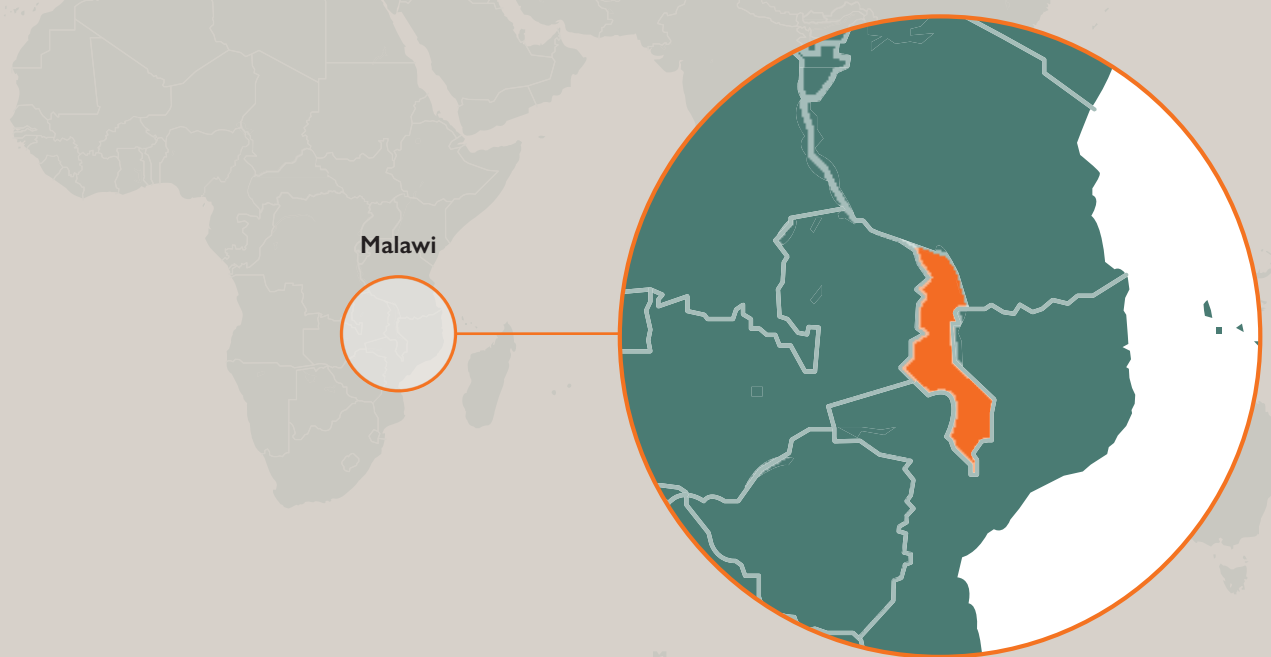


Southern Africa Floods & Cyclone Emergency Response:

Real Time Evaluation of World Vision Malawi's Response

September 2019



Executive Summary

The Malawi government reported approximately 869,000 people were affected by flooding and Cyclone Idai, including 60 deaths and 677 injuries. An estimated 87,000 people were displaced.

Rapid needs assessments continue in the hardest-hit areas to verify initial estimates and determine the number of people in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Satellite imagery showed Chikwawa district as particularly affected. Over 90,000 persons, including 43,391 registered children, across 15 area programmes (AP) in southern Malawi have been affected. The overall impact of the crisis on food security and nutrition, whether directly or indirectly, is huge, considering that the affected people lost nearly all their food commodities at their homes. Food prices have increased, by 40–50% in some local markets, further limiting access to food. Affected people have limited access to potable water, and in some internally displaced persons' camps wait times to draw water have been so long that people have opted to collect water from unprotected sources. Other people walk long distances to access safe water, which increases the risk of violence for women and girls. Over 400 schools were either submerged by floodwaters or used as temporary displacement sites. An estimated 20% of the learners have not yet returned to school due to the disaster.

The WV Malawi Category 2 National Office Response operates under the umbrella of the World Vision Southern Africa Floods & Cyclone Emergency Response (SAFCER), which was declared on 21 March 2019 as a Category 3 Global Response. To date, the response has projects in water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food

assistance, agriculture and livelihoods, camp management and shelter, as well as education.

The objective of the response is to meet the immediate life-saving and early recovery needs of up to 130,000 people affected by the cyclone in 15 districts. World Vision's response has significantly exceeded, and in fact more than tripled, its beneficiary target of 130,000 by reaching approximately 467,000 beneficiaries. World Vision exceeded its funding target of US\$6.5 million by securing approximately US\$8.8 million to date.

The Real Time Evaluation of WV Malawi's response to Cyclone Idai took place in July 2019. The purpose was to assess the response against four criteria (organisational efficiency, relevance, coordination and influence, and programme effectiveness) and culminated in a workshop comprising World Vision staff and partners. Participants validated the findings, refined and prioritised recommendations, and developed action plans for the five prioritised recommendations for immediate improvement.

Main findings

Organisational efficiency

Decisions have been based on needs assessments. They have remained flexible but occasionally have been communicated in a delayed manner. Declaration of the response was perceived to be timely and aligned with the government's declaration. WV Malawi used 20% adjustable AP funds, and World Vision's National Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund was also activated. Funds were generally availed efficiently; however, release of pooled private non-sponsorship funds from SAFCER has been delayed.

