



**Point of
Progress**

NETWORKING FOR YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT



2024

ANNUAL REPORT



◦ **DISTRICTS
WHERE WE
WORK**

◦ **Mzimba**

◦ **Lilongwe**

◦ **Machinga**

Phalombe ◦

Mulanje ◦



» INTRODUCTION

Point of Progress (PoP), formerly known as the Network for Youth Development (NfYD), is a legally registered Malawian non-governmental organization (NGO) established under the Trustees Incorporation Act. It is officially registered with the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA) and is also recognized by the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA).

We are committed to empowering youth, women and children by increasing their access to relevant skills, knowledge and opportunities, enabling them to shape a better future. At the heart of our work is the creation of safe and inclusive spaces and forums where people can exchange ideas, share experiences and learn from one another in the collective struggle for a more just and dignified life.

Our vision is clear: ***a united and equal Malawi where women, children, and youth are empowered to make informed decisions and lead meaningful lives.*** Our mission is ***to support and uplift marginalized communities through inclusive, rights-based approaches across the sectors of education, health, economic development, and leadership.*** Guided by our core values of equity, sustainability, empowerment and collaboration, PoP's interventions are designed to generate long-lasting, community-driven impact.

The rebranding from NfYD to Point of Progress represents a deliberate and strategic shift, shaped by over a decade of grassroots engagement. While NfYD focused primarily on youth development, our experience revealed the need for a broader, more holistic approach to development one that

integrates gender equality, education, health, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods. This new identity reflects our evolved mandate and reinforces our commitment to localization, community ownership and institutional resilience. Our work is grounded in five interlinked thematic areas: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security; Youth Empowerment and Employment; Education and Skills Development; Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; and Health and Well-being. These areas are our key priorities for the communities where we work and they reflect Malawi's national and global development agendas.

Currently, Point of Progress works with a network of 1,033 youth and women's clubs across the country, reaching a total membership population of 52,985. Of these, 32,567 are female, 24,180 are male and 531 are persons with disabilities. Through these grassroots structures, PoP facilitates community mobilization, social accountability, leadership development and service delivery.



Our Strategic Plan (2024–2028) is fully aligned with Malawi’s Vision 2063 and the First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1). Nationally, our work contributes to the realization of key policies such as the National Youth Policy, the National Gender Policy, and the Malawi National Agriculture Policy. Globally, we align our programs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). We also adhere to international standards and conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In 2024, Point of Progress registered key achievements across all its thematic areas. Our efforts to support youth and women in agriculture through training, access to inputs and promotion of agribusiness have led to increased incomes, improved food security and strengthened resilience. We also continued to make strides in promoting climate justice, advancing girls’ education and strengthening community health systems.

This report therefore, provides a detailed account of our activities, results and learnings from 2024. It reflects the dedication of our staff, the resilience of the communities we serve and the importance of sustained collaboration with partners. As we look ahead, we remain committed to driving inclusive progress and empowering Malawi’s most vulnerable populations to lead the change they wish to see while we contribute towards a transformative progress in their lives.





THEMATIC PROGRESS FOR POINT OF PROGRESS

Agriculture and Food Systems

Malawi's agricultural landscape has faced compounding challenges in recent years, leaving millions vulnerable to hunger and income insecurity. According to the 2023–2024 Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) report, an estimated 4.4 million people across the country required urgent food assistance, representing approximately 22% of the population. These figures reflect the deepening impact of climate-induced shocks, structural poverty and limited resilience among smallholder farmers.

One of the most devastating events during the reporting period was Cyclone Freddy, which struck Malawi in early 2023. The cyclone affected more than 2.2 million people, claiming over 1,000 lives, displacing 659,000 individuals and damaging or destroying more than 500,000 hectares of crops a blow that left thousands of farming households without food or income.

