

CONCERN IN MALAWI – 2024

Factsheet compiled in 2025

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Eliza cradles her baby outside their informal brick home in Bitilinyu Camp, Traditional Authority (TA), Ndamera, having been displaced from her home in Nyachikadza due to flooding after Cyclone Freddy. Photo: Lydia Lampiri/Concern Worldwide.

Humanitarian Overview

Malawi continues to grapple with overlapping political, economic, and environmental challenges that are significantly straining communities, especially the most vulnerable. The 2023/2024 El Niño weather pattern brought well below-average rainfall, resulting in widespread drought and deepening the national food insecurity levels. During the lean season (October to March), an estimated 5.7 million people were projected to face IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse levels of food insecurity.¹

The drought was followed by intense rainfall and flooding, driven by increasingly frequent and severe tropical cyclones and storms. Cyclone Freddy, one of the most destructive cyclones in recent years, struck in 2023 and caused widespread devastation, particularly in southern Malawi. According to the Government of Malawi's Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (April 2023), the cyclone affected more than 2.2 million people, displaced more than 659,000

people, caused 679 deaths, and left over 530 people missing by mid-March 2023.² The cyclone severely damaged homes, infrastructure, and farmland, disrupting livelihoods and worsening already fragile food security structures.

These climate shocks are further exacerbated by Malawi's ongoing economic crisis. High fiscal deficits, a weakening currency, and inflation have driven up living costs, particularly food prices. This has eroded household purchasing power and made it increasingly difficult for low-income families to meet their basic needs.

While Malawi's political environment remains largely stable, upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in September 2025 may cause temporary disruptions. Election-related activities, campaign tensions, and shifting government priorities could restrict Concern's access to communities, slow program delivery, and affect coordination with government counterparts. In response, Concern is

1. [Reliefweb](#)

2. [Reliefweb](#)

prioritising the acceleration of critical activities in the first half of 2025. Key strategies include building flexibility into implementation plans, reinforcing relationships with local stakeholders, and closely monitoring the political landscape to mitigate programmatic disruptions.

Our Work in Malawi – 2024



**Food Systems and
Climate Resilience**

**Total number of programme participants in 2024:
258,113**

Climate change remains central to Concern Malawi's programming due to its growing impact on food security and livelihoods. The effects of El Niño were particularly severe, leading to widespread crop failure and a significant increase in the number of food-insecure households receiving Concern's support.

In November 2024, Concern Malawi participated in COP29 in Azerbaijan as part of the Concern Worldwide delegation. The team explored global best practices and innovative strategies to enhance

climate resilience across its programmes. Additionally, Concern partnered with Welthungerhilfe to launch the Global Hunger Index in Malawi, highlighting the intersection of gender equality and climate change especially during climate-related emergencies. This is particularly relevant to Concern's portfolio of programmes in Malawi as the organisation also serves as the Co-Chair of the Malawi Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, having hosted a high-level symposium on the topic in October 2024. These efforts reaffirm Concern's commitment to integrating climate action, gender equality, and sustainable development into all programming activities.

Concern's Food Security and Livelihoods portfolio in Malawi focuses on food systems strengthening, social protection, and climate resilience. One urban initiative, Renewable Energy for Sustainable Environmental Transformation (RESET), also addressed renewable energy and urban waste management.

Food Systems for Food Security-FS4FS – Mchinji and Lilongwe: The five-year programme (2023–2027) tackles chronic food insecurity and malnutrition by strengthening the four pillars of food security: availability, access, utilisation, and stability. FS4FS promotes crop diversification, enhances value chains for nutritious foods, connects smallholder farmers with private sector actors, and improves market access. The programme also prioritises research and advocacy to influence national food system policies.

Financial Access for Rural Markets, Smallholders and Enterprises (FARMSE) Lilongwe Rural:

Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through the Government of Malawi, FARMSE supports 2,500 ultra-poor households benefitting from the Social Cash Transfer Programme. The project uses a graduation approach to strengthen resilience through savings groups, business skills training, and access to agricultural inputs.

Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance (ZCRA) – Nsanje, Chikwawa, and Lilongwe Urban:

Launched in January 2024, ZCRA supports 35 (15 each in Nsanje and Chikwawa districts, and 5 in Lilongwe Urban) flood-prone communities to prepare for and respond to climate-related disasters, especially flooding. Using the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRMC) framework, the project applies a structured approach involving risk assessments, community-led resilience planning, adaptive actions, and continuous learning.



