



2025 Malawi Performance Report for WASH Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

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Under Water and Environmental Sanitation Network (WESNET)

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FOREWORD

In the 2024/25 reporting year, the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector in Malawi demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of compounding humanitarian and climatic challenges. Recurrent cholera outbreaks persisted across 14 districts, the shadow of Cyclone Freddy continued to loom over Southern Region communities, and the devastating floods brought by Tropical Storm Maravi in early 2025 tested the capacity and resolve of every actor in the sector. Yet, through coordinated and agile action, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) not only responded to immediate crises but continued to invest in the systems that will sustain WASH access for generations to come.

This year, 25 CSOs contributed to this annual performance report, an increase that reflects a growing culture of accountability and transparency within the sector. Together, these organizations reported a combined total WASH expenditure (excluding personal emoluments) of MWK 40.4 billion and total operational expenditure of MWK 142.4 billion. Collectively, they reached an estimated 4,619,100 beneficiaries, 3,724,060 with improved water access, 661,613 with improved sanitation, and 2,221,359 with hygiene services, across 27 of Malawi's 28 districts. Looking ahead, CSOs have projected a combined WASH budget of MWK 44.5 billion for 2025/26, signalling continued commitment to Malawi's WASH agenda.

The data for this report was compiled by WESNET from 25 diverse reporting entities. The breadth of participation, spanning international organizations, local CSOs, and academic research institutions, highlights the comprehensive and inclusive approach of the WESNET to sector accountability. The Ministry of Water and Sanitation's continued mandate for CSO accountability ensures that the insights from this report contribute meaningfully to the national Sector Progress Report (SPR), helping to shape policies and strategies that reflect actual needs and conditions on the ground.

This year's report also features a dedicated section on Case Studies and Success Stories, vivid, community-centred narratives that illustrate the tangible human impact behind the numbers. Highlights include the transformative Professionalized Repair and Maintenance (PRM) Programme by Beyond Water Malawi, which has achieved a 99% borehole functionality rate across 638 communities in Central Region; the groundwater early warning innovation by BASEflow in Southern Malawi; and the nationwide menstrual hygiene drive by Gracepads reaching communities from Chitipa to Nsanje.

As we publish this report, we are reminded of the importance of our collective commitment to improving WASH services in Malawi. The challenges are substantial, but the dedication and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders promise a future where sustainable access to clean water and sanitation is a reality for every Malawian.

Together, let us continue to build on this year's achievements and address the ongoing challenges with renewed vigour and strategic insight.

Safari Mbewe, Executive Director, WESNET

1.0 CONTEXT

The Water and Environmental Sanitation Network (WESNET) plays a pivotal role in the coordination and oversight of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and individuals involved in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) subsector in Malawi. Founded in 2005 and officially registered with the Malawi Government in 2011, WESNET has grown into a key national umbrella organization dedicated to advancing WASH initiatives that are critical to economic development and poverty reduction in the region. Headquartered in Lilongwe, WESNET's influence spans across Malawi, bolstered by a robust network of member organizations actively engaged in various WASH projects. These projects are vital for improving health outcomes, enhancing quality of life, and promoting sustainable development across communities.

Annually, WESNET is responsible for compiling the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Performance Report. This crucial document not only tracks the progress and efficiency of CSOs in the WASH sector but also serves as a vital accountability and performance monitoring tool. It reflects the collective contributions of CSOs to the WASH sector and gauges the impact of their interventions on community well-being. The methodology for gathering data for the CSO Performance Report involves a comprehensive data collection approach, a digital-based survey complemented by structured project performance report submissions, both refined for 2024/25. Together these tools collect detailed information on budgets, expenditures, focus areas, sectoral building blocks, best practices, challenges faced, and the outcomes of various initiatives. This process ensures that the report is both comprehensive and reflective of the true scope of work being carried out in the WASH sector.

Furthermore, this report plays a critical role in contributing to the government's broader Sector Progress Report (SPR). By integrating the CSO Performance Report into the SPR, WESNET ensures that the achievements and challenges of the WASH sector are accurately represented at the national level, helping to shape policy and funding decisions that will dictate the future direction of WASH initiatives in Malawi.

Through its diligent coordination and reporting efforts, WESNET not only enhances the operational transparency of WASH interventions but also fosters a collaborative environment that drives innovation and improvement across the sector. This synergy is essential for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals related to clean water and sanitation, ultimately paving the way for a healthier, more sustainable Malawi.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA), Malawi has close to 175 Non-Governmental Organizations that aim at complementing the work of government in the delivery of WASH activities in the country. There has been an increased number of players in the sector, which has resulted in duplication and sometimes conflicting efforts in as far as project implementation is concerned. It was also noted that there is a lack of accountability by most players. However, the annual report serves as an accountability tool while also showcasing and informing the good work that CSOs are doing in complementing government's efforts.

Using data from the NGORA database and WESNET's membership records, WESNET distributed its data collection tools to Non-Governmental Organizations with declared WASH activities. Out of 25 organizations that contributed data and reports: 17 are international organizations representing 68 per cent, 7 are local organizations representing 28 per cent, and 1 is an academic research institution representing 4 per cent of the total. The reporting rate has improved compared to the previous year, though it remains low relative to the total number of organizations implementing WASH projects in the country. The low reporting rate can be attributed to the phasing out of WASH projects by some NGOs and to other active organizations that did not provide feedback to the WESNET secretariat despite continuous reminders. It is important that the Ministry works together with the Network to ensure the enforcement of CSO reporting.

One data quality note: Heart to Heart Foundation submitted a WASH expenditure figure that exceeds their stated total organizational operations — which is arithmetically inconsistent and likely reflects a data entry error. This figure is excluded from all sector financial aggregates in this report, though the organization's beneficiary and geographic coverage data are retained where applicable.

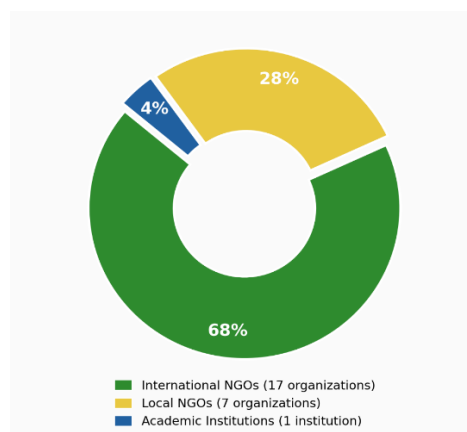


Figure 1: CSOs Contributing to the 2025 Report

3.0 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION FOR THE REPORTING CSOs

3.1 Districts where CSOs Operate

The CSO members have a presence in most districts of the country. However, their distribution across districts is not even, with a higher concentration of programming in Southern and Central regions driven by emergency response, development partner footprints, and infrastructure needs. Attached is how the reporting organizations are spread across the districts of Malawi. It must also be reported that no reporting organization indicated active WASH operations in Likoma District. It is therefore important that partners are identified to support Likoma District Council in the provision of WASH services, so that no one is left behind in accessing WASH services at the national level.