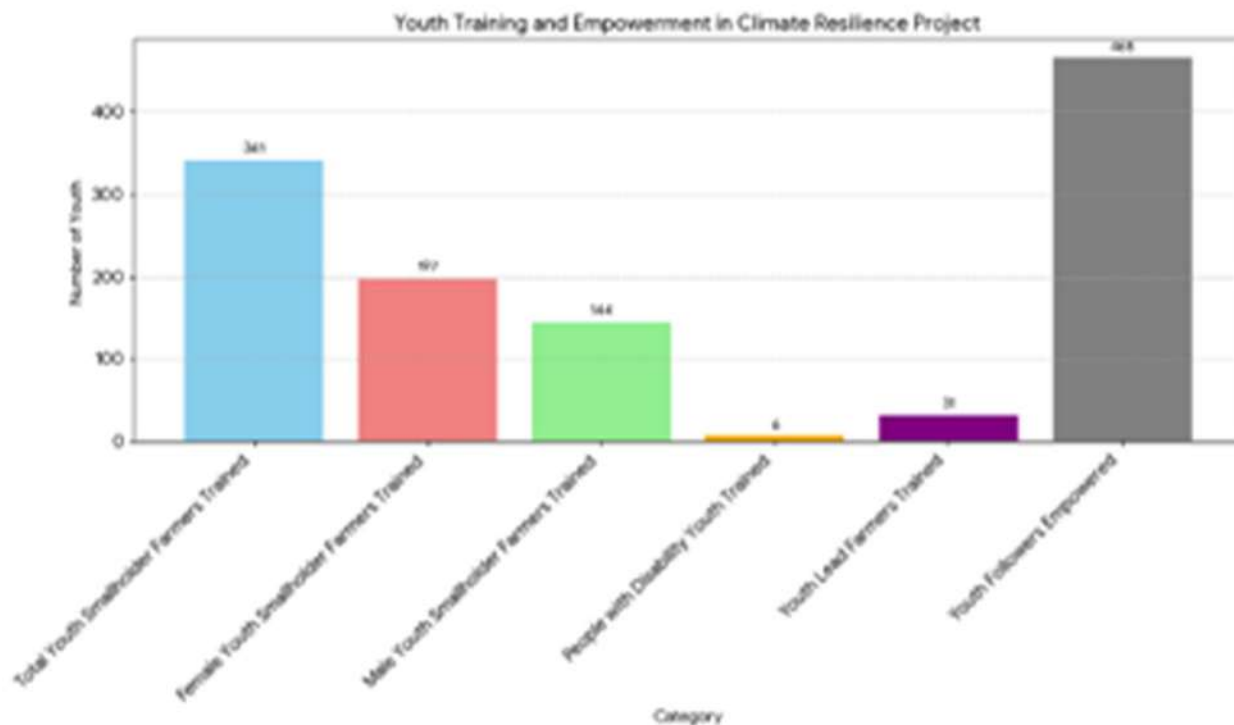
In response to these urgent needs, Point of Progress (PoP) implemented targeted interventions in some of the hardest-hit districts through initiatives such as the Transformative Livelihoods Improvement through Management of Ecosystems Project

(TILIME) in Lilongwe Rural and the Climate Resilience for Rural Livelihoods Project in Mzimba and Machinga. These projects focused on equipping rural communities with adaptive skills and resources to withstand environmental shocks while improving food availability and livelihoods.

Across these districts, 341 farmers, including women and youth, were reached with training in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and sustainable land use practices. Additionally, PoP distributed improved seed varieties and basic farming tools to strengthen productivity. Early results from community tracking indicate that participating households experienced improved food access and increased harvest yields despite unpredictable rainfall patterns.

The TILIME and MAMO initiatives also emphasised the economic empowerment of women and youth through village savings and loans (VSL) models and value addition enterprises. 88 groups successfully established small agribusinesses, including cooking oil processing, contributing to the household incomes and local economic circulation.

In the reporting year, Point of Progress made strategic investments in agriculture and environmental sustainability, with a total budget of MWK 53.5 million. The organization aimed at addressing persistent food insecurity, improve rural livelihoods and promote inclusive economic growth, particularly for women and youth. This work was implemented in close partnership with sectoral experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Gender, Malawi Bureau of Standards and other technical agencies, ensuring that all interventions were well-informed, high quality and aligned with national development priorities.



As part of its commitment to building climate resilience, Point of Progress trained 341 youth smallholder farmers 197 females and 144 males, 6 people with disability youth in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and permaculture techniques, including irrigation and organic composting using Mbeya fertilizer. These trainings equipped farmers to better withstand climate shocks, reduce land degradation, and enhance crop yields. Additionally, the trained 31 Youth Lead Farmers empowered 465 youth followers, spreading climate-smart farming techniques and business skills across the target districts. To complement this, 487 households received material inputs,

including improved seeds, fertilizers, and tools, which significantly contributed to an increase in productive household assets to 62%, just below the annual target of 65%. Additionally, average household income rose to MWK 141,348, from the baseline of MK131, 606. In addition, the interventions decreased the percentage of household with food reserve months from 27% to 19%.

To support environmental regeneration, PoP facilitated community-driven afforestation and reforestation activities, planting over 1,900 tree



seedlings in degraded areas. These initiatives promoted soil conservation, water retention and biodiversity, directly contributing to environmental protection goals under the National Forestry Policy (2016) and the Malawi Climate Change Management Policy (2016).

Point of Progress also made bold strides in advancing youth and women's participation in agricultural value chains. Through its youth-led cooking oil production enterprise, powered by an oil expeller machine, in Lilongwe 15 young people found employment, collectively producing over 850 litres of cooking oil per month. This initiative served as a job creator and enhanced local food processing capacity. These value addition efforts were further enhanced through specialized trainings delivered by professionals from the Malawi Bureau of Standards, focusing on quality control, food safety, and packaging standards.

