



Wyson, a standard four learner, reads Braille in class © UNICEF Malawi/2020

MALAWI

COVID-19

Situation Report



Reporting Period: 18 Nov - 2 Dec 2020

Highlights

- About 1,000 children with disabilities in 17 learning centers have received braille materials through UNICEF's support to Ministry of Health (MoH), in partnership with the Parent Child Health Initiative.
- On World Children's Day (20 November), UNICEF facilitated dialogue between children and the President of the Republic of Malawi. Children from across the country highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on children, particularly on education and increasing cases violence against children, early pregnancy and child marriage. The President pledged better legislation and policies to promote child rights.
- UNICEF and MoH have started the distribution of close to 1.2 million cloth masks to vulnerable communities and children in 22 districts. The masks were procured from local tailoring businesses and artisans with funding from Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

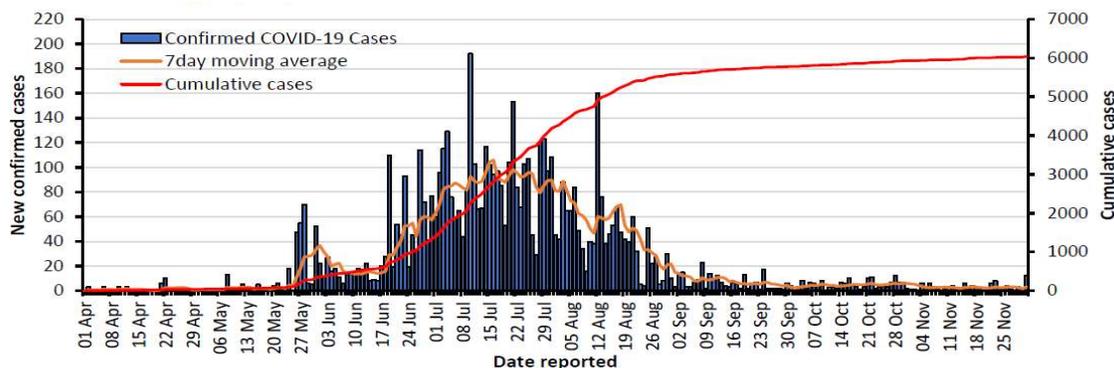
- UNICEF is supporting monitoring of schools since the reopening. A recent interactive voice response survey indicates that 78 per cent of primary school children returned to school after schools reopened. For the 22 per cent that have not gone back to school, reasons include concerns that schools are not yet safe to return to (54 per cent) and that pregnancy or early marriage (17 per cent).

Situation in numbers as of 2 December 2020

6,043 confirmed cases
5,472 recoveries
103 Cases lost to follow up
242 Cases still under investigation
185 deaths
75,150 tested samples
41 active cases

Source: 2020/12/03, 06.00am, Malawi COVID-19 Situation report. Public Health

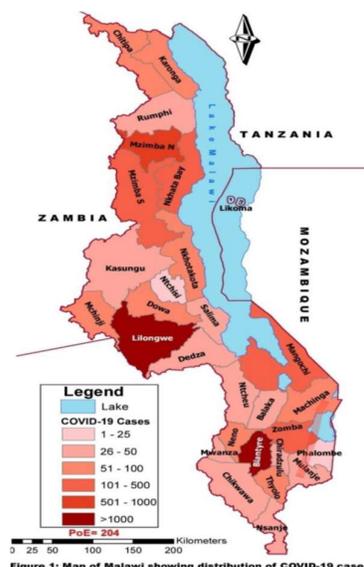
Epidemic curve of COVID-19 in Malawi of 2 December 2020



Situation Overview

As of 2 November, the cumulative number of cases has reached 6,043 with majority of the cases still being reported from urban districts of Lilongwe and Blantyre, the current epi centres of the outbreak. No new death was recorded in the past two-weeks period thus the number of deaths in Malawi remain 185. Eighty people are reported to have recovered during this period. In addition, 346 cases have been dropped from the list of active cases either because they were lost to follow up or they have been under investigation for a long period (since May 2020). This brings down the number of active cases to 41.

The country's laboratory testing capacity has greatly improved. Over 68,000 COVID-19 testing reagents for real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) and additional 290,000 antigen rapid diagnostic test kits are being distributed to all district hospital to start screening testing suspects for COVID-19. The MoH has issued a circular to all district health offices requesting them to resume testing of primary contacts since the country has enough test kits.