Deployed and seconded staff have been skilled and experienced; (re)trained on processes and roles; and equipped with World Vision, government and industry standards and guidelines. However, recruitment and contracting have been slow for the Emergency WASH Coordinator; other staffing gaps exist due to limited funding and inconsistent regional support. Some deployed staff worked exceedingly long hours, limiting time for personal well-being. Strong national office and disaster management (DM) leadership instituted a clear emergency management system and structure, despite a delay in formalisation. Internal communication has been done regularly between functions and from the field to the national office. Staff have been willing to communicate openly and work as one team.

Digital systems for procurement, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), finance and beneficiary management have worked well. ProVision, World Vision's supply chain software, has been seen as efficient and transparent and has strong leadership support. Most relief items have been procured domestically, many relatively quickly. Delays in the delivery of goods and services have been reported due to limited vendor supply, staff capacity to provide clear description of relief items, and consistency to 'receive goods' in ProVision.

The World Vision Partnership has been relatively well informed through situation reports, stories, and so on, despite a partial use of Microsoft Teams and the wvrelief intranet for information management. The response has been well supported by regional and global teams, especially regarding strategy, technical, communications, finance and procurement themes. World Vision offices in donor markets were informed quickly and collaborated on budgets, proposals and external communication. Visits by the SAF CER response director and Regional Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs director provided strong technical and moral support.

Relevance

Deliberate efforts were made to assess, target and prioritise the most vulnerable. However, affected populations reported bias in targeting, including a focus on internally displaced persons in camps, limiting assistance to affected populations staying outside camps.

World Vision has made good attempts to share adequate and transparent information with affected

populations and relevant stakeholders during needs assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring. Affected persons understand their rights, roles and responsibilities; however, they reported limited consultation at times. There has been a high level of participation of affected persons in activities, especially during distributions and in using agriculture inputs, although adolescent (14–18 years of age) participation has been minimal.

Multiple complaint-and-response mechanisms were established as a platform to listen to affected communities and improve implementation. Affected persons commonly reported that assistance is insufficient, shared or delayed at times. Captured issues tend to have been acted upon and resolved where possible; however, there is room to provide more consistent and timely response to beneficiaries' feedback.

World Vision staff received trainings on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, safeguarding and fraud; stakeholders and affected populations were also oriented. Humanitarian standards and 'do no harm' principles have guided World Vision's response activities, which are seen as appropriate and accessible. No major conflict or harm was reported as a result of World Vision's response.

Coordination and influence

World Vision has had strong working relationships with a wide variety of partners (communities, local leaders, government, UN, and so on) at all levels of the response, especially in targeting, verifying and registering affected populations. Participation in interagency forums – like humanitarian clusters, the Humanitarian Country Team and the Humanitarian Response Committee – has been active. However, gaps exist in the consistency of engagement and advocacy across levels and clusters.

Generally, WV Malawi has limited staffing and skills in advocacy. These limitations were reflected in the response, which had no contextualised advocacy strategy and inadequate dedicated advocacy staffing; however, efforts to advocate for the well-being of vulnerable groups took place in clusters and at the field implementation level. The response ensured that protection and social accountability messages were shared with affected people and alerted authorities to gaps in infrastructure reconstruction.

In general, communication, both domestically and internationally, was properly done in alignment with policies, procedures and key messages. The response engaged key external media houses and channels (e.g. *Nyasa Times*, CNN, *Church Times*) to share the needs of affected populations. Despite overshadowing by SAFCER Mozambique, public appeals were used to mobilise resources from Malawian corporations and in donor markets.

Programme effectiveness

World Vision's response has significantly exceeded – in fact, more than tripled – its beneficiary target of 130,000 by reaching approximately 467,000 beneficiaries. Furthermore, World Vision exceeded its funding target of US\$6.5 million by securing US\$8.8 million to date. A strong Grant Acquisition and Management team developed a diverse funding portfolio, including new donors and local companies; however, humanitarian needs continue to outstrip available funding, especially in protection, shelter and nutrition.

Communities, partners and staff believe World Vision declared its response and deployed staff quickly. All actors consider World Vision's response to be effective because it addressed immediate needs, especially in food assistance and WASH and provided shelter and non-food items. Furthermore, the response has started addressing longer-term needs in agriculture and livelihoods.

Strong coordination on joint assessments with the government and clusters was reported; these have informed response strategies and plans. Furthermore, verifications and regular monitoring activities have been carried out by competent M&E staff.

The SAFCER strategic intent and Malawi 90-day response plan have been aligned with community needs as well as with government, clusters and World Vision global strategies. There is scope to develop a formalised strategy with greater focus on recovery and resilience interventions.

Strategic scenarios

Workshop participants identified and reflected on three scenarios that are occurring now, or are likely to occur, that are significantly affecting WV Malawi's emergency response. These three scenarios are:

Climate change: To date, disaster risk reduction and resilience-building initiatives have not systematically mitigated the impact of climate change on health and well-being.

Channels of Hope: For the first time in an emergency context, WV Malawi is implementing Channels of Hope to help protect women and girls from negative coping strategies like school dropout, child labour and early marriages.

Cash and voucher programming: Across the humanitarian sector there is growing recognition of the effectiveness of cash and voucher programming as a powerful approach to respond to people in emergencies.

Prioritised recommendations

The five recommendations prioritised by workshop participants are:

- Reinforce prioritisations for processes and culture of timely 'response mode'
- Coordinate deployments/secondments, both local and international, for staff capacity building, including through the Regional Disaster Management team.
- Position DM themes in 2020 WV Malawi strategy review to reflect operational context.
- Develop a fundraising strategy to engage actively national companies and individuals for emergency funding.
- Develop cash and voucher programming expertise within WV Malawi.



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