



A toilet constructed by UNICEF at an emergency treatment unit © UNICEF Malawi/Govani

# MALAWI COVID-19 Situation Report



Reporting Period: 4 -17 November 2020

## Situation in Numbers as of 17 November 2020

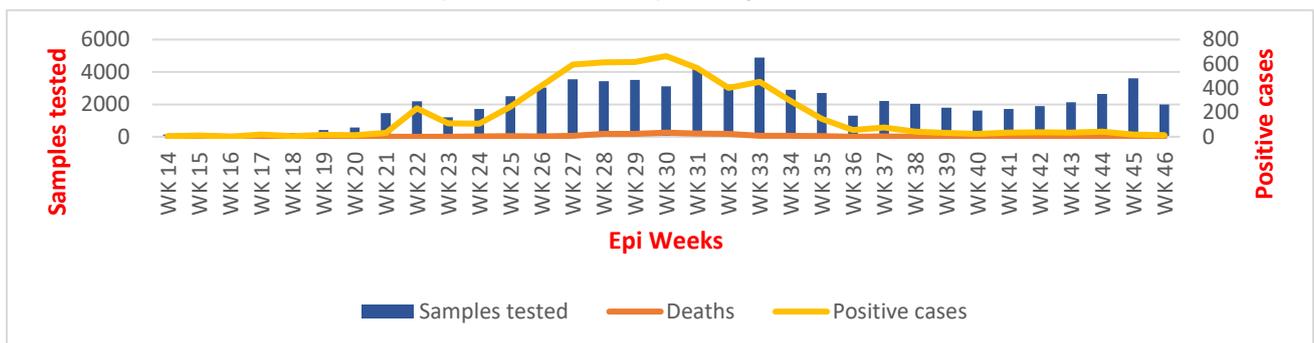
**5,999** confirmed cases  
**5,434** recoveries  
**185** deaths  
**69,621** tested samples  
**384** active cases

Source: 2020/11/18, 06.00am, Malawi COVID-19 Situation report, Public Health

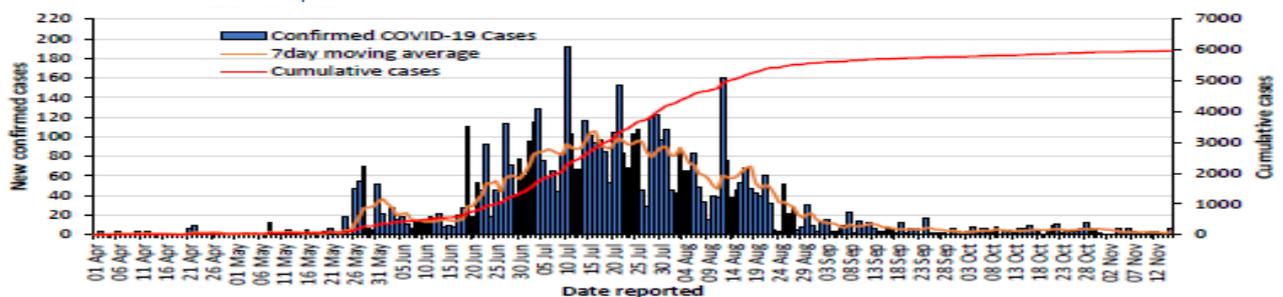
### Highlights

- UNICEF has partnered with Nkhoma Synod, which is one of Malawi's largest faith-based communities and trained 160 pastors and pastors' wives on psychosocial first aid. This has enabled the Nkhoma Synod to provide the community based mental health and psychosocial support to more than 1,200 people, including around 500 children.
- During the reporting period, construction of an additional 20 permanent toilets has been completed at Mwanza emergency treatment unit and at two health centres in Blantyre. This is to improve infection prevention and control at emergency treatment centres border posts and other public places.
- UNICEF with funding from Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and Irish Embassy through Malawi Red Cross society continues to support Ministry of Health with points of entry screening of travelers. In the past two weeks 13,196 people were screened.

Samples collected and positivity rate over time



Epidemic curve of COVID-19 in Malawi of 4 November 2020



## Situation Overview

Seventeen out of 28 districts have not reported COVID-19 cases for the past two weeks and the epidemiology curve is flattening. While this is a good progress towards controlling the pandemic, contact tracing to scale up testing remains sub optimal in most of the district hospitals.

As of 17 November the cumulative number of cases stood at 5,999 with majority of the cases being reported from urban districts of Lilongwe and Blantyre, the current epi centres of the outbreak. One death was recorded in the past two-weeks period bringing the total number of deaths to 185. A total of 133 people has recovered in the reporting period, reducing the number of active cases from 414 reported in previous report to 281 representing a reduction of more than 30 percent. Emergency treatment units have not been occupied for more than eight weeks and all cases are being managed at home.