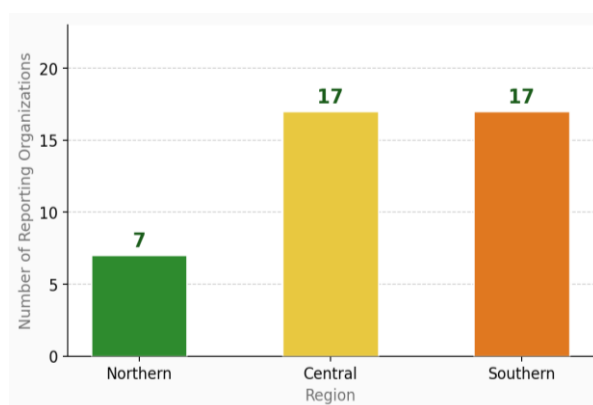


Figure 2: Regional Distribution — Number of Reporting CSOs by Region

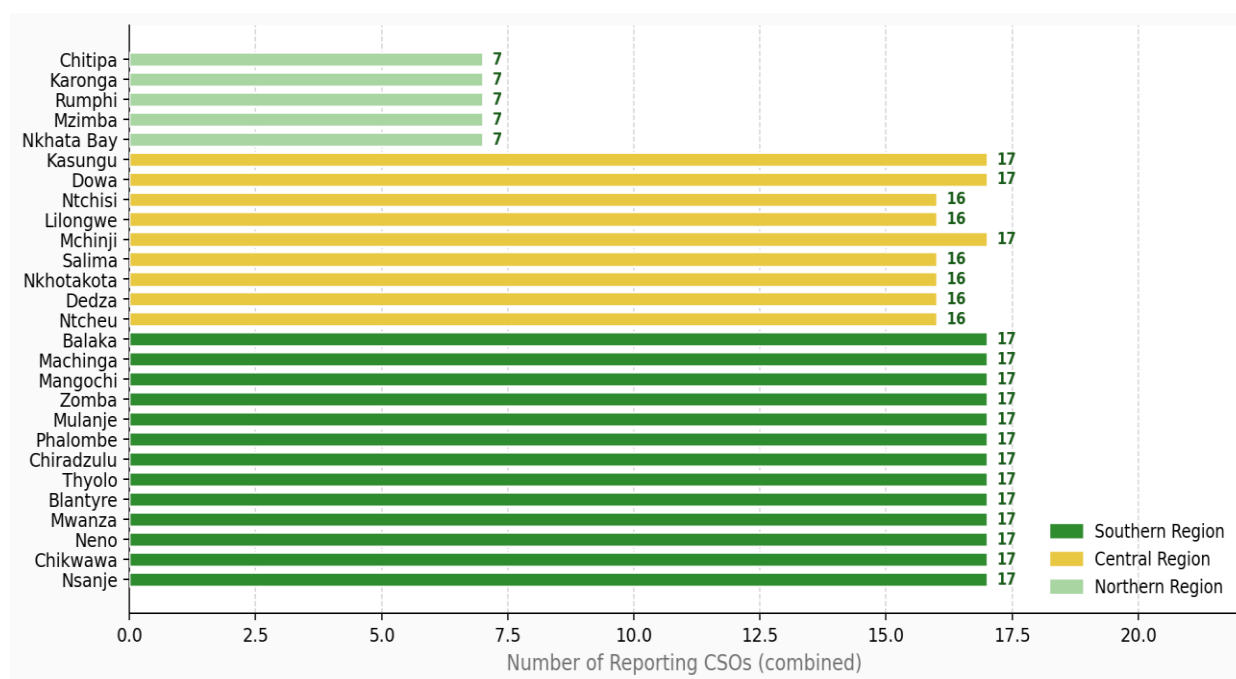


Figure 3: CSOs Districts of Operation

4.0 FINANCING & EXPENDITURE AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO THE SECTOR

This section gives a snapshot of investments and progress made by CSOs in the 2024/25 financial year. It must be emphasized that the information presented is not comprehensive due to the relatively low CSO report submission rate. The section also shows the donors who supported the CSOs.

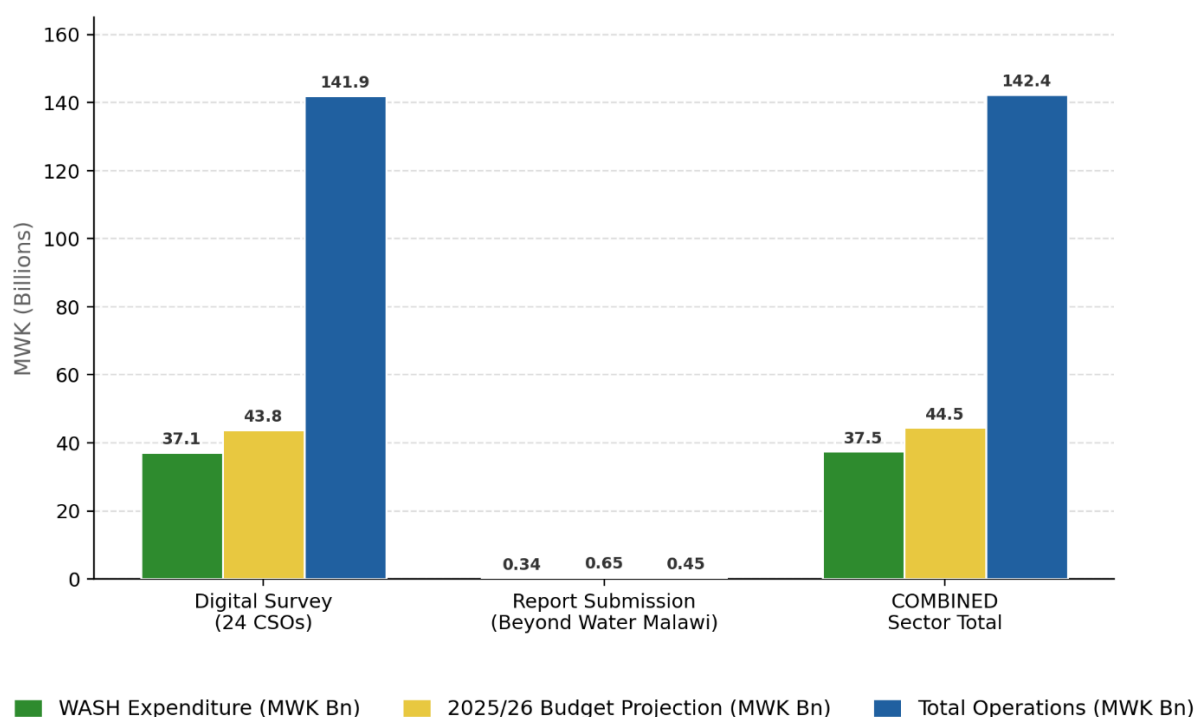


Figure 4: CSO Expenditure Overview — WASH Investment, Total Operations, and 2025/26 Projections (MWK Billions)

4.1 CSOs Expenditure in WASH (Excluding Personal Emoluments)

In 2024/25, reporting CSOs collectively invested MWK 40.4 billion in WASH-specific activities (excluding personal emoluments), affirming the sector's continued commitment to improving water, sanitation, and hygiene services across Malawi. Leading contributions came from World Vision International, which allocated MWK 14.5 billion to WASH projects, accounting for 36% of total reported WASH expenditure, encompassing water supply construction, borehole rehabilitation, and integrated hygiene promotion across multiple districts. Malawi Water Project contributed MWK 5.4 billion, followed by Water For People (MWK 4.3 billion) with its district wide "Everyone Forever" sustainability model, and Innovation Africa (MWK 3.6 billion) focusing on reticulated water supply systems. Self Help Africa (MWK 2.5 billion) integrated WASH within climate resilience and livelihoods programming, while Water Mission (MWK 1.3 billion), Habitat for Humanity Malawi (MWK 1.0 billion), Water Witness (MWK 963.5 million), and Design Outreach (MWK 850 million) made substantial contributions across all regions.

Beyond Water Malawi invested MWK 343.4 million (excluding personal emoluments) in the Professionalized Repair and Maintenance (PRM) Programme across Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji, a 100% WASH-focused organization whose total organizational budget of MWK 446.4 million is entirely directed to the sector. Smaller but impactful contributions came from New Apostolic Church Relief Organization

(MWK 439.7 million), Inter Aide (MWK 392.4 million), Basic Services Development Agency, BASEDA (MWK 108.2 million), Orant Charities Africa (MWK 109 million), Gracepads (MWK 55 million), Temwa (MWK 34 million), and Beyond Our Hearts Foundation (MWK 200,000). Local CSOs continued to face significant resource constraints relative to international counterparts, highlighting the need for equitable funding mechanisms to ensure all regions and communities benefit from WASH investments.

