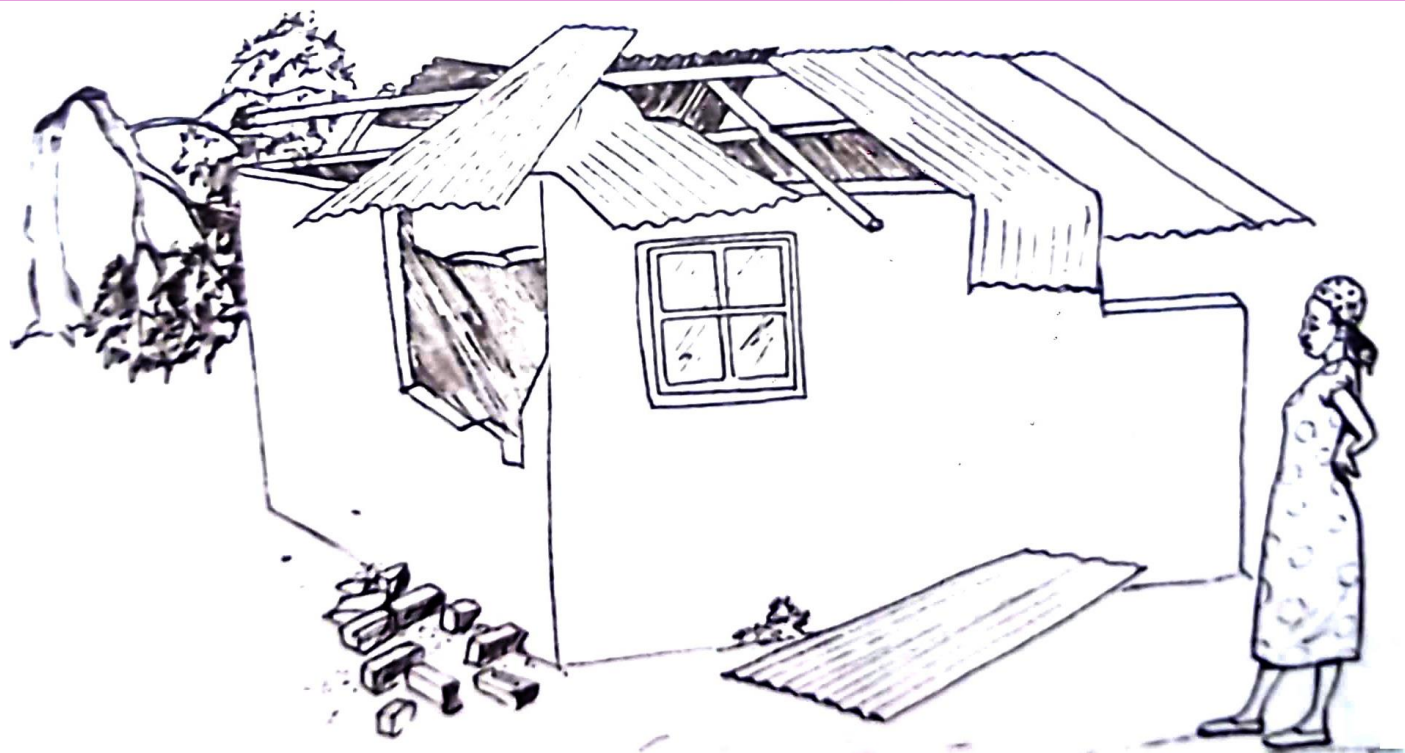


ADN Junior Champion Magazine

Children and Youths Stories from Malawi



Volume 3

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Children and Youths Stories from Malawi

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About Avoidable Deaths Network (ADN): ADN is a diverse, dynamic, inclusive, and innovative global-local membership network of experts, practitioners and researchers interested in avoiding human deaths from natural hazards, naturally triggered technological hazards and human-made hazards in low- and middle-income countries. ADN exists to help policymakers, researchers, practitioners and citizens make better decisions to save lives and reduce injuries to achieve sustainable development. ADN's purpose is aligned with the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction's first two global targets and is a member of the Sendai Framework's Voluntary Commitment Platform. On 12 March 2023, ADN launched a global campaign: International Awareness Day for Avoidable Deaths (IAD4AD). More details of the global campaign can be found through this link: <https://iad4ad.avoidable-deaths.net/>

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Message from the Presidents

Dear Readers,

The *Junior Champion Magazine* is a landmark initiative for ADN. This has been possible because of the relentless pursuit of Master Arkoneil Ghosh, Miss Prarthona Datta and Miss Anushka Konar. Our three youth editors have become agents of change.

