



Safe Access To Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Malawi

Saving lives through SAFE cooking

WFP works to ensure that the food assistance provided can be consumed as safely and nutritiously as possible. While cooking may be thought of as a safe activity, in many circumstances, especially humanitarian settings, it poses serious health, safety and environmental risks. In Malawi, people are facing severe challenges related to a lack of access to cooking fuel.

FACTS Malawi

- **In rural Malawi, more than 90 percent of households still cook with traditional three-stone open fires.**
- **Almost all rural and half of the urban population depends on firewood for cooking.**
- **Between 1990-2015, Malawi lost 19.2 percent of its forest area** under heavy pressures from slash-and-burn agriculture and firewood collection for cooking, coal- and brick-making.
- **The school system is characterized by high rates of student absenteeism and drop-out.** School meals are a strong incentive for attendance, yet often require access to cooking fuel for their preparation.
- **Firewood collection involves the risk of gender-based violence and attack,** especially against women and girls.

Until 2015, Malawi has supported 872,227 people through the SAFE initiative. WFP has globally reached over 6 million people with SAFE in 18 countries.

The challenge

A combination of recent economic shocks and natural disasters, including a severe El Niño in 2015, have greatly aggravated Malawi's food insecurity. In areas of high population growth and deforestation, the situation is further exacerbated by a lack of access to cooking fuel threatening the health, nutrition and livelihoods of vulnerable populations.

Women and children are particularly affected, as they are often the ones responsible for collecting firewood and preparing meals for their families. Collection trips take valuable time away from more productive pursuits such as education and income-generating activities. Cooking on open fire exposes women and children to heightened risks of respiratory diseases due to toxic smoke inhalation. Insufficient firewood to prepare food often leads to households skipping meals, undercooking or selling food to buy or save on cooking fuel, thus jeopardizing their nutrition.



Safe Access To Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Malawi



Working on sustainable solutions

The **success of SAFE in Malawi** relies on an innovative combination of energy-related and income-generating activities addressing various challenges linked to the access of cooking fuel. These activities focus on nutrition, livelihoods, health, gender, environment and education.

SAFE in Malawi

The SAFE initiative in Malawi is integrated within WFP's Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) and School Meals projects that together cover 20 districts. It follows a holistic approach to address the energy needs of populations through the following activities:

1. Provision and production training of **fuel-efficient mud stoves to households**
2. Provision of **institutional stoves to WFP-assisted schools and training of school cooks** on fuel-efficient cooking methods
3. **Afforestation through community forestry, household woodlots and planting of fruit trees** to increase access to firewood and diversify livelihoods
4. **Gender-based violence sensitization and protection training**



Progress to date

- **Distribution and use of 460 fuel-efficient household stoves and 1,482 institutional stoves** have decreased the duration and number of firewood collection trips, **reducing the associated exposure to gender-based violence risks as well as deforestation.**
- **Trained 1,485 households on how to make their own improved stoves**, in order to promote the stoves' adoption and sustainable use.
- Awareness-raising and protection training sessions have **improved community-based protection strategies.**
- **7 million trees** have been planted.

Future objectives Malawi

Integrated within WFP's FFA and School Meals activities in the country, SAFE responds to the high-priority, energy-related needs and challenges of local communities. With a rising need for assistance, FFA has been scaled up to cover 7 districts (Karonga, Balaka, Zomba, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Nsanje and Blantyre). School Meals are currently assisting 748 schools in 13 districts (Nsanje, Chikwawa, Thyolo, Mulanje, Chiradzulu, Phalombe, Zomba, Mangochi, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza and Ntcheu).

WFP Malawi is actively seeking US\$6 million to continue the implementation of FFA and School Meals projects in the country. Out of this budget, US\$416,000 will be allocated to provide 783 primary schools with cooking pots and energy-saving stoves. By 2018, SAFE in Malawi is planning to reach an additional 35,000 households through energy-related activities, including afforestation.

WFP has globally committed to support 10 million people through SAFE activities by 2020.

A global survey conducted by WFP in 54 countries in 2015 highlighted that two thirds of these countries had energy-related concerns affecting people's food security, nutrition or safety. WFP has cookstove activities in 27 of its country offices.