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 Humanitarian Country Team met on 27 November 2020 and among others, received an update regarding strengthening of the national COVID-19 coordination structure by establishing a dedicated coordination secretariat. This will help to relieve the Department of Disaster Management Affairs of some of the work overload to focus more on coordinating preparedness and response efforts to weather related shocks that may be experienced during the rainy season that commenced in November.
- MoH through the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) with support from WHO and UNICEF constituted a technical working group to fast tracking key milestones for possible roll out of a COVID-19 vaccine whenever WHO prequalifies one. The technical working group (TWG) under the leadership of the EPI manager is developing a country specific work plan to guide introduction process.

- At the last humanitarian country team meeting of 1 December 2020, it was communicated that a COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be available in Malawi within the first quarter of 2021. Meanwhile, the TWG has completed and submitted to WHO the self-assessment of the country's level of preparedness and is now working on a cold chain assessment.

Malawi COVID-19 Supply Chain

- UNICEF is supporting the procurement of cold chain equipment, COVID-19 assays and sample collection kits. The total cost is estimated at \$1.5 million.
- UNICEF is facilitating the distribution of close to 1.2 million adult and child cloth masks to all districts in Malawi. Presently, close to 400,000 cloth masks valued at about \$260,000 have been released from the warehouse and are being distributed to all 29 district health offices.
- UNICEF is coordinating the distribution of various COVID-19 supplies for the MoH from UNICEF, WFP and CMST warehouses. Distribution to the various district health offices and facilities is currently underway.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Public health response to reduce coronavirus transmission and mortality

UNICEF and MoH are distributing close to 1.2 million cloth masks to vulnerable communities and children in 22 districts. The masks were procured from local tailoring businesses and artisans with funding from Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The masks are being distributed along with comprehensive question and answer leaflets with information to the communities, that cloth masks should be used alongside other approaches such as physical distancing, avoiding crowded, closed and close-contact settings, ensuring good ventilation, washing hands with soap, covering sneezes and coughs among other practices.

With funding from Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and Irish Embassy, UNICEF, through Malawi Red Cross Society, continues to support the screening of travellers at airports and borders. In the past two weeks over 21,302 travellers were screened at Kamuzu and Chileka International Airports as well as border points of Songwe in Karonga, Dedza, Mwanza and Chitipa compared to 13,196 people in the previous report. Two travellers were identified during routine screening to have faked negative results, yet they had tested positive. The cases were detected by port health staff and handed over to the rapid response team after which they were quarantined for a period of 10 days. UNICEF also supported a one-day meeting that brought together 35 port health staff from key six points of entry to be trained in screening, reporting and referral including infection prevention and control requirements while at work.

Continuity of health, education, nutrition and protection services

UNICEF continues to provide technical and coordination support to the education cluster in the ongoing efforts to ensure safe return to school. During a cluster meeting held on 24 November 2020, issues relating to the classroom congestion were discussed. Partners are mobilizing resources to support the Ministry of Education to decongest classrooms and rehabilitate damaged ones. At the cluster meeting an update was provided indicating that final year secondary school exams that were cancelled in early November 2020 due to massive leakage of examination papers will be conducted in January 2021. Students are expected to return to school by 28 December 2020 to prepare for the examination.

UNICEF is also supporting monitoring of schools since the reopening. A recent interactive voice response (IVR) survey conducted by Viamo indicates that 78 per cent of primary school children returned to school after schools reopened. For the 22 per cent that have not gone back to school, reasons include concerns that schools are not yet safe to return to (54 per cent) and pregnancy and early marriage (17 per cent).

When asked what they would like to see once they return to school, 58 per cent of the learners indicated that they would like to see more technology to support learning, 19 per cent want to have proper hygiene and sanitization in classrooms, 8 per cent want smaller classes, 8 per cent want more learning materials, and 6 per cent want remedial and accelerated classes. Eighty-five per cent would like to keep the distance learning programme running even while schools are open highlighting the importance of distance learning and mainstreaming it to the regular teaching and learning practices.

UNICEF is also supporting the dissemination of messages on child marriage, prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and available services for survivors of GBV. During the reporting period, four radio drama episodes were broadcast on YONECO FM radio which has a listenership of over 4.9 million people. Six protection related SMS messages were sent to 30,000 people, encouraging them to report cases through helplines. UNICEF has also supported the technical working group on child marriage and teenage pregnancy to finalize resource mapping to identify the funding gap and budget for immediate actions.

