. Another measured knowledge, attitudes and practices stemming from a joint programme on nutrition. Key findings were shared with the government for relevant policy considerations and adjustments from the above works through policy briefs and dissemination workshops.
As part of enhancing knowledge management efforts, the quality of UNICEF Malawi’s knowledge inventory was recognised when headquarters proposed to showcase it in the global knowledge management portal. Looking ahead research efforts will continue to equip UNICEF’s leadership team with evidence to help drive change and constant improvement. However, one lesson learned in 2020 was that while technological innovation has advantages during emergencies, it can also exclude communities that cannot access or afford technology, electricity and internet connectivity. The pandemic experience helped develop alternative, online processes that may be effectively deployed during future emergencies situations.

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Supply

Delivering on Child Rights

Supplies are essential for nurturing child rights. To support programming across Malawi, UNICEF procures supplies and distributes them to government, UN agencies and partners.

In 2020, UNICEF spent US$55 million on goods and services to improve the lives of children, with US$12 million going toward the fight against COVID-19. UNICEF purchased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), medicines, consumables, diagnostics, medical equipment and oxygen-related equipment which was used for COVID-19 response efforts in government health facilities across the country. The effective management of programme supplies helped UNICEF achieve zero dollars of goods in transit for more than 100 days; zero dollars of programme supplies expiring in less than six months and a warehouse stock holding value kept within set limits of less than US$2 million.

But the 2020 supply effort was not without challenges. Offshore lockdowns impacted factory operations and flight schedules, which greatly slowed the arrival of goods from foreign ports, leading to worldwide shortages of infection control supplies. While headquarters granted authorization to country offices to procure locally, delays were experienced regardless. In addition, the cost of PPE and other goods increased dramatically, selling for six to eight times more than their cost prior to the pandemic. Nonetheless, UNICEF managed to procure some PPE from local suppliers for the COVID-19 response.

UNICEF was named “supply chain coordinator” for the UN country team’s joint COVID-19 response because of its credibility and expertise. Recognizing that demand would outpace supply, UNICEF was given the job of hosting a new supply “portal” to better harmonize procurement needs across agencies and facilitating real-time information on the availability, procurement and delivery of supplies.
The portal provided a digitized supply chain process, a standardized approach to procurement and a uniform method for ensuring equitable access across agencies. The portal also provided a real-time, user-friendly registration process while featuring easy-to-understand, segmented catalogues including brief product descriptions. To date, about US$2.5 million worth of COVID supplies have been requested through the portal for procurement.

Aside from COVID-19 efforts, UNICEF successfully implemented the eCRC platform and the InTend platform for bidding purposes. At the same time, task teams were formed to review standard operating procedures (SOPs) and streamline work processes. The review, taking in both high value and low value procurement SOPs, is expected to be completed in 2021 as part of the overall digitization of operations processes. UNICEF also participated in the national quantification of essential medicines and nutrition supplies, while providing technical advice to an external “Supply Chain Maturity Model” assessment conducted to improve the integrated health supply chain.

In 2020, UNICEF supported the Government of Malawi in improving the lives of children by increasing access to essential goods and services (worth US$55 million) in various areas including health, WASH, education, nutrition protection, etc. This support also included the much needed health supplies, testing kits, medical equipment and PPEs to fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF, as Supply Chain Coordinator, successfully managed the UN global supply portal that facilitated multiple agencies to have access to global markets for critical COVID-19 supplies and equipment worth US $2.5 million.

Major Achievements
Goal Line Replaced By Virus Red Line At Soccer Stadium

The makeshift hospital in the basement of Kamuzu Stadium in Lilongwe seems a world away from the thousands of cheering fans who filled the overhead stands last September.

At that time, the Blue Eagles and Mighty Wanderers met for a winner-takes-all soccer encounter. It would be the last time the city’s largest sporting venue would be used as intended.

Since then, the playing area of Kamuzu has stood idle following a nationwide ban on public gatherings to control the spread of COVID-19. However, below ground the meeting rooms in the stadium’s basement have been a hive of activity since an emergency hospital designed to treat COVID-19 patients was set up there.

The new high-dependency wards are intended to take pressure off the city’s major emergency units at Bwaila and Kamuzu Central hospitals.

Now the rush to save lives is well underway here. A red line marks the boundary of the COVID-19 containment area. Health workers clad in coveralls, face shields and gloves are the only people besides patients allowed to cross it.

A sprawling corridor beyond the line takes patients and hospital staff to wards where oxygen cylinders stand upright at the side of every sickbed.