We are excited to launch the third issue on 12 March 2025 to mark the ADN's Global Campaign, 'International Awareness Day for Avoidable Deaths' (IAD4AD). IAD4AD is an awareness-raising public engagement global campaign celebrated annually on 12 March and throughout the month.

We are so pleased that this year, our youth editors successfully brought this Magazine to fruition by bringing the voices of the children and youths of Malawi to the forefront. These are their stories written from their point of view. These authors bring forth poignant stories of hunger, hardships, survival, psychosocial trauma, and lessons to change the existing circumstances. Reading these stories in the simple words of the youth authors is humbling—at times disturbing. We are glad the Magazine can act as a conduit to convey their stories to the global community.

Many thanks to our Guest Editor, Dr Jean Kayira from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in the United States for collecting these stories from Malawi.

ADN productions are collective efforts, and the Junior Champion Magazine is no exception. We would like to thank the Editorial Board Support Team Ms. Kelly Litsoung, Dr Hideyuki Shiroshita, Mr. Mohammad Fahimul Islam and Ms. Sadia Afrin Sayfa Negaban for bringing this Magazine to fruition.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles as much as we did.

Prof. Nibedita Ray-Bennett & Dr. Hideyuki Shiroshita

Foreword from the Guest Editor

The third issue of Junior Champion Magazine brings stories on climate vulnerabilities and resilience from youths in Malawi. Ten youth share their experiences of flood disasters that happened in Malawi between 2019 and 2024 as part of my decolonial climate change research. I requested youths, with their parents' consent, to reflect and share their experiences of floods. Participating youth come from three regions: Central (Lilongwe and Kasungu districts), Northern (Chitipa and Rumphi districts), and Southern (Chikwawa and Mulanje districts).

Youths from northern and southern regions, as well as from Kasungu district in the central region come from rural areas with no running water and electricity in their homes. They often interact directly with the land, assisting with farming activities and daily chores such as fetching firewood and water. In contrast, youths from Lilongwe district in the central region are from the capital city of Malawi. However, they come from less affluent families and live in one of the most densely populated areas in the city. Most of the youth contributors do not have internet access nor smart phones. They wrote their stories by hand and gave them to their teachers who took photos of the stories and shared them with me via WhatsApp. Many wrote their stories in the local language of Chichewa, which I then translated into English for this issue. I acknowledge that in the process of bringing coherence and clarity, some of the original meaning might have been lost or altered during translation from Chichewa to English.

In this issue, readers will have the opportunity to learn the traumatic and devastating impacts of floods on the lives of the youths. Loss of family members, houses, property which led to food insecurity and economic hardships which further impacted school attendance among others. Also apparent in these stories is a fallacy of a 'climate haven' - an area which is less prone to climate change impacts. Youths whose parents thought that by relocating them to a different area such as Lilongwe would be a solution, has proved to not be the case at all - floods were in Lilongwe as well.

All these stories are stories of adaptation, stories of life, stories of healing, from and within youth perspectives. This issue shows how young people do not stop at sharing hardships; they go a step further by sharing lessons from traumatic experiences. The importance of community, the interconnectedness between weather and land and the need to respect the environment. These are characteristics of the sub-Saharan concept of Ubuntu (Umunthu in Chichewa) captured in the assertion, “I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, 1969). The “we” includes humans and our more-than-human relatives. Umunthu challenges the Cartesian individualism “I think therefore I am.” It was this aspect that helped the youth during the traumatic times. Tied to this, were actions that communities under guidance of the Elders agreed to practice as climate adaptation measures. Actions that privilege planting of Indigenous trees and fruits. The youth are also calling on the government to provide resources such as school supplies and different types of crops.

