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# NEWSLETTER

Climate Resilience Rural Livelihood Programme  
- Malawi Mozambique (MAMO)



## ABOUT POINT OF PROGRESS

Point Of Progress is a local non-governmental organization which is committed to empowering young people and children to act around issues that affect their lives and play an active role in the development process. The organization also gives a forum to young women and young men from different backgrounds to share ideas, exchange experiences and learn from each other in the struggle for a better life. Point Of Progress is registered with Malawi Government, Council for Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGOMA) and NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA).

The organization enables young people and women to create programmes and influence policies in the areas of Agriculture, Environment, and Climate Change, Children and Women's Rights, Youth Participation and Development, Gender Equality, and Skills Development/ Entrepreneurship. The organization promotes, protects and advances children's and young people's rights by building their leadership skills, and strengthening their scope of the youth through the clubs that the organization established in different communities so that they can actively participate and be involved in all issues that affect their day to day lives.

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## OUR BELIEF

We believe that the youth of Malawi, if equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, are a force of change to be reckoned with. We believe that our youths have the energy to create a more powerful and more united Malawi.



## OUR MISSION

We empower youths in Malawi by offering access to relevant skills and knowledge that help them make more informed decisions that create better futures for them and their families.



## OUR PURPOSE

We exist to create a more united Malawi, one where both men and women are equally active in building a better future for themselves and their communities.

Three key factors set us apart from other youth led organizations and clubs:

- We believe that 'young people' are the key to unlocking the key challenges that keep Malawi behind (dated beliefs / gender disparity / poor education)
- We believe that providing youth with relevant knowledge and skills addresses 3 key pillars; decision making, confidence and leadership, new ideas and innovations which inspire and equip young people to make positive change.
- Our model methodology: the Young Women Can Do It Approach which is committed to promote gender equality, empower young women and increase their influence and social participation at all levels.



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# **CLIMATE RESILIENCE RURAL LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME - MALAWI MOZAMBIQUE (MAMO)**

The Climate Resilience Rural Livelihood Programme, which runs from 2021 to 2025, seeks to augment the resilience of rural communities and contribute to the establishment of sustainable food systems by integrating rural development with climate adaptation and natural resource management. For this, the programme draws from a range of partnerships, intervention approaches and technical methods, which it adapts to the specific conditions of each community. It places particular emphasis on areas such as Climate Adaptive Villages (CAV), nutrition, gender equality/ women's empowerment, and the inclusion of individuals living with disabilities.

Development Fund of Norway together with Point Of Progress (POP), Biodiversity Conservation Initiative (BCI), Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) and Heifer International are implementing MAMO in the rural districts of Machinga, Ntchisi, Mzimba and Rumphi. Interventions focus on agricultural sector transformation by targeting both changes in material conditions (food, income) and broader normative changes (social, governance) that are important for climate resilience and well-being. Particular emphasis is placed on vulnerable groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and persons with HIV/AIDS. The goal of the programme is to increasing the climate resilience and well-being of rural communities in Malawi and Mozambique.

Point Of Progress (POP) main role in the programme is to increase economic empowerment of rural households, especially women, youth and persons with disabilities, and persons with HIV/AIDS. Additionally, Point Of Progress works around issues of increasing influence and recognition of women and persons with disabilities, and persons with HIV/AIDS within their households, improved government services and legal frameworks in line with rural communities' needs, rights and priorities. The main deliverable here is to see women, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV/AIDS advocating for their rights within the food system arena.





## CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

As in other parts of the world, Malawians, particularly rural communities and smallholder farmers, persist in grappling with the adverse effects of climate change, entrenched poverty, food insecurity, and a lack of employment opportunities amid environmental degradation. As of January 2019, Malawi scored 4.81 out of 10 on the African Agriculture Transformation Scorecard (AATS) against the 2019 benchmark of 6.66 out of 10.

These challenges compound Malawi's vulnerability to external shocks like climate change, disease outbreaks, and natural disasters, alongside high population growth and unsustainable urbanization. Energy shortages are pervasive, with only 11% of the population having access to electricity.

Although Malawi has progressed in building its human capital, defined as the knowledge, skills and health people accumulate, poverty and inequality remain stubbornly high. Poverty is driven by low productivity in the agriculture sector, volatile economic growth, rapid population growth, high unemployment, and limited coverage of safety net programs and targeting challenges.

Impoverished communities are also vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and, more recently, to the negative impact of COVID-19.

To ensure that there is relevance to the country context, the programme has been aligned with the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP), Malawi 2063 Agenda, The Malawi 2063 First 10- year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) 2021-2030, National Resilience Strategy (NRS), National Agriculture Policy (NAP), National Youth Policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The central theme involves a new paradigm shift that blends climate change resilience through climate adapted practices, development of sustainable food systems, action research and market-led value chain approach to produce greater and more sustainable impacts on the lives, livelihoods and resilience of smallholder farmers in Malawi. The programme's aim is to build resilience to climate change and transform smallholders to become successful commercial producers.