Community members Jalphy, John, and Yowasi showcase their nursery at Bitilinyu Camp, TA Ndamera. Photo: Lydia Lampiri/Concern Worldwide

Renewable Energy and Solid Waste Management for Enhanced Town Resilience (RESET) – Lilongwe Urban:

RESET, which concluded in December 2024, was implemented in partnership with three organisations and funded by the Irish Aid Climate Enterprise Fund. Aimed at reducing environmental degradation and promoting renewable energy entrepreneurship, the project installed ten biodigester systems across five urban settlements—converting organic waste into biogas for cooking and biofertiliser for agriculture. Business development training and community mobilisation supported long-term sustainability. The project generated MK 61.9 million in revenue—87% from bio-compost sales—with income from fertiliser and recycled goods exceeding targets by 103% and 514%, respectively, highlighting the untapped potential of waste valorisation.

Building on its success, RESET expanded to four new sites across Lilongwe Rural and Mchinji Districts under the Food for Food Security programme, jointly implemented by Concern Worldwide and CICODE with continued support from Irish Aid. One of the project's key indicators, the Household Asset Index, showed an increase from 3.16 at baseline to 3.34 at endline—

reflecting improved resilience despite ongoing economic and climate shocks.

The entrepreneurial and business skills gained by participants are now translating into sustainable income generation, with beneficiaries accessing both primary and secondary markets more effectively. Moreover, the project drove a wider cultural shift: increased waste sorting was observed even among non-participants, showing RESET's impact beyond its direct reach and reinforcing its contribution to resilient, climate-smart communities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

- 3,086** homestead gardens and 50 school gardens established, boosting household nutrition and income through fruit and vegetable production.
- 103%** increase in biofertiliser production at three operational sites.
- 191** participants adopted household-level waste segregation practices.
- 2,445** individuals participated in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), accumulating MWK 4.9 million in savings.



Emergency Response

Total number of programme participants in 2024:
37,654

Lean Season Food Assistance Response – Nsanje

District: With support from the World Food Programme (WFP), this lifesaving intervention targeted 36,904 households (166,066 people) across nine Traditional Authorities (TAs) in Nsanje District. Food distributions included maize and cooking oil, delivered during the critical lean season. The initiative also helped strengthen Malawi's National Social Protection (SRSP) mechanisms by using Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) mechanisms to extend support to both new and existing vulnerable populations.

Flash Flood Response – Chikwawa District: In April 2024, severe flooding displaced 1,683 households in Ngabu and Lundu Traditional Authorities in Chikwawa District. Working with EAGLES Relief and Development Programme, Concern implemented a digital household registration system to prioritise the most affected families. Emergency Non-Food Items (NFIs) were distributed, including Pic's grain storage bags, plastic sheeting, 20-litre water buckets, and basic kitchenware.

Humanitarian Response to Mozambican Asylum Seekers – Nsanje:

In late 2024, post-election violence in Mozambique led 7,330 individuals (3,603 households) to flee to Malawi, with 6,834 arriving in Nsanje District. Concern's CEO Fund supported the humanitarian response by distributing food and NFIs to 2,200 households across four camps (Nyamithuthu, Chadzuka, Tengani, and Khope). Each household received maize flour, soya pieces, beans, soap, and a 20-litre bucket. Displaced individuals, many of whom reported days without food or basic services, expressed gratitude for the support, which addressed urgent needs during the rainy season. Additional hygiene items were distributed to a local health facility and the Nsanje prison due to concurrent flooding.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

- 50kg** of maize and 0.5 litres of cooking oil were delivered to targeted households in Nsanje as part of the lean season response.
- 1,172** participants received emergency NFI kits as part of the flood response in Chikwawa.
- 2,200** Mozambican asylum-seeker households supported with emergency food and non-food items across four camps in Nsanje.
- 4,000** bars of soap distributed to improve hygiene in camps, a local health facility, and Nsanje Prison during concurrent flooding.



In October of 2024, Concern's office in Malawi launched a partnership with the World Food Programme to support emergency food distribution in Nsanje. Photo: Lydia Lampiri/Concern Worldwide

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**ENDING
EXTREME POVERTY
WHATEVER
IT TAKES**