



RCRP-2

Newsletter



Building Resilience Together

August 2026



MESSAGE FROM PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Dear Reader,

As we continue implementing the Regional Climate Resilience Programme (RCRP-2), I am pleased to share encouraging progress on one of our key priorities: restoring and strengthening Malawi's critical road, bridge, and culvert infrastructure. Tropical Cyclone Freddy left many communities isolated when vital roads and crossings were damaged or washed away.

Today, through RCRP-2, the Roads Authority is leading the reconstruction and rehabilitation of these essential lifelines using climate-resilient designs. Works are packaged into targeted lots covering small to medium-scale bridges, culverts, and road sections – including important routes such as the Mangochi-Makanjira (S129) Road.

These upgrades are already making a real difference. Better drainage systems, stronger foundations, and flood-resistant structures mean our roads and bridges can better withstand heavy rains and future cyclones.

This translates into: safer journeys for families and emergency services, reliable access to markets, schools, and health facilities, reduced economic losses when disasters strike and stronger connectivity that supports trade and livelihoods across districts.

Every kilometre rehabilitated and every bridge reinforced brings us closer to a Malawi that is not just recovering from climate shocks, but truly resilient to them. I want to thank the Roads Authority team, our contractors, district councils, and the communities who continue to support this important work.

Your continued cooperation ensures we deliver quality infrastructure that will serve generations to come. Looking ahead, we will accelerate more road and bridge projects while maintaining high standards of climate resilience and environmental care.

We remain committed to transparent implementation and value for every kwacha invested under this World Bank-supported programme. Together, we are rebuilding stronger connections, literally and figuratively, for a more resilient Malawi.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Warm regards,

Adwell Zembele



EDITORS NOTE

Dear Reader,

When Tropical Cyclone Freddy tore through Malawi, it didn't just damage homes and fields; it severed vital connections. Roads were washed away, bridges collapsed, and entire communities found themselves cut off from markets, schools, hospitals, and emergency help.

Today, the Regional Climate Resilience Programme (RCRP-2) is quietly but powerfully rebuilding those broken links with stronger, smarter infrastructure designed to withstand future climate shocks.

In this edition of the RCRP-2 newsletter, we shine the spotlight on our roads, bridges, and culverts rehabilitation efforts. You will discover how climate-resilient designs, better drainage, reinforced foundations, and flood-resistant structures are transforming vulnerability into strength. These are not just construction projects; they are lifelines that restore access, protect livelihoods, and keep communities connected even when the rains return.

From ongoing works on critical routes like the Mangochi-Makanjira road to newly strengthened crossings that now stand ready for the next heavy season, the progress we highlight here demonstrates RCRP-2's commitment to practical, lasting resilience.

As you read these stories, I invite you to see the human side: the mother who can now reach the market without fear, the student whose school remains accessible year-round, and the farmer whose produce no longer rots because transport routes stay open.

We hope this issue inspires confidence that, together with our partners at the Roads Authority, district councils, and local communities, we are building a Malawi that bounces back faster and stronger from climate challenges.

Thank you for being part of this resilience journey.

warm regards,
Happy reading,

Yvonne Akonda Sundu

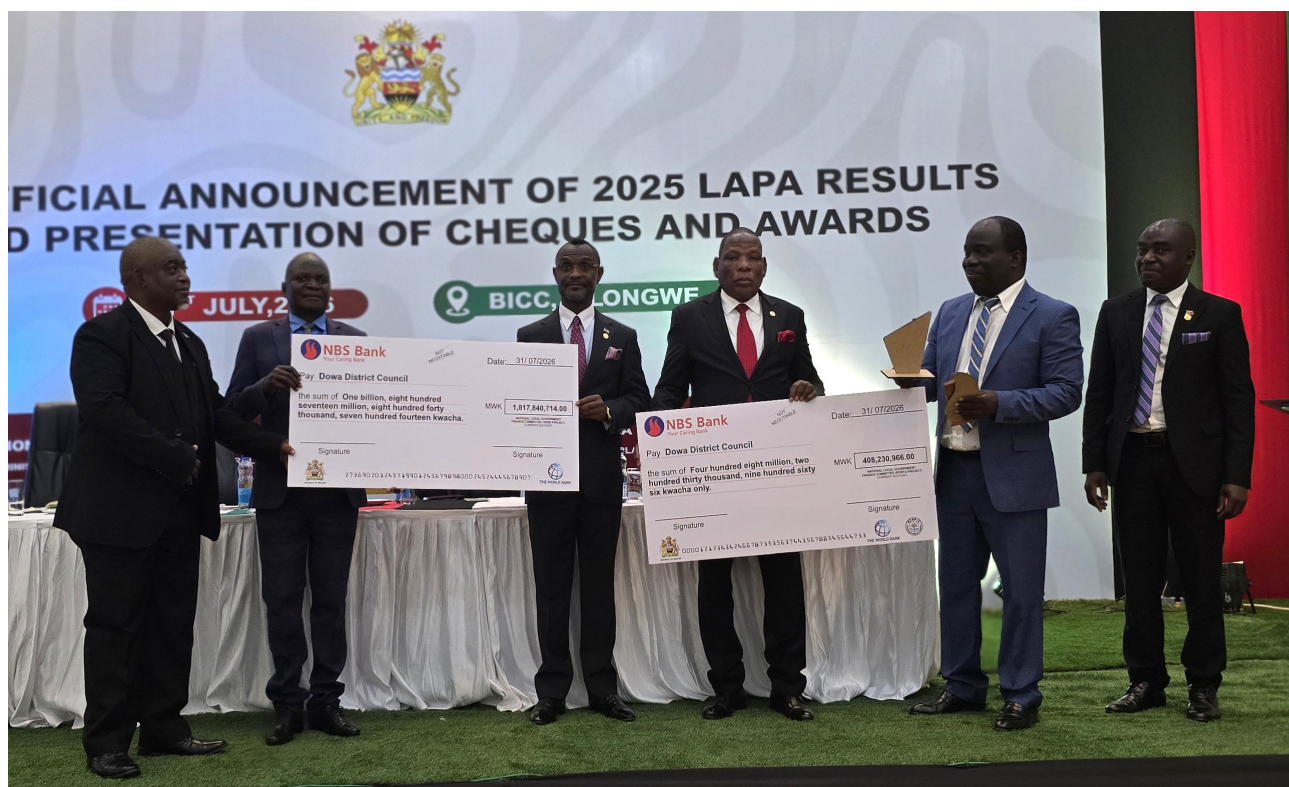
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Dowa Council DC, James Kanyangalazi (far left), Council Chair Billy Mtika (second left) holds dummy cheques with the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Honourable Dr. Ben Malunga Phiri, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Honourable Joseph Mathyola Mwanamveka, as Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development, Reverend Moses Chimphemo (second right) and Principal Secretary Responsible for Decentralisation Peterson Ponderani (far right) look on.

Be prudent with public resources- Minister Phiri tells councils

The Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Dr. Ben Malunga Phiri, M.P. has implored district councils to be prudent in managing public resources.

Malunga Phiri made the remarks at the Cheque Presentation Ceremony and Announcement of the 2025 Local Authority Performance Assessment (LAPA) Results for the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2).

The program has disbursed cheques amounting to US\$6.5 million, which is approximately MWK10 billion, to eligible Local Authorities based on their performance in the 2025 LAPA.

27 out of 28 district councils met the minimum assessment conditions leading to the Performance Based

Grants (PBGs), with Lilongwe, Nsanje, Ntcheu and Thyolo having been recognised for consistently maintaining unqualified audits from 2021 to 2025.

"This is the sound financial management we are advocating for. We look forward to seeing that in all district councils," said the Minister.

The outstanding performing councils are Dowa and Neno in that order, with Rumphi, Kasungu and Salima all in position 3.

The top two district councils have each received MK408,230,966 and MK123,194,622, respectively, from RCRP-2 for the implementation of the cycle 2 PBG interventions.

Speaking earlier, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and

Development, Joseph Mathyola Mwanamveka, M.P., cautioned district commissioners against underperforming, as that means denying people development.

"LAPA results are key in the process of full decentralisation and accountability of results. As such, we do not want DCs that fail to do their job," he said.

He also called on the National Local Government Finance Committee (NLGFC) to emphasise to local authorities having an unqualified audit opinion.

"From 22 clean audits in 2023/2024 to 18 in 2024/2025, this is worrying. We need to have more districts on the list. NLGFC should find a way to reverse the trend," he said.

Contractor for Makanjira road bridges on site

The sites for the bridges construction along the Chingo-Makanjira road in Mangochi under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2) has been handed over to the contractor.



State of affairs at Lugola Bridge on Chingo Makanjira road in Mangochi.

