



SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

# Livelihoods Programme

## Background

Malawi is a low-income, least developed country which faces multiple development challenges. Despite a strong policy environment, agricultural productivity is constrained by the highest deforestation rates in southern Africa, high population growth, and a heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture.

In recent years, the country has faced successive climatic shocks. In March 2019, the country was hit by Cyclone Idai, affecting over 800,000 people and causing an estimated USD 220 million in loss and damages. During the 2020/2021 lean season (November 2020 – March 2021), over 2.6 million people were estimated to be food insecure.

## Key numbers



90% of agriculture in Malawi is rain-fed. Nearly half of Malawi's 28 districts have experienced at least 4 major shocks in the last decade.

Agriculture accounts for around 23% of GDP and employing 64% of the country's workforce.



Farm sizes are small, averaging 0.24 hectares in Malawi compared to the sub-Saharan African Only 35 percent of farmers own land due to land tenure security challenges

On average, 1-2m people each year have required emergency food assistance over the lean season (except for 2016/2017 during the El Nino year).

## Breaking the cycle of hunger

WFP's overall livelihood approach seeks to graduate food and nutrition insecure farming communities from subsistence to surplus-producing livelihoods, where they can access well-functioning markets that support national food systems, all in line with the Government's priorities.

The Livelihoods Programme leverages WFP's long-standing field presence and partnership base to implement Food For Assets (FFA), the Integrated Risk Management Programme (IRMP), and Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS) programmes in an integrated approach.

Communities are at the centre of the activities through the implementation of Community Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) sessions where farming communities identify their own challenges and ways to address them.

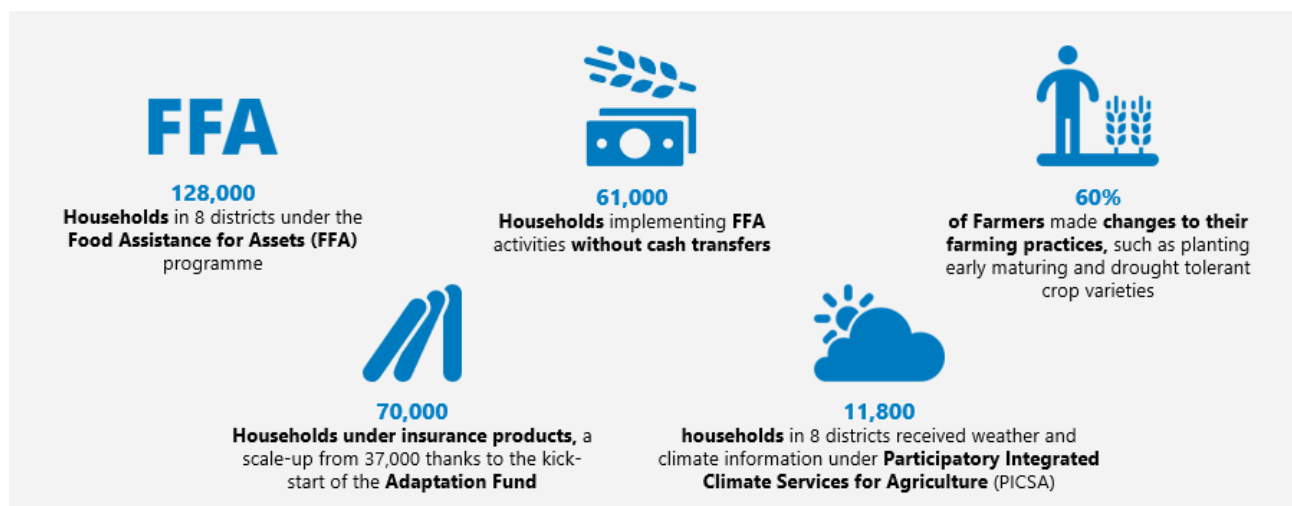
## Linkages

In Malawi, the livelihoods Programme is part of the WFP's integrated resilience building portfolio, which also includes established linkages to Forecast Based Financing, Shock Responsive Social Protection, nutrition-sensitive and Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) forms an integral part of the project to influence positive behavioural change through messages on nutrition, gender, agriculture, health and sanitation using all possible communication channels.

## Geographic Coverage

WFP's FFA programme aims to increase agricultural productivity by supporting 128,000 households in eight districts (Balaka, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Machinga, Mangochi, Phalombe, Nsanje and Zomba).

## Key 2020 Results



## Key Indicators / achievements

- **Food Consumption:** Between 2019 and 2020, the proportion of households having acceptable food consumption has increased in most districts.
- **Livelihoods Coping Strategies Index:** Participants are resorting to far less critical coping strategies, meaning that—when they do experience shocks—they are better able to bounce back, because they have not lost most of their productive assets.
- **Dietary Diversity:** WFP participants experience **better dietary diversity** in terms of the number of food groups consumed.
- Satellite pictures show that there is an overall **improvement in vegetation** condition since the programme started at the end of 2016.
- **Over 90 %** of participants report increased yield and improved ability to resist weather shocks.
- **Over 90 %** of participants report that regeneration of woodlot has significantly reduced surface water run offs and soil erosion.
- In Blantyre District, where cash transfers to participants has been stopped since 2019, **88% of participants are still participating in resilience-building activities.**
- **76% of participants in 2020** stated that messaging received on climate information were used to make decisions related to agriculture among others.
- **60 percent of participating households** made changes to their farming practices such as planting early-maturing and drought-tolerant crop varieties.
- Fuel efficient stoves have reduced the time spent by to fetch firewood by **60%** (as reported by participants).

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD



Read about Marita Tangata and other smallholder farmers in Malawi who went from depending on food assistance to being self-sufficient. [Learn more here.](#)