In my community-based research in Malawi, guided by decolonial, land-based, and relational frameworks I have learned from the Elders again and again of the importance of Indigenous knowledge and practices as climate adaptation strategies. They have also emphasized the need for this content to be meaningfully integrated in the school curriculum which tends to be still influenced by Eurocentric worldviews.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identify youth as crucial players in achieving the SDGs. Similarly, the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) lists youth as strategic players for climate resilience development. While the plan mentions the challenges the youth encounter due to climate change impacts, it also emphasizes the key role that they play as change agents at local, national, and international levels. All this points to the importance of centering the youth voice. This issue of the Junior Champion Magazine is an excellent venue for the youth to advocate for their perspectives, thoughts and vision for climate resilience at community, country and international scales.

Dr Jean Kayira

Associate Professor
Dept. of Environmental Studies,
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, USA

Message from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the third issue of Junior Champion Magazine - Children and Youths' Stories from Malawi. This edition highlights the lived experiences of children and youth in Malawi, capturing how climate-related disasters have shaped their lives.

As editors, we are honored to amplify the voices of these young storytellers. Their accounts, written amidst immense challenges, reflect resilience, hope, and determination. These stories are not just narratives of hardship but powerful testaments to perseverance—where adversity is met with collective strength. From devastating floods and food insecurity to the enduring spirit of communities, these stories illustrate both struggle and resilience.

Through this issue, we aim to emphasize the interconnectedness of human lives and environmental challenges. These personal experiences underscore the urgency of addressing climate change and its cascading effects, particularly on vulnerable communities. The youth featured in this magazine demonstrate solidarity in the face of economic instability and climate-related crises. Their courage and determination serve as lessons for us all.

More than personal reflections, these stories are also a call to action—urging us to critically examine our world and the steps needed to build a sustainable future. They remind us that disasters are not natural but the result of vulnerabilities and unaddressed risks. By understanding their causes, we can take meaningful action to mitigate climate impacts and create a world where every child can thrive.

We encourage you to reflect on these heartfelt stories, recognizing the strength of these young voices and their communities. Let their words inspire us to work toward a more resilient and just future.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Warm regards,

Anushka Konar & Prarthona Datta

Volume Editors, Junior Champion Magazine

Cyclone Freddy: A Personal Account of Climate Change's Impact in Malawi

Davison Makanjira

I would like to talk about how climate change has affected me personally and the country of Malawi. What I have experienced is something that I have never seen before in my 16 years of life. I have experienced the worst impacts of climate change. In March of 2023, we had cyclone Freddy affected many parts of the southern region in Malawi including my village in Mulanje district. There was a lot of flooding that swept people, animals like cattle and chickens. Homes were destroyed, buried or swept away. Crops in the gardens were swept away or buried.

My family was one of the many families affected. Two of my siblings who were 7 years old died because they were carried away in the flood. Our house was destroyed and everything we had was washed away - goats, clothes, cooking utensils, schoolbooks, everything, nothing was left. It was very sad. But I thank God that my parents were spared. This did not just happen to my family but most families in my village were in a similar situation.

Since we lost our houses, we sought shelter in a church and Limbuli primary school, which were on a higher elevation than our houses. It was hard to find food because the food we had went with the flood and we relied on donations, which were not always easy. School was also affected because I did not have books, and the school building was used as a shelter for the displaced people. We were in the second term and the government closed schools in most of the affected areas for the rest of the term.

When I reflect on this, I feel sad and cannot believe what I have experienced because of climate change. It was a traumatic experience. To give me a break, my parents thought that changing location would help me forget the tough experiences that came because of the cyclone. So, I came to stay with my aunt in Lilongwe. But being

in Lilongwe does not mean I have run away from experiencing the impacts of climate change.

On 24 November 2024, we had heavy rains with strong winds that took off roofs from many houses including my aunt's. My school books were destroyed and my clothes were wet. My education has once again been affected. I don't have books, when I ask my aunt to get me new ones, she says she doesn't have money for that because she has to fix the roof. Experiencing flooding, heavy rains and strong winds in two consecutive years makes me very nervous.