For health workers in a hurry to assist the patients gasping for air as the oxygen machines beep, there is no time to rest.

“The short, high-pitched sound alerts us that oxygen is low in the patient’s blood and the heart is not working properly. That’s an emergency,” says Dr. Anthony Chafunya.

Here in a cramped space filled by fumes from chemicals sprayed to kill germs, Dr. Chafunya runs a team of almost 250 health workers and support staff.

According to the doctor, approximately eight out of every 10 patients arrive with severe breathing difficulties.

“Some will spend 20 days on oxygen if they have lung problems and underlying conditions. We use the cylinders to supplement their normal oxygen uptake while managing chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and HIV-AIDS,” says Dr. Chafunya.

However, at first the oxygen supply was erratic as COVID-19 overstretched the health system, deepening the disease burden. Staff members have also been in short supply and there was a lack of essential supplies, including medicine.

But with support from UNICEF and funding from UK Aid, the Health Sector Joint Fund and the World Bank, more oxygen had been made available at a manufacturing facility in Blantyre.

Now the stadium receives 70 cylinders of oxygen every day.

“Oxygen is medicine,” says Chafunya. “A lorry departs at 5am every day to collect oxygen cylinders. Since the facility opened, we have never run out of oxygen supply.”
Delivering as one

In 2020, UNICEF worked closely with the UN Resident Coordinator’s office, other UN agencies and the government to jointly implement a range of programmes.

Under the UN’s Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UNICEF shares its expertise with the broader UN community in line with planning and implementation of UN development activities in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN’s joint programmes in Malawi bring a constellation of UN assets together with the common aim of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, alleviating poverty and improving the lives of the Malawian people.

UNICEF continued its partnership with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA on the Spotlight Initiative (SI), a global joint programme designed to respond to violence against women and girls with a focus on addressing sexual, gender-based violence, harmful practices and sexual and reproductive health. The US$20 million initiative is funded by the EU and addresses undernutrition, focusing on cognitive and social development of children, and the broader implications for economic development. In 2020, across 10 districts, Afikepo increased access to maternal, infant and young child nutrition services to 229,483 pregnant and lactating women, 415,938 children under five years old, and 378,647 adolescent girls.

UNICEF and UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP are supporting the implementation of the US$400,000 UN Partnership on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) on advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in Malawi. In 2020, a key UNPRD achievement was the completion of the Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Malawi (SitAn), which showed a disability prevalence of about 5 percent (2018) and over 2 percent among children aged 5-17. The SitAn was showcased during the UN75 Dialogue and Consultations with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities.
UNICEF last year worked with FAO, UNDP, WFP, the government and a number of NGOs on the Promoting Sustainable Partnerships for Empowered Resilience (PROSPER) programme. The US$75 million programme is funded by the UK and supports the government’s efforts to reduce extreme poverty and end recurrent cycles of crises and humanitarian assistance. Targeting food insecure households in four districts, the programme aims to build resilience for 1,159,938 people (300,000 households) by reducing the impact of climate shocks, responding to seasonal consumption needs, supporting the design of social safety nets, and generating evidence and knowledge to inform government policy.

UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and UN Women are implementing the UN Joint Programme on Girls Education (UNJPEGE), a programme in 169 schools aimed at improving access, quality and relevance of education for girls.
The programme will soon be launching its third phase, with US$40.6 million funding from the Government of Norway. In 2020, 20,698 girls benefited from mentorship sessions provided by role models from within the targeted districts such as bankers, nurses, schoolteachers and policewomen.

Together for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (2gether4SRHR) is a UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, and UNAIDS joint programme aimed at increasing access to services that support sexual and reproductive health and rights, and HIV and gender-based violence (GBV) services. The programme is funded by Sweden. In 2020, 2getherSRHR worked to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration at the district and facility level.

In 2020, across 10 districts, the Afikepo programme increased access to maternal, infant and young child nutrition services to 229,483 pregnant and lactating women, 415,938 children under 5 years old, and 378,647 adolescent girls.

Under the Spotlight Initiative, 212,262 adolescents were trained to detect Sexual and Gender-based violence and report incidents to relevant authorities. Some 170,467 people were also reached with key messages on gender equality, prevention of SGBV, child rights, COVID-19 prevention and information on social services.

