



Investing in Malawi's Future

A Guide for Family
Planning Budget
Advocacy



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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is a resource for anyone involved in family planning budget advocacy in Malawi. It contains key messages and talking points for use by Members of Parliament, civil society organizations, youth, ward councilors, and other stakeholders. Each message is followed by key talking points that advocates can use to support their arguments.

BACKGROUND



Malawi's Rapidly Growing Population



Malawi is experiencing rapid population growth—the result of continued high fertility rates and lower mortality rates. Rapid population growth is significantly affecting Malawi's ability to meet basic health, education, agriculture, and economic needs.

Malawi had a total population of 17.5 million in 2018, a **35%** increase from 2008.¹

If the present rate of growth continues, Malawi's population will be almost **43 million people** by 2050.²

Malawian women bear an average of **four or five children** each.

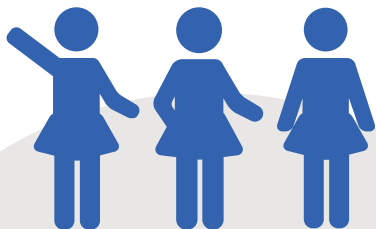
Yet, **couples in Malawi want smaller families**—on average, between three and four children. Strong family planning programs can help couples achieve this.

1. NSO, 2019

2. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and University of Malawi, Chancellor College, 2017

Malawi's Young Population

2 in 3 Malawians
are under the age of 24.



There are an estimated 3.7 million young people 15–24 years of age in Malawi.³ Investment in their health, education, and economic opportunities will dramatically influence Malawi's future.

Girls and young women

Girls and young women face significant challenges. **47%** face early or forced marriage before 18 years of age, and nearly **1 in 3** adolescents ages 15–19 have begun childbearing. Of those, **46%** gave birth before their 18th birthday.³

More than **1 in 3** pregnancies among women and girls ages 15–24 were mistimed—they were wanted later.³

Just **1 in 3** women ages 15–24 are using contraception.³

More than half of sexually active unmarried women ages 15–19 want to avoid becoming pregnant in the next two years but are not using family planning.⁴

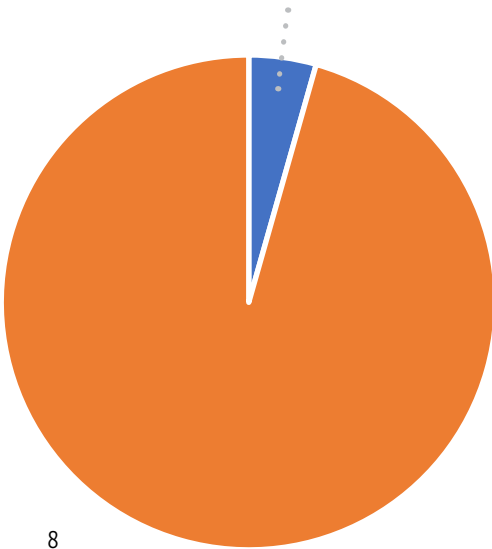
3. NSO and ICF, 2017

4. ICF, 2015



Malawi Needs More Domestic Funding for Family Planning

The 2019/20 national (domestic) budget allocation for family planning commodities is only **4.6%** of total projected need (2020).



Donor reliance: In 2017/18, 75% of the health budget came from donors, compared to **25%** from the government.⁵

Domestic resources: A dedicated national budget line item for family planning commodities was established in 2013. It has grown steadily, but too slowly—in 2020, it was only **4.6%** of projected need.⁶ There is also no dedicated line item for other family planning program costs.

District level: The gains made at the national level are not being mirrored at the district level—most districts still do not budget for family planning.

5. Government of Malawi, 2018

6. Calculations were made using the Family Planning CIP Costing Tool (Health Policy Plus, 2017), based on population projections and current international prices for family planning commodities, and the national budget for FY 2019/20. Cost does not account for inflation nor for freight, handling, or distribution costs.

Increase Budget Allocations for Family Planning⁷



By 2030, over **3.6 million** women will need contraceptive commodities to meet their reproductive intentions.

Meeting this need will cost **US\$9.2 million**—the cost of commodities alone, not taking other family planning program needs into account.⁸

Annual increases in the national family planning budget line item will help Malawi meet this need.

7. Calculations were made using the Family Planning CIP Costing Tool (Health Policy Plus, 2017), based on population projections and current international prices for family planning commodities.