To strengthen market access and promote knowledge sharing, PoP organized two agriculture fairs and three field days, reaching 504 farmers and stakeholders. These platforms allowed cooperative groups and small-scale processors to showcase innovations and link up with potential buyers and service providers. These initiatives are impactful on the ground because they directly contribute to the realization of Malawi's Vision 2063, particularly under Pillar 1: Agricultural Productivity and Commercialization, and Enabler 2: Enhanced Human Capital Development. They also align with the National Agriculture Policy by promoting sustainable land management, value chain development and inclusive participation of youth and women. Furthermore, PoP's work advances the objectives of the National Youth Policy, which emphasize inclusive economic growth, youth employment and environmental sustainability.

Through this comprehensive approach, Point of Progress continues to play a catalytic role in transforming rural agriculture into a resilient, inclusive and sustainable sector contributing to national and global goals of food security, environmental conservation and economic empowerment.



Climate Justice

In a year marked by escalating climate challenges and deepening social inequalities, Point of Progress, in collaboration with the Norwegian youth organization Spire, strengthened its commitment to youth-led climate justice through the Solidarity Exchange for the Environment and Development (SEED) initiative. This program brought together youth from Malawi and Norway to explore the interconnectedness of climate, agriculture, and gender, turning complex global issues into tangible interventions, advocacy efforts, and public awareness campaigns.

SEED is strategically aligned with Malawi's National Climate Change Management Policy and National Youth Policy, both of which prioritize youth inclusion in climate governance, climate-resilient agriculture, and environmental sustainability. Similarly, in Norway, the initiative

supported the objectives of the International Climate and Forest Initiative and reflected the nation's broader commitment to climate-smart solutions in the Global South. The program ensured youth-led efforts complemented and reinforced national policy priorities rather than operating in isolation.

In Malawi, Point of Progress mobilized communities through participatory farm visits, school climate campaigns, and woodlot establishment. These activities doubled as climate mitigation efforts and practical policy demonstrations. They supported the objectives of Malawi's Climate-Smart Agriculture strategy, National Agriculture Policy, and the Malawi 2063 development agenda. The woodlots addressed reforestation goals outlined in the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy, while education-focused advocacy aligned with the national policy on integrating environment and climate change into the education sector.

Spire contributed a global justice perspective by immersing Norwegian youth in the lived realities of climate-impacted communities in Malawi. Their direct exposure to local farming systems and gender-sensitive adaptation practices allowed for a deeper understanding of the Global North's responsibilities in both causing and addressing the climate crisis. Participants carried these insights into national forums and COP-related events, reinforcing Norway's commitment to equitable climate action and solidarity.

Internally, both organizations used the exchange to refine their strategic focus. Point of Progress integrated climate justice more deliberately across



all its programs, strengthening staff capacity for policy engagement and expanding collaboration with government stakeholders. Spire, meanwhile, infused learnings from the exchange into its grassroots environmental campaigns, bridging local activism with global development issues.

A standout achievement of SEED was its influence on policy. Participants developed evidence-based policy briefs and facilitated dialogues with 27 policymakers—ranging from government officials to youth parliamentarians in Malawi, and from political advisors to development ministers in Norway. These engagements emphasized the critical need to incorporate youth-driven climate recommendations into national planning and budgeting, particularly in agriculture, water, and gender resilience.

The initiative's communication efforts significantly amplified its impact. Through social media, visual content, brochures, and documentaries, SEED reached 8,550 people, giving a local face and voice to climate justice. These materials not only raised public awareness but also served as advocacy tools at platforms like the Malawi Climate Justice Conference. As a result, 17 civil society organizations engaged directly in SEED activities, deepening the ecosystem of youth-led climate advocacy.

Above all, SEED shifted perceptions of youth from passive beneficiaries to credible policy actors. Whether presenting at conferences, engaging embassies, or highlighting community-based climate work, young participants demonstrated agency, knowledge, and authenticity proving that youth are essential partners in effective policy implementation. As SEED moves into its next phase, it stands on a strong foundation of meaningful policy engagement, cross-cultural learning, and community resilience—anchored in solidarity rather than charity.





