



GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

Poverty and Inequality Report

Evidence from the Sixth Integrated Household Survey
(IHS6), 2024/25

National Statistical Office
Government of Malawi

June 2026

Monetary poverty, ultra-poverty, consumption welfare and inequality





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The Commissioner of Statistics
National Statistical Office
Off Chimbiya Road, P. O. Box 333, Zomba, Malawi
Website: www.nsomalawi.mw
Email: commissioner@nso.gov.mw

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present the *Poverty and Inequality Report: Evidence from the Sixth Integrated Household Survey (IHS6), 2024/25*. This report provides an updated assessment of poverty and inequality in Malawi and serves as an important evidence base for policy formulation, development planning and resource allocation. At a time when Government is implementing the National Economic Recovery Plan (NERP), the findings of this report provide valuable insights into the socio-economic challenges facing our country and reinforce the need for targeted and evidence-based interventions.



The report shows that while progress has been made in reducing overall poverty, significant challenges remain, particularly with respect to ultra-poverty and inequality. These findings highlight the need to accelerate reforms that stimulate economic growth, expand productive employment, strengthen food security, build resilience and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable households. They also provide an important baseline against which the impact of Government's interventions under the National Economic Recovery Plan can be measured over time.

The Government's vision is not merely to reduce poverty statistics, but to transform the economic conditions that create poverty. Through the National Economic Recovery Plan, we are pursuing reforms that restore macroeconomic stability, promote investment and industrialization, strengthen productive sectors, expand economic opportunities and improve the welfare of all Malawians. The evidence presented in this report will remain central to monitoring our progress and ensuring that our policies continue to respond to the realities and aspirations of our people.

I commend the National Statistical Office for successfully undertaking the Sixth Integrated Household Survey and producing this comprehensive report. I also express my sincere appreciation to the World Bank, the LSMS Team and all cooperating partners whose financial and technical support made this important work possible. Their continued commitment to strengthening Malawi's National Statistical System is greatly appreciated.

I encourage policymakers, development partners, researchers and all stakeholders to make full use of the evidence presented in this report. By grounding our decisions in credible data and rigorous analysis, we can collectively design more effective policies and interventions that contribute to the realization of Malawi 2063 and a more prosperous, inclusive and resilient Malawi.

Cliff Chiunda, PhD

Secretary to the Treasury

PREFACE

I am pleased to present the Poverty and Inequality Report based on the 2024/25 Malawi poverty estimates. These estimates are based on data from the Sixth Integrated Household Survey (IHS6), conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) over a twelve-month period from July 2024 to July 2025. The IHS is a comprehensive, multi-topic survey carried out every three to five years and is designed to generate timely and reliable information on key welfare and socio-economic indicators. These indicators play a critical role in tracking progress and informing the monitoring of national and global development agendas, including Malawi 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



In addition, the survey gathers detailed information on household consumption patterns, covering both food and non-food expenditures throughout the year. This rich dataset supports in-depth analysis and the construction of the country's poverty profile. The resulting poverty estimates provide an essential foundation for the Government and other stakeholders to design and implement effective economic and social policies that support Malawi's development.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Malawi and to all stakeholders whose commitment and professionalism contributed to the successful implementation of the survey and the preparation of this report. I am particularly grateful to the World Bank, through the Statistical Capacity Building (StatCap) Project and the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS) team, for the financial and technical support provided throughout the implementation of the Sixth Integrated Household Survey, which provides the data used to estimate the poverty rates presented in this report.

Shelton KANYANDA

Commissioner of Statistics

ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Meaning
CBN	Cost of Basic Needs
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
CPI	Consumer Price Index
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGT	Foster-Greer-Thorbecke poverty measures
FPL	Food Poverty Line / Ultra-Poverty Line
GE	Generalized Entropy
IHS5	Fifth Integrated Household Survey, 2019/20
IHS6	Sixth Integrated Household Survey, 2024/25
kcal	kilocalories
LSMS	Living Standards Measurement Study
MWK	Malawi kwacha
NCT	Nutrient Conversion Table
NSO	National Statistical Office
p.p.	percentage points
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
StatCap	Statistical Capacity Building Project
TPL	Total Poverty Line
UNU	United Nations University
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sixth Integrated Household Survey (IHS6), implemented in 2024/25, provides the newest official evidence on monetary poverty, inequality and living standards in Malawi. The report follows the Cost of Basic Needs approach and draws on the welfare-measurement literature associated with Ravallion (1994), Deaton and Zaidi (2002), Mancini and Vecchi (2022), and the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke poverty-measurement framework (Foster, Greer and Thorbecke, 1984).

The national poverty headcount in IHS6 is estimated at **47.3 percent**. This is lower than the IHS5 estimate of **50.7 percent**, implying a decline of **3.4 percentage points** between 2019/20 and 2024/25. The ultra-poverty headcount, however, increased from **20.5 percent** in IHS5 to **24.0 percent** in IHS6.