The sites were handed over by the Roads Authority (RA) to Anhui Foreign Construction Group, together with the design and supervision consultant, Kandoli Consulting Engineers, in joint venture with Advanced Engineering Solutions Limited from Tanzania.

RCRP-2 RA Deputy Project Coordinator, Eng. Jarrison Chilongo said the contractor is expected to work on the nine bridges for the next 24 months till July 2028.

"Supervision of construction works for Lot 3 is expected to start immediately the contractor mobilises, and it will be ongoing until the end of the project. This is to maintain the standards," he said.



An ambulance crossing where Unga Bridge used to sit along the Chingo-Makanjira road in Mangochi.

Eng. Chilongo says the goal is simple: safe, seamless and efficient traffic flow that does not get disrupted during the rainy season.

"This is more than bridges. It's about linking people to markets, hospitals, schools and many other essential services all year-round. That is why we will build hydraulically adequate, climate-resilient structures to withstand extreme weather and in the process create meaningful jobs for local communities," he said.

He added: "The bridges, Lusalumwe and Nkuli, are in Mangochi North East Constituency, Kalanje, Lungwena, Mbwazi, Lutende, Lilembwe, Unga and Lugola in Mangochi Lutende Constituency. These bridges are of varying spans, including wider approach roads."

Officially designated as S129, the road is an important corridor for transporters who currently spend hours commuting or get completely cut off during the rainy season.

Through RCRP-2, RA is spearheading works on roads and bridges in the southern districts of Malawi.

"We are implementing basin-level infrastructure development, targeting the reconstruction of road and bridge infrastructure, which includes detailed engineering design, civil works execution and construction supervision of the same for road infrastructure damaged by Tropical Cyclone Freddy," explained Eng. Chilongo.



What remains of Lungwena Bridge on Chingo-Makanjira road in Mangochi. Pictures by Yvonne Sundu.

The RA scope is divided into three lots: Lot 1 is for small-scale bridges, culverts, and road sections throughout the southern region of Malawi; Lot 2 is for medium-scale bridges, culverts, and road sections also in the Southern Region of Malawi; and Lot 3 is for the reconstruction of bridges and road sections along the Chingo-Makanjira (S129) road.

Meanwhile, the detailed engineering designs for Lots 1 and 2 sites are nearing completion, awaiting completion of development of safeguards instruments.

"We envisage that by the end of August, a training needs assessment for all the Project Affected Persons (PAPs) will be done, and the actual training sessions are planned for September and October 2026.

Similarly, we are hoping that compensation money to all the PAPs for Lots 1 and 2 will be disbursed before commencing civil works in these sites," explained Eng. Chilongo.

A dream sewn into reality



Muhammad, together with fellow trainees, during the PAPs tailoring training.

Farrida's journey from fear and uncertainty to hope and opportunity

When Farrida Muhammad first heard that her house, grocery shop, and beloved trees would have to make way for the construction of a new bridge along the Chingo-Makanjira road in Mangochi, fear gripped her heart.

For the mother of three from Lunga village in Traditional Authority Namavi, the news felt like the beginning of a difficult chapter. The small grocery business she had built over the years was her family's main source of income. Her home represented years of hard work and sacrifice. The thought of losing both left her worried about how she would provide for her children.

"I was very concerned. I kept asking myself what would happen to my family and how we would survive after losing the things we depend on," recalls Farrida.

Like many Project Affected Persons (PAPs) along the Chingo-Makanjira road, Farrida's property falls within the area required for the construction of climate-resilient bridges being implemented by the Roads Authority (RA) with support from the World Bank under the Regional Climate Resilience Programme (RCRP-2).

However, what began as a source of anxiety gradually turned into a story of hope.

Farrida says her fears began to ease when project teams carried out assessments and valuation exercises to determine compensation for affected assets. Through community consultations and continuous engagement, she gained confidence in the process.

"The assessments were conducted openly and transparently. We were involved throughout, and everything was explained clearly. That gave me peace of mind," she says.

But compensation is only one part of the support being provided to affected families.

Recognising that financial compensation alone may not guarantee long-term economic security, RCRP-2 has introduced a Livelihood Restoration Plan aimed



Muhammad (on a sewing machine): I have been empowered through the training.

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A trainer explains to a trainee during the tailoring class session.

at helping affected households rebuild and improve their livelihoods. Through this initiative, 206 affected community members are receiving training in business management, financial literacy, agriculture, and vocational skills tailored to their interests and aspirations.

For Farrida, this presented an opportunity she had been waiting for all her life.

She had always dreamed of becoming a tailor, but never had the chance to acquire the necessary skills.

"When the project team asked us what kind of skills we would like to learn; I immediately chose tailoring. It has always been something I wanted to do," she says with a smile.

Today, Farrida has undergone tailoring training and is already looking beyond the challenges of displacement toward a brighter future.

She plans to use part of her compensation money to purchase a sewing machine and establish her own tailoring business, a venture she

believes will provide a sustainable source of income for her family long after the bridge construction is completed.

"I am excited because this training has given me a skill that no one can take away from me. Once I get my sewing machine, I will start my own business and support my children," she says.

Her story reflects the broader vision behind the RA's Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP): ensuring that project-affected people are not left worse off by development interventions, but are instead empowered with new opportunities to improve their lives.

While the bridges being constructed under RCRP-2 will strengthen connectivity and climate resilience across Mangochi, for people like Farrida Muhammad, the project is building something equally important - a pathway to a more secure and prosperous future.

The program's Deputy Coordinator at RA, Eng. Jarrison Chilongo said the thematic areas were identified after conducting a PAPs Training

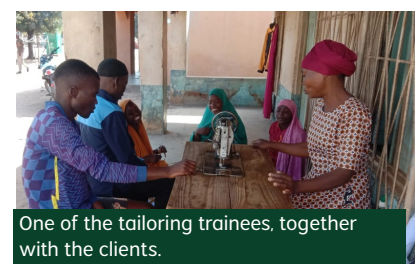
Needs Assessment.

"Through the trainings, we hope the PAPs will be better equipped on how to use the compensation money they are going to receive to develop their livelihood," said Eng. Chilongo.

"At the core of the LRP is to support the PAPs in regaining their economic and social stability through the targeted assistance that suits their different specific needs.

"It will also contribute to the PAPs' long-term livelihood resilience by empowering them through capacity building, market linkages and sustainable investments," he added.

As the sound of sewing machines begins to replace uncertainty, Farrida's dream is slowly becoming a reality, proving that with the right support, change can create opportunities as well as challenges.



One of the tailoring trainees, together with the clients.



The newly constructed Bale Health Post in Chitipa.

Bale Health Post restores hope in Chitipa

For years, expectant mothers in the hilly villages of group village head (GVH) Mwenebale in Chitipa District risked their lives travelling 13 kilometres to the nearest health facility.

But now a new health post funded through the World Bank-funded Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2) is set to change that reality for at least 1,334 people.

For many families, accessing healthcare has meant walking over steep terrain to Wenya Health Centre, a journey that becomes almost impossible at night or during the rainy season.

Today, that story is beginning to change as the facility is expected to restore hope to many more people who have endured years of limited access to essential health services.

For 38-year-old Jane Sibale of Mphinda Village, Traditional Authority Mwenewenya, the K177 million project is more than just a new building. It represents safety, dignity and a chance for mothers and children to live healthier

lives.

"Some women deliver at home due to long distances to Wenya Health Centre," she says.

Sibale, a mother of six, explains that the area's rugged landscape worsened mobility challenges.

"Things are worse at night and during the rainy season because the area is hilly," she explains.

Home deliveries and delayed treatment have remained common in the area because reaching the nearest health facility often requires hours of walking on difficult terrain.

For pregnant women, young children and the elderly, the journey has been torture. Recognising these challenges, the community in GVH Mwenebale prioritised the construction of Bale Health Post in its Village Action Plan (VAP) over other development needs.

Bale Village Development Committee chairperson Wyson Kapira says improving access to healthcare topped the community's development priorities because women and children were the

most affected by the long distances.

"We prioritised the construction of Bale Health Post in our Village Action Plans after seeing how women and children were suffering while travelling to the nearest health facility," he says.

Kapira thanks Chitipa District Council for responding positively and sending contractors to start constructing the health post.

GVH Mwenebale says the new facility will improve healthcare delivery for communities that have struggled for decades.

Beyond improving access to healthcare, the project demonstrates how climate resilience investments can strengthen essential public services. In remote areas like Bale, heavy rains often make roads impassable, cutting communities off from health facilities.

By bringing healthcare closer to the people, the project reduces the risks associated with climate-related disasters while strengthening community resilience.

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Kapira: We prioritised construction of Bale Health Post in our VAP.