During the reporting period, 269 callers to the national child helpline and gender-based violence (GBV) crisis line received psychological first aid (PFA). Cases reported through the helplines during this period included 161 on GBV and child protection, including 25 child marriage cases, 25 emotional abuse cases and 20 defilement cases. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, more than 5,000 callers have received PFA with support from UNICEF and the reported cases have been referred to the relevant service providers including police, social welfare, judiciary, health, and other partners.

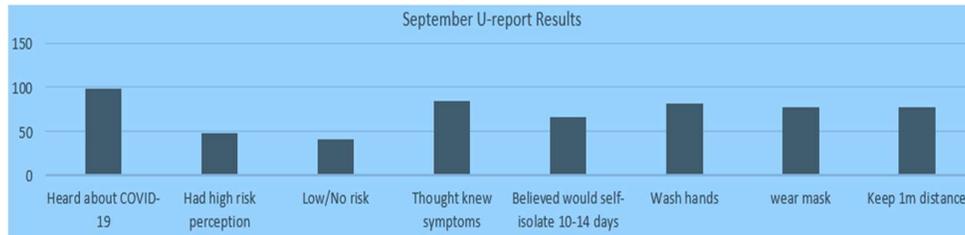
Strengthening Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Through partnership with the Parent Child Health Initiative (PACHI), UNICEF has supported the Ministries of Health and Education to distribute braille materials to 17 learning centres, reaching 1,000 children with disabilities (<https://youtu.be/tWKJoc0ETpg>). In addition, PACHI has distributed 2,500 COVID-19 children comic books to 13,600 children in 17 schools. PACHI has mobilized 117 communities and 64 faith leaders to develop action plans addressing norms surrounding COVID-19 prevention and control as well as continuity of demand for Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health (MNCAH) services, including immunization in the second year of life. Community engagement and social accountability interventions have reached close to 17,000 people.



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UNICEF continued to share insights, evidence and best practices and lessons to RCCE partners to influence systematic and evidence-based implementation of activities. UNICEF participated in a conference organised by the University of Malawi, College of Medicine and shared results of rapid assessment studies using U-report (<https://ureport.mw/opinion/4591/>) and Qualitative approaches). The results indicated a rise in knowledge levels and self-efficacy but a decline in risk perception (see figure below).



Partners suggested recommendations for preventing a second wave of infections. These included heightened RCCE interventions that could continue engagement through interactive communication, create interpersonal communication materials for health workers and engaging cultural/religious/political leaders to improve risk perception.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

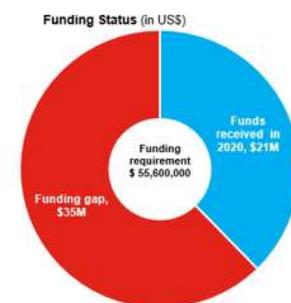
On World Children’s Day (20 November), UNICEF facilitated an interactive session between children and the President of the Republic of Malawi. Sixty children from across the country highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on children, particularly on education and increasing cases violence against children, early pregnancy and child marriage. They also stressed the need for water and sanitation facilities in school and asked the Government to promote children’s participation by establishing more children’s parliaments and children’s corners. The President [pledged](#) better legislation and policies to promote child rights. The event was broadcast live on radio, TV and online and covered by several national media outlets including [Times](#) and [Malawi News Agency](#).

UNICEF published a [story](#) on how children are benefitting from desks provided by UNICEF with support from the [KIND Fund](#), a partnership between UNICEF and MSNBC. Teachers say the desks are helping them observe physical distancing as part of COVID-19 prevention.

A fresh appeal for donations for more desks for the children of Malawi was made on [MSNBC](#), highlighting the important link to COVID-19 prevention.

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: 17 December 2020

Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Target	Total results as of 2 Dec. 2020
Health		
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
WASH		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	5000	6,909
C4D		
Number of people reached with COVID-19 messages on prevention and access to services	8,000,000	12,000,000
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	16,253
Nutrition		
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
Child Protection		
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	21,000	28,392
Number of children without parental or family care provided with alternative care arrangements	350	1,176
Education		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	2,139,311	1,423,396
Social Protection		
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 2 Dec. 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%
TOTAL US\$:	\$55,600,000	\$ 17,190,743	\$41,693,786	75%

* 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