



Government of Malawi

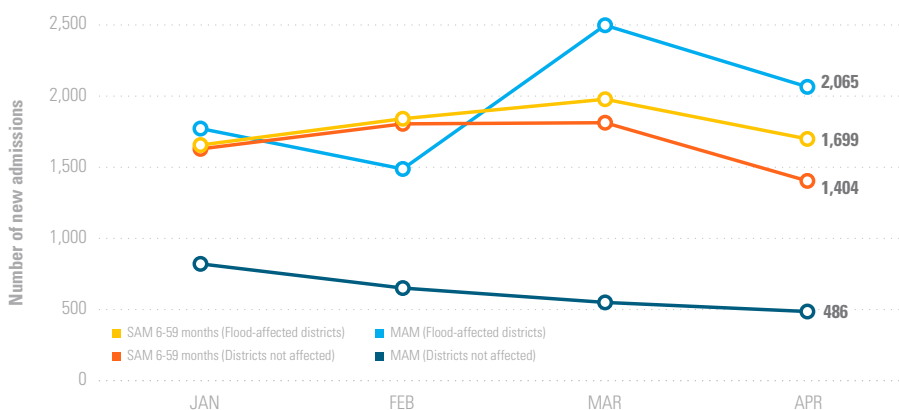
Nutrition Updates

Vol. 2 Reporting Period
April - May 2023

Key Highlights

- Overall, 3,103 children 6-59 months with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were admitted in April. This reached a cumulative total of 13,825 children (22.3% of the 62,067 annual target) since January.
- Overall, there has been a 16% increase in the number of MAM admissions among the 13 flood-affected districts from January to April (an increase from 1,772 to 2,065).
- 278,747 primary caregivers of children 0-23 months have been reached with infant and young child feeding counselling.
- Through the Back-to-School campaign, 36,791 adolescent girls 10-19 years old received iron folic acid (IFA) supplements in the affected areas from March to May.

New SAM and MAM admissions in flood-affected and non-flood affected districts in 2023



CMAM Programme Performance

SAM Children 6-59 months (April 2023)

Cure Rate

93.8%

Death Rate

1.7%

Default Rate

3.0%

Non-responder

1.8%



Challenges

- Limited resources for districts to scale-up nutrition screening.
- Lack of CSB and increased household food insecurity may result in greater SAM cases.
- Inadequate data quality and delays in reporting by partners and stakeholders.



Funding Requirement (US\$)

8,181,969



Funding Gap (US\$)

5,652,953

Progress of Nutrition Cluster Response from January to May 2023

Indicator	Cluster Target*	Cluster Results	Male	Female	% Reach
Number of children 6-59 months screened for wasting	2,170,526	775,821	354,963	420,858	35.7%
Number of children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment**	62,067	13,947	6,696	7,251	22.5%
Number of primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling	607,877	278,747	16,933	261,814	45.9%
Number of adolescent girls 10-19 years old receiving IFA tablets in affected areas	79,642	36,791	NA	36,791	46.2%

*Cluster Target up to December 2023 **The admission data is up to April 2023



Back-to-School Campaign - Adolescent girls (10-19 years old) reached with Iron Folic Acid supplements

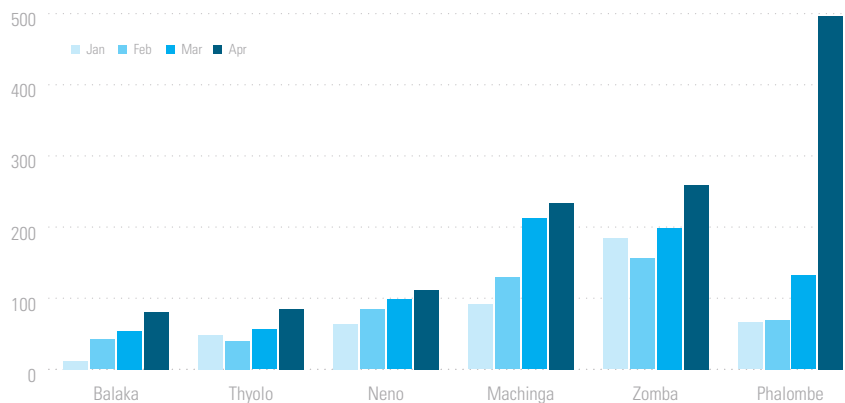
UNICEF has repositioned over 1.78 million Iron Folic Acid supplement tablets and 248,081 Albendazole tablets across Nsanje, Phalombe, Blantyre, Machinga, Chikwawa, Zomba, Mulanje and Mangochi districts targeted for the Back-to-School campaign. The intervention aims to benefit 79,642 adolescent girls aged 10-19 years, who are enrolled in 150 schools. From March to May 2023, a total of 36,791 adolescent girls have consumed the weekly recommended doses. Health and nutrition education sessions including nutrition messages on dietary diversity and iron-rich foods have been provided, with the aim to reduce anaemia susceptibility. This effort represents a 46.2% reach against UNICEF’s planned target of 79,642.