Health and Well-being

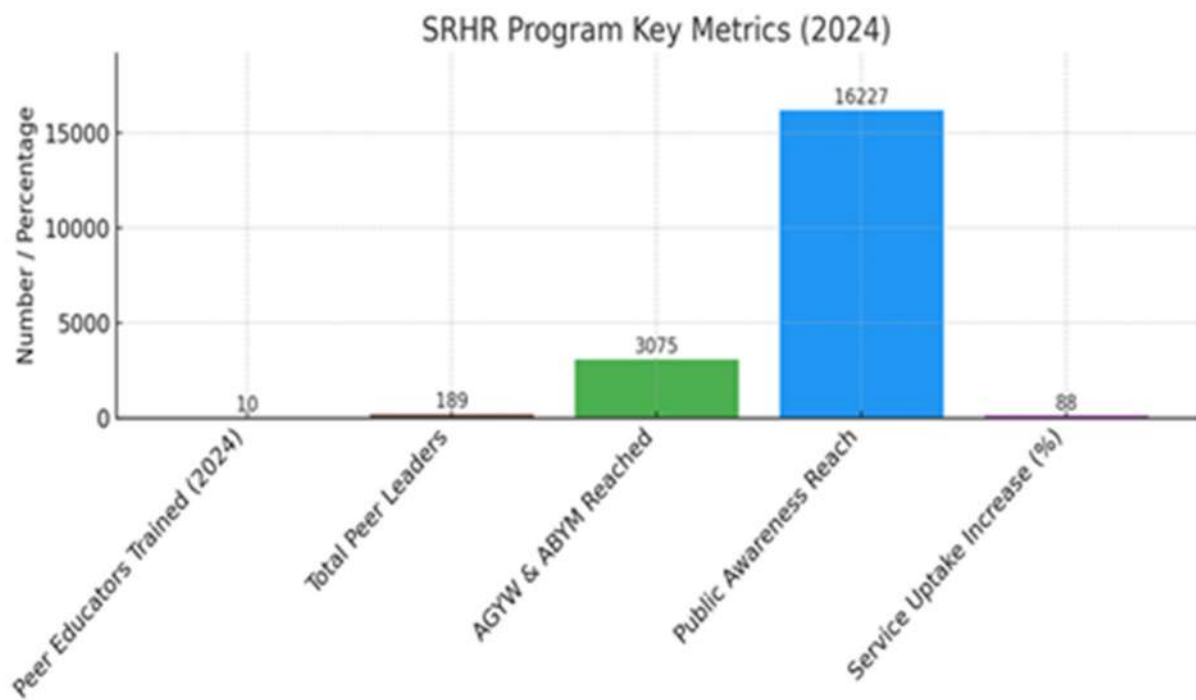
Health is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development. Guided by the World Health Organization's broad definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, Point of Progress continues to prioritize Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), mental wellness and nutrition as key components of its community development efforts. With a particular focus on adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), our work aligns with national frameworks such as the Malawi National Strategy for Adolescent Girls and Young Women, the National Youth Policy and global commitments like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through the **Her Future, Her Choice** project, PoP has worked to dismantle barriers that prevent young people especially girls and young women from accessing quality SRHR information and services. The initiative promotes safe spaces, inclusive education and leadership development to empower youth as informed advocates for their rights and wellbeing.

In 2024, this work yielded notable results. 10 new peer educators were trained, joining a network of 189 peer leaders who reached 3,075 AGYW and adolescent boys and young men (ABYM) with critical SRHR services. This represented an 88% increase in service uptake

compared to previous years. Public awareness efforts including community dialogues, campaigns, and trainings reached a cumulative 16,227 individuals (11,581 females, 4,646 males, and 81 persons with disabilities), promoting gender equality and challenging harmful cultural norms that limit access to SRHR. The chart on next page highlights key achievements of the SRHR program in 2024, including peer educator training, total peer leaders, service reach, public awareness impact, and service uptake growth.





Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Gender equality and women's empowerment have become foundational pillars in Malawi's pursuit of sustainable development. These themes are enshrined in the country's national frameworks, including Vision 2020, Vision 2063 and the National Youth Policy. However, significant challenges persist in achieving these goals, reinforcing the need for comprehensive and transformative strategies.

Despite the policies in place, gender equality remains a complex issue in Malawi, with deep-rooted barriers preventing women from fully participating in economic, social and political spheres. Systemic challenges such as limited access to education, high unemployment rates among women and the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) hinder the realization of gender parity. Societal stereotypes further exacerbate these disparities, curbing women's involvement in leadership and decision-making processes.



To address these issues, Point of Progress (PoP) has implemented targeted interventions that focus on empowering young women and girls. Through initiatives such as the Young Women Can Do It (YWCDI) clubs, PoP has promoted a culture of leadership and inclusivity, enabling youth both boys and girls as well as women to engage more actively in local governance and decision-making processes. The organization has collaborated with over 60 grassroots organizations, helping to increase participation in gender-inclusive leadership and decision-making.