8. Cost does not account for inflation nor for freight, handling, or distribution costs.

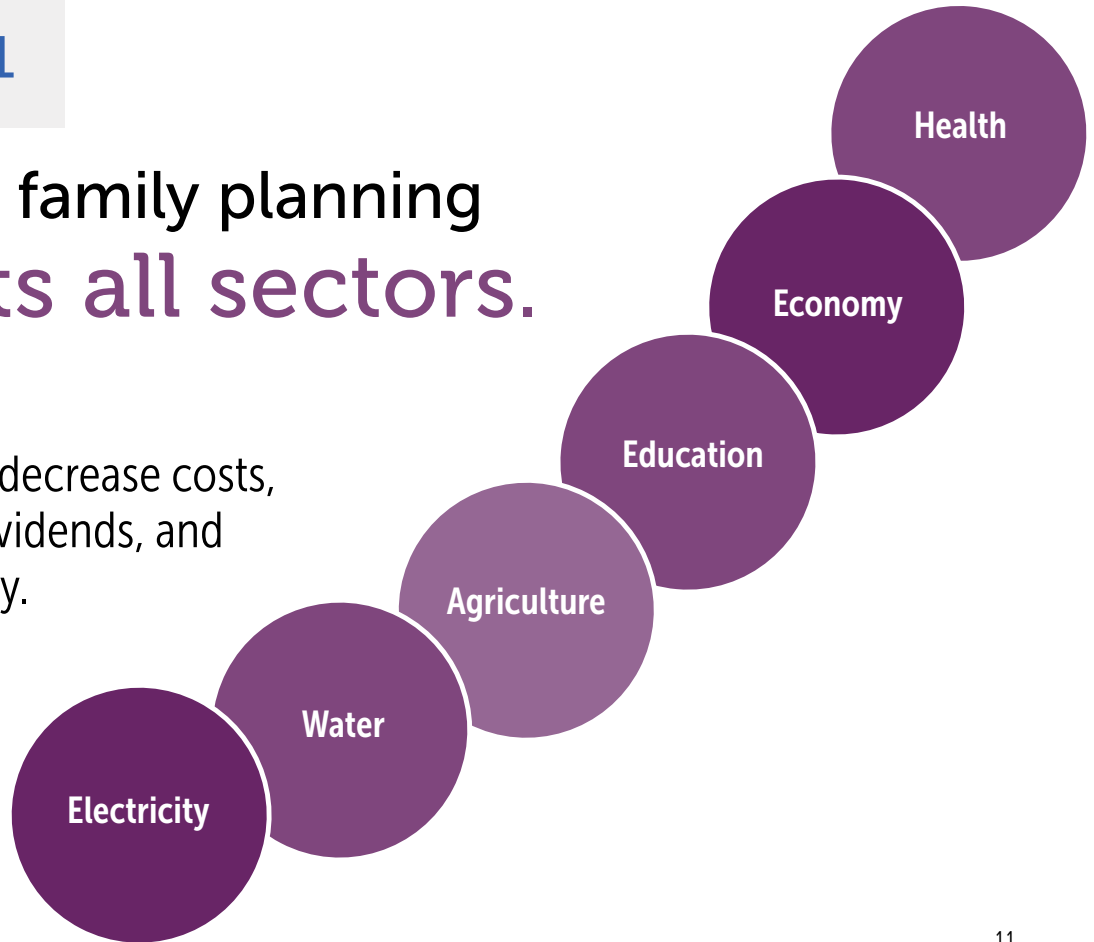
MESSAGES



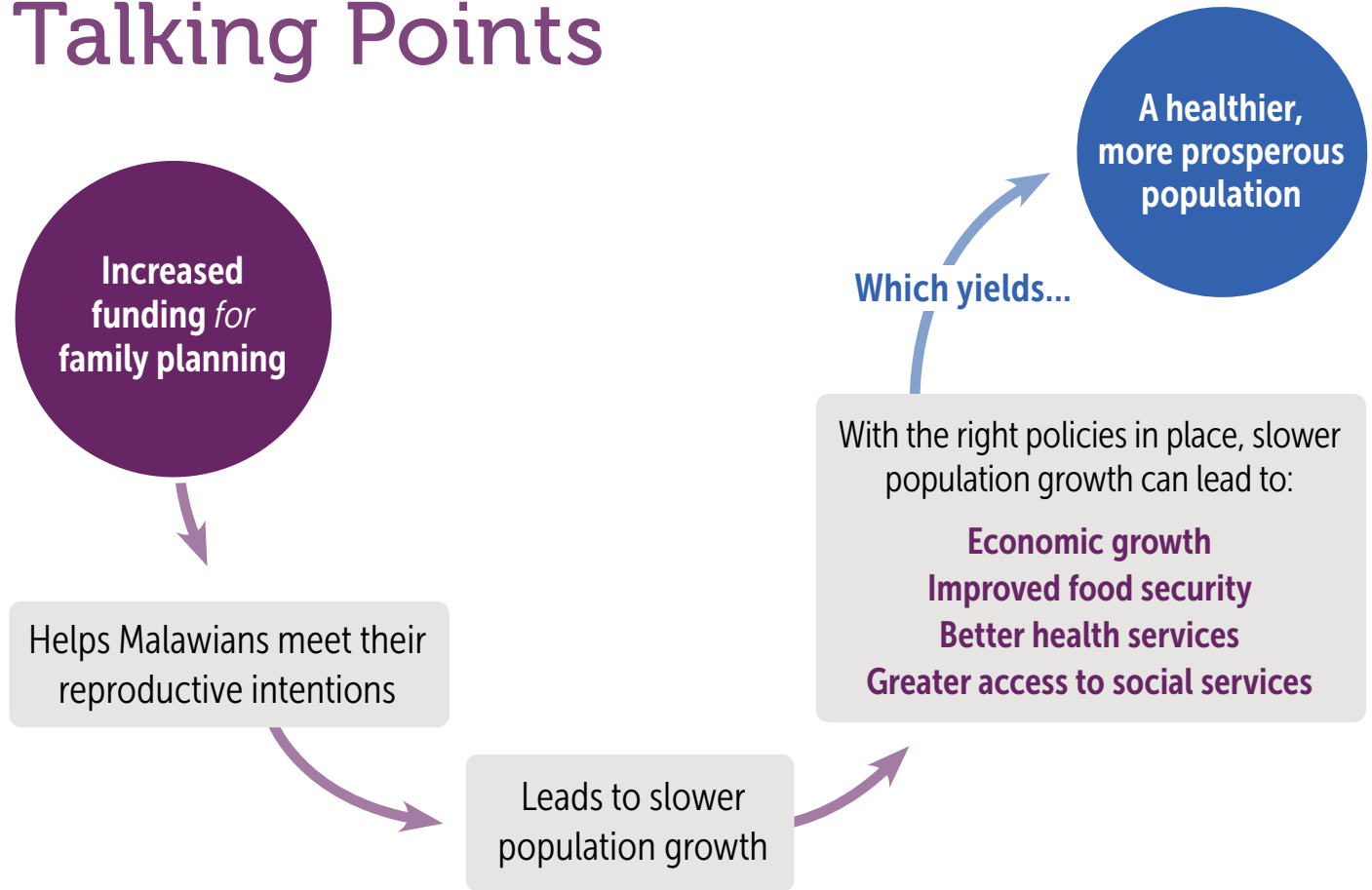
MESSAGE #1


Investing in family planning benefits all sectors.

Such investments decrease costs,
yield economic dividends, and
promote prosperity.



Talking Points





Helping women and couples delay and space their pregnancies through comprehensive family planning *results in...*

- Reduced maternal mortality and morbidity
- Healthier infants and children
- Lower health and education expenditures
- Fewer people left without electricity
- Greater access to clean water
- Less urbanization
- Improved food security
- Better economic opportunities for today's youth

MESSAGE #2

Investing in family planning
saves money
across several sectors.

Increased investments in voluntary
family planning programs will help
improve social services.



Talking Points

If Malawi continues to invest in family planning and succeeds in reducing the fertility rate to 2.3 by 2050, the country would:⁹

Save US\$10.9 billion in recurrent health expenditure

Save US\$1.7 billion in recurrent education expenditure

See a 25% increase in individual incomes

9. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and University of Malawi, Chancellor College, 2017

District-level benefits include the following:

Savings on human resources in the health and education sectors

- Fewer community health workers needed
- Fewer primary school teachers needed
- Fewer primary schools will need to be built

Reduced pressure on land and agriculture—lower population density will preserve water and other natural resources and may increase crop yields

Improved quality and availability of education, health, and other services

MESSAGE #3

Family planning guarantees a **return on investment**;
each dollar today will
pay off many times over
in the future.

