

Mid-Term Report for WASH, Muluwezi

Improving Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Malawi with Temwa



Overview of the project

Contaminated water sources, poor water and sanitation infrastructure, and lack of hygiene awareness are a major development barrier for poor and isolated communities in northern Malawi. To address these challenges, Temwa's Improving Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project provides sustainable solutions that increase access to clean water and better sanitation, while improving community WASH knowledge and service provision. This mid-term report focuses on progress to date in extending this project to the village of Muluwezi in the Khondowe Area. Thousands of people in the wider community will also be able to access accurate health information and be encouraged to improve sanitation facilities and behaviour through the project activities.

Project activities

Events to raise awareness of WASH best practices

The project was launched in April with an Awareness Campaign targeting households across the Khondowe Area. Temwa conducted a community-led sports competition bringing together approximately 950 community members. Using football and netball matches as engagement tools, the project team disseminated key health and hygiene messages. Prior to the games and throughout the event, the Project Officer and Health Surveillance Assistant covered practical topics, including handwashing, safe water handling, sanitation facility use, and waste disposal. The interactive format encouraged community engagement through quizzes and discussions, with two participants receiving water filters as prizes for correctly answering WASH-related questions. Cash rewards were also awarded to winning teams to incentivise participation.



Temwa supported a second event sensitising community members in Muluwezi, using an evening film and presentation/discussion. The village has 234 households which the Project aims to directly support with the provision of subsidised water filters. Households will also be supported to adopt other WASH facilities and practices.

Figure 1: Muluwezi WASH committee Chairperson emphasizing on the importance of community participation in the WASH project during the awareness campaign.

Stakeholder engagement to support the uptake of WASH Practices



In April, a WASH Committee, comprising 10 members, was established to manage daily activities within the village of Muluwezi. Temwa facilitated a meeting of WASH and Village Development Committee members, Chiefs, and health surveillance assistants (HSAs) to agree roles for every stakeholder to support the project's goals.

Figure 2: Muluwezi WASH Committee and VDC members after the training on WASH

Over April and May, Temwa staff conducted training sessions for members of the WASH and Village Development Committees, focusing on the proper assembly, usage, and maintenance of ceramic water filters. Participants gained hands-on experience and demonstrated their understanding by assembling filters and explaining each component's function. This practical knowledge equipped local leaders to champion proper filter use and provide peer support within their villages. Temwa also trained 40 leaders (WASH committee members/VDC/village heads) as "WASH Champions" to model behaviours, for example by conducting handwashing demonstrations at community gatherings.



Figure 3: Muluwezi WASH Committee Secretary role-playing on convincing a community member to buy a water filter during the training on assembling, usage and management of a water filter

The WASH Committee initiated a household mapping process to map current WASH practices and promote those not yet widely adopted. It was found that there had already been significant progress in sanitation and hygiene due to Temwa's previous efforts to encourage the uptake of WASH Best Practices through District-wide Community Awareness Campaigns.

However, whilst a relatively high proportion of households are using latrines and treating water, critical gaps remain. In particular, the survey found that water treatment was inconsistent in 70% of households, and waste management practices at the household level were insufficient. The village continues to struggle with high rates of waterborne diseases – the Health Centre recorded 98 cases of diarrhoea and dysentery in the three months prior to the baseline survey, underscoring the ongoing challenges.

Stakeholders also identified there were significant gaps in community WASH infrastructure, in particular, insufficient toilets in the health centre (e.g. 1:50 toilet ratio at the health centre versus the 1:15 WHO recommendation, and 1 toilet per 40 female students in school versus 1:25 WHO recommendation and 1 per 60 male students vs 1:50 recommendation).

Temwa supported WASH and VDC members to jointly develop a Water Filter Sales Strategy and a Community Work Plan, with participants agreeing on an affordable, subsidized price for the filters (MK 10,000 Unit price with a flexible 3-month repayment plan). Traditional authorities and health workers made strong commitments to reinforce WASH practices at the household and institutional levels. Chiefs pledged to enact local by-laws mandating household ownership of water filters and adherence to hygiene standards. The Health Advisory Committee was tasked with integrating hygiene education into its health service delivery. Health workers pledged to link access to health services with household compliance to WASH standards. Finally, the School Committee was tasked with developing student-led sanitation monitoring clubs.

Training in resource mobilisation and political advocacy

Temwa conducted a session with the Community leadership (30 local leaders from the Village Development Committee, WASH Committee and Village Heads) with practical skills in resource mobilisation and proposal writing, enabling them to develop actionable strategies to close critical WASH infrastructure gaps.

Participants were also provided with training in political advocacy, with leaders trained in lobbying MPs for Constituency Development Fund support. Participants were supported in identifying local resources such as land, labour and materials that could be deployed affordably. Finally, village heads were tasked with identifying/soliciting 10+ local well-wishers for material donations, including for bricks and labour.