In the reporting period, PoP achieved significant milestones in advancing the social, economic, and political empowerment of women and girls. This included supporting 53 young women (including 2 with disabilities) to establish profitable businesses and ensuring that 7 young women (1 with a disability) were appointed to decision-making positions within local governance structures. PoP also supported 658 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and provided capacity-building programs that reached 7,544 girls and women. These programs included training on gender equality, leadership, vocational skills, business management, Village Savings and Loans (VSL), and education.





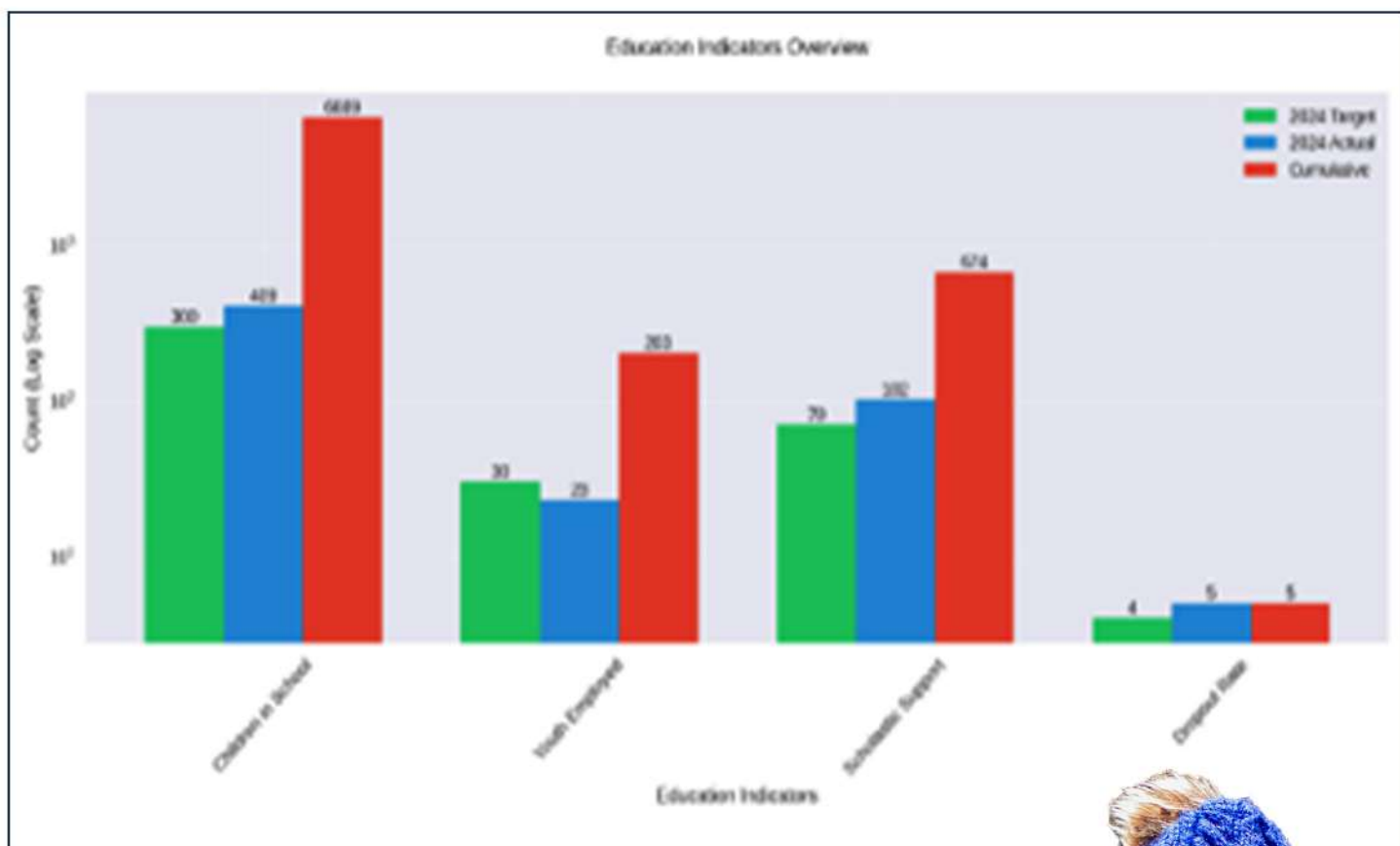
Education and Skills Development

Despite notable policy reforms and investments, Malawi's education sector continues to face persistent structural challenges that undermine its growth and inclusivity. The impact of climate change—exemplified by Cyclone Freddy in 2023—severely damaged educational infrastructure, especially in the Southern Region, displacing thousands of learners and disrupting continuity in learning. This has strained government efforts to meet the targets outlined in the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020–2030, particularly in early childhood development, basic education, and secondary and higher education. The 2023 Joint Sector Review Report highlighted critical issues, including a shortage of qualified early childhood development (ECD) practitioners, inadequate school infrastructure, and low foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes, which hinder learners' progression. Furthermore, implementation of the TEVET Policy and work-based learning remains weak due to the absence of robust quality assurance mechanisms such as standards for in-company mentors, aligned curricula, and clear assessment frameworks. These gaps compromise efforts to ensure equitable access to relevant, quality, and skills-based education as envisioned in the Education Act of 2013 and the Malawi Vision 2063.