The construction of Bale Health Post contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which seeks to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of all people by 2030.

As construction progresses, residents eagerly await the day when the doors of Bale Health Post will open—ushering in a new chapter of healthier lives, stronger communities and renewed hope for generations to come.

The 12-month project, which is disability-friendly with ramps for easy access to the health facility, started on August 18, 2025 and is expected to be completed by July 30, 2026.

Chitipa District Hospital spokesperson Masida Nyirongo says the facility will promote healthcare services in the area.

"Even vaccines are kept at Wenya Health Centre, which is a big challenge in terms of transporting them uphill and back. Once the health post is completed, vaccines will be stocked right there, which

will in turn boost under-five clinic services," he says.

Chitipa District RCRP-2 Engineer Rachael Nyasulu is optimistic about the project's timeframe.

She says once completed, the health post will have a waiting area, antenatal, post-natal, diagnostic/treatment room and medical storage rooms.

"The building consists of a concrete reinforced foundation, built with strong and weather-resistant blocks," Nyasulu explains.

She says the project is remaining with a few features to be completed, which include plumbing, solar installation, incinerator, painting and external works.

As workers put the finishing touches to the structure ahead of its expected completion date, residents are looking forward to a future where healthcare is no longer a distant dream.



Construction of septic tank and soakaway at Bale Health Post. Pictures by Aliko Munde, MANA.

Hail to safe motherhood



Matiyasi: Women will be comfortable coming to the facility.

Lying along Mulanje-Phalombe Road, Chambe Health Centre has brought a new lease of life into the area following rehabilitation works on a maternity wing at the facility.

For years, the journey to safe motherhood for women in the area under Traditional Authority Mkanda in Mulanje District was marked by a deteriorating maternity wing that offered little comfort and less safety.

For Bertha Tapani, a resident of Mulavo Village, the memories of past maternal care are vivid. She recalls that when labour began, women at Chambe Health Centre were referred to Mulanje District Hospital, at least 20 kilometres away.

"Our facility has no ambulance. So, it was difficult for us to afford transport to Mulanje District Hospital. The best solution was to give birth in the village with the help of traditional birth attendants," she says.

Left without reliable emergency transport, many expectant mothers had no choice but to rely on traditional birth attendants, risking complications far from proper medical intervention.

Eliza Matiyasi from Mwanyiri Village recalls a dilapidated maternity wing that had turned into a threat rather

than a hospital, as the conditions were equally distressing.

He explains: "Pregnant women were afraid to go to the facility because of its poor state, as it posed a threat to their lives.

"The facility, full of cracks and with a worn-out roof, was also leaking during the rainy season. At some point, the roof was blown off by the wind."

Matiyasi said that with a shortage of beds, women in labour found themselves sleeping on the bare floor.

The facility's in-charge, Ernest Kamzati, said termites destroyed the old timber holding the roof.

He says: "The delivery packs were contaminated because of soil falling from the destroyed roof.

"Some people were going to Kambenje and Mulanje District Hospital because the structure was a threat to pregnant women."

The turning point, however, arrived through the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2), which funded K135 million for rehabilitation works.



Tapani: No more going to Mulanje District Hospital.

The transformation replaced the fragile, termite-ridden wooden beams with a modern, resilient steel roof structure designed to withstand heavy rains and strong winds.

Kamzati said the rehabilitation of the building has restored trust between the healthcare system and the community.

He said: "The roof can no longer be destroyed by termites as it is made of steel materials.

"The structure has provided a conducive environment for delivery services. It has uplifted the face of the facility and is attracting women to come to the hospital for delivery."

For mothers like Bertha Tapani, the shift means peace of mind during one of the most vulnerable moments of a woman's life.

"We no longer worry about transport because we know that we will access maternity services right here in the village at our health facility," she says.

Where fear and uncertainty once dictated the birth of a child, Chambe's newly-renovated maternity wing now offers something far greater: the lifesaving promise of safe care close to home.

Health facility rehab promotes ART services



The renovated maternity wing at Chambe Health Centre. Pictures by Robert Nayeja, MANA.

Chambe Health Centre in-charge Ernest Kamzati says the rehabilitation of the maternity wing, which also houses the anti-retroviral therapy (ART) unit, will promote the delivery of the service at the facility.

He said that the facility stopped using the room due to its dilapidated state.

"The room was in a poor state. So, we relocated to another room, but in an open space. As a result, it violated the requirement of privacy," said Kamzati.

He said the number of people accessing healthcare services, especially ARTs, dropped due to a lack of privacy following the relocation of the room.

"Some clients do not want people to see them walking into an ART room. But following the rehabilitation of the maternity wing, the hospital is planning to return to the wing," said Kamzati.

One client from Mwanyiri Village said she was not comfortable with the improvised room, adding that it placed their status in the spotlight in the area.

"Once you walk into that room, everyone knew that you were going to get ARVs. The best place was the room at the maternity wing, where people would not know what you were going to do on that side," she added.

Another client from John Village said he visits Mulanje District Hospital for ART treatment.

"If I don't have transport, I stay days without taking medication. I believe once Chambe Health Facility opens the rehabilitated maternity wing, I will be comfortable to get ARVs at the facility and will no longer miss taking drugs," he said.

"The room was in a poor state."

Guardian shelter restores dignity to women

Guardians at Karonga District Hospital endured sleepless nights for years as the small, old, dilapidated guardian shelter could not accommodate more than 100 women.

With no adequate shelter, some slept on verandas while others braved the open air, exposing themselves to harsh weather and insecurity while staying close to loved ones receiving treatment.

That experience has now changed following the completion of a K172 million guardians' shelter constructed under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2).

Construction of the facility by Steady Builders Company started in November 2025 and was completed in February 2026 before being handed over to the hospital.

The investment covered the construction of a modern guardians' shelter with a capacity to accommodate up to 80 people at a time, together with four double latrines designed to improve sanitation and hygiene within the hospital environment.

For Christina Nyasulu from Tilora Village in Traditional Authority Wasambo, the new shelter represents more than just a building; it is a source of relief and hope.

She recalls how guardians often struggled to find a place to sleep, especially during the rainy season when many were forced to spend nights outside.

"We did not have enough space, and some of us were forced to sleep outside, even when it was raining. We are grateful to the council for the facility," says Nyasulu.

Group village head Mwambuli described the development as a long-awaited response to a pressing community need.

He said the previous shelter had deteriorated to the point where it could no longer provide safe accommodation for guardians, many of whom travel long distances to support patients admitted to the district's referral hospital.

"We thank the council for constructing the shelter because the previous one was in a bad condition. We appeal for continued support to address other challenges facing the hospital," he said.

Health officials say the new infrastructure will improve the welfare of guardians, whose role is essential in patient care such as feeding patients, helping them to bathe and providing emotional support.

Karonga district director of health and sanitation David Sibale said the old shelter could no longer cope with the growing number of guardians, leaving many exposed to harsh weather conditions and poor sanitation.

"We welcome the facility with gratitude because our guardians face many challenges while taking care of patients. The previous shelter was in a poor condition and could not accommodate the increasing number of guardians," he said.

Karonga District Hospital Management Committee chairperson Felix Mwakyanjala said increasing patient numbers have placed enormous pressure on hospital infrastructure.

He said the old shelter, which was serving more than 100 guardians daily, had become overcrowded,

lacked electricity and exposed users to theft and insecurity.

"The construction of this shelter has come at the right time, as thieves were having a field day at the old facility, which had no electricity and was overcrowded. Now, this will be a thing of the past. We are very grateful for the RCRP-2 project," said Mwakyanjala.

Karonga District RCRP-2 engineer Innocent Ngoma said the project forms part of broader efforts to strengthen community resilience while improving access to quality public services through climate-resilient infrastructure.

He said the shelter has been designed to provide a safer and more dignified environment for guardians, with improved sanitation, better protection from extreme weather and easier access for users.

"The facility also incorporates climate-resilient features to withstand adverse weather conditions and includes ramps to improve accessibility for people with disabilities," said Ngoma.

For guardians arriving at Karonga District Hospital, the new shelter offers more than protection from the weather.

It restores dignity, privacy and safety to people who stand beside their loved ones during some of life's most difficult moments.

**"This shelter
has come
at the right
time."**

People team up to grade road

People in group village head (GVH) Mwenebale in Chitipa District have rehabilitated an earth road from Wenya Trading Centre to Bale Health Post to ease mobility challenges they were facing during the rainy season.

GVH Mwenebale said the road's poor condition made it difficult for vehicles to reach the area, affecting transportation of people and goods.

He said communities voluntarily dedicated their time and labour to rehabilitate the road to address the challenges they faced.