These experiences have taught me several lessons:

- People need to plant trees everywhere, especially fruit trees because these would help when food is scarce.
- I told my parents that they should grow different types of crops so that when heavy rain comes, some crops would not be washed away such as cassava and sweet potatoes. I also told my parents to accept what happened to our family in 2023.
- Like the advice I gave my parents, people in Mulanje should grow different types of crops. In Mulanje, the problem of hunger is every year. Sometimes it is because of heavy rain like in 2023, in other years it is drought. Also, many people like to work in tea plantations instead of working in their own fields. The government should help provide different types of crops for people to plant.
- In Mulanje there are not many trees because of deforestation for firewood but also tea plantations. It is important to plant trees as they are helpful in preventing soil erosion that comes from heavy rain.
- People should build houses in higher areas and not in the valleys. A lot of people like to build houses in low areas, they should not do that.
- Lastly, the government should help provide school supplies to learners like me. My education is definitely not going well. I don't have books as they were destroyed by the heavy rain on 24 November. When I ask my teachers in school, they

say the school doesn't have any books to give me. When I ask my aunt, she says she doesn't have money because she has to fix the roof of the house that was damaged because of the heavy rain and strong wind. My life is hard.

Age: 16

Class: 6

School: Mvunguti Primary (elementary) School

District: Lilongwe, Central Region (this is where he lives now, but he is originally from Magodi village, Traditional Authority Limbali, Mulanje in the Southern Region)

A Storm to Remember

Faith Mtambwe

I am from Area 25 in Lilongwe city, Malawi. As far as I can remember, my family and I have seen changes in weather and rainfall patterns. However, on 24 November 2024, I experienced a storm, which was different from what I have experienced before. The storm came during the night and was associated with high-speed wind, heavy rain, excessive lightning, and thunder. The storm pounded the area for about two hours causing massive devastation. Many homes were destroyed. Some homes had roofs blown out while others had completely collapsed.

My family home had its roof blown off while we were sleeping. We were woken up by the rain but also by the high-speed wind blowing over the house. I basically lost my clothes and school materials in the storm. I was not able to go to school for days and weeks following the storm. While our house building structure was still standing, our neighbors house had completely collapsed, killing two people. Other members of the household were injured from falling debris. I am also aware of another storm-related death in our area. This involved death from lightning strike. A parent was killed in the incident, but a child was found unconscious but badly wounded.

This storm event was unusual in Area 25 and in the region. The area gets heavy rains during good years, but this storm was far much worse. The devastation the storm caused revealed we are living in different times. As a young person, it was frightening and left me afraid for my life and my future. For my family, the trauma affected people differently. My parents remember many episodes of this nature. As a family unit, however, we are still struggling to cope with the events of the day. We have not been able to replace the roof as we cannot afford the roofing materials. The alternative is to roof the house with grass-thatched roofing material, which can be collected from the forest. I have not been able to replace my school materials that were destroyed in the storm.

As many people struggle to make sense of what had happened, it is clear this event is related to climate change. And on a local level, the situation was made worse by, first, the increasing deforestation in our area. Our indigenous forests are being replaced with new homes and farms. As more homes are being built, more land is being cleared of its indigenous forests and vegetation. Second, the lack of rural housing support programs in the country has left many people vulnerable to climate change effects. Traditional houses are predominantly made of mud with a grass-thatched roof. However, in area 25 where I live, homes are made of bricks and iron roofs. The storm, however, just exposed the serious weakness in housing standards. It is time homes are built to withstand the impacts of climate change. This will require more government support as well as education on rural housing schemes.

In conclusion, the lesson I draw from this experience to mitigate the extreme weather associated with climate change is to promote tree planting in our community and on all open land including around homes. But also providing more education on planned or controlled cutting of trees. Unplanned cutting of trees and other forest resources needs to be avoided as much as possible if we have a chance of surviving the changing times. Additionally, agriculture extension services need to provide more information to farmers about climate change. Providing farmers and schools with weather warnings from the Meteorology Department could help people prepare for extreme weather. This could help to prevent unnecessary loss of life.

Age: 13

Class: 6

School: Dzenza primary school

District: Lilongwe, Central Region



Floods in Lilongwe: Photo taken by Daniel Elisa

The Flood in My Area

Dorothy C. Matumbila

I am from Chimalabanthu village in Rumphu district in northern Malawi. I would like to share a story about an experience I had four years ago when I was 11 years old. It was on Friday, 18 December 2020 when my friends and I went to fetch firewood in the nearby Lungazi hill after we came back from school. We wanted to get firewood this day before Christmas, which was only a week away.

