Temwa Carbon Balance Report

February 2026

Temwa Carbon Balance Summary

Communities in Nkhata Bay North in northern Malawi are facing increasingly severe impacts of climate change, including heavy rainfall that causes soil erosion, prolonged dry seasons that hinder crop production, and resulting income losses that drive further deforestation. To tackle this, Temwa Carbon Balance (TCB) offers organisations and individuals an opportunity to balance their CO2 emissions through community tree-planting, sustainable farming, and community-led management of local natural resources in the hard-to-reach villages of Nkhata Bay North. Temwa has cumulatively planted 1.8 million trees, with 271,331 of those trees planted since 2020 through TCB, with 6,240 seedlings planted between June 2025 and December 2025.

We are delighted to share TCB's continued success, marked by growing community involvement. Thank you for choosing to balance your carbon with Temwa - your support enables our life-changing work to continue.

Project Context and Aims

Temwa Carbon Balance has the goal to restore forests and strengthen livelihoods by working with the communities in Nkhata Bay North to grow trees from locally managed nurseries into resilient woodlots, school orchards and protected natural forests, while building forest-friendly income streams that make standing forests more valuable than felled ones.

Figure 1. Duwe VNRMC sowing pinus oorcapa seeds in readiness for 2025/2026 forest season.

Community ownership sits at the centre of this model. Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs), school management committees and local leaders co-design simple, practical plans, deciding where nurseries will be established, which species will be raised, how and when seedlings will be out-planted, how firebreaks and patrols will be maintained, and how income from honey or bamboo will pay for the next season's work. This is how client contributions to Carbon Balance are translated into measurable, long-term impact.

The six months covered in this report brought two positive changes. First, communities were better prepared to act quickly when the early rains arrived, so seedlings could be hardened-off and planted on time. Second, the expansion of beekeeping meant more natural forest blocks were under watchful eyes and routine patrols, which directly reduced cutting and fire risk. Although several setbacks arose, local committees and Temwa's field team responded effectively. They coordinated visits, shared transport, mobilised short-term labour to secure water, and maintained a strong focus on monitoring, coaching, and governance.

Recent Project Achievements

Between June and December, TCB achieved strong results in forest restoration, nursery development, and sustainable livelihood strengthening. The scale-up of nurseries to 19 active sites, the production of over 69,000 seedlings, early tree planting successes, and significant income-generating beekeeping activities collectively demonstrate growing community ownership and improved environmental stewardship. The combination of early rains, consistent capacity building, and strengthened VNRMC governance placed the project on track to achieve the 80,000-seedling target early in the next period.

Tree Raising and Management

Figure 2. Tree seedlings at evergreen VNRMC tree nursery.

The nursery network continued to strengthen throughout the season, with more communities joining and contributing to seedling production. By the end of the year, nurseries were raising healthy seedlings at a strong pace, supported by improved care practices such as better watering, shading and weeding. Late-sown species were also beginning to emerge, helping prepare for the main planting period early in the new year.

Nursery development expanded rapidly from June to December, growing from a few early-stage nurseries to 19 fully active nurseries. Communities demonstrated increasing ownership of seedling production efforts, with cumulative numbers rising steadily from 4,740 tubes in June to 69,089 seedlings by December, representing 80% of the annual target of 80,000 seedlings.

Seedling survival rates remained high throughout the period (averaging 95%) due to improved management techniques, including watering schedules, shade management and timely weeding. Several VNRMCs also received support on potting, sowing, hardening, and nursery disease control, contributing to higher germination rates, with some reaching 99% (e.g. Temwanani VNRMC).