"The terrain in the area is mountainous, and the road was in bad shape, making it difficult for vehicles to reach our area. We, therefore, decided to rehabilitate the road and we are happy that vehicles can now access the area

without problems," said GVH Mwenebale.

A youth, Blessings Kayira, said young people played a leading role in the rehabilitation exercise because they understood the importance of improving access to their communities.

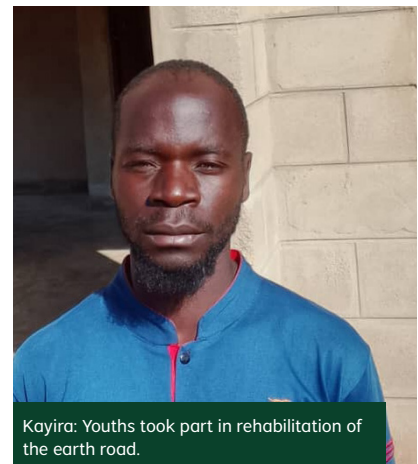
He said the road's poor state made it difficult for farmers to transport produce to markets and for patients to be ferried to health facilities.

"Most of us are farmers and transporting produce was a challenge. It was also difficult to ferry patients to hospital. We are happy that vehicles can now move without problems," said Kayira.

Chitipa District Council community development officer Haddy Mulenga commended communities in Bale for rehabilitating the road.

He said: "The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare is promoting community development initiatives.

"The road's rehabilitation is expected to improve mobility, facilitate access to markets and health services as well as enhance socio-economic activities in Bale and surrounding communities."



Kayira: Youths took part in rehabilitation of the earth road.



Communities busy rehabilitating the road to Bale Health Post. Pictures by Aliko Munde, MANA.



Community members drawing water from one of the taps.

From rivers to running taps: How safe water is transforming lives in Bwanali

For years, the sound of footsteps echoed through the villages of Bwanali, Nsolo, Namkumba and Makwinja under Group Village Head Bwanali in Dedza district long before sunrise.

Women and girls, carrying buckets on their heads, would leave their homes as early as 3 a.m. to begin the long journey in search of water.

The trek was more than just exhausting. It exposed them to dangers ranging from accidents and attacks to crossing swollen rivers during the rainy season.

Those fortunate enough to avoid the river still had to endure long queues at the only borehole serving all four villages. Fetching water often consumed hours that could have been spent caring for families, tending gardens or engaging in income-generating activities.

Today, that story has changed.

An over K75 million water reticulation system installed under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2) has brought clean and safe

drinking water within reach of the four villages.

The system comprises a 10,000-litre water storage tank connected to seven community water kiosks through a two-kilometre pipeline, providing safe water to approximately 350 households, representing nearly 1,750 people.

For community members, however, the project is about much more than pipes, taps and water tanks. It represents restored dignity, improved health and renewed hope.

Water Committee Chairperson, William Papius, recalls the difficult years before the project.

"Women left home as early as three in the morning to fetch water. As men, we worried because they

were gone for many hours, and sometimes we suspected they had gone elsewhere.

Worse still, some were attacked while others drowned while trying to access water.

Those challenges are now becoming a thing of the past," he said.

Like many rural communities, Bwanali depended largely on the Nankokwe River for domestic use.

During the dry season, water levels dropped and quality deteriorated, while in the rainy season, contamination increased the risk of waterborne diseases. The only alternative was a single borehole that served all four villages, forcing families to spend long hours waiting for their turn.

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For Berita Ignancio of Makwinja Village, the new water system has completely transformed daily life.



Ignancio: Access to clean water has transformed our daily lives.

"We were poor in terms of access to clean and safe water. Sometimes we spent almost three-quarters of an hour just waiting to draw water from the borehole because everyone depended on it. We hardly had time to complete household chores.

"Now we can collect water close to our homes. We have enough time to care for our families, and we are planning to establish backyard gardens so that we can improve household nutrition," she explained.

The benefits extend beyond convenience. Ready access to safe water has encouraged better hygiene practices within households.

Colotacia Lengu from Nsolo Village says frequent bathing and regular washing have become part of everyday life.

"Our bodies are cleaner because water is nearby. We used to spend so much time fetching water that household chores were neglected. Now things have changed," said Lengu.

She added that community members have taken ownership of the project by ensuring children do not misuse the taps and by introducing penalties for anyone who deliberately

damages the facilities.

Improved access to clean water is also yielding positive health outcomes.

According to the Water Supply Committee Secretary, Michael Linzi, cases of diarrhoeal diseases that were once common, particularly during the rainy season, have significantly declined.

"Before the project, many families relied on river water. When people wanted clean water, they had to queue at the only borehole serving about 350 households. Today, safe water is much easier to access, and illnesses associated with unsafe water have reduced," he said.

Recognising that the infrastructure must serve future generations, the community has already established mechanisms to ensure its sustainability.

Every household contributes K500 towards a maintenance fund, generating more than K70,000 annually to cover minor repairs.

Community members have also agreed to employ a watchman and enforce local by-laws aimed at protecting the water kiosks from vandalism and misuse.



Women drawing water from one of the taps.

Village Head Nsolo I believes community ownership is key to preserving the investment.

"We are grateful for this development. We used to walk about 25 minutes one way to fetch water from the river.

As a community, we are committed to taking care of this project so that our children and grandchildren continue to benefit," he emphasised.

While the immediate impact is visible through clean water flowing from community taps, the project's significance reaches much further.

By reducing time spent fetching water, families can devote more hours to farming, education and other productive activities. Improved hygiene contributes to healthier communities, while backyard gardening strengthens household food security and nutrition.

These are precisely the kind of outcomes that the Regional Climate Resilience Program seeks to achieve: building resilient communities that are better equipped to withstand the effects of climate change while improving livelihoods and access to essential services.

For the people of Bwanali, resilience now flows with every drop of clean water.

**"Now
things have
changed".**



RCRP-2: Restoring livelihoods along Chingo - Makanjira road

The Regional Climate Resilience Programme (RCRP-2), through the Roads Authority (RA), with financial support from the World Bank, has undertaken critical infrastructure recovery works to rehabilitate and reconstruct transport assets damaged by Tropical Cyclone Freddy in 2023.

One such intervention is the construction and rehabilitation of 9 bridges along the Chingo to Makanjira (S129) Road in Mangochi district. The S129 Road is a vital mobility corridor for Malawi's south-eastern region, facilitating movement between inland communities and the lakeshore area, and linking with Mozambique.

The devastating impacts of Cyclone Freddy, particularly flooding, washouts, and scouring, rendered many bridge structures impassable, severely disrupting access to

markets, schools, and healthcare.

The scope of the proposed project includes replacing damaged structures with reinforced concrete bridges, removing failed Bailey bridges and associated debris, constructing culverts, and improving road approaches and drainage systems using climate-resilient designs.

To ensure that the livelihood of the Project Affected Persons (PAPs) in the project area is promoted, RA developed and is implementing a comprehensive Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) to mitigate all resettlement in line with the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP).

Under this project, the PAPs eligible for livelihood restoration are those who have suffered economic displacement (loss of income sources) and physical displacement

(loss of shelter and means of livelihood).

The RAP identified 206 PAPs who the LRP is supporting in regaining their economic and social stability through the targeted assistance that suits their different specific needs.

The LRP will also contribute to the PAPs' long-term livelihood resilience by empowering them through capacity building, market linkages and sustainable investments.

All 206 PAPs received training in Agri-skills, Business Management and Financial Management, but vocational skills, specifically tailoring, were offered to only 40 people, as they are the only ones who chose it during the PAPs training needs assessment.



RESTORING LIVELIHOODS ALONG CHINGO - MAKANJIRA ROAD

WHAT'S BEING BUILT



Climate-resilient
designs for bridges.



Remove failed Bailey
bridges & debris.



Improve road
approaches &
drainage systems.



SCAN ME

Learn more about
RCRP-2 and our work
in communities.



Tropical Cyclone Freddy, 2023, caused flooding, washouts, and scouring, resulting in the impassability of roads across Malawi.



RCRP-2 identified Project Affected Persons (PAPs) along the road.



The eligible PAPs are people with economic displacement & physical displacement.

PAPs Support Includes



Agri-skills



Business
Management

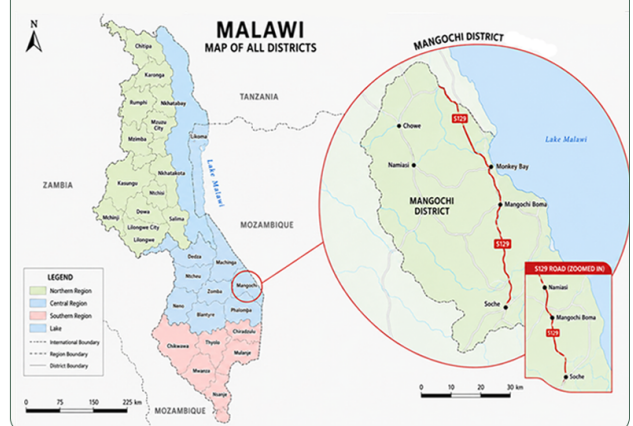


Financial
Management



Specialised
training
Tailoring

WHERE WE ARE WORKING



**TOTAL PAPs
SUPPORTED**

206



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Beacon of hope as construction of Kapiri Evacuation Centre takes shape. Pictures by Steven Chirombo, MANA.

