

Ministry of Education Interventions for Disaster Management and Mitigation

PRESENTATION BY

GRACE MILNER

DIRECTOR OF BASIC EDUCATION

Outline

1. Introduction

- Common natural disasters
- High risk areas

2. Negative effect of disasters on education

3. Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

Introduction

- Over the past decades, extreme climate events such as floods, droughts have increased in frequency and intensity, affecting many key sectors of Malawian economy , including the education sector.
- Malawi is at high risk of natural disasters such as strong winds, heavy rains, floods and droughts, landslides and earthquakes as well as other hazards such as epidemics and environmental threats
- Droughts and floods pose the most significant risk to Malawi
- Droughts are common in Karonga in Northern region and Shire valley in the southern region as well as the Bwanje valley in the central region

Introductioncont (2)

- Most flood prone areas are around lakes and rivers, especially the Shire valley in the southern region and areas along the lake shore in south and central region
- Earthquakes rarely occur and mainly concentrate in the regions around districts of Karonga and Chitipa in northern region and Dedza in central region

Negative Effect of Disasters on Education

- Cause damage to school infrastructure such as classroom blocks, teachers' houses, offices, sanitation blocks, feeding shelters and boreholes
- destruction to teaching and learning materials such as text books, exercise books, chalk, dusters, and teacher reference materials
- disruption of teaching and learning because of safety reasons and displaced people sought refuge in schools and use classrooms for shelter hence creating pressure on school facilities such as classrooms, toilets and water points
- short/long-term negative consequences include poor learner attendance, increase in drop out cases and poor learning outcomes

Negative Effect of Disasters on Educationcont (2)

- for instance in the last three months alone the sector has been affected by cyclone Ana, Dumako, Halima and just recently Gombe
- the cyclones caused enormous damage to school infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and loss of learning in affected schools

Negative Effect of Disasters on Education

....cont (3)

- boreholes got contaminated due to floods and school buildings had roofs blown off, walls collapsing, cracks developing and pit latrines collapsed
- teaching and learning materials were also destroyed in the process including already inadequate textbooks and teacher's reference books

Negative Effect of Disasters on Educationcont (4)

- some of damaged infrastructure require minor repairs, others need major rehabilitation while those that were totally damaged need to be replaced
- on 25th January, 2022, all schools in the southern region were suspended due to cyclone Ana
- the sector is still in process of recovery and still trying to rebuild damaged schools
- the Ministry will produce a comprehensive disaster needs assessment report on cyclone Ana

All teachers houses at nkhadzi F P school in Nsanje were underwater, water level was waist high. Running water soaked soya for learners. All staff found refuge in a classroom on raised ground. Toilets collapsed and mud was deposited in teachers houses



Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

The Ministry of Education has put in place a number of interventions to respond to disaster situations:

- 1. National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020 – 2030** has identified natural disasters and epidemics such as Covid 19 to have negative impact on teaching and learning outcomes in schools and has prioritized the following mitigation strategies
 - Promote disaster-risk reduction, resilience and well-coordinated disaster response to school based hazards. Construct resilient school structures.
 - Building capacity among communities to respond to COVID or similar pandemics in future. Promotion of other modes of education delivery including ODE

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

....cont (2)

2. The Ministry has just recently developed **Education in Emergencies (EiE) Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026** to assist sector in coordinating efforts in response to emergencies and enhance disaster management and response capacity at all levels
3. The Ministry is implementing national education curriculum that is responsive to issues of climate change and health hazards that continue to affect Malawi. It has included themes of disaster risk reduction in the school curriculum. This helps to raise awareness of disaster risks and the impact of climate change and mitigation measures among communities in the country

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation *....cont (3)*

4. In case of emergency The Ministry use local resources and fund it receives from the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) for disaster response and recovery
 - These are funds that are used for the provision of relief items, learning materials and repairing of damaged school buildings
 - Depending on gravity of damage caused to infrastructure and humanitarian needs, the schools get assistance in a form of relief items and building materials for repairs such as iron sheets, cement and can construct of new infrastructure

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

....cont (4)

- However the funds are not adequate to cater for all needs in the affected schools
- Also there are a lot of logistic challenges involved in transporting relief items and building materials from central office to the schools
- Plans are underway to improve effectiveness of disaster preparedness and management by introducing budget line for emergency response at all levels of Ministry (central office, education district and school level)

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation *....cont(5)*

5. The Ministry through the Department of School Health, Nutrition and HIV and AIDS (SHNA) is implementing a number of activities for disaster response and disaster reduction. These interventions include:
 - development and adoption of Safer Schools Construction Guidelines has led to building better and resilient school structures which resist disasters
 - deployment of volunteer teachers to address the psychosocial needs of the learners in disaster prone areas has also proved to be very important in disaster risk management.
 - Implementation of School Feeding Program (SFP), targeting schools in areas that are food insecure and disaster prone

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

....cont (6)

- The Ministry with support from World Food Programmes (WFP) and Mary's Meal is implementing School Feeding Programme in selected primary schools
- The programme targets the most food insecure districts of Malawi, these are districts prone to food shortages due to severe climate events such as flooding and drought
- The programme benefits 600,000 children in seven districts (Chikwawa, Dedza Mangochi, Phalombe, Nsanje, Salima and Zomba). (WFP, 2021)
- Evidence shows that there is significant increase in learner attendance and reduction in drop-out rates among girls and boys in target districts

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

....cont (7)

The Ministry has started implementing Malawi Education Reform Programme (MERP) in all primary schools, from 31 Dec. 2021 to 31 Dec., 2025 (4 years)

MoE through MERP will ensure that all school activities supported by project are environmentally friendly and that infrastructure is “climate-safe” by

- i. promoting use of climate friendly infrastructure (e.g. use of concrete blocks instead of fired bricks and use of energy saving bulbs for lighting)
- ii. designing and constructing resilience infrastructure that can withstand extreme climate events such as strong winds, and floods e.g. design of raised foundations will be considered for schools in flood prone areas
- iii. build capacity of key stakeholders at all levels in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation
- iv. Each school will be required to have Disaster prepared plan

Interventions for disaster management and mitigation

....cont (8)

- The Ministry is promoting the planting of trees and other plants in school premises and surrounding areas across the country
- This intervention is aimed at propagating tree planting culture among learners and parents
- at the same time protecting school environment from strong winds and floods
- Ultimately contributing to reducing adverse impacts of climate change such as floods, drought and extreme weather.



Thank you for listening