This session established a foundation for long term project sustainability by fostering strong community ownership. Local Leaders subsequently developed an Action Plan with defined roles and timelines for improving toilet facilities in the area, specifically, the construction of 4 new toilets (2 at health centre, 2 at school), addressing the 1:50 and 1:40 user ratios. The committees also committed to reinvest 100% of water filter profits into construction of 4 latrines at Khondowe health centre and 4 latrines at Khondowe primary school.

Figure 4 above: Muluwezi VDC Chair making a point during the resource mobilisation training, Figure 5 to the right: Flemmings Zimba, Muluwezi VDC Chairperson.

"This month, we moved from saying 'we need toilets' to 'we are building them.' The community owns the solution."- Khondowe VDC Chairperson



Supporting the uptake of WASH practices at household level



Figure 4: Muluwezi WASH Committee and VDC members receiving part of the water filters

From April to July, the WASH Committee has undertaken regular visits to households to support and encourage the adoption of all WASH best practices, reinforcing messages given at the Community event on essential hygiene and sanitation behaviours, and ensuring end-users could use and maintain the ceramic water filters.

The 300 water filters procured by Temwa were handed over to the WASH Committee for distribution to the households, and for use in schools, fishing camps and the Health Care Clinic for under 5s.

Over May and June, Community engagement in monitoring the progress of households in adopting best practices gained traction, with WASH Committee members actively involved in collecting household data, tracking infrastructure improvements, and reporting changes. Monitoring efforts confirmed a better understanding of the link between sanitation and health, a stronger awareness of hygiene and safe water practices, and increased uptake of these practices, including the use of pit latrines, dish racks, rubbish pits and regular handwashing with soap.

Nearly all households in Muluwezi have now been reached by WASH interventions, and this is already being reflected in a decrease in the incidence of waterborne diseases compared to the baseline. According to the Muluwezi Health Centre, 14% of all illnesses were waterborne related in the quarter before the Project started. This figure has dropped to 6% in the quarter up to end of June.

Challenges

The original proposal for this Project included the provision of ceramic water filters to 671 households in Khondowe. However, changes were made at District level that led to the division of Khondowe into 2 villages. With the elevation of Group Village Headman Komphoka, a New VDC (Muluwezi) was established in Khondowe Area. This, combined with the challenge of raising sufficient funds to purchase nearly 700 water filters, led to a decision to focus the Project's household support on the village of Muluwezi, which has 234 households. Temwa was subsequently able to purchase 300 water filters for use by households and other community facilities in Muluwezi.

Lack of funding and prolonged rains delayed the construction of demonstration latrines. Radio programming has also been delayed to the second half of the year, with Temwa agreeing to support the re-instatement of the community radio station in exchange for airing WASH related programming in the second half of 2025.

Finally, the plan to conduct a media tour has also been affected by a lack of funding. There are now plans to conduct a Media Tour combining WASH and other health messages in the second half of 2025, drawing on resources from another of Temwa's health projects, as well as additional funds recently received for the WASH Project.

Successes

The absence of sufficient funds at the beginning of the Project led to a much stronger focus in the initial stages on working with Community leaders to devise their own resource mobilisation strategy. The process of mapping resources and identifying priority activities has fostered a strong community ownership and commitment to the goals of the project. Temwa staff have also built the capacity of local leadership to advocate for more resources at District level.

Initially, only 20 households purchased the water filters outright, with most households unable to afford the upfront costs of a water filter, despite the subsidised cost. The slow take up of water filters has in large part been due to uncertain incomes from fishing, the key source of livelihood in the village. The WASH Committee, in partnership with other Community Leaders, has devised a flexible 3-month repayment scheme and enforcement approach. By the end of July, 78 households had adopted the water filters.

To build on these gains and reach all planned targets, increased funding support and continued stakeholder collaboration are essential. Temwa has received additional funding for the Project in the second half of July and is now preparing to complete the activities needed to ensure sustained project impact. The priorities for the second half of the year are to:

- ✓ Build demonstration latrines and undertake broader community awareness raising efforts
- ✓ Support the wider uptake of flexible payment models or subsidies for low-income households to promote the daily use water filters by households
- ✓ Provide additional training to WASH Committees and on data collection, reporting, and hygiene promotion strategies

Community Story

An Exemplary Chief Championing Clean Water at Household Level in Muluwezi

Village Headman Chakonya, a 50-year-old chief residing in Muluwezi with his family of eight, has become a vocal advocate for safe water and hygiene practices in his community. Like many in his village, his household previously struggled with unsafe drinking water from an unprotected source resulting in frequent diarrheal outbreaks.

The introduction of Temwa's WASH project is marking a turning point. Through education sessions and subsidised access to water filters, households like Chakonya's have begun practicing safe water treatment and improved hygiene.



"This has changed our lives," says Chakonya, who now ensures his household follows all hygiene practices and encourages others in the village to do the same. He is working closely with fellow village heads, the VDC, and the WASH committee to scale up these practices across Muluwezi.

For more information please contact:

[Kerry Johnstone](#) - Trust and Programmes Officer

Kerry.johnstone@temwa.org Temwa, Kambe House, 34 Portland Square, Bristol, BS2 8RG