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) operates six projects in Dedza, Dowa, Chitipa, and Karonga funded by BMZ, Charity Water, UNHCR, Krombacher, and ADA

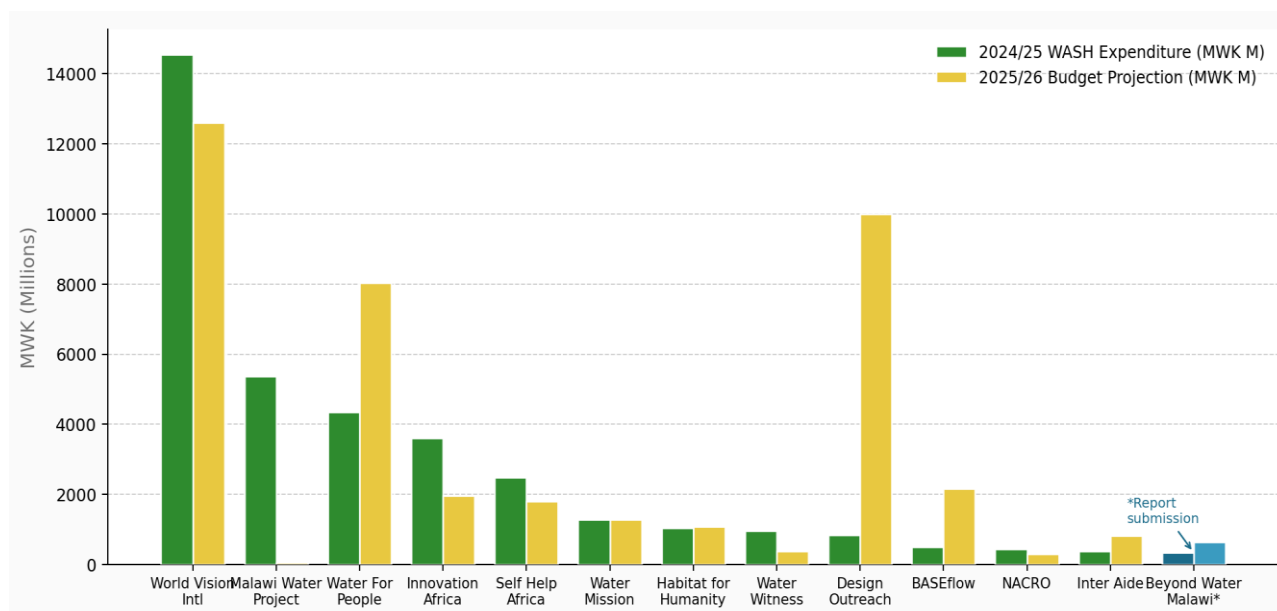


Figure 5: CSO WASH Expenditures and 2025/26 Budget Projections by Organization (Top 13)

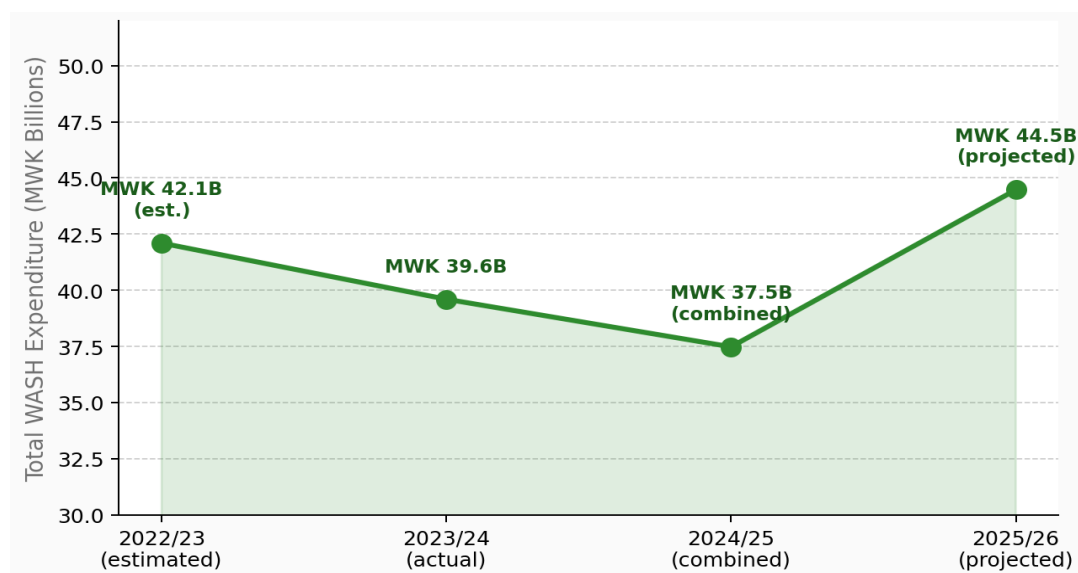


Figure 6: Year-on-Year WASH Expenditure Trend (MWK Billions)

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) operates six projects across Dedza, Dowa, Chitipa, and Karonga, project-level financial tables were provided and have been used to derive a corrected sector contribution. WHH's total WASH expenditure for the reporting period is estimated at MWK 3,219,962,148 (MWK 3.22 billion), comprising: MWK 1,019,008,200 from the BMZ-funded WASH governance project (MWI

1070); MWK 1,926,100,100 from the Charity:water water access project; MWK 186,301,080 across two UNHCR-funded Dzaleka humanitarian projects; MWK 87,870,300 from the ADA-funded WASH in Schools project (MWi 1087); and MWK 682,468 from the Krombacher post-implementation monitoring project (MWi 1086). A sixth UNHCR project entry, stated in the summary table at MWK 3.22 billion contribution is included in the sector total of MWK 40.4 billion reported above.

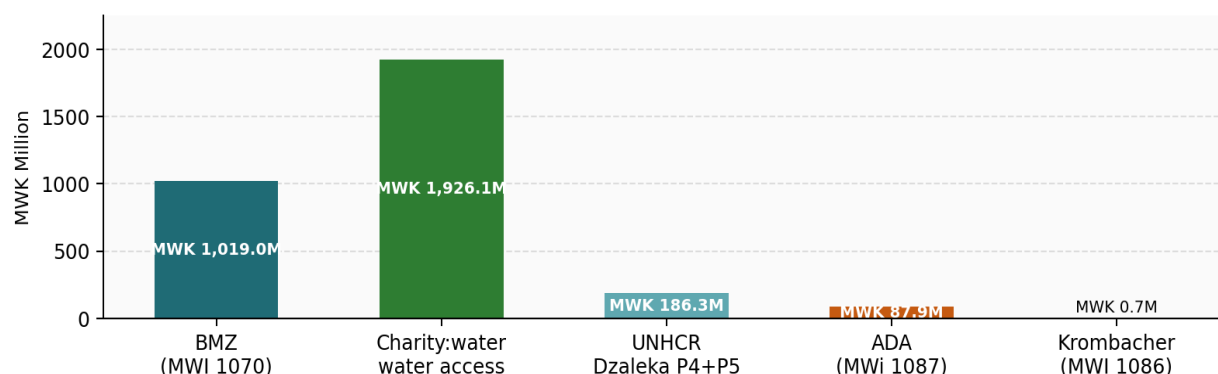


Figure 7: Welthungerhilfe WASH expenditure by project, 2024/25. Figures derived from Section 1.2 project finance tables in WHH's annual report. Total: MWK 3,219,962,148.

4.2 Expenditure on Operations

Total operational expenditures for reporting CSOs in 2024/25 amounted to MWK 142.4 billion, encompassing both WASH-specific activities and broader organizational costs including staff salaries, logistics, capacity-building workshops, and community engagement. World Vision International again led with MWK 80.5 billion, reflecting its extensive multi-sectoral programming footprint across 18 districts. Malawi Water Project (MWK 20.5 billion), Self Help Africa (MWK 18.4 billion), and Orant Charities Africa (MWK 3.1 billion) followed. Beyond Water Malawi reported total operations of MWK 446.4 million — entirely directed to WASH, demonstrating a lean, highly focused organizational structure. Smaller organizations such as BASEDA, Inter Aide, Temwa, and Gracepads showcased efficient resource utilization and high programmatic-to-operational cost ratios despite limited budgets.

4.3 Budget Projections for 2025/26

Looking ahead to 2025/26, CSOs have collectively projected a total WASH budget of MWK 44.5 billion, an increase of 18.7% over 2024/25 actuals, signalling continued commitment to Malawi's water and sanitation challenges. World Vision International leads with a projected MWK 12.6 billion, aimed at sustaining its integrated WASH programmes across rural and urban areas. Water For People plans to invest MWK 8.0 billion, scaling its "Everyone Forever" model for district-wide water access and sustainability. Design Outreach has projected a substantial MWK 10.0 billion, a significant increase reflecting planned expansion, while BASEflow projects MWK 2.2 billion for groundwater monitoring and catchment management. Beyond Water Malawi projects MWK 650.2 million for the continued expansion of the PRM Programme, against an anticipated funding gap of MWK 164.1 million that the organization is actively working to close through local donor match-funding. While these projections reflect optimism, achieving

them will require enhanced donor support, improved coordination with government systems, and innovative financing strategies.