## Progress On Higher Level Results

In 2023, Point Of Progress directly reached 2,963 youth households (1,867 girls, 1096 boys, 24 girls with disability, 39 boys with disability) through 76 Young Women Can Do It Clubs with interventions on Village Savings and Loans, business management, women participation and agriculture input support. Table 1. below shows outcome level progress.

INDICATOR	2023 TARGET	ACHIEVED	COMMENT
<b>% of small/medium enterprises established for at least 12 months that have net profit</b>	55%	25%	The project has just supported SMEs with materials. Profits will be realized from mid-2024
<b>Average % decision making positions held by women who actively participate</b>	58%	66%	The Young Women Can Do It approach made girls in leadership position to actively participate in grassroots structures.
<b>% of people from self-help, micro-finance and savings and loans groups who used credit/loans for income generation activities (annual)</b>	75%	63%	Cyclone Freddy made Machinga VSLs to be inactive hence the variance.
<b>% small/medium enterprises supported by the program that have begun selling their products</b>	65%	25%	The project has just supported SMEs with materials. Profits will be realized from mid-2024



# CASE STUDIES

## MABVUTO FALOID SLOWLY RECOVERING FROM THE TRAIL OF CYCLONE FREDDY DESTRUCTION

A journey to the Msanama Extension Planning Area in the Mataka section of Traditional Authority Mlomba in Machinga unveils a heartbreaking scene, showcasing the devastating impact of cyclone Freddy. Even without hearing the narrative, one is moved to tears upon witnessing the aftermath. The landscape is marked by patches of damaged property and fields now submerged in Lake Chilwa, illustrating the widespread destruction caused by the cyclone. The floodwaters have also brought an influx of mud and debris, adding further challenges to crop cultivation in the region.

***“Climate change is a threat to youth with disabilities. This [cyclone] has affected youth with disabilities because there is nothing left in this area. My house was heavily damaged and the whole of our family resorted to live in my mother’s house hence no more privacy. Additionally, I have to start from scratch in terms of my recovery.”***  
Narrated Mabvuto Faloid – a youth with disability.



Mabvuto tending to his maize garden



Amidst this adversity, the Point Of Progress interventions under the MAMO program have played a crucial role in facilitating a turnaround. Mabvuto, for instance, credits his positive change to these interventions. The Point Of Progress conducted capacity-building sessions in collaboration with the Pabwalo Young Women Can Do It club, covering topics such as business management, Village Savings and Loans (VSL) methodology, gender, and leadership. Importantly, the program supported 70 youth households (45 girls and 25 boys) with agriculture inputs specifically for irrigation. District agriculture officers, District Social Welfare Officers, and the District Youth Officer co-facilitated these sessions.

***“The business management and VSL training have made me trace profitability of my business. Additionally, I have cultivated maize on a 1-acre piece of land using irrigation. The proceeds from my maize business and irrigation will make me food and economic secure. I am expecting to realize MK280, 000.00 from these interventions.”***

Concludes Mabvuto.



**Mabvuto selling maize grains**



**Mabvuto stands in front of his house that collapsed due to Cyclone Freddy**

Notably, Point of Progress, under the MAMO Program, has actively engaged and mobilized 203 youth with disabilities (89 girls, 114 boys). These young individuals have been seamlessly integrated into the project interventions.

The programme has also conducted awareness campaigns and involved parents in discussions regarding the participation of youth with disabilities in the food system. This holistic approach aims to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the community, fostering resilience and sustainable development.





Hawa showing off fresh green maize from her garden

## BLOSSOMING FROM CYCLONE FREDDY: A CASE OF HAWA ASAMU

Hawa Asamu, a survivor of cyclone Freddy from Msanama EPA in Machinga, has now achieved food and income security, marking a positive turn in her life. Following the loss of her property, livestock, and crops during the cyclone, the MAMO Programme has played a crucial role in bringing stability to Hawa's life.

***“It may be difficult to recover because this area was destroyed, even the land. The way it is now, it will take time to recover to full production. The fertile land where we were able to harvest and feed our families has almost been covered by water. Now all the crops are gone, the ground is full of sand which cannot benefit anyone. Malnutrition which is caused by lack of food will easily attack this area.”***

Narrated Hawa.

A pivotal moment for Hawa occurred when Point Of Progress initiated a feasibility study on irrigation. District Agriculture Officers, specifically from the irrigation department, facilitated this study for the Mlaina Women Can Do It Club in Msanama EPA in Machinga. As a result of this study, Hawa and 140 others in her community have gained access to sustainable irrigation practices, ensuring a more reliable source of food and income throughout the year. The programme's interventions have not only addressed immediate challenges but have also empowered individuals like Hawa to build resilience and regain their livelihoods.

Hawa Asamu, a survivor of cyclone Freddy from Msanama EPA in Machinga, is progressing towards achieving food and income security, marking a positive turn in her life. Following the loss of her property, livestock, and crops during the cyclone, the programme has played a crucial role in bringing stability to Hawa's life.