Increased access to, and use of, voluntary
family planning will help Malawi
reach its development goals.



Talking Points

Investing in family planning can:

Accelerate economic growth,
leading to **greater prosperity**

- Over the next 30 years, smaller families alone could increase Malawi's gross domestic product by 25%.

Yield returns far larger than
the initial investment

- Investing US\$1 in meeting unmet need for contraceptives can yield \$120 in long-term benefits.¹⁰
- For each additional \$1 spent on contraceptive services, the cost of pregnancy-related care would drop by \$2.20.¹¹

District-level benefits include:

More resources available
to invest in:

- Improving the availability and quality of health and education services
- Infrastructure
- Expanding access to clean water and electricity

Increased **economic opportunities** for youth

10. FP2020, 2018

11. Guttmacher Institute, 2017

MESSAGE #4

Districts are key
to improving access to quality
family planning services.

District family planning budget
allocations are essential to ensure
that quality family planning
services reach all Malawians.



Talking Points

Budgeting at the district level will have the most direct impact on improving access to quality family planning services.

National resources can support commodities and health system improvements, but districts are where services are prioritized and managed. Districts are responsible for tailoring health services to meet the needs of the community.

Members of Parliament play a vital role in advocating to ensure adequate resources for family planning—both at the national level and within their districts.



Take Action

National Level

- Increase budget allocation for family planning, prioritizing service delivery and improving how funds are spent.
- Expand the family planning commodities budget line item to include other family planning program activities.

District Level

- Integrate family planning into district development plans (DDPs) and district implementation plans (DIPs).
- Create dedicated budget line items for family planning in district budgets and use them to allocate resources to support family planning.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Health
- Education
- Economy
- Agriculture
- Family Planning
Year-Round Budget
Advocacy

This section includes additional information on current issues and priorities—supporting evidence for the advocacy messages presented in the guide.

Health

Investing in family planning will help Malawi move toward universal health coverage and reach the goals outlined in the third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and the second Health Sector Strategic Plan for 2017–2022.



Decreasing the fertility rate from 4.4 to 2.3 by 2050 could result in:¹²

- **Lower health spending**—US\$10.86 billion would be saved between 2020 and 2050—resources that could be used to improve the availability and quality of health services
- **Reduced human resource shortages**—8,978 fewer health professionals will be needed
- **Infrastructure savings**—371 fewer hospitals and health centers will need to be built

Education is "...a catalyst for socioeconomic development, industrial growth, and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak, and the voiceless."

— Ministry of Education,
Science and Technology,
National Education Sector
Plan 2008-2017, p. 3

Education

Education is key to Malawi's socioeconomic development. Slowing population growth will ease pressure on the education system, enabling improvement in the quality, availability, and relevance of the system—reducing dropout rates and promoting effective learning.

If Malawi's population continues growing at the current rate, the number of primary and secondary school pupils is projected to more than double by 2050—a daunting prospect, as Malawi is already struggling with "one of the world's most dramatic teacher shortages" and an education system in need of vast infrastructure improvements.¹³

Decreasing the fertility rate from 4.4 to 2.3 by 2050 could result in:¹⁴

- **A savings of US\$1.7 billion** between 2015 and 2050, which could be used to improve the pupil-to-teacher ratio, build new schools, and improve existing infrastructure
- **3.6 million fewer pupils** to educate
- **Reduced teacher shortages—96,000 fewer** additional teachers would be needed
- **7,000 fewer schools** that would need to be built

13. UNESCO, n.d., p. 2

14. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and University of Malawi, Chancellor College, 2017

Economy

“Smaller family sizes make it much easier for parents to lift their families out of poverty.”

— Third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, 2017-2022, p. 16

Slowing population growth can accelerate economic growth.

Decreasing the fertility rate from 4.4 to 2.3 by 2050 could result in:¹⁵

- **Higher incomes**—It is estimated that, over the next 30 years, Malawi’s gross domestic product could increase by 25% as a result of smaller families alone.
- **Lower unemployment**—With rapid population growth, many new jobs must be created each year to support youth entering the labor force and avoid increases in unemployment and underemployment.
- **Higher productivity**—Improvements in the availability and quality of education, health, and other social services yield economic benefits by increasing workforce productivity and skill levels and freeing up resources.