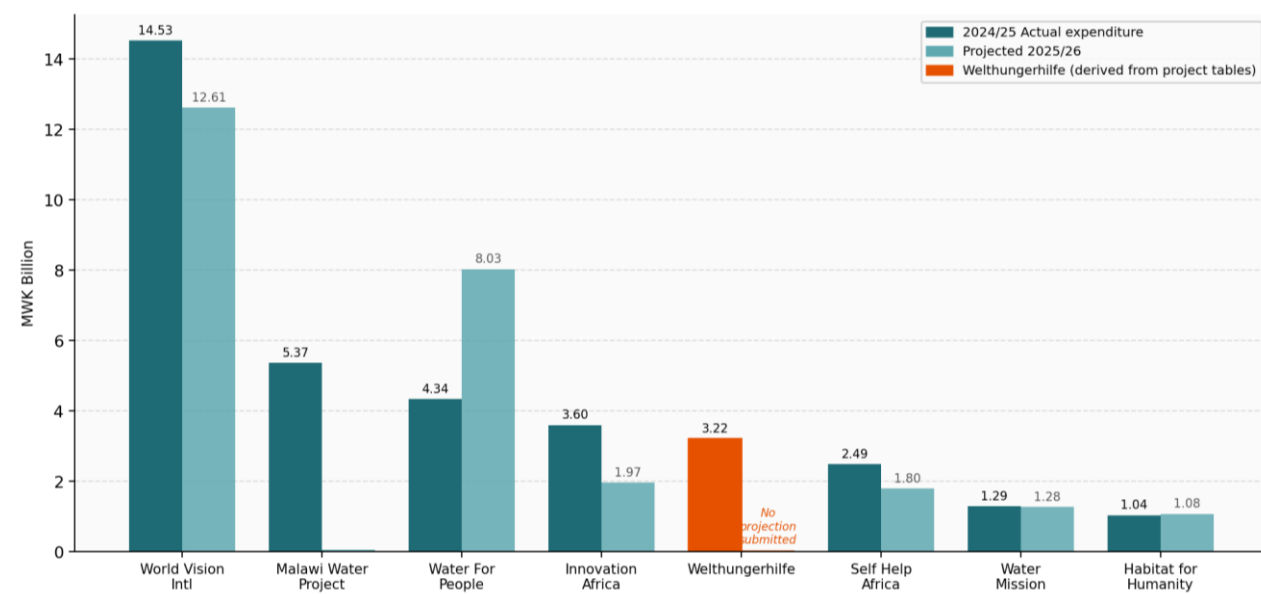


Figure 8: WASH Expenditure (2024/25 actual) vs Projected Budget (2025/26) for top 8 CSOs by actual expenditure. Welthungerhilfe enters at rank 5 (MWK 3.22B actual).

4.4 Donors

In the 2024/25 reporting year, CSOs in Malawi's WASH sector received substantial support from a diverse array of international and domestic donors. These included: DAI UK and Water Witness International; BMZ (Germany) and FCDO (UK); French Development Agency (AFD), AERMC, Medicor Foundation, Waterloo Foundation, Rotork, GOAC, Thirsty Planet, and Urenco; Orant Charities United States; Kirsh/Nattie Kirsh Foundation; UNHCR, Charity Water, and Austria Development Agency; Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Scottish Government, and Engineers Without Borders; Trocaire, SADC GMI, Shockwave Foundation, and The Crap Foundation; The One Foundation; World Vision US, WV Canada, P&G, and Non-Foundation; Temwa UK; Christian Ministries USA and RJ Foundation; Bjorgaas Social Welfare Fund, Trinity International, and Anglican Aid Australia; Save the Children, CAWST, and Malawi Diaspora USA; RGHI, NIHR, WaterAid, University of Strathclyde, and UKRI; NAK-Karitativ; Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA); FromWales; Made Blue; Good Neighbors Korea; and revenue from Gracepads pad sales.

These donors provided financial resources, technical expertise, and support, ensuring that CSOs could effectively address immediate needs and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable improvements in WASH services. The diverse nature of these contributions, from bilateral governments, private foundations, NGOs, corporate sponsors, and individual donors, underscores broad-based international commitment to enhancing public health infrastructure in Malawi.

4.5 Key Stakeholders

In the 2024/25 reporting period, CSOs in Malawi's WASH sector collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders to enhance water, sanitation, and hygiene services across various districts. Key stakeholders included:

- **Government Departments:** The Ministry of Water and Sanitation (including direct Ministerial and Principal Secretary engagement), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Gender through the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. Their involvement ensured WASH initiatives were aligned with national policies and integrated into broader public health and education strategies.
- **District Councils and Local Government Units:** Including District Water Offices and District Health Offices in Kasungu, Dowa, Mchinji, Blantyre, Mulanje, and across all operational districts, instrumental in local governance, quarterly project performance assessments, and Joint Sector Review participation.
- **Development Partners and NGOs:** Collaborative partners including Water For People, WaterAid Malawi, GoodNeighbors Malawi, UNICEF, and Welthungerhilfe, contributing funding, technical expertise, signed MOUs, and joint implementation of WASH projects.
- **Community Structures:** Village Development Committees (VDCs), Area Development Committees (ADCs), Water Point Committees (WPCs), Area Mechanics (AMs), Village Natural Leaders (VNLs), Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), and local leaders, the bedrock of community ownership, behaviour change communication, and facility maintenance.
- **Academic and Research Institutions:** WASHTED (MUBAS) and other research bodies contributing applied evidence that directly informs sector programming and national policy.
- **Private Sector:** Borehole drilling companies, spare-part suppliers, IoT technology providers (Water Mission), smartphone-based data platforms (Beyond Water MIS), and corporate sponsors (Rotork, Urenco, Thirsty Planet) — bringing technical expertise, commercial scale, and innovative solutions.

These collaborations ensured a comprehensive approach to improving WASH services, highlighting the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing public health challenges effectively. Through these partnerships, CSOs leveraged a wide range of resources, expertise, and platforms to drive progress in the WASH sector.

5.0 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The WASH sector has seen substantial progress in the 2024/25 reporting period, with key achievements across water supply, sanitation, hygiene, and research significantly impacting both the sector and its beneficiaries. Across 25 reporting CSOs, the combined reach was 4,514,738 beneficiaries, 3,658,560 with improved water access, 661,613 with improved sanitation, and 2,221,359 with hygiene services. These achievements span 27 of Malawi's 28 districts and represent a diverse portfolio of infrastructure, behaviour change, maintenance, and research interventions.

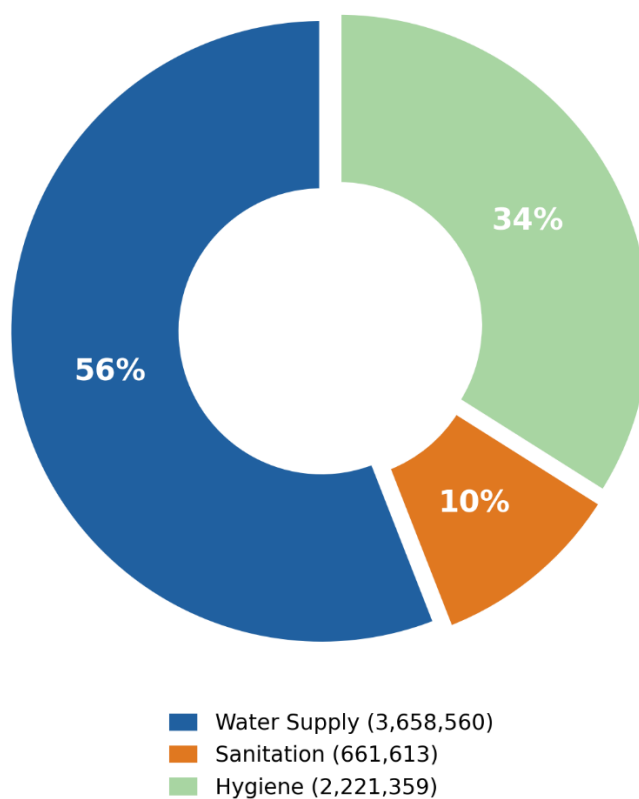


Figure 9 : Number of Beneficiaries Reached by Thematic Area

5.1 Water Supply

Water supply achievements in 2024/25 were transformative in both scale and quality. Inter Aide reached 1,361,750 beneficiaries with improved water access through its community-based pump maintenance and repair programme across Central and Southern districts. BASEDA reached 802,750 beneficiaries; Self Help Africa, 559,218; Design Outreach, 226,250; and Amref Health Africa, 75,714. Water For People sustained clean water access for 62,000 beneficiaries in Blantyre and Mulanje under its "Everyone Forever" district-wide model. BASEflow reached 15,052 beneficiaries while piloting a Groundwater Monitoring Early Warning System in Southern Region.