Evacuation centre brings hope to communities

When floods swept through parts of Traditional Authority Kachindamoto in 2023, panic spread quickly across villages including Dzindebvu, Chagunda, Nyanja, Sitolo, Goshen and Chejelo.

Families fled rising waters with only what they could carry, leaving behind homes, livestock and treasured belongings.

For more than 2,000 people, survival meant squeezing into nearby schools and churches. Classrooms meant for learning suddenly became homes. Churches became makeshift shelters. Privacy disappeared. Proper sanitation was almost non-existent.

Women struggled to care for young children, while outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases became an added burden.

Nearly two years later, those painful memories are giving way to hope.

Standing at the heart of the affected communities is the Kapiri Evacuation Centre, a modern facility under construction through the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2), with financial support from the



Chatuluka: Women and girls suffer the most during disasters.

World Bank.

Constructed at K297 million by a PCM/Meshozi joint venture, the centre is designed to provide safe and dignified shelter whenever disasters strike. Construction commenced on May 2025 and is progressing steadily.

Unlike temporary shelters used in the past, the centre has been carefully designed with separate accommodation spaces for women, men and the elderly.

It will also include a kitchen and sanitation facilities to ensure disaster survivors can live in safe and hygienic conditions while waiting to return home.

For Esinta Fletcher from Dzindebvu



Fletcher: This evacuation centre gives our families hope and peace of mind.

Village, the structure represents far more than bricks and mortar. She says: "The coming of this structure is timely because when disasters happened, we had nowhere to run.

"We sought refuge in schools, thereby disrupting children's education. We saw how disasters affected us, and because of that experience, we will not allow this infrastructure to be misused." Her memories of the 2023 disaster remain vivid.

"The floods struck without warning. We ran for our lives, leaving everything behind. Having a place like this gives us peace of mind," she added.

The facility is strategically located at the centre of the disaster-prone communities, allowing displaced

<<<<FROM PAGE 18

families to remain close to their homes and return quickly once floodwaters subside.

The facility reflects Malawi's growing emphasis on disaster preparedness rather than emergency response alone.

By investing in permanent evacuation centres, the country is reducing disaster risks, protecting vulnerable populations and ensuring essential services such as education to continue uninterrupted during emergencies.

The project's grievance redress mechanism committee chairperson, Jeremiah Goodson, said the project

is already benefiting the community beyond the completed building.

"Our responsibility is to ensure the project benefits everyone fairly. We monitor grievances, prevent child labour and encourage employment opportunities for people with disabilities wherever possible," he said.

Goodson believes the centre will continue serving the community even when there are no disasters.

For Gladys Chatuluka of Ndindi Village, the centre offers dignity, particularly for women and girls.

"When disasters strike, women face many challenges. We struggle to

prepare food, find places to sleep and care for children. This structure will benefit women and girls. We are grateful to the government and the World Bank for this project," she says.

As climate-related disasters continue to increase across Malawi, investments such as the Kapiri Evacuation Centre are becoming essential components of resilient communities.

For the people of Kapiri, the building represents security before disaster strikes, dignity during emergencies and opportunity long after flood waters recede.

Voices from the Ground

Across RCRP-2 communities, members speak of hope that resilient infrastructure brings. From health, education to business and schools, they are directly responding to community needs; reducing risk, restoring trust, and creating spaces where people can live, work, and learn with dignity.



"Some women delivered at home due to long distances to access healthcare services at Wenya Health Centre. Things are worse at night during the rainy season because the area is hilly. It was difficult to go with children to Wenya Health Centre. - **Jane Sibale, 38, from Mphinda Village in Traditional Authority Mwenewenya in Chitipa District.**



"Once completed, the health post will serve many people in the area.

People have been suffering while travelling to Wenya Health Centre.

At the same time, some have even died at home because of the long distance to access medical services"

- **GVH Mwenebale of Traditional Authority Mwenewenya in Chitipa District.**



"I used to spread my tomatoes on bare ground, exposing them to contamination. It was unhealthy. As a busy trading hub, Chinkhoma deserve a proper market infrastructure that does not expose both sellers and buyers to business and health risks" - **Delia Phiri, tomato seller, Chinkhoma Market, Kasungu.**

"Customers buy with their eyes first. When they walk into a clean market, they immediately trust the food we sell. That way, a clean and safe market restores trust, and customers



are more willing to buy when they know that goods, especially food, are sold in a clean place and sanitation is not in doubt" - **George Phiri, fish seller, Chinkhoma Market, Kasungu.**



"The standard of construction has inspired many parents to enrol their children here. It is encouraging to see more pupils attending school because they now have a comfortable and dignified place to learn" - **Alefa Magetsi, Chairperson for the School Management Committee, Ngokwe Primary School, Machinga.**

RCRP-2 Impact Pulse Quick hits on restoring critical connectivity



Rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and culverts damaged by Tropical Cyclone Freddy is advancing across multiple districts. These climate-resilient upgrades are reducing travel disruptions during heavy rains and improving access to markets, schools, and health facilities for thousands of families.



Safer Crossings for Communities



New and reconstructed bridges with better drainage systems are being prioritised to withstand future floods. This means fewer road closures and safer journeys even in the rainy season - directly supporting livelihoods and emergency response.

Economic Lifelines Strengthened



Climate-proofed road networks are boosting trade and keeping supply routes open. Communities that were previously cut off after storms can now move goods and access services more reliably, reducing economic losses from climate shocks.

Better learning and teaching environment



Investing in safe, resilient, and well-equipped school infrastructure that supports both learners and teachers to thrive. By rehabilitating classrooms, providing adequate WASH facilities, and ensuring access to teaching and learning materials, the project aims to reduce disruptions caused by climate shocks and improve retention, attendance, and performance.



Improved agriculture

Critical to building resilient livelihoods and improving food security in targeted communities. This includes the rehabilitation and construction of irrigation schemes, EPA offices and staff houses that enable farmers to reduce post-harvest losses, improve access to inputs and extension services, and strengthen farmers' ability.

Safer and cleaner water sources



Central to protecting community health and building resilience to climate shocks. The project supports the rehabilitation and construction of water reticulation systems alongside the promotion of good hygiene and sanitation practices. By providing communities with reliable access to clean water, RCRP-2 reduces the risk of waterborne diseases and eases the burden of water collection, especially for women and children.

HERE ARE RCRP-2 HITS AT THE MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)



Farmers

146,186



General public

234,378



Guardians

80



Patients

57,654



Pupils

4,086



Pupils and teachers

200



Teachers

1,367



Vendors and buyers

400



TOTAL BENEFICIARIES

444,351



Restoring hope in education sector

When Cyclone Freddy hit Mulanje District in March 2023, it left a trail of destruction in its wake. In particular, the storm dealt a big blow to the education system as it destroyed classroom blocks, thereby threatening the future of thousands of learners.

For schools already struggling with the shortage of learning spaces, hope was lost. With classrooms destroyed, hundreds of pupils were forced to learn under trees, exposed to harsh weather conditions. During rains or winter, parents fear for their children's safety.

Today, the disruption of teaching and learning is no more, thanks to the construction of new classroom blocks under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2).

For Esnat Maloya, a parent from Traditional Authority (T/A) Mkanda, the newly-constructed school block at Chikonde Primary School has brought relief.

She says: "During winter, I could not send my child to school because they were learning under a tree.

"Now, I send my child to school because he is learning in a new classroom block."

The relief is equally the same at Chumani Primary School in T/A Mabuka.

With an enrolment of 1, 600 pupils, the school was pushed to introduce open-air classes after wind destroyed one of its classroom blocks.

The school's head teacher, Henderson Kanyanjira, said: "We only had three classroom blocks. The other classroom was destroyed by the wind."

The school's management committee secretary, Solomoni Davide Banda, explained how worrisome the situation was, adding that any threat of bad weather brought learning to a halt.

"Sometimes parents were not sending children to school once they saw that it was cloudy. They feared that their children would not be safe from the rainfall," he said.

Now, with the new block in place, attendance has bounced back as parents are assured of their children's

safety and pupils can focus on their studies without outdoor distractions.

