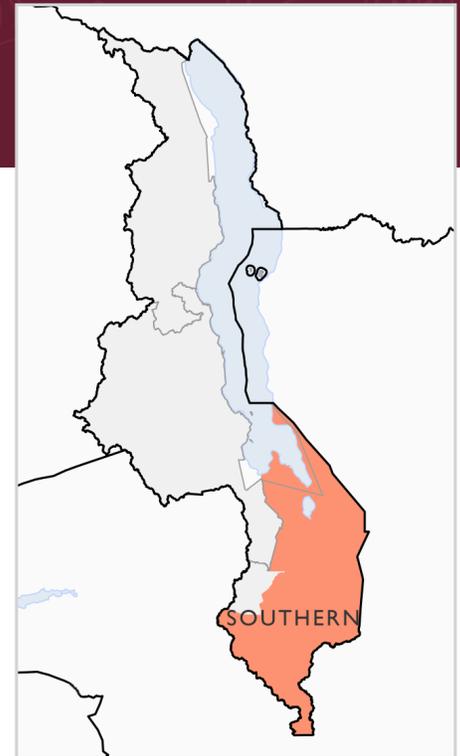


USAID Malawi Resilience Fact Sheet

Resilience
Focus Zone



Background/Risk

Malawi is far from meeting Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 targets and is highly vulnerable to multivariate shocks that affect nearly all of its 28 districts. Risk and exposure to shocks and stresses are driven by a confluence of over-dependence on rainfed maize and tobacco, unmodernized agriculture sector, dependence on biomass for energy resulting in deforestation and land degradation, undiversified rural economy, and limited access to finance. Malawians have inadequate access to social services, and women and youth are highly marginalized. Climate change and population growth have emerged as the twin threats exacerbating other existing shocks, and there is limited adaptation capacity.

Poverty has marginally increased since 2010 and ultra poverty remains high, especially among women, at 25 percent., Stunting rates have reduced overall, but remain above 47 percent among poor households, and some districts have seen backsliding on stunting rates since 2010.1

Driven by the humanitarian caseloads caused by the 2015–2016 droughts and floods, the Government of Malawi developed the National Resilience Strategy (NRS) in collaboration with the NRS Task Force, including USAID and other Development Partners. USAID has aligned its resilience approaches with the NRS, and continues to support the Government of Malawi in implementation.

Program Strategies

USAID resilience programming responds to several priorities in Malawi:

1. Build economic capital through private sector-led approaches that modernize agricultural value chains and food systems, scale-up sustainable productivity and climate-smart agriculture, increase productivity through small-scale irrigation and integrated watershed approaches, and strengthen financial services and inclusion
2. Diversify on- and off-farm livelihoods for marginalized and underrepresented populations, people and systems vulnerable to shocks and stresses, and firms to diversify rural livelihoods, increase incomes, reduce pressure on natural resources, and create jobs
3. Build and protect natural resources through integrated watershed management and landscape design approaches, reforestation, clean and renewable energy, sustainable forestry businesses, and ecosystem services
4. Build human capital through nutrition, education, and health programming
5. Strengthen social cohesion and human capital through empowering women, adolescent girls, youth, and people with disabilities
6. Strengthen shock-responsive systems through integrating disaster risk management, mitigation, response, recovery, and adaptation approaches, and strengthening adaptive social protection services in coordination with the Government of Malawi and development partners
7. Strengthen systems and governance through sector-specific policy implementation support and strengthening multi-sectoral coordination systems and structures of the NRS and contributing policies
8. Sequence, layer, and integrate interventions of both USAID-funded activities and those funded and managed by others to build economies of scale and synergies across programs in the Resilience Focus Zone.

Activities and Strategic Partnerships

The Feed The Future Agriculture

Diversification (AgDiv) and other activities promote a private sector-led approach to strengthening markets and finance through building capacity of private enterprises and entrepreneurs to invest in value chains and food systems, increasing and diversifying sustainable productivity, promoting nutrition, and increasing women's empowerment. Crosscutting resilience approaches include scaling up climate-smart approaches and watershed management and irrigation approaches.

The Titukulane Resilience Food Security

Activity (RFSA) supports the NRS through increasing stable and equitable incomes from agricultural and nonagricultural livelihoods; improving food security, nutrition, and productive assets for poor households; and strengthening the local capacity for disaster risk management and shock-responsive mechanisms that reduce risk and vulnerability to multivariate shocks and stresses.

The USAID-funded **World Food Program (WFP) Food for Assets** activity supports participants to build and maintain assets that include community gardens, irrigation farming, and reforestation that improves livelihoods, creates healthier natural environments, reduces the effects of shocks, and strengthens resilience to natural disasters. WFP also supports lean season cash transfer top-ups, and strengthens shock-responsive social protection systems.

The Youth Business Acceleration and Investment Facility (YBAIF)

is designed to accelerate and invest in youth-led enterprises, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), access to finance, diversified income and livelihoods, gender equality and women's empowerment, and a more inclusive and resilient private sector ecosystem.

Governance activities strengthen local systems to support resilience, economic stimulation, transparency, citizen participation, and decentralized multisectoral services

Environmental activities support scaling up electrification and renewable energy sources, clean cooking and heating that reduce deforestation and the use of unsustainable charcoal, both key causes of eroding natural productive assets and increasing the risk and exposure to climate and extreme weather disasters.

USAID supports human capital through education and health programs that increase access to primary and higher education, support adolescent girls and young women, expand workforce development, and strengthen systems for health and education resilience.

Evaluation and Learning

USAID is leading a new partnership with the Government of Malawi, donors, implementing partners, and academic partners to collaboratively implement a district-level Rapid Feedback Monitoring System (RFMS). The activity was designed with a focus on rural areas where livelihoods are predominantly based on smallholder agriculture and where there is high vulnerability to climate variability, and was recently expanded to urban areas in response to the increased vulnerability to the health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The RFMS activity is a multistakeholder initiative designed to measure resilience, allowing for evidence-based adaptation. It is designed to rapidly detect shocks and measure resilience, allowing for immediate programmatic adaptations, improved coordination with cross-sector partners, and increased community engagement, and for communities to mitigate risk and respond to shocks in a more efficient and effective manner.

The AgDiv programs include a monitoring survey focused at the food systems and market to measure trends that affect systems resilience. Additionally, governance and decentralization support includes strengthening district-level, multisectoral monitoring and evaluation systems to align with the NRS.

Contact John Meyer, Senior Strategy and Impact Advisor, Center for Resilience at johnmeyer@usaid.gov to learn more.

Data: Data come from the World Bank's 2019 Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) Surveys in Malawi and Uganda and 11 rounds of phone interviews conducted by the World Bank in 2020/21. The phone survey samples drew from households interviewed during the 2019 data collection.

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