As we were gathering firewood, I saw a very dark cloud in the sky. I told my friends that we should go home quickly because dark clouds usually are a sign of heavy rainfall. We picked a few firewood and rushed home. It had not started raining yet so I decided to take a bath. Before I could finish the bath, it started to rain. The rain was heavy and caused many problems in my village. Houses fell, crops like maize, chickens, goats, and household property were washed away for many people in the village.

There was a lot of sadness in the village because of the losses. Many people had no place to stay, no food and no clothes. Farming activities were affected. Well-wishers came to assist us with food, shelter-at the school, clothes, farm implements and spiritual support - we needed to believe in a higher power to stay hopeful. I can't remember exactly how long we stayed at the school waiting for the conditions to dry and to return to start rebuilding our houses, which was not easy.

All people in my village are subsistence farmers and many lost their crops with the flood. This caused famine as people including my family harvested little or nothing. I remember not having enough to eat or going hungry many times. Because of this, I missed school many times because I was hungry and weak. The flood happened during the holiday. I remember not going to school when it started in January, in fact I rarely went to school all five days in a week - it was usually two or three days. This affected my performance such that I had to repeat a class. I was in standard 4 and I repeated it.

Because the damage affected a lot of people in the village, the chief called all people in the village to discuss the flood. Agriculture extension officers were present as well. I attended the meeting mainly to listen. The discussions centered on how our village does not have a lot of trees and that the surrounding hills and mountains are increasingly becoming bare because people are cutting down the trees for building houses and firewood. We were also told that the flood caused a lot of damage because most of our land is bare and if we had trees the damage would not have been so bad.

Several Elders lamented on how bare the village had become. They said that in the past when they were our age, the village had a lot of Indigenous trees all over - the surrounding hills and mountains were thick forests with different tree species and were home to a lot of animals like deer, hare, and large herbivores like buffalo. Also, present in the forests were different plants that were used as medicines. Unfortunately, all this is history. We were all encouraged not to cut trees instead to plant many trees especially Indigenous ones. The chief urged everyone to take this call seriously because he said, “prevention is better than cure.” The experience of the flood in December 2020 is unforgettable in my life.

Thank you for reading my story.

Age: 15

Class: 8

School: Mzokoto Primary School

Village: Chimalabanthu

District: Rumphi, Northern Region

The Heavy Storm

Joice Kaira

I was born in 2011; I lived with my family for 8 years in Chitipa district which is the northern region of Malawi. In 2019 my aunt asked my parents if she could take me to live with her in Mzokoto in Rumphi district, also in northern Malawi. My parents agreed and I went with my aunt. I go to school at Mzokoto primary, and I am in standard 8. During the December holiday of in 2019, I asked my aunt if I could visit my parents during the holiday. My aunt agreed to go for holiday, and I arrived at my village in Chitipa.

I stayed at home for two days. On the third day when I woke up in the morning, it was very sunny and very hot. Suddenly the weather changed, it became very cloudy and the clouds were very dark. At the same moment came the very heavy storm which came with heavy rainfall. I ran into the house and there was no one at home. I was alone because everyone had gone to do various chores, because I had just arrived two days before I was given the chance to rest so I did not join them. There were strong winds with the rain and suddenly the roof of our house came off even though it was made of iron sheets. I was very scared, I cried and shouted for help but no one responded!

I was also afraid of being carried away. I hid myself under the table and the house fell down but the table did not break. I survived because of the table. And I thanked God because of that.

After what seemed like a very long time, the storm calmed and I heard my father's voice. He was crying when he saw that the house had fallen. He then remembered that I was at home alone and he called, "my daughter, where are you"? I answered, "Father I am here under the table come and save me". My father rushed to rescue me. He removed bricks from the table and I was saved. My father was very happy that I was alive and did not have any injuries, it was a miracle that the table did not break. My relatives came back from where they were, when they saw that the house

had fallen, they cried. When they learned that I was in the house and came out with no injuries, they cried even more, we all cried! We thanked God for saving me. We also cried because of the lost property and how we were going to have our house rebuilt. My grandfather heard about this, and he was filled with pity. He allowed my family to live with him.