The UN Partnership on Rights of Persons with Disabilities completed the Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities in Malawi, which showed a disability prevalence of 5.6 per cent (2018) and 2.4 per cent among children aged 5-17 years.
In 2020, UNICEF worked with the government, development partners, businesses, civil society organizations, as well as children and young people across Malawi. Importantly, UNICEF worked closely with partners to raise US$17 million to respond to COVID-19. Specifically, resources were mobilized for the virus response from the UK’s Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, Irish Aid, Germany’s KFW development bank and the Global Partnership for Education. A US$ 1 million grant from Japan was signed in December 2020 representing the country’s first engagement with UNICEF Malawi in five years.

UNICEF remained a critical partner for the government. During 2020, UNICEF worked closely with key central ministries, district councils and other government entities such as the Malawi Police Service and the Malawi Judiciary. UNICEF’s close collaboration with the National Planning Commission, the National Statistical Office, the Department of Economic Planning and Development, other UN agencies, civil society organizations, academia and the National Youth Council of Malawi led to the successful completion of data collection for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey as well as the preparation and first presentation of the National Voluntary Review at the High-Level Political Forum.

In 2020, partnerships with civil society organizations also played a critical role in the successful delivery of humanitarian and development interventions. Partners helped UNICEF with child health, nutrition and protection services. They included organizations such as the Paediatric and Child Health Association of Malawi, the Maikhanda Trust, the Parent and Child Health Initiative Trust, Malawi Red Cross Society, Save the Children, World Relief and Youth Net and Counselling.

At the same time, UNICEF formed partnerships with the private sector and philanthropic organizations including the Segal Family Foundation, the Baobab Health Trust, software companies GoodCitizen and ARM, and development consultants Cooper/Smith, which all supported the creation of innovative
solutions. Virginia Tech played a critical role in developing the African Drone and Data Academy curriculum. The GAVI Vaccine Alliance and the Rockefeller Foundation continued to strongly support maternal, newborn and child health services, child immunization and HIV prevention. Airtel and TeleKom Networks Malawi telco companies supported dissemination of remote learning programmes free of charge. UNICEF also had discussions to renew the partnership with Standard Bank on supporting the girl child in Malawi.

In 2020, UNICEF received strong support from the governments of the UK, Germany, Norway, Ireland, Japan, Sweden and China and also USAID and the EU, which together assisted with health, education, HIV, WASH and child protection services. Partnerships with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund provided insight into the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, informing policy decisions and funding choices. UNICEF also received funding from the World Bank through the Pandemic Emergency Fund to purchase health supplies for COVID-19.

UNICEF continued to be an active member of the UN Country Team (UNCT). In response to COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF also worked closely with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, the World Health Organization, UN agencies and other development partners. UNICEF continued to lead the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework’s efforts while also participating in seven out of eight UN joint programmes. UNICEF successfully led negotiation with the UK’s Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office for a five-year, US$40 million health system strengthening programme, being implemented jointly with WHO and UNFPA.

UNICEF and partners raised **US$ 17 million** to respond to COVID-19.

**US$ 31.8 million** was transferred to implementing partners, including governmental and civil society partners.
Major Donors

The major development partners we worked with in 2020 were:

- Finland
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Ireland
- Korea
- Luxembourg
- Norway
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Sweden
- United States
- United Kingdom

In addition to funds received, UNICEF Malawi also received support from its National Committees:
Acknowledgements

UNICEF’s work is funded entirely through the voluntary support of millions of people around the world and our partners in government, civil society and the private sector. Voluntary contributions enable UNICEF to deliver on its mandate to protect children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

We want to thank all our partners for their generous support which has enabled us to respond quickly to the humanitarian and development needs of children in Malawi in 2020.

A special acknowledgment goes out to the World Bank, the EU, USAID, CDC, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the Government of Ireland, KFW, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Global Partnership for Education, ECW, the Government of Japan, the Vaccine Alliance, the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, the Government of China, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Rockefeller Foundation for helping UNICEF continue to give children the education, clean water, health care, protection — and childhoods they deserve.

UNICEF also appreciates and acknowledges the role of NGO partners, international organizations and sister UN agencies, whose partnerships have been critical to help us support the Government of Malawi and achieve results for children and women in Malawi.
Budget Overview

In 2020, UNICEF allocated and utilized a total of about US$58 million from various development partners to achieve the planned results for children in Malawi. Most of the funds allocated and utilized were funded by various development partners through other resources regular (ORR) funding type, representing 55 per cent of the total funds.
Figure 1
Allocation and Utilization by funding type (in US$ million)

Figure 2
Utilization by pillar/Outcome (in US$ million)
The utilization per various programmatic goals: