



Action brief

# Advocacy for sustainable nutrition financing in Malawi

**Country :** Malawi

**Date :** 2023

**Themes :** Social Mobilisation, Advocacy and Communication

**Sub-themes :** Building national investment cases, supported by data and evidence, to drive nutrition advocacy



## Overview



Inadequate nutrition financing remains a challenge in Malawi. Insufficient funding for nutrition programmes perpetuates a cycle of poor nutrition status and compromised development by hindering efforts to combat malnutrition, impacting public health, hampering economic development and undermining the overall well-being and productivity of individuals and communities.



## Objectives of the action brief

This action brief seeks to highlight that effective nutrition financing plays a crucial role in implementing and scaling up nutrition interventions. Budget analysis ensures that adequate resources are available to address malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant and lactating women, and those living in poverty.



## Period covered

Following the presentation of the 2023/24 budget to the Parliament by the Ministry of Finance, the Civil Society Organizations Nutrition Alliance (CSONA) facilitated thorough budget analyses at national and district levels. These evaluations coincided with the destructive impact of Tropical Cyclone Freddy.



## What action was taken?

Budget analysis is a good practice because it employs an approach that has proven effective in achieving positive outcomes and generating sustainable development results. It depends on robust evidence, reliable data and evaluations from the budget analyses of previous years.

Acknowledging the importance of collaborating on budget analyses, CSONA involves financial experts, nutrition experts, ministries, departments, agencies and civil society organizations. These stakeholders play crucial roles in producing budget analyses for nutrition, allowing for a multidimensional perspective, the integration of technical knowledge and effective advocacy for improved resource allocation.

The budget analysis results were consolidated and presented by CSONA in collaboration with the Civil Society Agriculture Network and Oxfam to the Parliamentary Committee on Budget and Finance and the Parliamentary Committee on Nutrition, HIV and AIDS.

CSONA has been conducting budget analyses annually since 2017, and the budget allocation for nutrition has risen from less than 1 per cent of the total national budget to 1.6 per cent of the national budget. Before CSONA's nutrition budget advocacy, there was limited allocation of funds towards nutrition, and this barred the office of the

Principal Nutrition HIV and AIDS Officer from effectively coordinating and implementing nutrition interventions.

Thanks to CSONA's advocacy initiatives – such as lobby meetings with government ministries and departments, the production of position papers on the importance of increased nutrition investment, media engagement to garner support for increased investment, and the production of policy briefs – the Government has created a dedicated and protected cost centre for nutrition at the district level. Typically, this cost centre is a designated budget focused on all nutrition-related activities and initiatives.

Establishing a dedicated cost centre for nutrition is a sustainable development because:

- It shows a commitment to addressing malnutrition as a priority and allows for more focused attention and resources to be directed towards nutrition-related activities, interventions and programmes.
- There is assurance that the Government will always allocate resources more efficiently and effectively towards addressing malnutrition and improving nutrition coordination

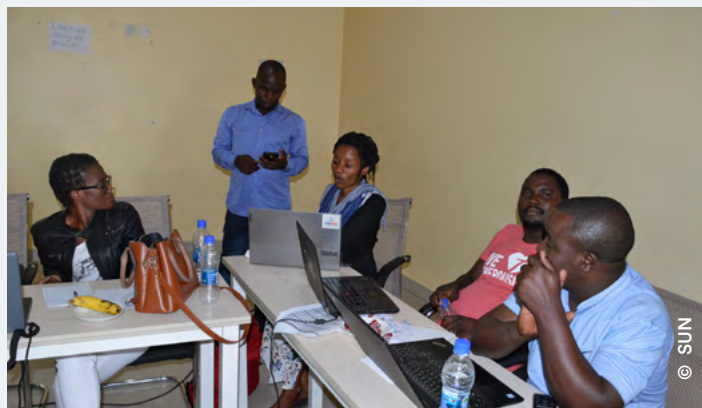


## What would the country do differently?

Two things that could have been done differently would have been to gather in advance all necessary documents useful for budget analysis activities and to conduct budget advocacy at all points of the budget cycle, from formulation to implementation.

The greatest challenge in this year's budget analysis was the devastating Tropical Cyclone Freddy, which heavily disrupted normal activities in the country and affected the allocation of resources to many programmes, including those in the nutrition sector. Ongoing efforts include urging the Government to ensure that disaster preparedness – including nutrition emergency support – is in place. CSONA joined other civil society

organizations in urging the Government to enact a disaster risk management bill and review the disaster risk management policy.





## Adaptation and Applicability

**Building a compelling case by gathering evidence and data on the nutritional situation in the country, the impact of malnutrition on health and economic development, and the potential returns on investing in nutrition is useful in demonstrating the urgent need for increased financing and the long-term benefits it can bring.**

**It is of paramount importance to understand the audience of the advocacy by conducting a power mapping and analysing their interests, as these will be points of entry.**

**If advocacy does not work, conduct an evaluation of what challenge has been met, what went wrong and how it could be done differently. Find out what other avenues can be explored and consider changing the methodology used.**

**It is key to consider the importance of political will in any new setting. Understand the political landscape, policies and regulations related to food, nutrition and health. Advocate for evidence-based policies and interventions aligned with local priorities. Engage with policymakers, government agencies and stakeholders to promote sustainable nutrition financing.**



## Next steps

- Engage policymakers and government officials to secure their commitments to prioritizing nutrition and allocating adequate financial resources.
- Advocate for nutrition to be recognized as a cross-cutting issue that requires multisectoral collaboration and investment.
- Enhance capacities to collect nutrition data, track progress and assess the impacts of interventions. This data will support evidence-based decision-making, resource allocation and advocacy efforts.



## Further information



[https://cadrtogo.org/article/192804183601-mise-https://open.substack.com/pub/africabrief/p/civil-society-organizations-advocate?utm\\_source=direct&r=1nyd8x&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=email](https://cadrtogo.org/article/192804183601-mise-https://open.substack.com/pub/africabrief/p/civil-society-organizations-advocate?utm_source=direct&r=1nyd8x&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email)



[https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7063573494235578368?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_android](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7063573494235578368?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android)



This Good Practice was developed in collaboration with the SUN Civil Society Network (SUN CSN). For more information about the SUN CSN, please visit their website: <https://www.suncivilsociety.com/>

Scaling Up  
NUTRITION

Civil Society Network

ENGAGE • INSPIRE • INVEST