



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**CONCERN**  
worldwide



# BEYOND BARRIERS

**MALAWI CASE STUDY:**  
CARE MALAWI

## Lead Author

Herbert Mwalukomo

## Contributors

Mark Johnson, Ariana Marnicio, Melody Wei, Oona Mitchell, Elisabeth Ashley Haugen

**September 2024**

To learn more, visit  
**[beyondbarriers.concernusa.org](https://beyondbarriers.concernusa.org)**

This case study is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Concern Worldwide and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. The case study reflects the views and perspectives of the research participants, not those of Concern Worldwide and its research partners.

## THE HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM: A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING LOCALIZATION

As part of its commitment to the Grand Bargain, CARE Malawi established a Humanitarian Partnership Platform (HPP) in November 2022 in collaboration with the Government of Malawi and ten local NGOs. The platform brings together these actors in the humanitarian sector, especially in disaster prone districts, as a collective platform of first responders when disaster strikes. Such a platform was first launched by CARE in the Philippines in 2016 to serve as an avenue to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of CARE and its partners' humanitarian and development plans and work.

CARE Malawi convened the platform by bringing together different local organizations that CARE had been working with. Initially, the platform was made up of organizations from the disaster-prone region of Nsanje and Chikwawa districts. CARE provides financial resources to the platform and the platform members manage the resources by themselves.

The shared goal of the HPP partners is to be among the first responders when help is needed the most, while enabling women's leadership in emergencies. The primary objective of this initiative is to streamline and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of locally led and gender-sensitive humanitarian response, with a strong emphasis on well-coordinated planning and execution for both response and recovery operations.

In a bid to strengthen the leadership of local organizations in national leadership of humanitarian work, CARE Malawi promotes representation of the platform in the Humanitarian Country Team, a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum co-chaired by the Government of Malawi's Commissioner of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Malawi.

Even though the HPP was initially set up for humanitarian work in Nsanje and Chikwawa, the platform includes all organizations, some of which have presence in other districts of the country. In 2024, the platform extended to Nkhotakota, central Malawi, where heavy rains caused severe flooding affecting thousands of people.

The platform has a governance framework allowing it to operate in other places of need where members of the platform have presence, which made it possible to identify organizations that have a strong presence in Nkhotakota among members of the HPP. Following due diligence, the members were given resources to carry out the humanitarian work in the district.

The HPP works closely with the government through DoDMA to enhance coordination of emergency response activities, provides funding to its members for emergency response, and collaborates to secure funds for preparation and anticipatory action. The HPP also organizes capacity-strengthening workshops across various sectors to strengthen the capacity of all its members.

During the first two years of its establishment, the HPP was funded by Vitol Foundation and BHA to strengthen capacity of partners in areas such as Emergency WASH, GBViE, Cash and Voucher Assistance, Emergency Shelter response, and Operational and Fiscal Efficiency during Emergency Response. CARE prioritizes delivery of all its humanitarian assistance through the HPP members, depending on location. For example, some HPP members now have capacity in Cash and Voucher Assistance and are now scheduled to take up large unconditional cash transfer programs. Some HPP partners are also now providing direct funding into community contingency plans.

CARE Malawi is currently the overall coordinator in the HPP. However, HPP Members are coordination leads for different sectors (WASH, Shelter, GBV and Gender, Cash and Vouchers, etc). The HPP operations are guided by a steering committee which consists of the Executive Directors of each HPP organization. HPP member organizations rotate in taking the leadership of the steering committee, which is currently chaired by CADECOM Malawi. Decisions are curated and finalized during sector meetings by all members.

CARE Malawi will continue as a member of the HPP, but not necessarily as a coordinator. CARE will continue to invest in broadening and deepening outreach, efficiency, and effectiveness of the HPP, graduating the HPP one milestone at a time. A full graduation into operational and fiscal self-sufficiency is expected by Oct 2026.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Effective Localization of Disaster Response:** The Localization Pilot Project highlights the effectiveness of localizing disaster response efforts. By empowering local communities and organizations, the project improved disaster preparedness and response times. Communities can now respond within 72 hours, a significant improvement from the previous wait of over a week.
- **Strengthening Local Capacity:** The project successfully enhanced the capacity of local NGOs and district councils. Beyond Our Hearts Foundation (BOHF) saw a substantial increase in its donor base and resource mobilization capabilities. This was achieved through targeted support, including training in organizational management and resource mobilization, which enabled BOHF to secure additional funding and improve its operational effectiveness.
- **Collaboration and Inclusivity:** The project underscored the importance of collaboration among local actors, including NGOs and district councils. By working together and pre-positioning funds, the local actors could effectively coordinate disaster responses. The project also emphasized inclusivity by ensuring marginalized voices were considered in disaster management efforts.
- **Sustainability and Long-Term Impact:** The Localization Pilot Project has laid the groundwork for long-term sustainability. BOHF's increased capacity for resource mobilization and organizational development, coupled with its involvement in defining the project's second phase, positions it for continued success beyond the Save the Children-supported initiative.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

**BEYONDBARRIERS.CONCERNUSA.ORG**