Soon we learned that four houses and the private hospital in our village had also fallen because of the storm. It was a very sad situation.

I came back to my aunt's place in Rumphi in January of 2020 after the holiday was over but never stopped thinking about what I experienced. This incident happened four years ago. I still think about it from time to time, especially during the rainy season because it is unforgettable in my life.

Age: 13

Class: 8

School: Mzokoto Primary (elementary) School

Village: Yaphama

District: Rumphi where she lives with her aunt and goes to school - but the story is based on her experiences when she went for vacation in her home district of Chitipa. Rumphi and Chitipa are both in the northern region

The Terrible Flood

Junior Mbate

It was on Friday 18 December 2020 when I was with my friends coming from school going home - it was the last day of school for term one of the 2020-2021 academic year. As we were on our way home we saw a big cloud holding a meeting in the sky and we knew that soon rain would fall on the earth's surface.

From school to home, we cross a stream. But instead of going home or at least crossing the stream, we decided to do what we always did after school, which is playing soccer. As we started to play, my friend yelled "hey! Look, there is a big storm coming from the northern direction!" We dropped everything and started running as fast as we could so that we could cross the stream fast before it started flowing. This stream flows most of the time it rains. We got to the stream and started crossing one by one. All my friends crossed and I was the one remaining to cross. As I made the last step to cross, I slipped and fell. I was so scared that I would be carried away and started crying as I tried to get up, grab and hang onto anything to keep me from being carried away.

Luckily there was a tree close to the stream bank, I grabbed the branch tightly as my friends tried to help and shouted for help! People who were running away from the storm and trying to cross the same stream came to my rescue and helped me get to the dry land safely. I was shaking very badly and cried all the way home. My friends and people who helped rescue me were very supportive and walked with me to my parent's home.

This experience was very traumatic. I could not sleep for many weeks. Even though the incident happened at the beginning of Christmas holiday; when school started in January, I could not go to school consistently. I missed a number of classes because I was still afraid. Because of this, I performed poorly in term two, I got the last position. This made me sad. I tried to work hard in term three and I was able to pass and got promoted to standard 5. I should say that this incident has left a lasting

impression on me - I am nervous about crossing any river, especially ones that do not have steady bridges.

At home and in school we learn that we should not cut trees carelessly; instead, we should plant trees because they help bring rain, protect soil erosion and give us fresh air to breathe. I would add that having trees along streams is very important. It was a tree that was along the stream bank that saved my life.

Age: 16

Class: 8

School: Mzokoto Primary (elementary) School

Village: Vitanda

District: Rumphi, Northern Region

Lessons in The Storm

Daniel Elisa

I grew up in Lilongwe, a place I always thought of as peaceful and full of life. Our family home sat on the edge of a small farming community, where every planting season brought the promise of prosperity. My parents, lifelong farmers, taught me the value of hard work, resilience, and respect for the environment. They often spoke about how the land and the weather were interconnected, how we had to care for the soil to obtain its rewards. But no lesson could prepare us for the storm that changed everything during the growing season of 2023-2024. It began with the rain. At first, we were thankful they came early, promising a generous harvest. But in February of 2024, this promise was shattered. With each day, the rains grew heavier and harsh. The skies, once welcoming, were now filled with threatening clouds, and the rivers that brought life to our fields began to overflow.

On the night of 26 February, the rains became thunder. The beating on the roof was loud, and water seeped through every gap in our house. My family gathered in the corner of our small home, listening to the wind scream and the rain batter our walls. By morning, the damage was done. Our house was spared but the house next door had collapsed, reduced to bricks. Our fields were underwater; the crops we had spent months nurturing swept away. The scene outside was heart-wrenching. Entire homes had been destroyed, leaving families homeless and helpless. I saw neighbors digging through the mud for remnants of their belongings, children crying over the loss of toys and books, and elders staring at the horizon, where the floodwaters stretched as far as the eye could see. Our community, which once thrived, was now in ruins.

The impact on my family was devastating. Our maize fields our main source of food and income were gone. Without them, we faced hunger and uncertainty. My parents were heartbroken, not just for the loss but for the fear that their hard work had been in vain. I could feel the weight of their worry, which pressed on all of us.