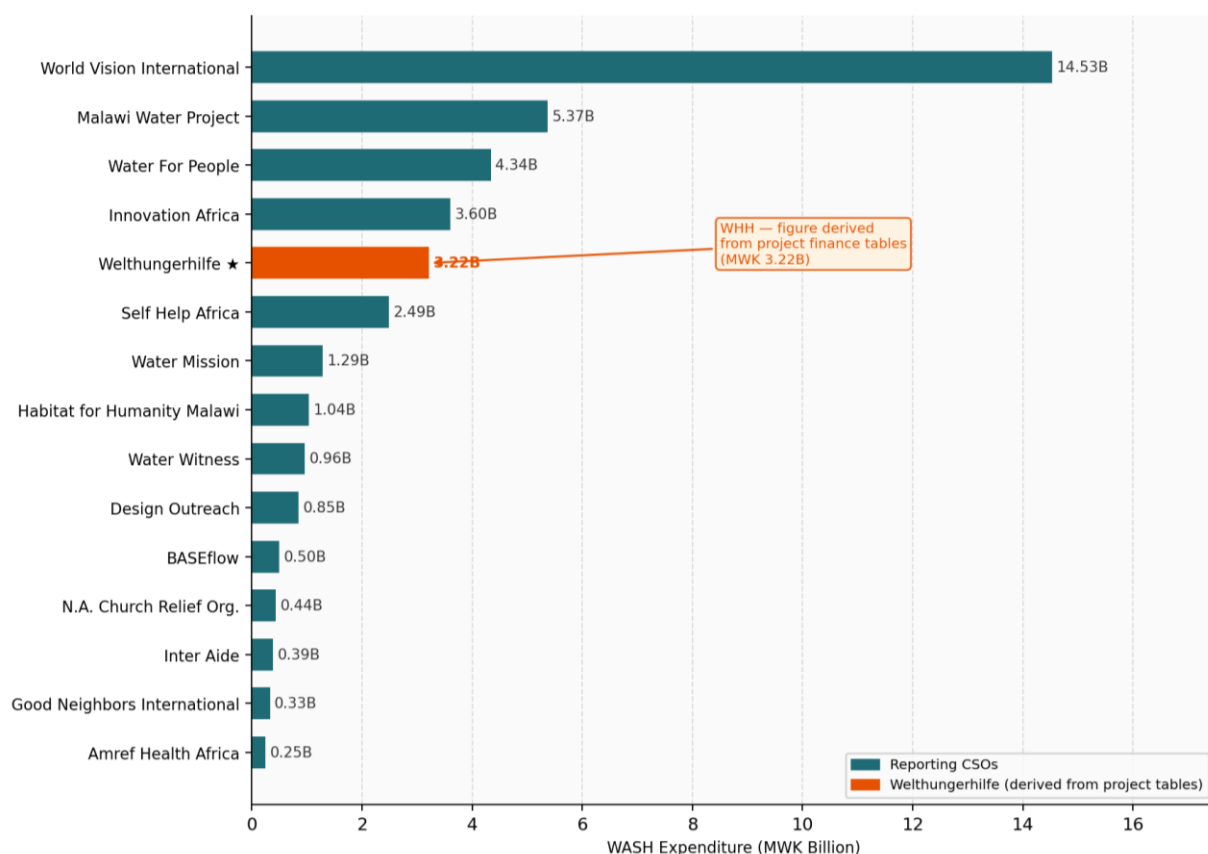


Figure 10: WASH Expenditure by CSO, 2024/ 25 (MWK Billion). Welthungerhilfe at rank 5 with MWK 3.22B, derived from project finance tables.

BeyondWater reached 261,580 beneficiaries (127,651 males; 133,929 females) across 638 communities and 52,316 households in Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji through the Professionalized Repair and Maintenance Programme. A total of 185 previously non-functional boreholes were fully restored to functionality, achieving a 100% repair success rate. Under the PRM model, average borehole functionality across the programme's coverage area stands at 99%, compared to a pre-programme baseline of approximately 70%, a result that has been presented at national and regional Joint Sector Review meetings as a model for scaling rural water supply professionalization.



Water source – Zangadidya river Vs Borehole repaired (Reported by Malawi Water Project)

5.2 Sanitation and Hygiene

Sanitation achievements were notable across all regions. Self Help Africa reached 160,502 sanitation beneficiaries; World Vision International, 137,147; Fishermans Rest Community Projects, 94,500; WASHTED (through healthcare facility improvements), 3,000; and GoodNeighbors Malawi, 56,481. In hygiene programming, Self Help Africa reached 912,950 beneficiaries, World Vision International 137,147, Habitat for Humanity Malawi 121,648, New Apostolic Church Relief Organization 14,099, and Beyond Our Hearts Foundation 1,899.

Gracepads continued its menstrual hygiene management programming, reaching 3,000 beneficiaries with reusable sanitary pad distribution and MHM education in Lilongwe. Orant Charities Africa reached 11,500 hygiene beneficiaries in Central Region through handpump maintenance and hygiene promotion activities.

5.3 Research and Knowledge Generation

Research initiatives in 2024/25 have generated deep and actionable insights. WASHTED (MUBAS) conducted applied research on sanitation and hygiene conditions in guardian shelters at district hospitals, a chronically overlooked WASH environment, translating findings directly into infrastructure improvements at participating health facilities. Results have been submitted for peer-reviewed publication and shared with the Ministry of Health for policy consideration. BASEflow advanced its groundwater monitoring evidence base, integrating hydrogeological data with climate projections to develop a predictive early warning system for water table depletion in Southern Malawi.

BeyondWater contributes to the sector's research base through Quarterly Project Performance Assessments covering all 638 water points, baseline surveys, and water point functionality data shared monthly with Water For People, WaterAid Malawi, GoodNeighbors Malawi, and three district councils. Their evidence on the PRM model, showing a progression from 70% to 99% borehole functionality, directly informed the Ministry of Water and Sanitation's policy framework on professionalizing rural water supply, published in collaboration with Water For People.

6.0 EMERGENCY WASH (CSO ACTIVITIES IN RESPONDING TO OUTBREAKS AND EMERGENCIES)

In 2024/25, Malawi continued to face significant WASH-related challenges. Cholera outbreaks persisted across 14 districts, while communities in Southern Region continued to recover from the cumulative impacts of Cyclone Freddy. WASH CSOs played a crucial role in both preparedness and active response efforts. CSOs committed approximately MWK 2.8 billion towards emergency WASH activities, underscoring the critical role of WASH interventions in controlling the spread of disease and mitigating the impact of natural disasters on public health infrastructure.