Standard Seven learner Mike Mangatchaya remembers how difficult it was to study outdoors.

"Some learners would lose concentration and leave class just to follow a tractor passing along the road next to the school," he said.

The story of struggle did not spare Chanunkha Primary School, whose deputy head teacher Henderson Duncain explained how Cyclone Freddy compounded their existing challenges.

"We have 1, 566 learners, and the school block that had four classrooms was destroyed during Cyclone Freddy," he said.

Duncain thanked the RCRP-2 for funding a new classroom block, saying it will significantly reduce overcrowding and restore a good learning environment.

The destroyed Chanunkha Primary School block in Mulanje.



The newly rehabilitated Chanunkha Primary School.

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A similar transformation has taken place at Mloza Primary School in T/A Njema where learning was disrupted after the storm destroyed the classroom block.

As these modern school blocks rise from the disaster's aftermath, communities are uniting to protect them because they are an investment in their children's future.

Lydia Frank, a parent at Chanunkha Primary, said that the community has already taken ownership of the new facility.

At Mloza Primary, parent-teacher association chairperson Chimwemwe Chikomoni echoed that commitment, stating that communities around the area have agreed to protect the newly-constructed block from vandalism.

The rollout of these resilient classroom blocks across Mulanje represents a crucial milestone in the district's recovery journey, proving that even in the wake of climate disaster, community resilience and targeted support can rebuild a brighter future for the next generation.

Four classroom blocks have been constructed in four schools in the district.

RCRP-2 is a Government of Malawi initiative supported by the World Bank to strengthen local infrastructure and governance to better withstand the impacts of climate change.



Before Chanunkha Primary School in Mulanje.



) Newly rehabilitated classroom block at Muloza Primary School in Mulanje. Pictures by Robert Nayeja. MANA.



Duncan: The blocks will ease congestion.



New classroom block at Ngokwe Primary School courtesy of RCRP-2. Picture by Leonard Masauli, MANA.

School block ignites hope among learners

Every morning, eight-year-old Latifa Ingeresi, a Standard Two learner at Ngokwe Primary School in Machinga District, walks into a bright classroom, sits at her desk and eagerly waits for lessons to begin.

Just a few months ago, this was not the case for her and hundreds of other pupils who attended lessons under a tree because of a shortage of classrooms.

Whenever rain clouds gathered, lessons were abruptly interrupted as pupils packed their exercise books and hurried home, losing valuable learning time.

"I am happy because we now learn in a classroom. When it rains, we do not stop learning anymore," said Ingeresi.

For years, outdoor learning had become the norm for junior classes at the school in Traditional Authority Ngokwe in the district.

During the rainy season, classes

were suspended or combined with other streams where space allowed, leaving many pupils struggling to concentrate.

However, a newly constructed classroom block for Standard Two and Three, furnished with desks and other learning facilities, has provided hundreds of learners with a safe and conducive environment for learning.

The facility was built under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2), which supports infrastructure designed to help communities withstand the impacts of climate-related disasters, including heavy rains and flooding that frequently disrupt education in vulnerable areas.

The school's deputy head teacher Amina James says the new classrooms have transformed not only the school's appearance but also ignited learners' enthusiasm for education.

She explains: "Since the classroom block was completed, we have seen a remarkable increase in enrolment from around 1, 000 learners to 2, 350.

"More children are coming to school because they have a proper place to learn. Previously, many of them attended classes under trees, which exposed them to harsh weather, especially during the rainy season."

Despite the progress, James says the school still requires additional classroom blocks to cope with the growing enrolment and eliminate overcrowding.

The school's management committee chairperson Alefa Magetsi says the completion of the project is a source of joy.

He says: "As a committee, we closely monitored the construction to ensure quality work, transparency and accountability throughout the project.

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"We are delighted to see children learning in decent classrooms, and we hope more development projects will continue improving education in our community."

Machinga District Council works supervisor Francis Chipojola said the project was delivered within the contractual period through close collaboration among the council, the contractor and the community.

"Regular technical supervision ensured that construction met the required standards, and we are satisfied with the quality of the completed infrastructure, and K147 million has been used towards the

project," he says.

The council's director of education services, Wezzie Kacheche Banda, says the new infrastructure is easing pressure on one of the most populated primary schools in the area.

She said Ngokwe Primary School has more than 2 000 learners, with more than 400 pupils in Standard One alone.

She explains: "This has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and, at times, it requires outdoor learning. Since the area is also prone to disasters during the rainy season,

outdoor classes become impossible, affecting attendance and learning.

"The new classroom block will significantly reduce congestion, provide a safe learning environment throughout the year and improve both attendance and the quality of education."

The RCRP-2 is funded by the World Bank, and it operates as a \$250 million regional grant, with \$240 million specifically allocated to the Government of Malawi to build resilience and repair infrastructure damaged by Cyclone Freddy.

New school block doubles enrolment in Machinga

A newly-constructed classroom block at Ngokwe Primary School in Machinga District has more than doubled the school's enrolment from about 1, 000 to 2, 350 learners.

The facility, constructed under the World Bank-funded Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2), was handed over to the community in February 2026.

The school's deputy head teacher Amina Kanyenga attributes the sharp increase to the improved learning environment created by the new infrastructure.

"Since the classroom block was

handed over in February, we have witnessed a significant rise in enrolment. More learners, particularly those in Standard One and Two, are eager to attend school because they now have proper classrooms furnished with desks," she said.

Kanyenga said the classroom block has created a safe and attractive learning environment.

"We expect enrolment to continue increasing, although we are concerned that the two classrooms may soon be overwhelmed by the growing number of learners," he said.

The school's management committee chairperson Alefa Magetsi said the quality of the new infrastructure has renewed confidence in the school among parents and learners.

She said: "The standard of construction has inspired many parents to enrol their children here.

"It is encouraging to see more pupils attending school because they now have a comfortable and dignified place to learn."



The new classroom at Ngokwe Primary School furnished with desks.
Pictures by Leonard Masauli, MANA.



Kanyenga: The infrastructure has changed the school's face.



Saidi: Disasters in the region are no longer isolated.

Malawi hosts SADC regional dialogue on loss and damage

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) convened a high-level Regional Dialogue on Loss and Damage in Malawi this week, calling for a unified regional position to mobilise international finance and secure fair access to the Loss and Damage Fund.

Under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP), the program is aimed at forging a unified regional position on one of the most pressing challenges facing Southern Africa today.

Speaking during the opening remarks, Chief Secretary Justin Saidi said the dialogue comes at a critical time as the region grapples with escalating climate impacts that are increasingly exceeding adaptation limits.

The SADC region continues to face a severe and systemic disaster risk landscape characterised by recurring droughts, floods, and powerful cyclones. Since 2019, member states have been hit by Cyclones Idai, Kenneth, Gombe, and Freddy, as well as persistent droughts that have

worsened food insecurity and eroded hard-won development gains.

"Disasters in the region can no longer be viewed as isolated humanitarian events; they represent systemic threats to sustainable development, regional integration, and economic transformation," Saidi emphasised.

Post-disaster needs assessments across the region consistently show escalating losses, persistent financing gaps, and vulnerable areas being repeatedly affected before they can fully recover.

"This vicious cycle continues to strain national budgets and deepen community vulnerabilities," he said.

The Chief Secretary made a strong appeal to the World Bank, African Development Bank, UN agencies, bilateral partners, climate finance institutions, and the private sector to help establish a coordinated regional resilience financing architecture

"This architecture must move beyond fragmented post-disaster funding toward scalable, innovative,

and predictable solutions, including blended finance, guarantees, climate funds, insurance, and risk pooling," he stated.

SADC Project Coordinator for Disaster Risk Management, Multilateral Engagements and International Engagements in South Africa, Pumeza Tyali, noted critical gaps in data management.

"Since it is fragmented between different sectors, it is not easy to have one common datum in one place," Tyali said.

The meeting has attracted disaster risk management experts and policymakers from the region.

Malawi, together with Comoros, Madagascar and Mozambique within the SDAC region and South Sudan in East Africa, are the countries implementing the series of projects under the Regional Climate Resilience Program banner funded by the World Bank.

Strengthening early warning systems: design review for Shire River Basin's hydrological stations done

The Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2) continues to make significant progress in enhancing Malawi's capacity to monitor and respond to water-related climate shocks.

A key milestone has been reached with the completion of the design review for 18 hydrological monitoring stations in the Shire River Basin.

Director in the Department of Water Resources (DWR), Engineer James Chitete, underscored the importance of this work in building climate resilience in Malawi.

"The rehabilitation and upgrading of hydrological stations is one of the critical activities under RCRP-2. These stations provide essential water data that informs water resources management, infrastructure design, such as hydropower and dams, water allocation for irrigation and domestic supply, and most importantly, early warning systems for floods and droughts."