Trees Planted, Carbon Balanced

Carbon balanced by Temwa Since launched in 2020	
Trees planted	• 2020- 57,303 • 2021- 36,202 • 2022- 40,911 • 2023- 28,442 • 2024- 48,477 • 2025: 53,756 (+6,240 seedlings & 59,996 total) • **Cumulative total:** 271,331 trees planted
Potential carbon benefits	26,312 tonnes of CO^2

How has your support helped to date?	
Trees species planted	• 147,250 wood-based tree species • 88,207 agroforestry tree species • 83 herbal trees • 20,809 waters retaining • 2,000 bamboos • 12,982 fruit trees
Planting locations	• Chigwere • Bula • Kasasire • Kanolo • Usingini • Chikwina • Honga • Bigha
Who is growing the trees?	• VNRMCs • Schools • individuals

Stewardship of Natural Resources

Communities strengthened their everyday stewardship of forests by improving planning, increasing routine patrols, and investing in fire management and enrichment planting. Participatory mapping and collaborative decision-making helped expand protected forest areas, while local committees renewed momentum through clearer structures, stronger leadership, and practical approaches to resource mobilisation. At District level, Temwa's collaboration with other organisations supported more coordinated planning and reduced duplication of efforts.

Regular monitoring showed that most woodlots are being well maintained, with no wildfire incidents reported and growing adoption of beekeeping as a valuable protection tool. Bamboo woodlots also continued to thrive, with communities beginning to use the harvested poles for practical purposes showcasing bamboo's potential to reduce pressure on natural forests.

Forest-Friendly Livelihoods

Over the past six months, communities in Nkhata Bay North strengthened a "grow and earn" pathway that ties tree production to forest-friendly incomes so that households benefit most when forests are healthy and standing.

Communities across Gonamuthondo, Kanolo and Jembe made strong progress in expanding beekeeping as both a forest-protection tool and a source of income. Villages developed action plans, strengthened skills through hands-on training, and rapidly increased the number of hives installed in their local forests.

Figure 3. Chikoko VNRMC members hang their beehives.

As these efforts took root, early honey harvests began to show the benefits of the work, providing households with new income and reinforcing the value of keeping forests healthy and intact.

Committees also used some of the proceeds to support community needs, demonstrating how beekeeping is becoming a practical and sustainable livelihood option that directly encourages forest conservation.

Chikoko, Jembe, and Kanolo VNRMCs showed remarkable progress, with Kanolo installing 287 beehives and achieving a 53% colonization rate. 341 beehives have been produced and hung across the three VNRMCs, with 168 beehives colonised. Honey harvesting grew substantially – Kanolo reached 157.5 kg by December, surpassing last year's 105 kg. Income from honey sales contributed to household needs such as school fees, food security, and reinvestment into additional beehives. Training in honey processing, value addition, and marketing equipped community members with improved skills for commercialisation.

Trees Planted

Planting began as soon as the rains allowed. By the end of December, communities had planted 6,240 trees on 2.3 hectares of identified land, spanning wood-based (pine), agroforestry, and medicinal (Moringa) species. This early season wave included both VNRMC and individual plots. With 20% of nursery stock planting ready in December (and 50% forecast for January; 30% for February), planting will accelerate over the next eight weeks.

Fruit Trees for Nutrition and Income

School orchards continued to make steady progress, with trees maturing well thanks to consistent care and simple protection measures. Across the participating schools and nurseries, teams successfully raised many healthy fruit seedlings, supporting both existing orchards and the establishment of new ones in the coming season. Together, these efforts are strengthening nutrition for students, expanding future income opportunities, and ensuring that young trees receive the attention they need to thrive.

Community Success Stories

Honey that Saves Forests

Figure 3. The beehives constructed after training on beehive construction the demonstration.

In Mukhoza, Adams Nyasulu chose to integrate beekeeping into his family's woodlot. He installed 11 hives among carefully pruned trees, kept firebreaks clear and weeds down, and waited. Within a year he harvested 33 kg of honey - selling 20 kg for MK 150,000 (£65) and reinvesting in three more hives. The rest he kept for family consumption and for later sale when prices rise. The income strengthened household food security; the investment strengthened his woodlot.