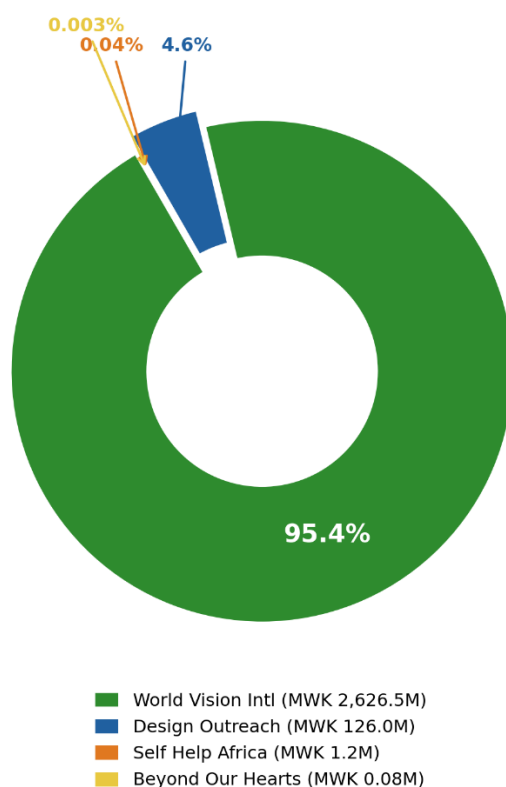


Figure 11: Emergency WASH Investment Breakdown (Total: MWK 2,753.8 Million)

6.1 Preparedness and Response Activities

CSOs engaged in a comprehensive range of preparedness and response activities to address cholera outbreaks and flood-related emergencies. World Vision International committed MWK 2,626.5 million to emergency WASH, implementing sanitation and hygiene awareness campaigns, borehole rehabilitation, distribution of water purifiers and HTH chlorine, and rehabilitation of flood-damaged latrines across affected districts. Design Outreach committed MWK 126 million to multi-sectoral emergency activities combining food distribution, borehole rehabilitation, and hygiene promotion. Self Help Africa invested MWK 1.2 million in prepositioning of WASH supplies, including water quality testing kits and pot-to-pot chlorination, ensuring rapid response capacity at community level. Beyond Our Hearts Foundation contributed MWK 80,000 to chlorination activities, school awareness campaigns, and borehole maintenance in emergency-affected communities.

Additional preparedness measures across the sector included the elevation of handpumps to prevent flood contamination, dissemination of cholera prevention information by environmental health officers and health surveillance assistants, and distribution of chlorine, soap, handwashing facilities, and oral rehydration salts to impacted households.

6.2 Achievements Registered

CSOs achieved significant milestones in emergency WASH activities during 2024/25:

- World Vision International restored WASH access to large populations across multiple districts through rapid borehole rehabilitation and the distribution of hygiene kits, water purifiers, and chlorine-based treatment materials.
- Design Outreach implemented a multi-sectoral emergency response integrating food security and WASH, demonstrating the critical nexus between nutrition and sanitation in disaster settings.
- Self Help Africa's emergency supply prepositioning enabled near-immediate response capability, demonstrating the value of embedding emergency preparedness within development programming rather than treating it as a separate mandate.
- Beyond Our Hearts Foundation demonstrated that even organizations with minimal budgets can contribute meaningfully to emergency response through targeted, community-level chlorination and awareness activities.

7.0 SECTOR BUILDING BLOCKS

The Sector Building Blocks framework delineates the foundational elements crucial to the advancement and sustainability of the WASH sector in Malawi. These building blocks, Government Leadership, Country Systems, Data Harmonization, and Financing, represent strategic areas essential for strengthening the overall effectiveness and resilience of WASH initiatives. This section examines how CSOs are collaborating with governmental and non-governmental partners to fortify these building blocks and characterizes whether organizations are contributing to systems strengthening or operating in parallel to government and country systems.

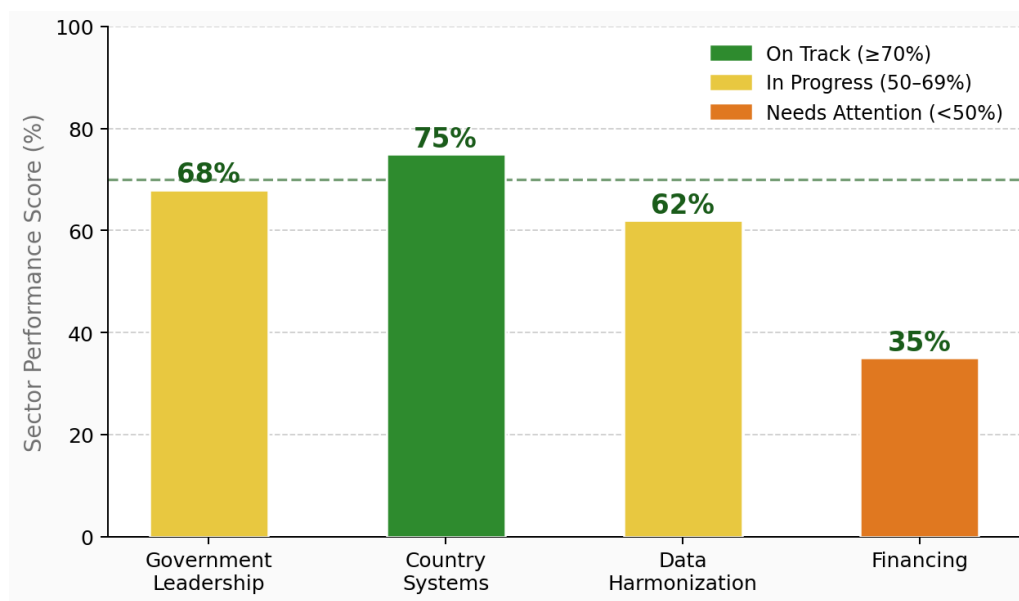


Figure 12 : WASH Sector Building Blocks Performance Score (2024/25)

Table 1: WASH Sector Building Blocks

Building Block 1: Government Leadership	Building Block 2: Country Systems
The WASH sector has shown significant strides in government leadership. The majority of reporting CSOs align their projects with District Strategic Investment Plans (DSIPs) and district-level coordination structures, underscoring a strong commitment to local government priorities. Beyond Water Malawi set a high bar in government engagement: direct meetings were held with the Minister of Water and Sanitation and the Permanent Secretary during the reporting period, and District Water Offices in Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji were engaged quarterly through DCT meetings and project performance assessments. Beyond Water also provided resources to District Councils for participation in Joint Sector Review (JSR) meetings at regional and national level, and presented PRM programme lessons at national JSR — a model of proactive government partnership. Water Witness called for districts to be recognized as "delivery hubs, not just implementers" — a recommendation that aligns with the broader sector need for genuine decentralization and resource transfer to sub-national government.	Progress in strengthening country systems has been commendable. Beyond Water Malawi's PRM model is a flagship example: 25 Area Mechanics in Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji are equipped with smartphones for data logging, providing verifiable evidence of every service visit, repair, and WPC payment. Borehole functionality under PRM stands at 99% — up from a 70% baseline — and an 81% WPC contract renewal rate demonstrates genuine community buy-in for professionalized service delivery. Water For People, Inter Aide, and BASEDA maintained community-based maintenance systems at scale across multiple districts, reaching millions of beneficiaries. Water Mission piloted IoT-enabled remote monitoring on water systems, reducing downtime and enabling real-time system management. Collectively, these organizations are building the human, institutional, and technical infrastructure that will sustain water access beyond project timelines.
Building Block 3: Data Harmonization	Building Block 4: Financing
Data harmonization has seen progress but remains a work in progress. Several CSOs — including Habitat for Humanity Malawi and Water For People — explicitly called for finalization of MWAMIS (Malawi Water and Sanitation Management Information System) and adoption of harmonized WASH indicators. Beyond Water Malawi operates a proprietary MIS tracking water point functionality, pump service records, WPC payment data, and Area Mechanic performance — sharing this data monthly with Water For People, WaterAid, Good Neighbors Malawi, and district councils. They noted that MWAMIS data for their operational districts was last updated in 2018–2020, highlighting a critical data currency gap, and recommended integration of their MIS with MWAMIS to create a reliable, continuously updated platform for rural water supply management. This proposal deserves urgent consideration by WESNET and the Ministry.	Financing remains a critical challenge. While combined WASH expenditure has grown, the majority of CSOs rely entirely on international donor funding with limited direct investment through government financial systems. Only a small number of CSOs are channeling any investment through district government accounts. Beyond Water Malawi's anticipated funding gap of MWK 164.1 million for 2025/26 — despite high-impact, evidence-based programming — illustrates the vulnerability of even the best-performing organizations to donor funding cycles. Multiple CSOs called for stronger advocacy for increased district-level financing. The sector-wide recommendation for 30% of CSO budgets to be channeled through district councils by 2027 remains a priority that requires concerted advocacy and incremental implementation.

8.0 BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS

This section highlights innovative contributions that CSOs have developed during the course of project implementation in 2024/25. These practices represent replicable models with demonstrated impact and potential for adoption at scale.

