

CASE STUDY

MALAWI 2022 / TROPICAL STORM ANA

KEYWORDS: Community engagement, Emergency shelter, NFI distribution

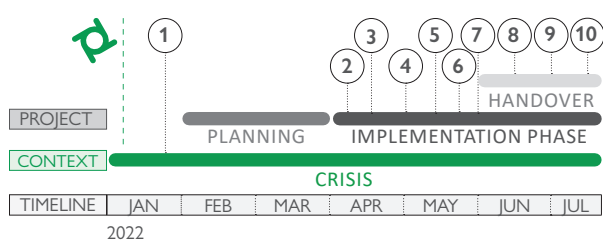
CRISIS	Tropical Storm Ana, January 2022
PEOPLE AFFECTED	221,127 HHs (995,072 individuals)*
PEOPLE DISPLACED	32,935 HHs (152,786 individuals)*
HOMES DAMAGED/ DESTROYED	59,860 homes completely destroyed 135,941 homes damaged
PEOPLE WITH SHELTER NEEDS	190,429 people *
PROJECT LOCATION	Chikwawa district, Southern Malawi
PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT	730 HHs (3,432 individuals) 4,257 individuals reached with Build Back Better messages
PROJECT OUTPUTS	Distribution of ESKs and NFI to 730 HHs Construction of 730 temporary shelters Community awareness and trainings on Safe Shelter construction
SHELTER SIZE	20 m² (Using 6*4 canvas as roof, considering some inclination and folding)
SHELTER DENSITY	4 m² per person (average of 5 persons per HH)
DIRECT COST	USD 208 per HH (Includes procurement of ESKs, NFIs, labor, and training on the use of ESKs.)
PROJECT COST	USD 251 per HH



PROJECT SUMMARY

In response to the effects of Tropical Storm Ana, this humanitarian project focused on meeting the emergency shelter needs of the affected population in the Chikwawa district, focusing on supporting self-recovery pathways. The area of intervention was selected based on a multi-sectoral needs assessment and analysis, with the project implemented in coordination with other stakeholders at the district and national level. The affected communities were the central actors throughout the project implementation, receiving support through shelter construction and NFIs.

*Malawi Floods Flash Update No. 2, February 2022



Jan 2022: Tropical Storm Ana caused floods, destruction, and fatalities in Malawi.

- 1 **Jan 2022:** Multi-sector Needs Assessment.
- 2 **Apr 2022:** Project inception meetings with District Civil Protection Committees and District executive committees.
- 3 **Apr 2022:** Project inception meetings with Local structures.
- 4 **Apr - May 2022:** Beneficiary selection and verification exercise.
- 5 **May 2022:** Safe house construction (BBB) awareness meetings.
- 6 **May 2022:** Training on how to use the emergency shelter kits.
- 7 **May 2022:** Emergency shelter training for staff.
- 8 **Jun - Jul 2022:** Distribution of Emergency shelter kits and NFIs.
- 9 **Jun - Jul 2022:** Construction of 730 temporary shelters.
- 10 **Jul 2022:** Project monitoring and post-distribution survey.



In the months of June and July, 730 HHs were assisted with temporary shelter construction.

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CONTEXT

Malawi is one of the world's least-developed countries. The economy is based on agriculture and has a largely rural and growing population. The country faces challenges in building and expanding the economy, improving education, healthcare, and environmental protection. The climate is hot in low-lying areas in the south of the country. Several languages are spoken, and there is an array of religious beliefs. Malawi has a low life expectancy and high infant mortality.

Tropical Storm Ana lashed the southern and central districts of Malawi in January 2022, bringing strong winds and heavy rains. Within hours of landfall, communities were faced with significant flooding. Some of the storm-affected areas were already suffering from floods due to the ongoing rainy season. According to the Government of Malawi – Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), by 31 January 2022, 37 people were reported dead, 22 were missing and 158 were injured. Over 193,558 households (948,434 individuals) were affected, and 740 hectares of crops were destroyed. Before the disaster, the areas impacted were already under Integrated Food Security Phase Classification 2 (stressed) and 3 (crisis).

Bridges were washed away by swollen rivers, while livestock drowned, and fields were submerged – destroying the livelihoods of rural families. Damage to public infrastructure (health facilities, churches, and schools including damage to teaching materials) was also reported.

More than 140 emergency camps were set up to deal with thousands of displaced and injured people. 22,364 households (109,359 people) were hosted in these camps, and displaced households sought refuge in designated open areas, churches, schools, and other public structures.

Some IDPs were hosted by relatives and friends. Most displacement sites were overcrowded, with limited access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and hygiene – raising concerns over possible disease outbreaks, including the spread of COVID-19. Protection concerns were raised, particularly gender-based violence (GBV). Additionally, there were increased vulnerabilities of people with disabilities, people living with HIV, and persons with albinism.