In the reporting year, 102 (92 girls, 10 boys, 10 youth with disability) learners were supported with scholastic materials. 23 (13 girls, 10 boys 2 youth with disability) youth were employed

through vocational skills. Above all 409 (297 girls, 112 boys, 98 youth with disability) were sent back to school and reduce the dropout rate to 5%. Additionally, in the reporting year, 7566 (4782 girls, 2784 boys, 203 youth with disabilities) youth have been reached with go back to school campaigns, scholastic support, quiz and debates, psychosocial support and vocational education.. Figure 2 below gives a summary of the theme achievement. Figure 2 below gives a summary of the theme achievement.





Youth empowerment and employment

The employment landscape in African countries, including Malawi, has remained structurally stagnant, limiting the shift toward high-income status characterized by productive agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. In Malawi, youth unemployment remains a major development challenge. According to Statista, over 83.5% of Malawi's young labour force operates in the informal economy, where small-scale enterprises often yield minimal income and lack long-term sustainability. Despite this bleak scenario, the agricultural sector presents a viable yet underutilized pathway for youth employment and empowerment. Malawi Vision 2063 (MW2063) and its First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) recognize agriculture as one of the key pillars for economic transformation, calling for modernization and commercialization of the sector to unlock youth potential. However, past and current efforts have inadequately leveraged this sector to create decent employment for the youth. The National Agriculture Policy (2016) calls for increased youth engagement in agribusiness and value addition, while the National Youth Policy (2013) underscores the need for empowering young people through access to land, finance, and skills development in agriculture. Similarly, the National Employment and Labour Policy (2018) stresses inclusive employment strategies targeting vulnerable groups, including youth, through the promotion of green jobs and sustainable agriculture. Overcoming cultural stigmas, policy fragmentation, and limited access to productive resources is critical to unlocking agriculture's



stigmas, policy fragmentation, and limited access to productive resources is critical to unlocking agriculture's transformative role in youth livelihoods and fostering a resilient, inclusive economy.

To address these challenges, Point of Progress concentrated its efforts during the reporting year on enhancing the potential of youth and women in value addition, vocational skills, business management, and civic participation. As a result,

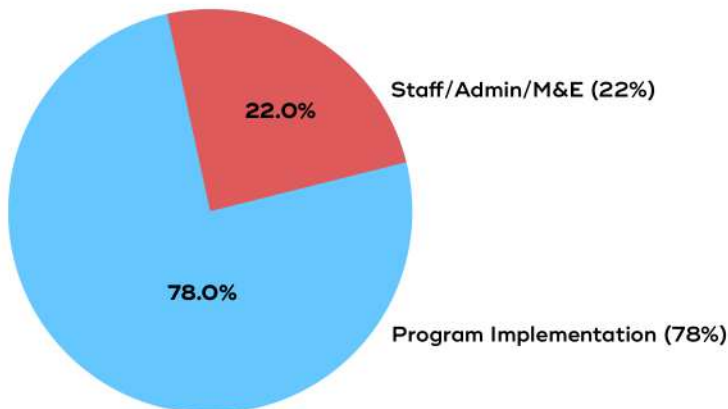
23 young people (13 girls and 10 boys) secured employment through value addition initiatives, contributing to an increase in household income from such activities from 0% to 29%. In addition, youth and women-led Village Savings and Loans (VSL) generated a circulating value of MK5, 431,200.

In terms of youth civic engagement, 4 youth (2 girls and 2 boys) were successfully integrated into local governance structures, enhancing youth representation in decision-making spaces.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

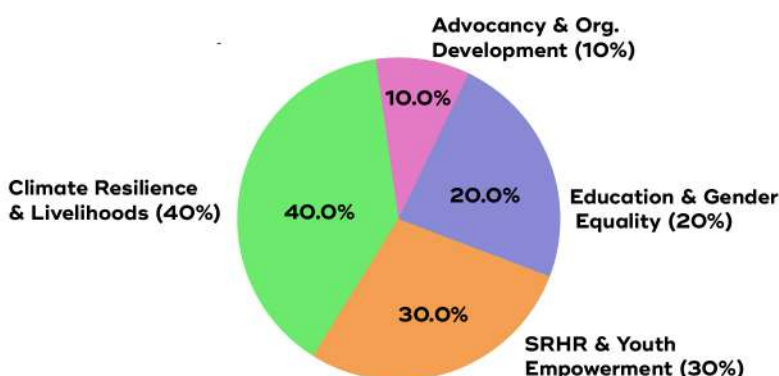
2024 Expenditure Overview



In 2024, Point of Progress operated on a total budget of MWK 490 million, sourced from international NGOs, donors and partners. IM Swedish, a new partner during the year, emerged as the lead donor, contributing 30% of the total funding. This was followed by Oxfam (27%), the Development Fund of Norway (15%), Plan International (16%), NOREC (12%), and other miscellaneous partners (10%).