The weeks that followed were a test of resilience. Relief efforts trickled in, but it was clear that help wouldn't be enough to rebuild what we had lost. The elders of our community gathered, discussing ways to recover and prevent such devastation in the future. They talked about how environmental degradation cutting down trees, poor farming practices, and blocked waterways had worsened the impact of the rains.

It was then that I truly understood what my parents had been teaching me all along. I realized that we had to take responsibility not just for our farms but for the environment around us. Together, we began planting trees to hold the soil and control the floods. We cleared the waterways that had been clogged with debris, allowing the rivers to flow freely. For my family and me, rebuilding was slow. We relied on support from relatives and the little we could save. I took on unusual jobs to contribute to our recovery, and my parents turned to smaller-scale farming on higher ground. Despite the hardship, the experience taught me something invaluable the strength of community and the importance of harmony with nature. It has been almost a year since these floods. However, each time I hear the crash of thunder, I am reminded of that storm and the lessons it brought. The heavy rains that destroyed so much also taught me resilience, the value of family, and the responsibility we all share in caring for our environment. I know now that even in the face of disaster, there is hope and with hope comes the strength to rebuild.

Age: 15 years

School: Malosa Secondary School

Class: 11

District: Zomba, Southern Region (this is where he goes to school but he is originally from Lilongwe in the Central Region)



Floods in Lilongwe: Photo taken by Daniel Elisa

Hunger

Tapiwa Mkwezalamba

I am in standard 7 at Mvunguti primary school in Lilongwe but my home is in Chikwawa district, in southern Malawi. In this story, I will be sharing about what I experienced in 2024 that is linked to climate change.

2024 was a particularly bad year in my home district of Chikwawa. Many families suffered serious food shortages and hunger due to extreme weather conditions. My family was among those worst affected as we did not have food to take us through the day. Going hungry for days meant I could not go to school.

The whole thing started at the beginning of the growing season in November-December of 2023. There were a couple of things that contributed to the situation. Number 1, my parents did not have enough seeds to plant maize at the time the rains started. They are hardworking farmers with sizable land to grow maize, but they did not use all the field because of lack of seed. Number 2, my parents did not have money to buy fertilizer to apply to the small field they had planted maize. The soil in our village is not fertile enough to harvest much if one does not apply fertilizer. Nonetheless, we were hoping for the best and trusting in God's help. Number 3, all the hope quickly vanished when in the months of Feb and March in 2024, at a time when the maize was almost ripe and everyone was looking forward to getting some relief, our area received severe and persistent storms with strong winds, which wiped out our maize fields.

The storm impact was much wider and much more severe, affecting many other families in the region. It left my family, and many people paralyzed. We were now driven into destitution and resorted to foraging wild fruits and vegetables to survive. Even though hunger is common in Chikwawa, this year was different, it was extreme. I stopped going to school. My parents thought of sending me to live with relatives in Lilongwe where the situation is much better than at home. So, I came to Lilongwe.

Food is available, I don't go hungry, and I am able to go to school at Mvunguti in area 25.

While I am okay in Lilongwe, I worry about my parents who are struggling to find food. I worry that a repeat might happen again. Since my parents did not harvest anything and are struggling with hunger, they will once again not have seeds to plant this growing season and no money to buy fertilizer. My other concern is that our fields have become dumping grounds for plastics products. People just throw plastics anyhow which affects our already poor soils.

While these things worry me, I have learned some things from this experience. Never rely on a single crop. It is better to grow various kinds of crops, sweet potatoes, cassava and not just maize. But also, our crop could have done better if we applied manure to our fields knowing we did not have money to buy fertilizer. Taking manure from our chickens or goats, cattle or home waste could be a solution to replenish the soil. Also, the behavior of dumping plastic products in our fields should change because plastic is not helping the soil.

Age: 15 years

School: Mvunguti Primary School

Class: 7

District: Chikwawa (Southern region but now lives in Lilongwe in the Central Region because of hunger in her village)

Climate Change and Its Impact: Lessons and Hopes for a Sustainable Future

Estina Alfred

In this essay I would like to explain more about climate change. It is the change of average weather condition in an area observed over a long period of time.