The country's laboratory testing capacity has greatly improved in the past two weeks with additional 10 test kits for RT-PCR donated to the Ministry of Health by African centres for Disease control and prevention (CDC), the country now has 80 RT-PCR kits with additional 49,000 Antigen RDTs that are yet to be deployed to various testing centres. The use of Ag-RDT testing procedure was reviewed on 17 November by a cross section of partners including UNICEF to be used for testing symptomatic suspected cases only.

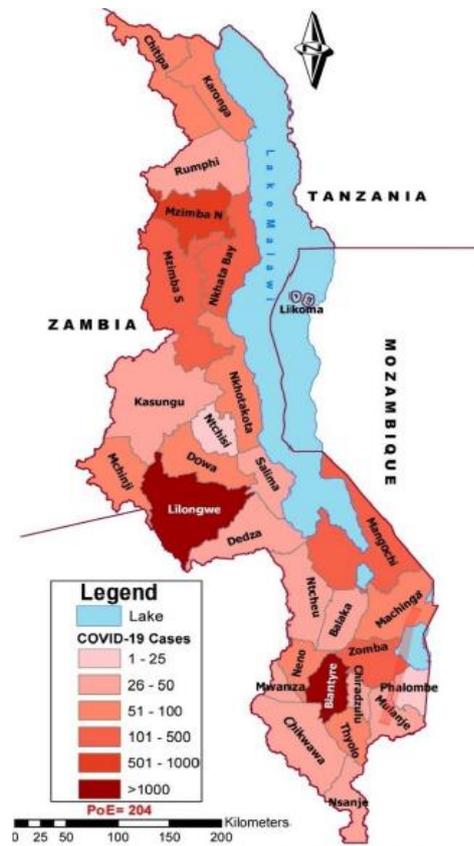


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing distribution of COVID-19 cases

## Programme response by UNICEF and partners

### Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

#### Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF Malawi is working in the following areas of strategic priority against COVID-19:

- Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality
- Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services
- Assessing and responding to the immediate secondary impact of COVID-19
- Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

UNICEF maintains critical preparedness and response operations, including operational humanitarian access corridors and delivery of services in Health, Education, Child and Social Protection, WASH, Nutrition and Communication for Development (C4D). This is being done to prevent and control infections, ensure continuity of education, promote positive behaviours, prevent transmission and ensure the protection of children rights, especially of the most vulnerable ones.

## Humanitarian leadership and coordination

- The National Disaster Preparedness and Relief Committee continues to meet to review COVID-19 related recommendations from the cluster system.
- Clusters continue to coordinate the response. Information relating to COVID-19 resource mobilization, allocation, programmatic implementation is being regularly updated.
- UNICEF is the co-lead agency for the Education, Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Protection Clusters, while also playing a key role in the Health Cluster.
- UNICEF participates in Humanitarian Country Team and the Inter-Cluster Coordination meetings which provide a platform for cross-sectoral coordination. The meetings are now taking place once every fortnight.
- To prepare for possible roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine whenever WHO prequalifies one, a task force has been set up under the health cluster to ensure that the country is ready. Among other preparatory activities, the technical working group will come up with a prioritization criterion under the guidance of WHO, to be used if the available doses are not enough for the entire population. The technical working group is also in the process of completing a WHO preparedness assessment checklist to determine the readiness level of the country and identify gaps that need to be addressed.
- MoH through the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) with support from WHO and UNICEF has constituted a technical working group that aims at fast tracking key milestones for possible roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine whenever WHO prequalifies one. The Technical working group under the leadership of the EPI manager is developing a country specific work plan to guide introduction process.

## Malawi COVID-19 Supply Chain

UNICEF continues to support the supply chain system to enhance availability and access to essential supplies for infection prevention and control, WASH and medical use through support to supply chains and local markets during the pandemic. Below is an overview of the areas of support during this reporting period:

- Predelivery inspection of face-cloth masks that UNICEF procured for distribution to vulnerable children and adults across the country is underway. A distribution list has been received from the Ministry of Health in readiness for dispatch to the districts.
- UNICEF is supporting the government in the distribution of the 11 containers of COVID-19 supplies (sodium chloride and glucose) to be dispatched to MoH Regional hubs in the South, Centre and Northern Regions.
- UNICEF has procured additional WASH supplies valued at US\$165,000. The consignment includes soap, buckets and squatting plates, COVID-19 Rapid diagnostic kits and PPEs to be distributed to laboratories.
- Reagents for 38,000 Taqpath test kits procured by UNICEF are expected to arrive during the last week of November 2020. This will significantly improve the testing capacity in the country.