A state of disaster was announced across 15 districts in the southern and central regions of Malawi, and an appeal for humanitarian assistance was made by the government to support displaced people in the camps with food and essential household items (EHI), to provide healthcare to injured people through the deployment of mobile clinics, and to provide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities.

NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

In February 2022, the national government released a consolidated four-month response plan targeting 166,000 households (747,000 people) with immediate survival needs, the restoration of essential socio economic services, and transition support to early recovery. A total of USD 70 million was required to implement the plan, with USD 4 million for Shelter and Camp Management. The Shelter Cluster's overall response objective was to facilitate the provision of safe, adequate shelter and to collect and manage data for people and institutions affected by the disaster, whose homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. According to the UN Flash Appeal for Malawi (February to May 2022), 159,000 individuals required emergency shelter support – of which approximately 96,000 were living in camps.



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The Government of Malawi led the humanitarian response, through the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), with support from humanitarian partners, including NGOs, the UN and donor agencies.

PROJECT DESIGN/STRATEGY

Project Objective: The project aimed to support the most vulnerable affected populations in the Chikwawa district regarding temporary shelter needs and accompanying them on their pathways to recovery in safe areas.

Output 1: Communities in the Chikwawa disaster-affected areas were supported in terms of their needs for emergency shelter and household items in IDP camps.

Activities included:

- The distribution of 730 emergency shelter kits (ESK), including a supplementary timber supply (eight pieces of timber – 16 feet long and 75mm x 75mm or 3 inch x 3 inch section).
- Community training on the use of shelter kits and how participants can build temporary shelters with the materials provided.
- Distribution of non-food item (NFI) kits and kitchen sets to 730 households.

Output 2: Communities in Chikwawa disaster-affected areas were supported in their voluntary request to resettle in safer areas.

Activities included:

- The provision of awareness raising guidance and technical support in safe shelter design and settlement planning.
- Training on improved construction techniques.
- Community support to secure land tenure in relocation areas.

“Emergency Shelter Kit” content:

Item	Quantity/kit
Rope	1 x 30m
Handsaw	1
Nail for roof sheets	½ Kg (1lb.)
Shovel	1
Hoe	1
Machete	1
Nails (Large)	½ Kg (1lb.)
Nails (Small)	½ Kg (1lb)
Claw Hammer	1
Woven Sack	1
Tarpaulin (4m x 6m)	2

“Household NFIs kits” content:

Blankets (Light type)	2
Sleeping Mats (Plastic style)	2
Jerrycan 20L / Bucket with lid 20 L	1
Laundry Soap (Start-up Kit)	½ Kg/HH/month
Personal Hygiene Soap	3/HH/month

Regarding assistance modality, the in-kind distribution was preferred over the provision of cash, based on the

implementing entity’s experience in the field and coordination within the Cluster partners. Cash modalities were considered not effective in this context because individuals often used cash support on non-shelter related expenses.



Families received relief items including NFIs and kitchen sets.



Distribution of Emergency Shelter Kits to construct temporary shelters.

IMPLEMENTATION

The affected community requested a government-supported relocation to a safer area, due to deteriorating conditions in the camp. In coordination with the affected communities, the Shelter Cluster, and civil protection committees, it was agreed that Emergency Shelter Kits (ESKs) would be provided to construct temporary emergency shelters in their original location, and the camps would be dismantled. In the second stage, once the government could finalize the procurement of new land in a safer area and support the relocation, participants would use the same tarps and timber in the final location. Such a double-step path re-using the ESKs was followed by 292 households, while the other 438 moved directly from the camps to the final allocated plot – for a total of 730 HHs supported by the project.

The project was run by a team of eight staff, of which three were construction supervisors. The discussions held with relevant government authorities facilitated the provision of land tenure documents for the IDPs on the final relocation plots (25x20m for each HH). Land ownership documents were temporarily granted to the community leadership until the individual land tenure titles were processed.

TARGETING

Vulnerabilities considered during beneficiary selection are as follows:

- Individuals directly impacted by the disaster.
- Child-led households.
- Elderly-led households.
- Household members with chronic illnesses.
- Children receiving supplementary feeding.
- Female-led households.
- Households with orphaned children.
- Household members with disabilities.
- Households with pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Recovery capacity: Households with low self-recovery capacity and those who haven't been able to rebuild a safe shelter.
- Displaced families living in camps, collective centers, transitional centers or host households.
- Families living in unsafe structures, threatening their own safety.
- Level of damage to household.

Following an inception meeting conducted with the camp management committee, Village Civil Protection Committees, and Village Development Committees where

selection criteria were agreed upon – the registration of participants for the project took place at the camps. A preliminary list was submitted to the organization, who together with the District Civil Protection Committee, and the Protection and Camp Management committees conducted a door-to-door verification while assessing household vulnerability.