Climate change has so many impacts in our everyday life. Some of the impacts are drought which causes famine. Famine may lead to poor health and death. Famine affected my attendance at school which led to poor performance. Drought also leads to death of animals those live in water and in the forest. This factor has led our village to experience the problem of malnutrition among children. Lack of proteins in most children made us not to attend classes because of illnesses. Drought has affected me a lot in the way that I woke up early in the morning to go draw water at a very far distance in order to get prepared for classes. Most of the days of the week I arrive at the school very late and get punished. Floods take away crops, people and animals. Another impact is epidemics. It also affects people's lives for example cholera and diarrhea.

There are so many lessons I have learnt from the environment such as planting trees. If we plant more trees, we will make the climate good. This will help to maintain reliable rainfall, which will make many families in my village harvest more crops to end hunger. For us who were thinking of dropping out of school due to hunger and will continue going to school. Trees produce fresh air. We should not pollute water in the dams, rivers, or lakes to conserve our environment. Clean environment makes everything feel warm and enjoyable. I think I can learn well in a good environment. My goals of becoming a nurse can be achieved. And lastly, we have to clean our environment to avoid diseases.

Name: Age: 13

School: Kaswamchenje primary (elementary)

Class: 7

Village: Makawondo

District: Kasungu, Central Region



Potato field in Kasungu

Understanding Climate Change in Malawi

Michelle Juwawo

I wanted to explain more about climate change. Climate change is the weather condition of an area, district, region, and country. Sometimes a country's climate can be tropical, or it cannot be tropical. Climate change can happen anytime. I will give an example of what happened today in my community in area 25 in Lilongwe. The morning was hot, suddenly the temperature changed, and it got cold. Then a heavy rain fell and in the afternoon the sun shined and it got hot again. Malawi's climate zone are hot dry areas, warm wet areas, cool wet areas, and hot wet areas.

Climate change impacts our everyday life because heavy rain can destroy houses, buildings can cause soil erosion, children cannot go to school because of heavy rains. While I have not experienced these impacts myself, I have heard about people who have had these experiences. Some people have lost their lives, others have lost their children, houses, their daily needs, they are left homeless because of floods. Other people die because of lack of food or water because of the dry climate. During cold climates, people can die or have long illnesses, street children can die because of the cold climate. Because of floods, waste is driven to oceans, lakes, and seas, which can cause water pollution and shortage of fish. Floods can also spread diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, malaria, or other viruses.

The lesson I have learned is that people should plant more trees to avoid soil erosion, proper disposal of waste, and avoid doing activities, which can pollute water. Lastly, this is how I wanted to explain climate change.

Age: 14

Class: 7

School: Mvunguti Primary (elementary) School

District: Lilongwe, Central Region

Protecting Malawi: Addressing Climate Change

Rachel Dzimbiri

I want to write this composition because I want to explain more about climate change because more people are not feeling well in this climate change.

Climate change means average weather conditions over a long period of time. It is mainly composed of rainfall either too wet or too dry and temperature either too hot or too cold. Too much rainfall causes floods, which cause damage such as washing away people's crops and damaging their houses. When people's crops are washed away, they don't harvest enough, which leads to hunger. Too much rainfall also causes soil erosion which means removal of topsoil. There are different types of soil erosion, e.g. land erosion, splash erosion, sheet erosion, till erosion, and gully erosion. When the topsoil is eroded, people don't harvest much, which leads to hunger. Too little rainfall causes drought, which leads to hunger because people don't harvest much.

One way to address the impacts of climate change is to avoid cutting down trees carelessly. Because if we are cutting down trees the rain will not fall well and the plants will die and we will not harvest enough crops to eat. We should also plant trees and have village forests because the trees give us fresh air to breathe and also make the rain fall well and the crops grow well. If we cut down one tree, we should plant 10 trees to replace the one we have cut. We should also avoid overgrazing animals because overgrazing causes soil erosion. Planting trees will avoid flooding and drought. We should all plant trees to care for our environment and build Malawi.

In this essay, I have explained about the impacts of climate change and that it is our responsibility to care for our environment to avoid negative impacts of climate change.

Age: 15

Class: 7

School: Mvunguti Primary School

District: Lilongwe, Central Region



Indigenous Trees at a Village Forest in Kasungu



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