Increasing MAM cases - Six flood-affected districts experiencing increased number of admissions for moderate acute malnutrition from January to April

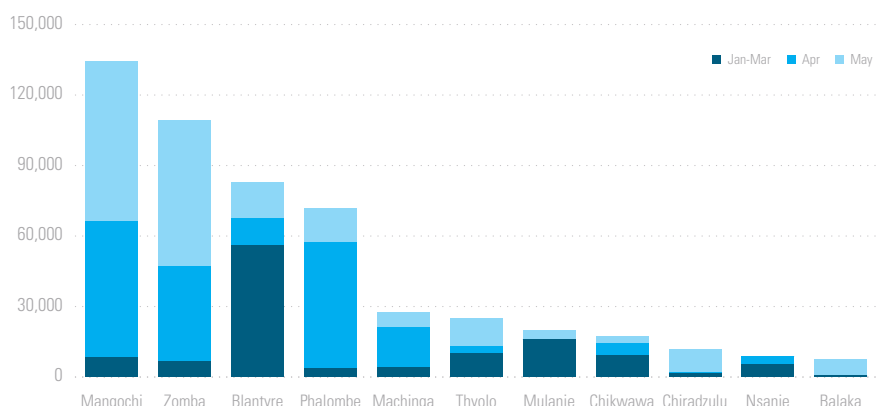
Balaka, Thyolo, Neno, Machinga, Zomba and Phalombe experienced a rising trend of cases of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). The greatest increase was noted in Phalombe where the new MAM admissions in April 2023 grew to six times the number of admissions in January 2023 (66 in January to 497 in April). Overall, in all the 13 flood-affected districts, there has been a 16% increase in the number of MAM admissions, an increase from 1,772 to 2,065 from January to April 2023.

A cumulative total of 775,821 (354,963 Male; 420,858 Female) from January to May 2023 has been screened for acute malnutrition. This is an additional progress of 604,412 children screened from April to May. UNICEF has continued support scaling up nutrition screening through different modalities, including integrated screening in care groups and growth monitoring sessions, Family MUAC in camps and affected communities and mass screening. Key frontline workers including Health Surveillance Assistants and community volunteers with support from Nutrition Cluster Partners supported the advancement.

Flood-affected districts with increasing trends of new MAM admissions



Number of children screened for acute malnutrition in flood affected districts (January to April 2023)



*No data available for Mwanza and Neno

An additional **604,412 children** were screened from April to May

HUMAN INTEREST STORY



© UNICEF/2023

Displaced but not forgotten

By Arnold Munthali, UNICEF Malawi

Empowering Women for Enhanced Child Nutrition and Wellbeing

Under normal circumstances, the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Programme, including the Early Childhood Development project, as implemented in the area of Traditional Authority Machinjiri in Blantyre, carries out several activities to improve the nutritional health of pregnant women, lactating mothers, and under-five children.

The project, implemented in the area by the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) with support from KFW through UNICEF Malawi, builds the capacity of women, especially caregivers, in nutrition through the care group model. This model allows information about nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, and early child development to cascade from frontline workers down through promoters to cluster leaders who lead care groups.

“We train them in sanitation and hygiene, as well as the best feeding practices for under-five children, and pregnant and lactating women,” explains Florence Kambala, the FUM Nutrition Field Officer for the area.

She says the project encourages project participants to construct good toilets and maintain proper handwashing facilities complete with soap. The project also encourages beneficiaries to practice integrated homestead farming, where they grow vegetables around their homes and rear small livestock from which they can obtain meat and eggs for good nutrition.

“We also ask them to use micronutrient powder to supplement the children’s nutrition and encourage them to access vitamin A and Albendazole for deworming,” Kambala adds.

The project also encourages pregnant women to attend antenatal clinics for advice from health surveillance assistants (HSAs) and to access iron folic acid.

However, Cyclone Freddy has upended all that. Some women and children who were beneficiaries of the project are now confined to camps for internally displaced persons (IDP), where they cannot establish backyard gardens nor access the best food for their children, lactating mothers, or pregnant women.

That, however, has not kept the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Programme, including the Early Childhood Development promoters, from following up with the children and women at the camps. Under challenging

circumstances, it is doing all it can to ensure their nutritional health, sanitation, and hygiene are maintained.

“Most of the Cyclone Freddy survivors also come from the areas where we work. They are our beneficiaries. Since the cyclone, everything was disrupted, especially the care group sessions, because the people were traumatized. After they moved into the camps, we started going there to conduct care group sessions. We conduct community complementary feeding sessions where we cook diversified food, including porridge, for children, lactating mothers, and pregnant women,” Kambala says.