Table 2: WASH Best Practices Registered in 2024/25

Institution	Best Practice
Beyond Water Malawi	Professionalized Repair and Maintenance (PRM) model for rural handpumps: 638 water points under professional Area Mechanic management; 99% borehole functionality rate (up from 70% baseline); 81% WPC contract renewal rate; smartphone-based data logs providing verifiable service evidence; Area Mechanic earnings increased from MWK 310,769 to MWK 953,571 per annum. Endorsed by Ministry of Water and Sanitation as a model for national rural water supply professionalization.
Water Mission	IoT-enabled remote monitoring sensors deployed across water systems, enabling real-time tracking of water flow, quality, and pump functionality — improving system uptime and supporting evidence-based preventive maintenance.
BASEDA	Community-based handpump maintenance and repair programme sustaining high borehole functionality across operational areas, with ongoing refinement of Community-Based Management (CBM) training protocols to clarify roles between Water Point Committees and Area Mechanics.
Evidence Action	Transparent, community-led rollout of chlorine dispensers with trained community "Chlorine Promoters", achieving consistently high usage rates among participating communities.
Water For People	"Everyone Forever" district-wide sustainability model ensuring service delivery and functionality for all people in a district, with focus on long-term impact, professionalized repair systems, and district-wide management structures.
BASEflow	Piloting of a Groundwater Monitoring Early Warning System integrating hydrogeological data with climate projections to generate predictive alerts for water table depletion — a pioneering approach to climate-resilient WASH planning.
Fishermans Rest Community Projects	Advocacy for improved handpump components to reduce breakdown frequency, combined with development of a nationwide parts programme in partnership with the Ministry — a public-private-NGO spare-parts supply chain model for handpump sustainability.
WASHTED	Applied research on WASH in healthcare facility guardian shelters, translating evidence directly into targeted infrastructure improvements at district hospitals and contributing to Ministry of Health policy consideration.

8.1 CASE STUDIES AND SUCCESS STORIES

This section features case studies and success stories drawn from CSO reports and field evidence. These narratives amplify community voices and organizational learning, providing human context to the quantitative achievements presented elsewhere in this report.

Case Study 1: Reversing Decades of Pump Failure — Beyond Water Malawi's PRM Model in Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji

Organization: Beyond Water Malawi | Region: Central | Districts: Kasungu, Dowa, Mchinji | Donors: Medicor Foundation, Waterloo Foundation, Rotork, GOAC, Thirsty Planet, Urenco | Partners: Water For People, WaterAid Malawi, Good Neighbors Malawi

Malawi has a longstanding rural water crisis rooted not in infrastructure scarcity alone, but in management failure. At any given time, an estimated 58.2% of rural handpumps in Malawi are non-functional, a statistic that represents millions of people falling back on unprotected water sources despite the presence of boreholes in their communities. Beyond Water Malawi has been systematically dismantling this pattern through the Professionalized Repair and Maintenance (PRM) Programme, implemented in Kasungu, Dowa, and Mchinji districts since 2022.

The PRM model replaces the traditional Community-Based Management approach, which relies on volunteer Water Point Committees to coordinate repairs informally, with a network of certified, professionally equipped Area Mechanics who provide fee-for-service maintenance to community water points on a contractual basis. Each of the 638 water points in the programme operates under a signed service contract between the community Water Point Committee and Beyond Water Malawi. Communities pay for the service, and the results speak for themselves: 81% of WPCs renew their contracts when they expire, demonstrating that communities value, and are willing to pay for, reliable water.

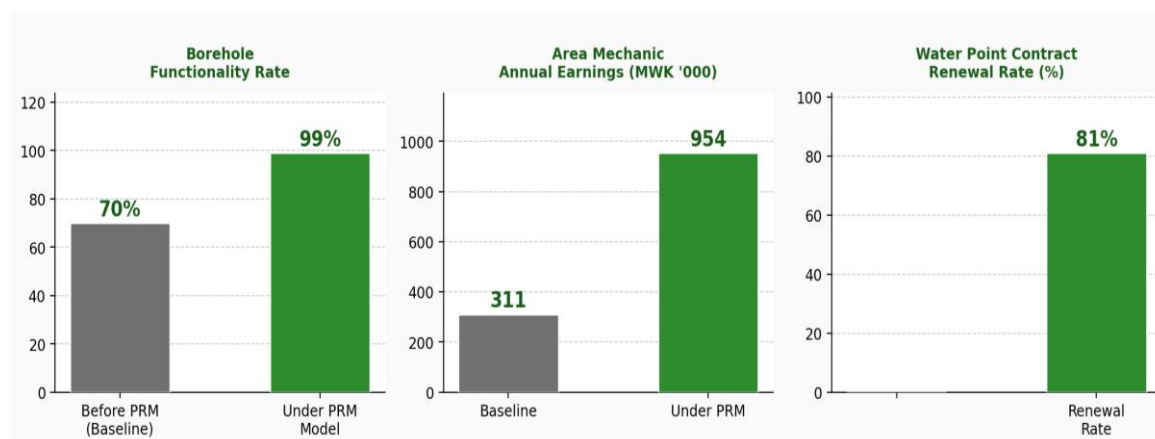


Figure 13: Beyond Water Malawi — PRM Programme Impact (2024/25)

A baseline survey before programme commencement found handpump functionality in the operational area at approximately 70%. Under PRM management, average functionality across all 638 covered water

points stands at 99%, a near-total elimination of pump non-functionality. All 25 Area Mechanics are equipped with smartphones for data logging, providing verifiable, time-stamped evidence of every service visit, part replacement, and WPC payment. This transparency has simultaneously enhanced accountability and improved the livelihoods of AMs themselves: average annual AM earnings have increased from MWK 310,769 at baseline to MWK 953,571, more than tripling.

Key outcomes in 2024/25: 638 water points under PRM management across 6 Traditional Authorities; 261,580 beneficiaries (127,651 males, 133,929 females) with sustained clean water access; 185 non-functional boreholes fully repaired; 52,316 households served; 25 Area Mechanics trained and equipped; 2,655 total individuals trained.

BeyondWater has also made a significant contribution to the sector's policy landscape. Their evidence directly informed the Ministry of Water and Sanitation's policy framework on professionalizing rural water supply management, and they continue to present PRM lessons at national and regional Joint Sector Reviews. They recommend that government urgently regulate service providers in the rural water supply space, to ensure adherence to operational standards while protecting service providers' path to scale and financial sustainability.

Case Study 2: Self Help Africa — Embedding WASH in Climate Resilience and Livelihoods

Organization: Self Help Africa | Regions: Central and Southern | Donors: The One Foundation, Charity Water

Self Help Africa (SHA) reached 912,950 beneficiaries with hygiene programming, 559,218 with improved water access, and 160,502 with improved sanitation in 2024/25, making them one of the broadest-reach CSOs among reporting organizations. SHA's defining approach is the deliberate integration of WASH within livelihoods and climate resilience programming: water access is not treated as a standalone intervention, but as a foundational enabler of food security, nutrition, and household economic resilience. This approach positions SHA as a sector leader in the growing WASH-climate adaptation nexus, with 2025/26 priorities including water resources management, groundwater management, school sanitation, community sanitation, disaster response, and piloting of new water technologies.

SHA was also among the CSOs responding to WASH emergencies in 2024/25, committing MWK 1.2 million to prepositioning of WASH supplies including water quality testing kits and pot-to-pot chlorination, demonstrating that emergency preparedness does not require large, dedicated budgets, only foresight and community-level systems.

Case Study 3: BASEflow — Pioneering Groundwater Intelligence for a Water-Stressed Future

Organization: BASEflow | Region: Southern | Donors: Trocaire, SADC Groundwater Management Institute, Shockwave Foundation, The Crap Foundation

With climate stress on water tables flagged by multiple reporting organizations, BASEflow's work in 2024/25 represents one of the most forward-looking WASH sector contributions: the piloting of a Groundwater Monitoring Early Warning System. Their SADC GMI-supported groundwater monitoring network integrates hydrogeological data with rainfall and temperature projections to generate predictive alerts for communities and District Water Offices in drought-prone areas of Southern Malawi. BASEflow reached 15,052 direct water beneficiaries while simultaneously building the data infrastructure that will protect water access for future generations. For 2025/26, BASEflow plans to scale this early warning system to additional districts while strengthening community-level groundwater governance and catchment management — a dual investment in evidence and community empowerment.

