



Improving Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Mid-Term Report – December 2021 - June 2022

This report shares the latest developments under Temwa’s Improving Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project implemented in 5 villages in Nkhata Bay North, Malawi, from December 2021 - June 2022. With the support of the Ashworth Trust and a number of other funders, we are pleased to report that significant progress has been made in reducing waterborne diseases and increasing awareness of safe WASH practices. Despite the challenges caused by Covid-19 in the targeted communities the project is on track and is exceeding its targets in many areas.

Project context and aims

Dirty water and poor hygiene are the two main killers in the world’s poorest communities. In Nkhata Bay North, three in five people contract waterborne diseases, such as bilharzia, diarrhoea and even cholera, every year. This is due to reliance on open water sources, poor sanitation infrastructure, and poor hygiene practices. At the same time, healthcare services are inadequate and hard to access due to the area’s topography and lack of reliable transport infrastructure. All too often, the community loses citizens to long-term illness and death as a result of poverty, poor levels of knowledge, and lack of access to health services.



Like elsewhere in the world, Malawi too experienced new waves of Covid-19 during the past year following the emergence of new variants. Due to the geographic isolation, there has continued to be very little governmental support for Covid-19 awareness, testing, or vaccines in Nkhata Bay North to help prevent transmission. As part of Temwa’s hygiene education and material support this project has continued to provide training, education, and materials to combat the deadly Covid-19 pandemic, during the past six months. Following Temwa’s community engagements, community lobbying has resulted in better support from the district, such as sufficient PPE supplies for the local health centres.

Temwa’s Improving Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene project aims to create safer and healthier communities with reduced illness and mortality and therefore increased productivity at schools and farms. We achieve this through community awareness activities; by providing access to clean water and sanitation; and by building community capacity around health service provision.

Community health achievements

We are proud to report that, from December 2021 - June 2022, your support has helped improve community water, sanitation and hygiene through the following project activities and achievements.

Outcome 1: Improved community knowledge about WASH and broader health issues

Improved understanding about health issues helps community members make informed decisions about their personal health. It also helps them assess the importance and effectiveness of risk reduction strategies, such as regular handwashing and Covid-19 vaccines. To support this, Temwa runs awareness-raising activities tailored to each community's needs.

In the past 6 months, over **4,000 adults and children**, (60% women) across the targeted five villages **attended increasingly popular awareness events**.

The events used engaging methods, such as well-known drama groups, to demonstrate personal and communal sanitation and hygiene practices. They also campaigned for eradication of open defecation along the lake, and showed how to use and maintain the ceramic water filters in a fun and interactive way. Our Temwa Malawi team delivering the awareness events reported that hiring a prominent drama group has positively contributed towards the impressive attendance, and is inspiring communities to improve their water, sanitation, and hygiene practices. Temwa also **distributed 60 T-shirts containing health messages** to spread the health messages further.



In the past six months, we continued to run **a radio awareness campaign that included monthly radio shows and daily radio jingles on a local radio station** on WASH and Covid-19 topics. We also broadcasted a **weekly fact-check radio show**, including phone-ins, that addresses any current health-related misconceptions circulating in the communities. The weekly fact-check shows initially focused on Covid-19 prevention, and were temporarily halted to reassess current gaps in community knowledge. Since they were paused, community demand for the shows redoubled, and we are excited to resume them this month in July. We are delighted to report that the radio campaign has been popular and wide-reaching: an estimated **40,000 people** have **accessed accurate and clear health information in Nkhata Bay North and the wider region** – exceeding the project target of 20,000 people. The shows continue to receive excellent feedback from the audience, in part because it provides a platform for them to interact with health experts and other community members. It allows them to share their views, reflect on problems, and to clarify doubts about Covid-19 and other health issues.

Outcome 2: Access to safe and clean water and sanitation

Lack of access to safe water means that each year, three in five people in Nkhata Bay North contract waterborne diseases, including bilharzia, diarrhoea, intestinal parasites and even cholera.

With your help in supporting this project, **200 ceramic water filters have been distributed** to households in five villages, and several community centres. **Clean water is now regularly available for 200 households, translating to about 1,200 people**, who are using water filters in their homes. Of sampled beneficiaries, over 80% are correctly using and maintaining the water filters. The introduction of water filters has resulted in the reduction of reported cases of waterborne diseases. For example, we were pleased to hear from the local Health Surveillance Assistant, that previously 80% of diarrhoea cases registered at the Usisya Health Centre were from the Murwa, Mchulu and Mabuli villages. However, since Temwa introduced



this project in these areas, the proportion has dropped to 40% of cases.

Each community's Water Committee charges households a subsidised fee for the filters, which encourages filter maintenance and creates **a fund that will be reinvested in local health projects** aligned with community priorities. For example, the three targeted villages in the Usisya area decided to construct shallow wells so that they have easy access to clean water, negating the need to walk far distances to collect contaminated water. (Read more under the Community Story below).

The project has also improved community sanitation. With material support from Temwa, the Water Committees supported their communities to **build an additional 5 demonstration latrines, bringing the total to 15: 8 of which have been completed.** Due to community demand, Temwa has agreed to use remaining project funds to renovate six toilets at the Usisya Health Centre by purchasing doors and door frames that are currently missing.