The lesson is simple and powerful: when a woodlot reliably produces honey and cash, it becomes an asset to steward rather than a store of timber to liquidate. This shift is clearly visible in the collective efforts of communities such as Kanolo and Jembe. As beekeeping has expanded, these villages have invested in more hives across their forested areas, which in turn has increased routine patrols, improved firebreak maintenance, and heightened attention to forest health. With more eyes and activity in the forest, illegal cutting has declined, and natural regeneration has flourished. What begins as a livelihood activity quickly becomes a conservation strategy: each additional hive represents not only a potential harvest of honey, but also an anchor for forest protection, ensuring that the ecosystem remains intact, biodiverse, and productive for years to come.

Protecting the Forest Through Beekeeping in Ganunkha Village

Figure 4. John Simbeyi poses with his newly hanged beehive.

In Ganunkha village, the local VNRMC has turned community enthusiasm for honey into a powerful forest-protection effort. After training in sustainable beekeeping, the committee expanded its network of hives across the natural forest, increasing monitoring and helping to deter logging and fires. The community has already seen stronger stewardship and fewer illegal activities. Looking ahead, the VNRMC plans to grow its beekeeping network even further, strengthening both livelihoods and the long-term health of the forest.

Where Trees and Livelihoods Grow Together

Figure 5. Pat Chiumia's farm in Chazeka village.

Pat Chiumia is a smallholder farmer in Chazeka village, Chigwere VDC. He has been actively involved with the Temwa Carbon Balance project since 2019. Through this engagement, Pat has learned a great deal, including the importance of natural resource management in relation to climate change.

Pat planted 20 *Syzgium cordatum* seedlings and maintained the existing trees (15) along the riverbank where he started cultivating in 2022. *Syzgium* species are known for their water retaining properties.

The trees are thriving, and the water level in the river remains steady, making winter cropping possible. Pat has cultivated 1.5 acres along the river and has planted maize that is now knee-high. He expects to harvest at least 30 pails of maize by February 2026, a critical period for food security in Malawi. This harvest should provide enough food for his extended household and generate income. He plans to keep aside 20 pails for home consumption and sell the rest.

A Thriving Forest, A Thriving Community

Figure 6. VNRMC members sowing Accacia seeds.

In Jembe Village, a remarkable transformation has taken place. The community has taken ownership of their natural resources and is championing sustainable management practices. Through TCB, the village has developed and implemented a VNRMC Plan, which has become a blueprint for sustainable development.

The community has enthusiastically adopted beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood option. The village has established a thriving beekeeping business, which has not only generated a diversified income for residents but also promoted forest conservation. Over 11 natural forests in the area are now being sustainably managed. This translates to over 10 hectares of the natural forests. There has been a reduced deforestation rate in these natural forests with 2 counts of freshly cut trees compared to 21 freshly cut trees during the baseline.

Njiri Primary School Orchard Recovery

In May 2025, Njiri Primary School received 416 fruit tree seedlings, which marked a major step toward improving student nutrition and generating future school income. However, shortly afterward, 11 seedlings were stolen from the orchard, threatening the school's progress and community morale. During a routine monitoring visit, teachers and Temwa staff discovered the theft and immediately informed school committee members and local chiefs.

Figure 7. Action plan development meeting at Nkholero village

The school leadership responded by sensitizing the surrounding community about the orchard's value, not only for learners' nutrition but also for the broader community's benefit. Their collaborative action proved effective: the stolen seedlings were recovered a week later, found hidden behind one of the school blocks. They were replanted, and the orchard began thriving once again. This outcome demonstrates the power of community.

Thank you

Thank you for choosing to offset your carbon footprint through Temwa Carbon Balance. As communities continue to grapple with the challenges of chronic poverty and climate change, the need for support in tree planting and forest-friendly livelihoods continues to grow. Your contribution helps regenerate forests and empowers communities to build sustainable livelihoods, building their long-term resilience.

For more information, please contact:

Fundraising and Programme Officer: Zoey Kontos, Elizabeth.Kontos@temwa.org