Case Study 4: Gracepads — Dignity from Chitipa to Nsanje

Organization: Gracepads | Region: Central | Funding: Revenue from sustainable reusable pad sales

Gracepads represents one of the most distinctive and financially self-sustaining models in Malawi's WASH sector. A social enterprise generating its own operating revenue through the production and sale of reusable sanitary pads, Gracepads directs proceeds into menstrual hygiene management (MHM) programming for girls in hard-to-reach communities. Operating on a total budget of MWK 55 million, Gracepads reached 3,000 beneficiaries with MHM education and pad distribution in 2024/25. For 2025/26, Gracepads is implementing a Chitipa-to-Nsanje drive, a nationwide initiative targeting the hardest-to-reach communities along the full length of the country, reflecting an organizational commitment to leaving no girl behind. Gracepads also proposed that WESNET consider organizing an annual WASH Fair to give grassroots WASH innovators a platform for visibility and resource mobilization, a recommendation WESNET has noted for 2025/26 planning.

Case Study 5: WASHTED — From Guardian Shelter Research to Hospital Policy Change

Institution: WASHTED, MUBAS | Regions: Central and Southern | Donors: RGHI, NIHR, WaterAid, World Vision, University of Strathclyde, UKRI

Guardian shelters — the informal accommodation used by family members accompanying patients at district hospitals — are one of the most overlooked WASH blind spots in Malawi's health system. WASHTED's applied research programme directly addressed this gap in 2024/25, conducting systematic assessments of sanitation and hygiene conditions in guardian shelters at district hospitals and translating findings into targeted infrastructure improvements and structured hygiene education delivered by Environmental Health Officers. Reaching 3,000 beneficiaries through hospital-based interventions, WASHTED has submitted its findings for peer-reviewed publication and shared them with the Ministry of Health for national policy consideration — exemplifying how applied academic research, when anchored in real community needs, can translate evidence into infrastructure and policy change. WASHTED has called for operationalization of its MOU with WESNET to formalize this research-to-programming pipeline, a collaboration that WESNET endorses and will prioritize in 2025/26.

8.2 CHALLENGES

In this reporting year, CSOs faced several significant challenges that impacted their operations and efficacy. These challenges highlight critical areas requiring strategic focus and resource allocation to enhance the sector's resilience and effectiveness.

1. **Low Reporting Rate and Data Quality:** Only 25 of approximately 175 NGORA-registered WASH NGOs submitted data or reports for this reporting cycle, a rate of approximately 14%. Additionally, one organization submitted financial data with a demonstrable entry error, underscoring the need for validation checks in the data collection process. Other organizations with active projects did not provide feedback to the WESNET secretariat despite continuous reminders. It is important that the Ministry works with the Network to enforce CSO reporting obligations.
2. **Duplication of Efforts and Coordination Gaps:** A significant challenge was the continued duplication of efforts, with multiple CSOs operating independently in certain districts without adequate coordination. Design Outreach called for NGOs to "gang up to implement one big project with more impact" rather than working in silos. Temwa noted that "multiple NGOs duplicate efforts in the WASH sector" and called for better information-sharing systems. This lack of coordination not only leads to inefficiencies but also risks overwhelming community resources and creates confusion among beneficiaries.
3. **Under-Resourced District Government Structures:** Water Witness described a challenge shared by many: "District WASH Offices are overstretched and under-resourced to deliver on their mandates." Beyond Water Malawi has innovated around this constraint by providing resources to District Councils for JSR participation and by engaging quarterly with district technical teams. However, this model requires individual organizational initiative rather than structural government investment, an unsustainable foundation for sector-wide systems strengthening.
4. **Data Fragmentation and Platform Currency:** MWAMIS data for several operational districts was found to be severely outdated, last updated between 2018 and 2020 in some cases. Multiple CSOs operate sophisticated data management systems (Beyond Water MIS, mWater, internal platforms) that are not integrated with the national platform, creating fragmentation that impairs sector-wide analysis and resource allocation decisions.
5. **Climate Vulnerability and Infrastructure Sustainability:** Climate-related stress on water infrastructure continues to intensify. Self Help Africa flagged climate resilience and groundwater management as key 2025/26 priorities. BASEflow's groundwater monitoring work is emerging as a critical response to falling water tables in Southern Malawi. The challenge of transitioning projects from construction to sustained operational phases — particularly once donor funding concludes, was noted by several organizations.

6. **Funding Gaps and Localization:** Beyond Water Malawi's anticipated 2025/26 funding gap of MWK 164.1 million, despite achieving outstanding programmatic results, illustrates the sector-wide vulnerability of even high-performing organizations to donor funding cycles. The persistent resource gap between international and local CSOs constrains programming depth, geographic reach, and organizational sustainability. Orant Charities Africa specifically called for WESNET and government to give local and small organizations greater visibility in sector conferences and workshops to support resource mobilization.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the challenges faced by Civil Society Organizations in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene sector, and building on the achievements and lessons of 2024/25, the following key recommendations are proposed:

7. **Strengthen Mandatory CSO Reporting:** It is recommended that annual WASH performance reporting to WESNET be enforced as a requirement for all NGORA-registered WASH organizations. The introduction of a dual reporting channel, the KoBoToolbox survey and the structured CSO Report Template, has shown promise in reaching organizations that prefer narrative-based reporting. Both channels should be formally recognized and supported going forward. WESNET should also introduce data validation checks to catch and flag entry errors before aggregation.
8. **Scale the PRM Model Nationally:** BeyondWater's Professionalized Repair and Maintenance Programme, achieving 99% functionality, 81% contract renewal, and tripling Area Mechanic incomes across 638 communities, should be formally endorsed by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation as the national model for rural handpump maintenance. Development partners should fund its systematic replication across all 28 districts, building on the evidence base that Beyond Water and its partners have already generated.
9. **Finalize MWAMIS and Integrate CSO Data Systems:** Habitat for Humanity Malawi, Water For People, and others called for finalization of MWAMIS and adoption of harmonized WASH indicators. WESNET should convene a technical working group to finalize the national WASH data platform, and explore integration of CSO MIS platforms, including Beyond Water's system, with MWAMIS. This integration would immediately improve data currency and set a precedent for systematic CSO-to-national platform data flows.
10. **Formalize CSO Participation in District Planning and JSR:** CSO participation in district WASH coordination structures should be formalized by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation. WESNET should track CSO participation in district planning processes as a sector indicator. The practice demonstrated by Beyond Water Malawi, providing resources to District Councils for JSR

participation and presenting evidence at national and regional JSR meetings, should be recognized and replicated across the sector.

11. **Prioritize Climate-Resilient Water Infrastructure:** Given growing evidence of climate stress on water infrastructure, all new WASH investments should incorporate a climate vulnerability assessment at site selection. CSOs should be incentivized to adopt climate-resilient technologies including elevated handpumps, solar-powered systems, managed aquifer recharge, and the groundwater early warning approach pioneered by BASEflow.
12. **Channel 30% of CSO Budgets Through District Councils:** To improve the integration of CSO efforts with government systems and increase the long-term sustainability of WASH projects, it is recommended that 30% of CSO WASH budgets be channeled through district councils by 2027. This approach would bolster local government capabilities and ensure alignment with district development plans. Fishermans Rest Community Projects called for WESNET and CSOs to jointly lobby the Ministry of Finance for increased WASH allocations to district councils.
13. **Strengthen Localization and Local CSO Capacity:** A dedicated Local CSO Capacity Development Programme should be established, with development partner support, to address the persistent funding gap. Orant Charities Africa recommended that WESNET and government give local and small organizations greater visibility in sector conferences. An annual WASH Fair, as proposed by Gracepads, should be piloted as a platform for grassroots WASH innovators to showcase their work and connect with resources.
14. **Operationalize the WESNET–WASHTED MOU:** WESNET and WASHTED should finalize and operationalize their MOU to formalize the research-to-programming pipeline, ensuring that academic findings are systematically integrated into CSO programming, policy advocacy, and the annual CSO Performance Report.