***“The MAMO project has equipped us with a lot of skills in livestock management, VSL, business management, gender and leadership. The coming in of Cyclone Freddy drained all the gains of these trainings since my crops and livestock were washed away. My only solace came in when Point Of Progress supported us with agricultural inputs and solar pump for irrigation. I utilized one-acre piece of land. It is like the gods have smiled on me as I have realized MK298,000 from green maize sales. Additionally, I am now food secure and I am able to eat all the six groups of food. For Cyclone Freddy impact, I have found a recovery formula.”***

The smiling Hawa concludes.

Under the programme, Point Of Progress has successfully mobilized 2963 youth households, including 1867 girls, 1096 boys, 24 girls with disabilities, and 39 boys with disabilities. These households are part of 76 Young Women Can Do It Clubs. Through this initiative, the programme provided support in the form of inputs and solar pumps to empower these youth households. They collectively cultivated maize on a 12-acre piece of land, fostering agricultural sustainability and contributing to the resilience of these communities. This concerted effort demonstrates the programme's commitment to promoting inclusive and impactful development in the region.



Hawa installing the solar panel irrigation



# LUCIA IDRISSE DRUMS UP YOUTH AFFORESTATION EFFORTS IN MACHINGA

Despite the challenges brought about by cyclone Freddy, the Tipewe Young Women Can Do It club in Msanama EPA, Machinga, maintains a resilient spirit, firmly believing in life after the disaster. Recognizing the disproportionate impact on young people, especially girls, the club, led by Lucia Idrissa, took proactive measures. Lucia initiated a self-led project to raise 5,000 tree seedlings, contributing to reforesting their community.

***“MAMO project built our capacity on climate resilience. With the linkages which Point Of Progress created with government staff, we sought polythene tubes from the EPA. Further, we linked with the forestry officer who advised us to source seeds locally. We believe that the Cyclone Freddy impact could have been reduced if we had trees within our communities.”***

Narrated Lucia

Point of Progress collaborated with the Tipewe Young Women Can Do It Club, conducting capacity-building sessions on climate change resilience technologies. The focus included highlighting afforestation as a key strategy for mitigating climate change. Furthermore, the youth were connected with government officers to address tree management issues.

The collective efforts of these youth have resulted in the planting of 12,450 trees, with an impressive 66% survival rate. This initiative not only contributes to environmental sustainability but also showcases the resilience and proactive spirit of the young community members in the face of adversity.



*Lucia and club members tending to their tree seedlings*





Tapson Phiri sorting out his maize field

## THE GOLD BENEATH THE DIRT

Education stands as a crucial priority in the development of young individuals, not only because it connects them to the education system but also because it serves as a foundation for their overall preparation for life. The quality, relevance, and effective management of education are intricately linked to the personal development of each young person, as well as the progress of local communities and the entire country. Despite considerable efforts, youth unemployment and underemployment in Malawi remain high at around 7.2%, as reported by the World Bank. Unfortunately, the rise in the number of educated youth has not been met with a proportional increase in employment opportunities.

In light of this, the key to economically empowering the youth lies in the improvement of food systems. The creative potential of Malawi's youth holds the key to remarkable advancements in transforming the country's agricultural ecosystems and value chains. By establishing a modern food sector that utilizes locally available, high-quality agricultural products, the youth can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Malawi's agriculture.

***“While most youth believe in white collar jobs, I chose differently and I don’t regret it. I chose a sector despised by many young people. Farming in particular, is thought to be for the backward and probably those who have less mileage in terms of education. Indeed, as a college graduate, the community anticipated me to be in office. However, after years of unsuccessful search for white collar jobs; Ephangweni YWCDI helped me realize that I can earn a living through agriculture.”***

Tapson Phiri from Ephangweni Young Women Can Do It Club  
in Vibangala EPA in Mzimba.



For Tapson, a significant turning point came when he was introduced to climate-smart technologies through the lead farmer model, facilitated by Point Of Progress under the programme. This transformative experience was complemented by business management, Village Savings and Loans (VSL), gender, leadership, and nutrition training, reshaping the perspective of agriculture as a promising avenue for young people. These capacity-building sessions were collaboratively conducted by District Agriculture Officers, District Social Welfare Officers, and the District Youth Officer.

***“I realized MK820,000 from agriculture in 2023. This has helped contribute to the building of my house and more importantly I have started a printing and stationery business. The secret behind bumper yields is embedded in climate smart technologies such as pit planting, swales, box ridges and manure making just to mention a few.”*** Concludes Tapson.

To streamline agriculture interventions, 124 youth lead farmers (69 girls, 55 boys) have been trained to serve as leaders in their communities. This approach aims to foster a more sustainable and empowering agricultural landscape for the youth in Malawi.



Tapson standing in front of his house









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NETWORKING FOR YOUTH  
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