Once verifications were complete, the 730 HHs were selected from 1,500 visited, and the final list was endorsed by the community and the rest of the stakeholders engaged. Complaint and feedback committees (of at least three people) were established in different locations, and a complaints desk was established at distribution sites.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The pre-existing community committees played a key role in the identification and selection of the project participants, but also in the safe shelter awareness campaign that the project promoted. A total of 70 local leaders were trained and replicated the training within several communities, reaching over 4,200 people with messaging and a construction manual on how to improve the disaster resistance of new construction considering site selection, house design, construction materials, and techniques. The committees were also trained in quality control and provided daily reports on the progress of the shelter construction.



The response included community awareness and trainings on Safe Shelter construction during distributions.

COORDINATION

The Shelter Cluster was led by the Ministry of Housing, co-led by the Malawi Red Cross, and was established at national and district levels. The strategy of the project was based on multi-sector assessments promoted from the Cluster, and also the contents of the ESK packages were agreed upon at a Cluster level. District civil protection meetings were also held, where local stakeholders and the Disaster Management Affairs Department were kept informed on project activities, challenges, and lessons learned.

MAIN CHALLENGES

- Procurement was impacted by market volatility, as the country was affected by an increase in inflation rates resulting in higher prices and delivery delays. It was decided to procure all the relief items and building materials at once, instead of small purchases, to secure fixed prices.
- Fuel scarcity affected the mobility of staff to supervise and monitor the project as required and had to be sourced from neighboring districts.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

To discourage deforestation during the construction of the shelters, the project provided timber purchased through a nationwide open bidding process, to which qualified suppliers from different districts applied.

LINKS WITH RECOVERY

The project provided useful tools like hoes, shovels, and machetes to support households with livelihood activities. The tools enhanced beneficiary capacity to return to work in the construction and agriculture sectors, both key to Malawi's economy.

OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

- This was the only shelter response project in the district that incorporated issues related to safe house construction. Therefore, the project posed a learning opportunity for other stakeholders doing similar interventions.
- The project raised awareness about Safe Shelter Construction among over 4,000 people. Thus, the project indirectly encouraged more families to build their homes following the safe house construction guidelines.
- The project supported the government and the communities in the resettlement process, doing advocacy on land tenure issues.



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STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTHS

- ✓ **Robust support.** The project received robust support from affected communities and other stakeholders, such as district government agencies (Civil Protection, Public Works, and Housing) and Shelter Cluster partners.
- ✓ **Participatory approach.** A participatory approach to community engagement allowed the project to address issues raised by affected communities, as opinions and preferences were seriously considered – enhancing beneficiary ownership of the project.
- ✓ **Increased resilience.** The project increased community efficacy and resilience to disasters through skills training and information sharing (i.e., site location, erecting temporary shelters, and community organizing to share key disaster messages).
- ✓ **Learning from past experiences.** The implementing entity, a national civil society organization, had previous experience in disaster risk reduction and response shelter projects.

WEAKNESSES

- × **Financial resources.** The entity, a national civil society organization, did not have the financial resources to respond immediately and needed to mobilize external resources. This delayed the initiation of response activities on the ground.
- × **All needs not covered.** Kitchen utensils were not provided through the project, which was a major gap according to post distribution monitoring. The provision of tarp, timber, tools, and fixings could not cover all needs, since most of the project participants had lost everything.



FURTHER READING ON SHELTER PROJECTS

On Malawi: [A.19 / MALAWI 2015](#); [A.20 / MALAWI 2015](#)

On cyclones: [A.15 / FIJI 2016](#); [A.18 / MADAGASCAR 2012](#)

On emergency shelter: [A.4 / NEPAL 2015](#); [A.15 / KENYA 2011](#)



In-kind distribution was preferred over the provision of cash, based on the implementing entity's experience in the field and coordination within the Cluster partners.



Over time, families built their permanent houses after securing land tenure in the new safe location.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Coordination with district-level structures demonstrated the importance of strong and effective partnerships** – as evidenced in the response efforts – which resulted in the decommissioning of camps in the district, among other benefits.
- **Community empowerment** is vital in reaching out to larger masses with Build Back Better messages.
- **Prepositioning of relief items.** There was a need to preposition all relief items prior to a disaster to assist affected communities as soon as possible and save lives.
- **Need for resilient temporary shelters.** Emergency shelters (tarpaulin shelters) have been home to most affected families for over seven months due to different vulnerabilities – demonstrating the importance of building resilient temporary shelters.
- **Self-led household recovery was hindered due to the financial crisis.** It would be convenient to combine the distribution of ESKs and NFIs with cash grants to enhance recovery.