Malawi's agriculture sector:

- Generates 30% of the country's gross domestic product
- Employs 64.1% of the labor force¹⁶
- Is critical to food security

Agriculture

Slowing population growth reduces pressure on land and agriculture, increasing the per capita availability of arable land and strengthening food security. A key goal of Malawi's Third Growth and Development Strategy is "sustainable agricultural transformation and water development that is adaptive to climate change and enhances ecosystem services" (p. 34).

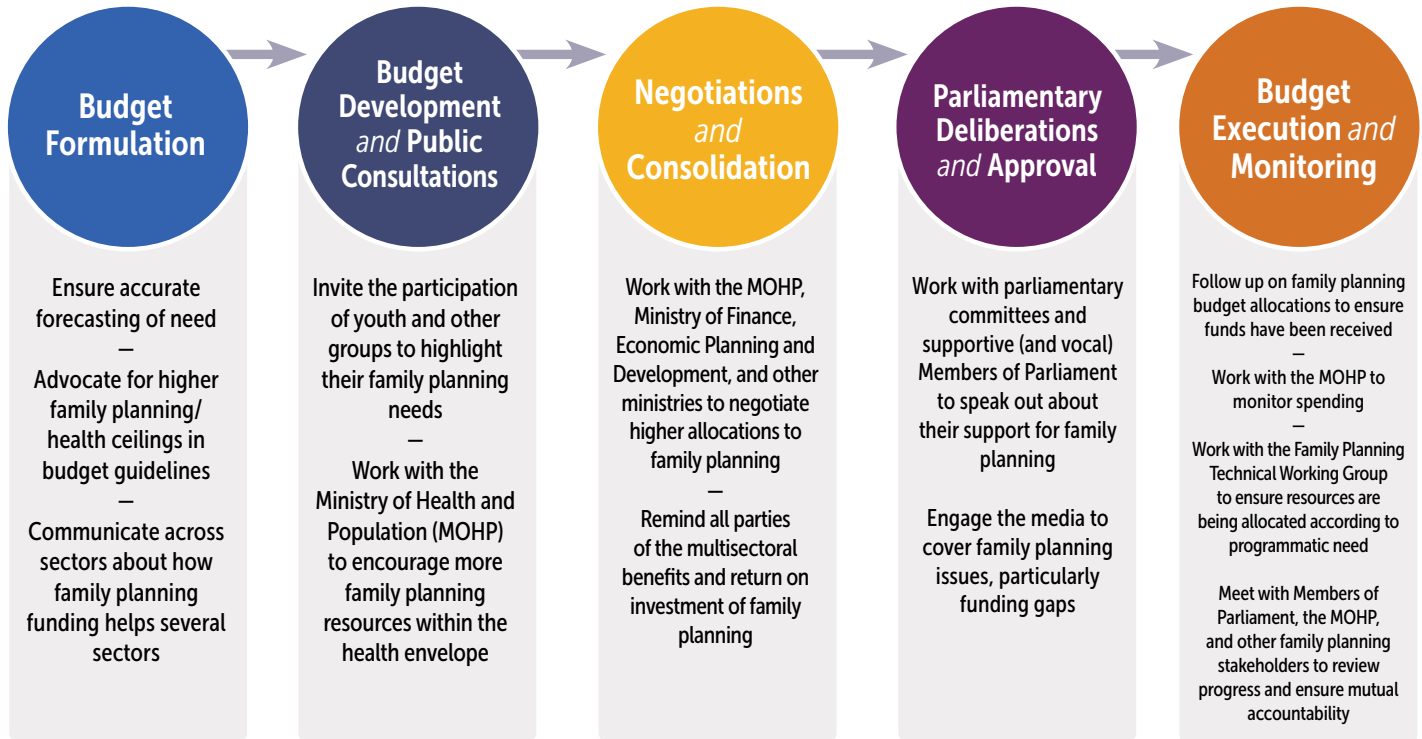
Decreasing the fertility rate from 4.4 to 2.3 by 2050 could result in:¹⁷

- **30% more** arable land per capita
- **Improved food security**—food production must increase at the same pace as population growth to avoid shortfalls; by 2050, Malawi will need 14 million fewer metric tons of maize if the fertility rate falls to 2.3

16. Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, 2016

17. Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and University of Malawi, Chancellor College, 2017

Family Planning Budget Advocacy Year-Round



A photograph of four young children of African descent lying on their stomachs on a sandy beach. They are all smiling broadly and resting their heads on their hands. In the background, a large, weathered wooden log or piece of driftwood is visible on the sand. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

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