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

### Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality

UNICEF continues to support Ministry of Health with screening of travellers at points of entry (POEs) with funding from Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and Irish Embassy through Malawi Red Cross Society. The PoEs being targeted for screening are Kamuzu International Airport, Songwe in Karonga, Dedza and Chitipa borders. In the past two weeks 13,196 people were screened with majority of the travellers entering through Mwanza including 1,079 returnees from South Africa. As per the Government of Malawi standard operating procedures all the travellers are required to

produce COVID-19 negative certificates. This has resulted in considerable reduction of positive cases in Malawi. In addition, UNICEF printed 35,000 travel guide flyers and 20,000 declaration forms to be used at major points of entry.

With funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UNICEF has procured just over 1 million masks for distribution to vulnerable children and adults. Of the beneficiaries, 30 per cent are children and 70 per cent are adults. This is to ensure that vulnerable communities are well equipped to prevent the spread of COVID-19. UNICEF is currently liaising with MoH on distribution plans.

UNICEF continues to support infection prevention and control at emergency treatment centres (ETUs), border posts and other public places. During the reporting period, construction of additional 20 permanent toilets for more sustainable use have been completed at Mwanza emergency Treatment Unit (ETU) and at two health centres at Kameza ETU in Blantyre. This brings the total number of permanent toilets constructed with support from UNICEF to 38, with 3 urinals and 4 bathrooms.

### **Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services**

UNICEF has disseminated back to school messages including on keeping girls in school, ending child marriages, preventing teen pregnancies and adolescent nutrition reaching 75,714 people in Dedza, Salima and Mangochi. As a way of ensuring minimal disruption to iron-folic acid (IFA) supplementation to adolescents and young people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the messages also focused on reminding girls on uptake of Iron-Folic Acid Supplementation (IFA) tablets after school reopening. About 17,955 girls from the three districts have received IFA tablets in the last three weeks.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, UNICEF has supported strengthening of reporting and referral mechanisms for child protection and violence cases, including sexual exploitation and abuse as well as negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage. UNICEF has enabled more than 4,700 people that reported cases on the national child helpline and gender-based violence (GBV) crisis line to receive psychological first aid (PFA). Of these, 208 received this support in the period of 28 October to 11 November. UNICEF support has facilitated referral pathways to appropriate organizations and agencies including police, social welfare, judiciary, health, and other partners for specialized mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services and other basic needs. UNICEF partner, YONECO has during the reporting period, directly facilitated the follow-up of cases in Nsanje, Chikwawa, Machinga, Balaka, Phalombe, and Mulanje districts.

To scale up the provision of mental health and psychosocial support services during the pandemic, UNICEF has partnered with Nkhoma Synod, which is one of Malawi's largest faith-based communities and trained 160 pastors and pastors' wives on PFA. This has enabled the Nkhoma Synod to provide the community based MHPSS to more than 1,200 people, including around 500 children. Another 200 people received community based MHPSS from District Social Welfare Offices (DSWOs) in Dedza district during the period of 26-30 October. This brings the total number so far reached with MHPSS by DSWO to over 22,100 people in 7 districts (Blantyre, Machinga, Dowa, Dedza, Mchinji, Zomba, Mulanje).

Furthermore, UNICEF continues to support awareness raising on protection issues and reporting mechanisms for child protection and violence as part of the efforts to address the increase in cases of violence and abuse during COVID-19. Through YONECO FM which has a listenership of over 4.9 million people, 8 radio drama episodes with messages on positive parenting; girls' empowerment; prevention of child marriage, child labour, child abuse and exploitation, and stigma during the COVID-

19 pandemic, were broadcast in the reporting period. Additionally, SMS messages on protection were sent to 30,000 people, which encouraged people to report cases through helplines.

UNICEF is providing financial and technical support to facilitate the follow-up and provision of necessary assistance to vulnerable people, including children living or working on the streets, children without parental or family care. To date, around 1,100 children without parental or family care, including children in the Child Care Institutions (CCIs) and children reintegrated from CCIs to their families, have been provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements and support by DSWO, YONECO, and Nkhoma Synod. Similarly, around 780 children living or working on the streets children in Blantyre, Machinga, Dedza, and Zomba districts have been provided with Psychosocial Support (PSS) and necessary material support since the beginning of the response, including five children supported during the reporting period in Dedza district.

As co-lead of Protection Cluster, UNICEF continues to support the government to respond to the increased concern of child marriage and teenage pregnancies. UNICEF has supported the government to establish the technical working group on child marriage and teenage pregnancy, which is working to finalise the roadmap and budget. The plan will then be presented to the donors' platform to harness coordination and budgetary contributions.