He added that accurate, real-time river-level data from modern automated stations with telemetry will improve flood forecasting lead times, support integration with national hydrological databases and early warning platforms.

"It will also enable better preparedness for both extreme floods and low-flow (drought) conditions and strengthen overall climate-informed decision-making in the vulnerable Shire River Basin.

Engineer Solomon Kalima says by delivering reliable, near-real-time observations, these stations will help national agencies like DWR, the Departments of Disaster Risk Management Affairs, and Climate Change and Meteorological Services protect communities, agriculture, infrastructure, and ecosystems from increasingly frequent climate-related disasters.

RCRP-2 remains committed to building a more resilient Malawi through strengthened hydromet infrastructure, sustainable catchment management, and community-level capacity building. Watch this space for updates as procurement advances and installation begins later this year," said Kalima.

Dr. Pratap Singh, representative of RMSI, the Consultant for the Design Review of Hydrological Stations, highlighted the thoroughness of the evaluation.

"A comprehensive assessment of the locations, instrumentation configuration, structural arrangements, telemetry systems, and datum control frameworks has been undertaken for all 18 stations.

"The consultant team conducted site visits to every station, engaging closely with the DWR and other stakeholders. This hands-on approach ensured that recommendations are practical and tailored to local conditions," said Dr. Singh.

The review aligned designs with international hydrometeorological



Eng Chitete: We will be better prepared for extreme floods.

standards, including World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) guidelines and the World Bank's Build Back Better approach.

Particular attention was given to hydraulic suitability and flood resilience in the form of instrumentation, including radar or pressure-transducer-based water-level sensors, structural arrangements, such as bridge-pier mounting and telemetry architecture and power supply (battery/solar systems with adequate autonomy).

Added Sr. Singh: "Benchmark referencing and vertical datum consistency for reliable rating-curve development and long-term accessibility for operation and maintenance (O&M), as climate resilience was a central consideration.

Non-contact radar-based sensors installed above the highest flood level with an additional 20% safety margin based on climate change scenarios for Malawi. Data collection platforms are proposed near bridges to make year-round O&M easier and safer."

The 18 stations are distinct from the 12 hydrological stations rehabilitated late last year, which focused mainly on equipment installation under the previous Malawi Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Project.

The new stations involve both civil works and the full installation of equipment, significantly expanding the monitoring network.

DWR RCRP-2 Desk Officer

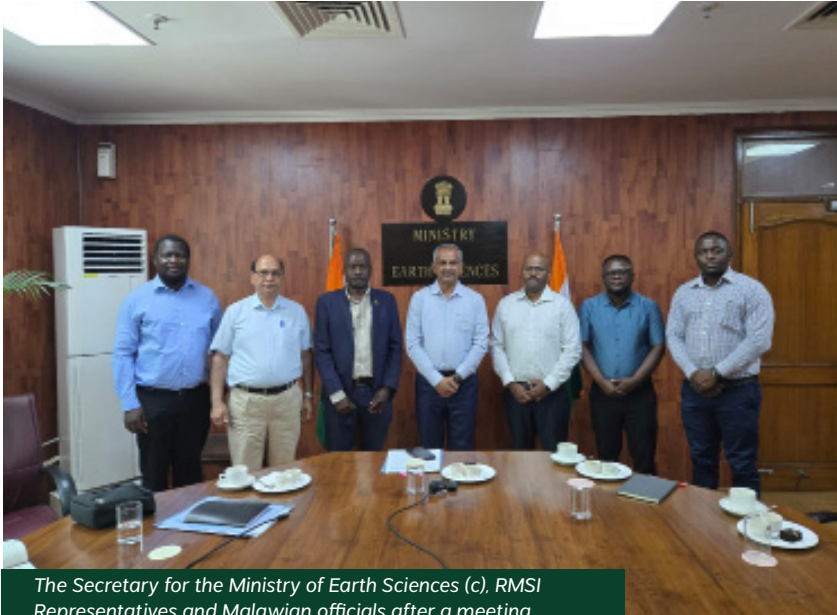


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Malawi officials gain advanced expertise in Hydrological monitoring



The Secretary for the Ministry of Earth Sciences (c), RMSI Representatives and Malawian officials after a meeting.

A high-level delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development's Department of Water Resources (DWR), together with a representative from the Regional Climate Resilience Project (RCRP-2), completed a technical training visit to India focused on hydrological monitoring systems and climate resilience.

The five-day visit, which took place in May, was organised under the RCRP-2 in collaboration with RMSI Private Limited of India as part of the

consultancy for the Design Review and Rehabilitation Supervision of Hydrological Monitoring Stations, including Installation of Monitoring Equipment.

During the visit, the delegation engaged with several of India's leading institutions in hydrology, meteorology, and climate sciences, including: Central Water Commission (CWC), India Meteorological Department (IMD), Ministry of Earth Sciences, National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee

The team participated in technical meetings, institutional discussions, and field visits, including a tour of water management infrastructure along the mighty Ganga River and of irrigation barrages.

Speaking on the visit, the Director of Water Resources, Eng. James Chitete emphasised that the key highlights and lessons are that the delegation was exposed to international best practices in several critical areas.

"These include real-time hydrological data collection and telemetry systems, advanced weather forecasting using multiple ensemble models; impact-based forecasting that links weather predictions to potential sectoral impacts;

There's also sophisticated decision support Systems; use of supercomputers for rapid, high-resolution modelling; innovative procurement approaches and data management practices, including classification of data for security and public access," he said.

He expressed confidence that the knowledge gained will directly support the upgrading of Malawi's hydrological monitoring network, improve flood forecasting, and strengthen overall climate resilience under the RCRP-2.



Members of the CWC, the RMSI Representative and Malawian officials during a meeting.



A FEWS at Mpasazi along the M1 Road. Pictures by Wanangwa Tembo, MANA.

Early warning systems save the day

Communities along river banks in Kasungu District have shared a complicated relationship with water since time immemorial.

Rivers such as Bua, Dwangwa, Milenje and Mpasadzi sustain agriculture, provide water for domestic use and offer children places to swim in summer. Yet during the rainy season, the same rivers quickly transform into destructive forces as they sweep crops, livestock and homes away.

At Mboza Village in Traditional Authority (T/A) Chilowamatambe, the Bua River flows quietly, almost invitingly, and children occasionally gather along its banks as women fetch water while farmers walk to fields that stretch towards the fertile riverbed.

To a visitor, the river appears peaceful, but the communities can tell a different story.

When rains pound the district, the

calm waters swell into a roaring current within hours, swallowing crops, cutting off roads and threatening lives downstream.

It is a story that communities along the Bua, Dwangwa, Milenje and Mpasadzi rivers can tell vividly.

"We have always depended on the Bua River," says Eliza Patulani from Mboza Village in T/A Chilowamatambe.

"Our children swim here during the dry season, people fetch water and many families cultivate along the river. But whenever the rains become heavy, we know this river can quickly become dangerous."

She says in previous years, families often realised the river was flooding only when the water had already begun spilling over its banks.

But through support from the

Regional Climate Resilient Program (RCRP-2), the government has established community-based flood early warning systems along the Bua River in Kasungu, Bua at Malomo in Ntchisi, Dwangwa, Milenje and Mpasadzi rivers to monitor the water flow and protect communities from floods.

River gauges standing firmly on the riverbanks and monitoring equipment positioned nearby form a warning system that is helping communities make life-saving decisions before floodwaters arrive.



Yakobe: These warnings give us time to act

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Patulani explains that before the installation of the system, many families relied on experience or guesswork to judge whether the river was becoming dangerous.

"Now we receive warnings before the river reaches dangerous levels. Once we hear the alerts, parents immediately stop children from swimming, people avoid unnecessary crossings, and everyone becomes more alert. Those simple actions save us," she says

Like many farming communities across Kasungu, households in Mboza rely almost entirely on agriculture for survival.

Grace Yakobe, also a community member of Mboza, says the fertile soils along the Bua River attract many farmers, making flood warnings particularly important.

Kasungu District is predominantly agricultural, with a population of over one million people whose livelihoods depend largely on rain-fed farming. Climate change has, however, made weather patterns increasingly unpredictable, exposing communities to both devastating floods and prolonged droughts.

According to early warning systems expert Mphatso Jentala, the system

combines modern technology with local participation.

He explains: "Each monitoring station has manual river gauge plates installed along the riverbank and automated river-level sensors that continuously transmit real-time information to the Department of Water Resources.

"By combining technology with community participation, we can detect rising water levels much earlier and issue timely warnings before floods occur."