In 2024, Point of Progress dedicated 78% of its total budget to program implementation, demonstrating a clear commitment to delivering tangible results in communities. The remaining 22% supported staffing, administration, and monitoring and evaluation—critical functions that ensure effective planning, coordination, accountability, and learning. This allocation reflects a well-balanced approach, where the majority of resources directly benefit target populations, while essential institutional systems are maintained to sustain quality, transparency, and impact.

2024 Thematic Expenditure Breakdown



In 2024, Point of Progress aligned its spending with its strategic priorities. The largest portion 40% was directed toward climate resilience and livelihoods (agriculture and food security), supporting sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation in vulnerable communities. 30% was allocated to SRHR and youth empowerment, promoting youth leadership and improved access to reproductive health services. 20% supported education and gender equality, focusing on inclusive learning and advancing equity for girls and young women. The remaining 10% was invested in advocacy and organizational development, aimed at enhancing institutional capacity and policy influence.

To enhance operational efficiency, Point of Progress introduced centralized procurement systems, shared administrative services across projects, and renegotiated key service contracts to make the best use of available resources. These improvements were guided by the organization's institutional finance and operations policies, ensuring consistency and fairness across all activities. Throughout the year, financial controls were carefully maintained, fully aligned with donor expectations, audit recommendations and internal standards.



Human Resources

In 2024, Point of Progress employed a qualified and competent team to support program implementation across various districts. The organization had a total of 32 staff members, comprising 20 full-time employees and these were 9 males and 11 females and 12 volunteers, including 4 females and 8 males.

The team brought with them diverse academic qualifications, ranging from diploma holders to those with master's degrees. Many of the volunteers served as interns, gaining practical experience to complete their academic programs. Staff turnover during the year was minimal, with most departures resulting from the scheduled conclusion of project activities.

Stakeholder Engagement & Partnerships

The success of 2025 programs was underpinned by strong stakeholder engagement. At the local level, Point of Progress collaborated with community-based organizations (CBOs), faith groups, traditional authorities, and local government structures. These partnerships ensured local ownership and culturally appropriate program delivery. Nationally, the organization worked with the Ministry of Agriculture,

Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Youth, and Ministry of Education on joint planning and policy dialogue.

International partners included the IM Swedish Cooperative Partner, the Development Fund of Norway, Plan International, NOREC, Oxfam and UN agencies. Technical assistance, funding, and strategic advice from these actors enabled program innovations and capacity building. Point of Progress acknowledges with deep gratitude the invaluable support and collaboration of its strategic partners, including Oxfam, Plan International, IM Swedish Development Partner, the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC), and The Development Fund. These organizations played a pivotal role in advancing the organization's mission in 2024 through both technical and financial contributions that have significantly enhanced the implementation of various community-centered initiatives. Their continued partnership has strengthened Point of Progress's capacity to address critical development challenges, promote social justice, and empower marginalized groups, particularly youth, children and women, in Malawi. Through joint programming, knowledge exchange, and sustained engagement, these partners have been instrumental in driving progress towards the achievement of Point of Progress's strategic objectives.



Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

In 2024, Point of Progress refined its MEAL framework to ensure programs remained evidence-based and responsive. The framework applied a mix of qualitative and quantitative tools, including baseline and endline surveys, focus group discussions, outcome harvesting, and digital data collection tools like KoboToolbox.

Regular monitoring allowed real-time adjustments to implementation plans. For instance, community feedback on school dropout triggers informed changes to the Girls Get Equal support package. MEAL data also helped identify high-risk areas requiring safeguarding protocols.