Outcome 3: Improved community health services

The five local health centres in Nkhata Bay North are sparsely located and severely under-resourced – lacking basic health necessities such as soap. Some community members live a nine-hour walk away from the closest clinic. Temwa aims to improve health services available within these remote communities. We work closely with local governance, such as Water and Village Development Committees, to ensure local ownership of planning, implementing, and sustaining activities.

During the reporting period, Temwa engaged and trained 150 local governance representatives on water, sanitation, and hygiene best practices. We also trained frontline health workers at the five local health centres and local governance structures on Covid-19, and continued to distribute protective medical equipment, including surgical masks, gloves, plastic aprons, hand sanitiser and infrared thermometers. As a result of this project, community members from Nkhata Bay North have not only improved their understanding of health issues, but **recognised the importance of community leadership.** This has encouraged them to **take action for their personal and communal health.**



We are pleased to report that Water Committees and other local governance structures helped increase community health knowledge through household WASH training, awareness events, and the radio shows. They also formulated WASH bylaws to encourage the adoption of safe practices, and guided households and local builders in the construction of their own latrines at home. In the last 6 months, **43 community members (53% women) were trained on building corbelled latrines** that are well-suited to the sandy soil in the lakeshore. We are pleased to report that the **incredible work of local governance has resulted in 12 additional households independently building new toilets and an estimated 60 new handwashing stations** being set up by community members in public areas and outside toilets at homes.

Furthermore, following Temwa's community engagements, community lobbying resulted in better support from the district: for example, the communities in Usisya town had a poor water supply due to damaged pipes. Following local governance lobbying for better water services, the district assigned a special task force to improve the water supply in the area. They extended the pipeline to Mabuli and Mchulu: supplying approximately 1,600 people with piped water who previously had no access. So far, an estimated **4,400 people across the targeted communities** and around 8,000 visitors from other areas of Nkhata Bay North **have access to sanitation and hygiene facilities.** This is a great achievement, as only 6% of the toilets in the area were previously structurally adequate.

Community Stories

Water filters are helping the communities reinvest in water projects

Residents of Usisya and surrounding areas have chosen to construct three shallow wells with the funds they mobilised through selling the subsidised water filters that they were given by Temwa. The Usisya Village Development Committee chair, Morson Thindwa, said the community chose this initiative to solve problems with water access. The contaminated local water supply puts the community at risk of waterborne diseases. "We cannot practise good hygiene if we don't have access to good water, that's why we kept on suffering from cases of diarrhoea despite all other efforts. But **with support from Temwa, we have managed to mobilise cash that will allow us to start our project to construct three shallow wells,**" said Thindwa.



Group Village Headman, Mr. Murwa agreed that the shallow wells will benefit the area significantly. Apart from reducing waterborne diseases caused by drinking of unsafe water, the wells will reduce the distance that women have to travel to fetch water.

"Fetching water in safe places is hard for women here, it takes over 40 minutes just to get one bucket of clean water. This is why most of them resorted to fetching water from the lake, though it is contaminated. But with the construction of shallow wells and also the coming of water filters, households will be getting clean water," said Mr. Murwa.

The shallow well construction will cost about MWK 900,000 (£718) Thanks to your support for providing the water filters, the community has already raised about MWK 562,000 (£449) towards their life-saving project.

Building toilets to save a hospital

The Usisya Health Centre is one of the five health centres in Nkhata Bay North where Temwa works. **Before the project began, the deeply inadequate facilities at the health centre put 90% of women and children visiting the hospital at risk of contracting waterborne diseases. The health facility had no functioning toilet,** which prompted patients to defecate in the bushes near the hospital. In the last two years, the hospital reported high cases of waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, and birhazia.

The facility previously relied on an electrical water pump which broke down over one year ago. Patients and hospital workers currently rely on water delivery from the Water Unit Association which only supplies water once a week, putting the hospital at risk of closure. The Usisya Health Centre covers about a third of the population in Nkhata Bay North. If the hospital were to close, it would put the lives of 17,600 people at risk.

To improve this dire health situation, the Hospital Management Committee chairperson called upon stakeholders, including Temwa, to help solve the hospital's water supply problem, and to construct essential hygiene facilities such as toilets, garbage bins, and an incinerator for the hospital. To respond to community demands to resolve the problems, Temwa facilitated an engagement meeting with the Area Development Committee, Health Management Committee, and other stakeholders. This provided an opportunity for other stakeholders to identify areas that they can support.



Thanks to your generous support, Temwa, with support from the Area and Village Development Committees and dedicated community members, is **now able to commence work to improve the toilets, and to fix the hospital's broken water system**. Temwa has also been running an awareness campaign to prevent open defecation around the hospital premises.

Thank you

Temwa is incredibly grateful for the generous support of the Ashworth Trust towards this life-saving project. By working with and through local governance structures and families, we have been able to significantly improve communities' access to safe and clean water, sanitation infrastructure and hygiene information. This is already saving lives: there is evidence of reduction in waterborne diseases, and reduced mortality in Nkhata Bay North and the wider region, all thanks to your help. The project is wholeheartedly supported by the communities who are very appreciative of Temwa's support. We believe access to clean water is a fundamental human right. Thank you for all of your help in creating healthier, safer and more resilient communities and empowering them/the communities to transform their own futures. In the upcoming year, we will expand this successful project to two new villages that have not yet received help.

Thank you again for your continued commitment and support!

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