One such camp for IDPs is at Mayera in Chileka, Blantyre, which currently has about 400 people, of whom 14 are pregnant women, and 52 are under-two years old. The camp also holds IDPs previously at Chirimba and Namatete camps, both have since been discontinued.

Kambala explains that the project has not relented in its advocacy for better health services in camps, such as antenatal and under-five clinics, nutrition screening, and supplementing of vitamin A and Albendazole.

“We are working hand in hand with HSAs. On some days we hold under-five and antenatal clinics, and we also conduct nutrition screening and cook porridge for children,” she says.

HUMAN INTEREST STORY CONTINUED



Crucially, the project has also trained mothers, some of whom are new to the project, on hygiene and sanitation, especially body hygiene and surrounding areas, building their capacity on good feeding practices, diversification of food, as well as the importance of access to the six food groups, Kambala adds.

Lucy Evans is one IDP who moved into the camp with her three children — 11 and seven years old, and another seven months old — after her house collapsed due to the effects of the cyclone. Before her son was born, she had been employed grading pepper at a firm within the area, but she had to leave her post following the birth of her child. The cyclone left her in a difficult situation.

Although she was not a care group member before the cyclone, Evans says she fed her children properly. Since joining a care group under the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Programme, including the Early Childhood Development project, she has learned more than she could have imagined.

“What I have gathered from the sessions we have had here is about preparing potatoes as porridge with groundnut flour, eggs, and vegetables added to it. It’s very

nutritious food for a child, and my children can grow healthy with this,” Evans says.

Andrew Maduka, the HSA for the Chileka Health Centre, says the Multi-sectoral Nutrition Programme, including the Early Childhood Development project, encourages using locally available resources to improve the nutrition of under 5 children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

“FUM has been helpful. The project has focused on how we can prepare nutritious food with locally available resources. So when this camp started, FUM realized that some of its beneficiaries were there. We come here periodically to measure their nutritional status using the MUAC [mid-upper arm circumference] tape. We would refer any children to the Chileka Health Centre for further treatment if they were found to be in danger, but we haven’t had a case of malnutrition since the camp was opened,” he says.

Despite the trauma she has experienced, Lucy is determined not to waste the knowledge she has picked up during her time at the Mayera camp, such as rearing livestock and starting a backyard garden.

“When I return home, I want to start a backyard garden and feed my children meals based on the recipes I have learned here. My biggest desire is to rebuild my house to return my life to normal,” Evans says.

Malawi aims to further strengthen these activities to realise the objective to ensure equitable access to nutrition services for the vulnerable populations affected by the multiple emergencies.

Situation Analysis and Humanitarian Needs

UNICEF in collaboration with the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDs (DNHA) continues the efforts to meet the needs of 2,857,988 people including 340,267 under 5 children and 181,097 pregnant and lactating women affected by the Tropical Cyclone Freddy. While displaced people have started returning to their homesteads, sustained support is required for at least three months to avoid the disaster’s secondary effects and enable them to rebuild their lives. The Cyclone hit Malawi as the country was experiencing one of the worst cholera outbreak in recent history. Although the overall trend in cholera cases and deaths is decreasing, a few districts those of which affected by the floods have experienced a relative increase in the past weeks. Furthermore, there is a growing concern of possible increases in malnutrition due to high food insecurity at the peak of the lean season. An estimated 3.8 million people were facing acute food

insecurity classified as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) Phase 3: Crisis. In the aftermath of the Cyclone, the situation is likely to worsen.

Malawi has a funding gap of US\$ 5,652,953 necessary to achieve adequate coverage of nutrition interventions prioritizing the promotion of maternal, infant, young child and adolescent nutrition (MIYCAN) practices and the early identification and treatment of moderate and severe acute malnutrition. As of May 2023, Malawi has a low coverage of 35.7% of children 6-59 months targeted to be screened. There is a need for more funding to scale up the early identification and referral activities and to procure treatment supplies as more cases are expected to be identified. So far, 45.9% of primary caregivers of children has been reached with education and counselling on infant and young child feeding and 46.2% of adolescent girls have benefitted from IFA supplements to help reduce anaemia susceptibility.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Felix Pensulo Phiri
(Nutrition Cluster Lead)

Director of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS
Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS
felixphiri8@gmail.com

Mamadou Ndiaye
(Nutrition Cluster Co-Lead)

Chief Nutrition
UNICEF Malawi Country Office
mandiaye@unicef.org

Stanley Vitumbiko Mwase
(Nutrition Cluster Co-Lead)

Nutrition Specialist
UNICEF Malawi Country Office
svmwase@unicef.org



Government
of Malawi

unicef 
for every child

Published by UNICEF Malawi
PO Box 30375, Airtel Complex Area
40/31, Lilongwe 3, Malawi

T: +265 1 770 770
www.unicef.org/malawi

#ForEveryChild