

Programme Area Overview

Welcome to Lilongwe the area where your sponsored child lives. We would like to introduce you to Lilongwe and share with you some of the work that Plan, children and local communities have been working on with the support of sponsors like you. This document was written by Plan staff with input from local children like your sponsored child. Thank you for helping to make this work possible.



A girl expressing her rights to duty bearers

Profile of the area

The Area is located in Lilongwe District in the central region of Malawi and lies between 1,200 and 1,829 Meters above sea level. Lilongwe District has a warm tropical climate with a mean annual temperature of about 21° Celsius. The lowest temperatures are experienced in July, ranging between 3.5° C to 12.5° C and the highest temperatures in October-November rising up to 39° C. Generally, there are cool, dry and rainy seasons in the district. The cool season is from May to July; the dry season is from August to October and the Rainy Season is usually from November to mid-April.

In the area, the matrilineal system of marriage is generally practiced whereby the man lives at his wife's home and the system is called Chikamwini in vernacular.

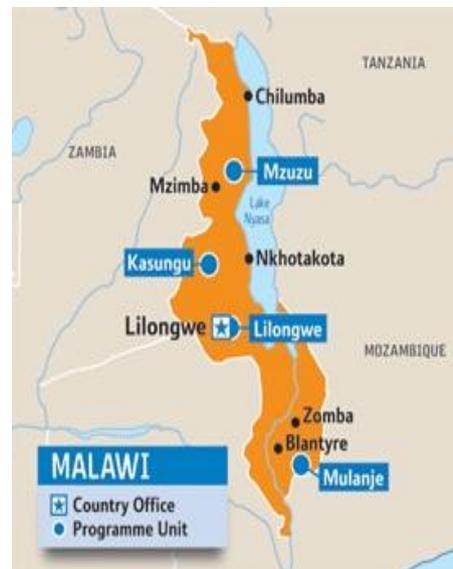
The area is dominated by the Chewa tribe and the commonly spoken language is Chichewa. The people believe in life after death, in addition, when a person dies the whole village gathers at the deceased house to mourn and condole the bereaved.

Lilongwe Program Area operates in Traditional Authority Njewa and Chimutu with a total population of 120, 851 people.

The program area

Agriculture is the main economic activity which supports over 90% of the population. The main crops grown are tobacco, maize, cassava and sweet potatoes. A lot of farmers use hand hoe when preparing their land. Other activities include small scale business such as baking and selling of confectioneries.

The common mode of transport used in the community, is bicycle and oxcart as most roads have deep gullies making them rarely passable during the rainy season. Most of the people walk almost 5 kilometers to access facilities such as health centres.



Map of Malawi showing areas Plan is working.

Situation assessment

Economically most people live below the poverty line (less than one US dollar a day). Most households do not harvest enough food to last them for the whole year due to erratic rainfall patterns as a result of climate change. The arable land where the communities live is highly degraded. It has few trees, insufficient portable safe water and poor soils. Further, some areas are prone to many preventable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections that make the economic problems discussed above worse.

Besides all these and with support from Plan, the communities still work hard to plant trees and care for them in order to prevent deforestation in their communities. Lack of portable water in some villages force people to fetch water from unprotected sources thereby putting lives of children at risk as they are more prone to water born disease such as cholera and dysentery.



Leaner's taking a lead in tree planting



Children learning under a shade

“Lack of portable water within a short distance is greatly affecting my school attendance and performance as I have to walk along distance to fetch water there by not having enough time for school work” said Maness a 12 year old girl.

Access to quality education for children is one of the biggest challenges in some communities within the program area. Some children walk a long distance approximately five kilometers to access quality education. In some schools, inadequate classroom blocks have led to the use of tree shades as alternative learning points.

Last year alone, I have diarrhoea four times and doctor attributes it to the unsafe water which we drink” said Wilfred, 12 a year old boy

Some key area indicators

Indicators	Situation of the program area
HIV prevalence rate	14.6%
Infant Mortality Rate(IMR)	93 /1000
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)	945/100000
Population without safe water	47%
Child Abuse cases since 2007	2,655
Immunization Coverage	100%

A brief overview of Plan achievements since working in the area

There has been a great improvement in the health standard of most children and community members through the adoption of good sanitation and hygiene practices in most villages, which resulted in reduced cases of water borne diseases.

To mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS amongst orphans and vulnerable children, the beneficiaries are supported with livelihood projects such as piggery. They were also empowered to live positively despite living with the virus.

Community based health interventions such as safe motherhood monitoring, and Integrated Management of Child illnesses have been implemented in the area and this has helped to reduce neonatal and maternal deaths. Community structures have been empowered to make systematic follow-ups of all pregnant mothers and encourage them to attend antenatal service and deliveries at a health facility.

There has been enhanced economic empowerment of most community members especially women due to Village Savings and Loans (VS&L) approach where members contribute shares and provide loans to each other at an affordable rate. The loans are used to operate small business ventures. This approach has uplifted more women from the poverty trap thereby enabling them to better support their families such as paying schools fees for their children and meeting other basic needs. Some villages are food secure because of continuously planting drought tolerant crops such as cassava.



VS&L group during one of their meetings



Doris, washing hands after using the latrine

The child protection program has assisted in withdrawal of some girls from child marriages, children from tobacco farms, eradication of corporal punishment in targeted schools and increase school enrolment due to conducive learning environment. Communities are empowered to report any case of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Children have also realized their right to quality education through learning in well constructed school blocks, children centered teaching methodologies by teachers and provision of school material.

Improved child development through supporting of Early Childhood Community Day Centres (pre-schools)

with provision of supplementary feeding and lessons facilitated by trained caregivers.

Some villages have adopted good sanitation and hygiene practices by using pit latrines and they also wash their hands after using the latrines and always ensure that the drop hole covers is in place.

“We no longer use the bush these days when we want to defecate and we always wash our hands after using the pit latrine” said Andrew a 6 year old boy.

The availability of safe water sources has also played an integral part in the eradication of water borne diseases such as cholera. There has been no cholera case within the Program area since 2010 unlike in the past when cases were reported.

“The safe water source has improved our access to potable water, hygiene practices and has also reduced time spent on fetching water. This will give us more time to concentrate on studies social activities” said Chifundo a 12 year old girl.



Judith, fetching water from a safe source

Through the introduction of Learn without fear in schools, corporal punishment has reduced as teachers opt for alternative means of disciplining learners. Relationship between teachers and learner's has improved and bullying of girls by boys have also been reduced. Consequently, this has triggered the increase in enrollment from 60% to 80% between from 2007 to 2011.

Area priorities for the coming 5 years

- Increase access to safe water supply.
- Promote good sanitation and hygiene behaviours.
- Improve the quality of basic education.
- Improve sexual reproductive health services among the adolescents.
- Promote Youth participation in decision making at all levels.

Message from the Program Area Manager

On behalf of Lilongwe Program Area and the entire communities we work in, I would like to extend a very hearty thanks to all our sponsors for your support which has resulted to improved well being of children, youths and the community as a whole. Your support has enabled Plan to reach to more children and enhance its program quality delivery. Consequently more children have realized their right to; a healthy start in life, right to education, right to water and improved sanitation, right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Thank you for your continue support to Plan



**Tambu Msiska, Program Area
Manager**