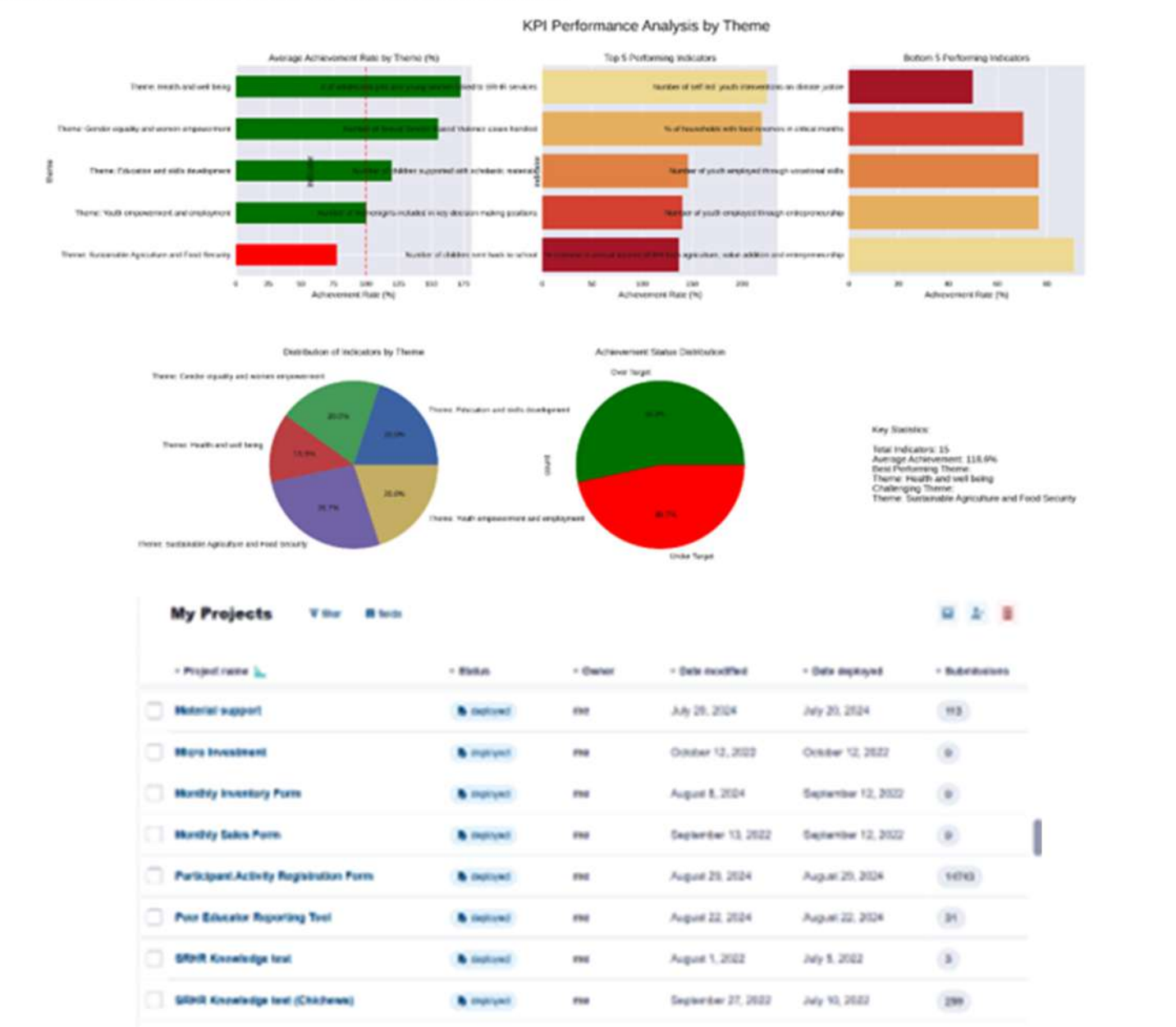
Quarterly learning meetings were held with staff, partners, and community volunteers to share insights and best practices. The MEAL team produced reports used for donor reporting, strategic reviews, and annual planning. The organization also began developing a centralized digital dashboard for real-time impact tracking.

Challenges and Solutions

In 2024, Point of Progress encountered several internal challenges related to administration and management. The growing scope of programs placed pressure on our lean staff structure, leading to capacity strains in implementation and reporting. Limited unrestricted funding made it difficult to invest in other operational needs such as transport, IT or digital systems and staff development. Additionally, adapting to our rebranding process from NfYD to PoP required internal restructuring, role realignments and team capacity building, all of which demanded time and resources.

Compliance with evolving donor and government regulations also increased administrative workload, particularly in meeting documentation and reporting standards. While governance structures like the Board of Trustees remained active, efforts were needed to deepen board involvement in strategic oversight and fundraising. In response, we introduced quarterly management reviews, staff refresher trainings, and improved internal coordination to strengthen our operational efficiency and institutional resilience.

Another key challenge faced by Point of Progress in 2024 was continued donor dependency amidst a noticeable decline in external funding support. As donor priorities shift and global economic pressures persist, sustaining program operations and core administrative functions has become increasingly difficult. In response, the organization has begun exploring alternative financing models, including the establishment of community-based social enterprises. Through these emerging partnerships, PoP aims to generate local income, promote ownership and reduce over-reliance on traditional funding streams while still delivering impact at the grassroots level.





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