### **Assessing and responding to the immediate secondary impacts of the COVID-19**

UNICEF has been supporting the Government in the response preparedness, planning and implementation of the COVID-19 Urban Cash Initiative (CUCI). CUCI is a government led intervention under the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms (MoEPDPS) that aims to support 185, 284 urban poor and vulnerable households with cash transfers for 3 months through existing and temporary emergency social protection systems. CUCI intends to counteract the economic impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods. UNICEF is supporting the design and operationalization of Grievance and Redress Mechanisms (GRM). UNICEF is also funding GRM operationalization costs for CUCI in Zomba and Mzuzu, including trainings of GRM ward and city council committees and operational costs. The trainings intend to build the capacity of the city and ward GRM committees to carry out their roles in CUCI GRM management (i.e. recording cases, reporting, providing information to those who seek it about the intervention and even referring beneficiaries to other service providers where necessary. UNICEF is providing continuous coordination support to the Government of Malawi by hosting weekly meetings.

### **Human Interest Stories and External Media**

UNICEF published two stories during the reporting period

1. [A KIND Fund scholarship recipient reflects on how COVID-19 school closures affected her and other students.](#)
2. [Learners in Salima speak on how they benefited from radio lessons during COVID-19 school closures](#)

UNICEF produced a [video](#) featuring traditional and religious leaders to encourage people to wear masks.

An interview with UNICEF Representative on the highlights of UNICEF's response to COVID-19 and support to children, was broadcast on Zodiak radio station.

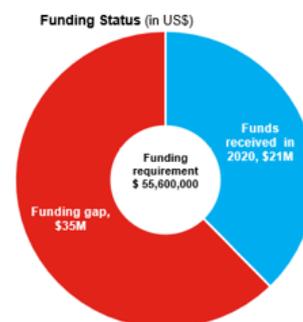
2,300 girls have now joined the U-Report Malawi platform under 20,000 Girls Challenge launched on 10 October. These young women will now be able to contribute to the platform which is used as a social listening tool for COVID-19 to collect information on public understanding, opinions, trust and confidence while illuminating information on questions, rumors and hesitancy around the pandemic.



UNICEF and the EU delegation in Malawi jointly published a statement in the [Nation](#) calling for more investment to education to enable all children to keep learning even during emergencies such as COVID-19.

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF needs an estimated US\$ 55,600,000 to respond effectively to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and children to complement the government efforts in Malawi. The proposed geographical coverage aims at targeting high risk as well as vulnerable districts from the North, Central and Southern parts of the country through a balanced approach seeking to leave no one behind. The proposed integrated programme approach will ensure comprehensive and holistic coverage of child needs, especially of the most vulnerable.



To date, UNICEF has received US\$ 20,976,214 contributions from public and private donors. However, a funding gap of 75 per cent remains. Specific funding requirements, resources available so far and the current funding gaps per sector are displayed in Annex B.

**Next SitRep:** 2 December 2020

**UNICEF Malawi COVID-19 website page:** <https://www.unicef.org/malawi/coronavirus-disease-19>

## Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Target	Total results as of 18 Nov. 2020
<b>Health</b>		
Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	400	800
Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases	400	719
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with PPEs	2,500	4,760
Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential new-born care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses and HIV care through UNICEF supported community health workers and health facilities.	500,000	168,499

<b>WASH</b>		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	5000	6,909
<b>C4D</b>		
Number of people reached with COVID-19 messages on prevention and access to services	8,000,000	8,000,000
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	300,000	1,239,635
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	5,000	3,634
<b>Nutrition</b>		
Number of caregivers to children aged 0-23 months reached with messages aiming to promote breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 through national communication campaigns	500,000	313,284
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)"	8,000	11,058
<b>Child Protection</b>		
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	21,000	28,123
Number of children without parental or family care provided with alternative care arrangements	350	1,176
<b>Education</b>		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	2,139,311	1,423,396
<b>Social Protection</b>		
Number of households benefitting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support	457,000	0

## Annex B: Malawi COVID-19 funding status by sector as of 18 Nov. 2020

Appeal Sector	Funding Requirements	Funds received against the appeal	Funding gap	
			\$	%
Health	\$30,600,000	\$9,337,367	\$21,262,633	69%
WASH	\$8,600,000	\$736,793	\$7,863,207	91%
C4D	\$1,000,000	\$632,054	\$367,946	37%
Education	\$3,200,000	\$ 6,484,529*	\$0	0%
Social Protection	\$7,200,000	\$0	\$7,200,000	100%
Nutrition	\$4,000,000	\$0	\$4,000,000	100%
Child Protection	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$1,000,000	100%
<b>TOTAL US\$:</b>	<b>\$55,600,000</b>	<b>\$ 17,190,743</b>	<b>\$41,693,786</b>	<b>75%</b>

\* The actual amount received from by the education sector is \$10,270,000. Of the total amount, 6,484,529 is what is earmarked for use in 2020 while the rest will be utilised in 2021; hence the revision to reflect only the funding available in 2020