Community-based gauge readers take readings daily, and once water reaches predetermined danger levels, the information is verified using automated sensors before official alerts are disseminated through short messaging services (SMS) on mobile phones, radio, television, WhatsApp platforms and local civil protection committees.

"The strength of this system is that it does not rely on one communication channel. If one method is unavailable, communities can still receive warnings through village heads, disaster committees or local radio stations. Our objective is to ensure no household is left uninformed," he says.

Although the systems were installed in Kasungu, their benefits extend far beyond the district's boundaries.

Jentala explains that the system installed at Malomo in Ntchisi on the upper Bua River plays a critical role in protecting downstream communities in neighbouring Nkhosakota District, which has historically experienced some of Malawi's most destructive floods.

He says: "Water flowing through Bua, Dwangwa and Milenje rivers originates largely from Kasungu before travelling downstream into Nkhosakota.

"Information collected at our monitoring stations enables authorities to warn downstream communities before floodwaters arrive."

The Bua River station at Malomo remains fully operational, collecting both automated and manual data, while Milenje station continues to function manually while awaiting installation of automated sensors.

The stations at Bua M1 and Dwangwa M1 were temporarily suspended from operations after road construction required removal of river gauge plates.



Jentala explains how the system works.



Mwale: If customers are discouraged by poor hygiene, our incomes suffer.

Good sanitation boosts trade

Long before the day's business reaches its peak, Chinkhoma Trading Centre is already bustling with activity.

Farmers, traders and customers converge on one of Kasungu District's busiest markets, where fresh produce changes hands and livelihoods are earned from sunrise until dusk.

Vendors open their stalls, displaying fresh vegetables, Irish potatoes, dried fish and a variety of farm produce as shoppers stream in from surrounding villages and beyond. By midday, the market is a hive of activity—and Sundays are the busiest because the weekly mobile market draws thousands of buyers and sellers.

However, beneath the vibrant commerce, there has been a silent but persistent challenge of poor sanitation.

With more than 280 vendors

operating in the market, alongside numerous shops and thousands of daily customers, Chinkhoma relied on a single pit latrine that had long ceased to meet the needs of the fastest-growing commercial centre.

The situation was not only inconvenient but also posed a serious public health risk.

The market's chairperson, Atende Yodo, says the absence of proper sanitary facilities, specifically toilets, created a serious sanitation challenge.

"You can imagine the bad smell, the queues as people struggled to find a decent place to relieve themselves. A full pit latrine is a health hazard because flies from the toilet go to where food such as fish is sold. That is dangerous because diseases can easily spread in such conditions," he says.

Across Malawi, sanitation remains

one of the biggest challenges facing public markets. Markets naturally bring together large numbers of people, yet sanitation infrastructure often fails to keep pace with growing populations and expanding businesses.

Poorly managed waste, overflowing pit latrines and inadequate drainage create favourable conditions for diarrhoeal diseases, cholera and other infections, especially during the rainy season when contaminated runoff can easily spread through busy trading areas.

"A full pit latrine is a health hazard."

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Recognising these challenges, Kasungu District Council, through the Regional Climate Resilient Program (RCRP-2), invested K50 million in the construction of two double ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines at Chinkhoma Market.

Construction began in June 2025, and the facilities are now ready for handover to the market committee, which will be responsible for their management and maintenance.

According to Cynthia Ngwira, RCRP-2 engineer for Kasungu District Council, the project was designed not only to improve sanitation but also to withstand the effects of climate change.

"The latrines have reinforced concrete slabs on both the substructure and superstructure. We incorporated wind-resistant roofing, proper foundation and ground anchorage to withstand extreme weather conditions.

"We also used durable materials such as treated timber and concrete blocks to ensure the facilities serve the community for many years," she explains.

Ngwira says the facilities have separate toilets for men and women, with both designed to accommodate persons with disabilities.

She adds that the project also responds to sanitation challenges that become worse during heavy rains.

"In the past, poor sanitation combined with heavy rainfall resulted in blocked drainage systems. Surface runoff could carry waste, contaminating surrounding areas and some water sources. By improving sanitation infrastructure, we are reducing these risks while making the market more resilient to climate-related shocks."

Yodo says the new toilets have restored dignity to both traders and customers.

"People spend many hours here selling and buying goods. Having clean and adequate toilets means they can conduct business comfortably without worrying about sanitation. We believe the market will now remain cleaner and healthier," he says.

He says improved sanitation will also help reduce the spread of diseases

by encouraging proper toilet use and reducing environmental contamination.

Fish vendor Maxon Mwale believes cleanliness is directly linked to business performance.

"When customers find a clean market, they feel confident buying food. No one wants to buy fish or vegetables from a place surrounded by bad smells or flies. A cleaner environment builds trust and attracts more customers," he says.

The improvements have also impressed regular shoppers such as Amina Amidu, who starts by appreciating the efforts made by the council and its partners to improve conditions at the market.

"We come here almost every week to buy food for our families. A clean market makes us feel safe and comfortable," she states.

Kasungu district trade officer Brino Kamanga says clean toilets in markets reduce disease risks, improve food safety, protect the environment and preserve the dignity of every person who visits the market.

New EPA to enhance agricultural

Villagers in Kamuona and Imani under Traditional Authority Mwanza in Salima can now breathe a sigh of relief following the handover of a new Extension Planning Area office and two teachers' houses built under the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2).

Speaking during the supervision exercise, the chairperson for the Chilwa EPA project, Ethel Mphungu, commended the government for replacing the office structure, which was destroyed by heavy rains.

"We are so excited about the coming

of this project as it will be easier to work with Agricultural Extension workers than the way it was in the past. This is because Agricultural

Extension workers mostly operate from far areas because of damaged infrastructure," she said.



A new teacher's house at Chinkhuli Primary School

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Headteacher for Chinkhuli Primary School, Fesia Bitolia, commended people in the area for their hard work as they participated fully in different aspects of the projects.

"We still need more teachers' houses as well as classroom blocks, as well as electricity to facilitate learning," she added.

Commenting on the matter, Salima District Council Director of Public Works, Harris Kumwenda, urged people around the two projects to take care of them as well as natural resources like trees.

"We have learnt a lot from climate change because deforestation led to increased floods in the district, which destroyed infrastructure, including the Chilwa EPA office in Kamuona village.

Moving forward, we need to prepare ourselves for other disasters by planting more trees, among others," he said.

The Chilwa EPA was built to the tune of over MK 23 million, while the teachers' houses at Chinkhuli Primary School are worth over MK 67 million.



Bitolia: We still need more teachers' houses.



Chilwa EPA old office. Pictures by Tiyamike Makanga.



Chilwa EPA's new office.



The new Ntonda TDC in Ntcheu district.
Pictures by Maston Kaiya, MANA.

Project builds PEA's house

In 2022, an accident occurred at Ntonda Teacher Development Centre (TDC) in Traditional Authority (T/A) Phambala in Ntcheu District when a tree fell on the house of a primary education advisor (PEA) following strong winds.

The incident happened in the evening while the PEA's family was inside the house. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the house sustained extensive damage, forcing the PEA to relocate to a rented house at Faiti Village, about two kilometres from the TDC.

Ntonda Primary School head teacher Joseph Dzokole says the PEA's relocation affected the delivery of educational support services.

He said it was easy to seek professional guidance whenever challenges arose when the PEA was close.

"I could just walk to his house whenever I needed his help," says Dzokole.

He says the situation has changed since the PEA moved away.

"As it is right now, when he is gone, it means I have to wait until the next day to meet him," adds Dzokole.

Through the Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2),

the government has rehabilitated the house, signalling a positive change in the delivery of education services in Ntonda.

Dzokole is excited about the project, which has cost the district council K144 million.

The rehabilitation of the house has come with an important add-on: a ventilated improved pit latrine.

"The community waited for this development and soon after construction, the PEA will be residing at the TDC which serves 14 primary schools under Ntonda Education Zone," he said.

Group village head Bwese I says the community has drawn important lessons from the incident.

"Village development committees

now ensure that potentially dangerous trees growing close to buildings are removed to prevent similar disasters in future," he explained.

The chief said through the community policing forum, they are safeguarding the construction site against theft and vandalism.

"In our village meetings, we always encourage our community policing members to conduct regular patrols around development projects because we believe these are our projects and we must take ownership by protecting them," he said.

The rehabilitation works include converting the house into a modern self-contained three-bedroom facility.



The old Ntonda TDC Staff House in Ntcheu.



Regional Climate Resilience Program (RCRP-2)

GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

Do you have any grievances, issues, or feedback



1 FACE TO FACE

Face to face through the following Grievance Redress Mechanism Committees;

- Community/Ward
- District/City
- National



2 GRIEVANCE BOX

3 TELEPHONE:

351

4 EMAIL:

grievance@rcrp.gov.mw



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