



World Food Programme

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# COVID-19 Response

In Malawi: “the work did not stop”

## Background

While the first cases of COVID-19 were only confirmed in Malawi in early April 2020, the Government enforced preventive measures since March which required a rapid adjustments of planned activities in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on WFP's operations in Malawi, while at the same time contributing to measures to curb the spread of the virus. Adjustments made to implementation within the context of the pandemic allowed WFP Malawi to continue delivering key services within the framework of its Country Strategic Plan.

## Supporting vulnerable urban populations

WFP, together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), supported the Government with the design, targeting approach, planning and roll-out of the COVID-19 urban Malawi cash intervention (CUCI), aimed at protecting Malawi's most vulnerable urban populations from the negative socio-economic effects of COVID-19. In addition, WFP led urban cash distributions in 7 district towns, namely Balaka, Nsanje, Neno, Machinga, Mangochi, Dedza and Salima reaching 53,000 people (11,000 households).

## Emergency Supply Chain Support

WFP Malawi, as co-lead of the National Logistics Cluster, has provided logistical support to the COVID-19 Response ensuring that augmented storage, transport capacity, and engineering support are available to the Government and humanitarian partners. For instance, WFP has deployed Mobile Units at border posts (for screening and isolation), in health centers (for testing and vaccination) and in Dzaleka Refugee Camp (for isolation, testing and isolation).



*WFP, MSF and the Malawi Engineering Society have partnered to set up a COVID-19 Field Hospital next to Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in the second main city Blantyre. The Unit is providing testing, vaccination, isolation and treatment facilities.*

22 humanitarian flights facilitated through WFP Aviation



53,000 people received cash distributions to respond to economic impacts of COVID-19



40 Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) set up for COVID-19 health screening, isolation and treatment







## Refugee Operation

WFP continued its support to refugees scaling up e-payments to avoid crowding at distribution sites. WFP also rolled out of pilot livelihoods programme to increase self-reliance of refugees.

## Malnutrition Prevention

Nutrition messages adjusted to include messaging on COVID-19 risk prevention reaching at least 3.7 million people through community radio, mobile vans and door-to-door visits by community volunteers. WASH and PPE items were also distributed to support the district level COVID-19 response.

## School feeding

WFP, through the Education Cluster, advocated with the Government for the adaptation of school feeding programmes to the school closure in the form of take-home support to contribute to the children's food and nutrition security. WFP provided an initial take-home support in 452 primary schools with school feeding in seven districts, resulting in close to 600,000 children (50 percent girls) receiving school meals via take-home rations, either as in-kind assistance or cash transfers. Furthermore, distributions of take-home rations were used to share key health messages on hygiene, gender, protection, education, and COVID-19 mitigating measures.



*Alice Nyadira, a mother of three children who go to Lifidzi School in Salima District, at the market after receiving a cash take-home rations.*

## The impact of COVID-19 on food prices and availability

To better understand the effects of COVID-19 on food and non-food prices and availability, WFP began to collect information using the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) module in lieu of its usual market price monitoring, which provided knowledge on needs, preferences, and demand behaviour of households.

In addition, WFP undertook a remote household survey data collection to monitor seasonal trends and the impact of COVID-19 on food security. An external call centre (GeoPoll) was contracted to conduct calls via random digital dialling on a monthly basis to interview households on their household-level food security situation, consumption patterns, and livelihoods-based coping strategies.

## Livelihoods and Resilience Building

FFA resilient livelihoods operations adjusted in adherence with prevention measures (such as smaller groups of participants at a time and distribution of PPE) to reduce the risk of exposure. WFP used an existing partnership with Farm Radio Trust to share information on how to safely wear masks, regular handwashing, observing social distance, and following good hygienic practices.

Across all the above-mentioned activities, increased preventive measures were taken such as handwashing stations, staggered distributions, personal protective equipment, and COVID-19 messaging to limit exposure for beneficiaries, staff and partners.

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Follow the link to see how WFP logistics has supported the humanitarian community to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Malawi. [Learn more here.](#)

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