The food poverty line represented a larger share of the total poverty line in IHS6 (68.5 percent) than in IHS5 (61.1 percent). This places the food-poverty threshold closer to the total poverty line and helps explain mechanistically how food poverty can rise even when the total poverty headcount falls.

This should not be interpreted as a uniform improvement in welfare. The poverty headcount is an average measure: some households moved above the to-

tal poverty line, while food hardship worsened among more vulnerable households.

Poverty remains overwhelmingly rural. In IHS6, rural poverty is **52.6 percent**, compared with **20.9 percent** in urban areas. Regionally, the Southern Region has the highest poverty rate at **55.8 percent**; the Northern and Central Regions are lower, at **41.0 percent** and **40.4 percent**. Rural South is the most deprived rural domain, with poverty of **62.3 percent** and ultra-poverty of **35.0 percent**.

The poverty gap measures the average shortfall from the poverty line, counting people above the line as having zero shortfall. It declined from **17.0 percent** in IHS5 to **15.7 percent** in IHS6. The squared poverty gap, which gives greater weight to people furthest below the line, also declined, from **7.6 percent** to **7.1 percent**.

At the same time, the ultra-poverty gap increased from **4.8 percent** to **6.4 percent**, while the squared ultra-poverty gap increased from **1.7 percent** to **2.5 percent**. These results confirm that the food-poverty dimension deteriorated even as the total poverty headcount fell. The Gini index increased from **37.9** to **39.9**, pointing to a modest increase in consumption inequality.

Table 1: Results summary

Indicator	IHS5 (2019/20)	IHS6 (2024/25)	Change
Poverty headcount (%)	50.7	47.3	-3.4 p.p.
Ultra-poverty headcount (%)	20.5	24.0	+3.5 p.p.
Poverty gap (%)	17.0	15.7	-1.3 p.p.
Squared poverty gap (%)	7.6	7.1	-0.5 p.p.
Ultra-poverty gap (%)	4.8	6.4	+1.6 p.p.
Squared ultra-poverty gap (%)	1.7	2.5	+0.8 p.p.
Gini index	37.9	39.9	+2.0 points
Total poverty line	MWK 454.5/day	MWK 1,562.6/day	Nominal lines; not a direct welfare comparison
Food poverty line	MWK 277.5/day	MWK 1,071.1/day	Nominal lines; not a direct welfare comparison

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6.

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The Poverty and Inequality Report updates the official poverty profile using data from the Sixth Integrated Household Survey, IHS6. As in previous Malawi poverty reports, the analysis proceeds in two steps. First, a consumption-based welfare indicator is constructed for each household and expressed per person. Second, this welfare indicator is compared with a monetary poverty line that represents the cost of meeting basic food and non-food needs.

The report is intended for policymakers, technical users, and the public. The IHS6 estimates will serve as the benchmark for poverty monitoring until the next integrated household survey.

The IHS6 poverty results should be read with three central messages. First, the national poverty head-count declined moderately compared with IHS5. Second, food poverty, also referred to as ultra-poverty, increased, indicating greater stress around the food poverty line. Third, spatial disparities remain large, with rural areas and districts in the Southern Region carrying a disproportionate burden of poverty.

This report measures monetary poverty. It does not claim to measure every dimension of well-being. Monetary poverty focuses on whether people have enough material resources to obtain the basic goods and services that normally require money. Other important dimensions of well-being, such as education quality, health outcomes, safety, empowerment, and vulnerability to shocks, should be studied alongside monetary poverty but are not all captured by the poverty rate.

THE IHS6 SURVEY AND WELFARE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

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2.1 Survey coverage and weighting

The IHS6 is a nationally representative integrated household survey. The poverty estimates are based on 12,502 households in the final poverty estimation file. The survey design defines 32 strata and 782 primary sampling units, and the survey-weighted population represented in the headcount estimation is 20,735,285 persons.

Poverty rates in this report are person-weighted. This means that each household's poverty status is assigned to all members of that household, and the household sampling weight is multiplied by household size. For this reason, the report presents the share of people living in poverty, not simply the share of households that are poor.

2.2 Why consumption is used as the welfare indicator

The report measures material welfare using real per capita consumption. In simple terms, this is the value of what a household consumes, adjusted for household size and for differences in prices across places and months.

Consumption is preferred to income for poverty measurement in Malawi because many households rely on informal work, farming, own production, seasonal activities, and self-employment. In these settings, income can be difficult to measure accurately and can vary sharply across the year. Consumption is usually a more stable and reliable measure of living standards.

The theoretical basis is the money-metric approach to welfare. Households choose goods and services based on the prices they face and the resources available to them. Valuing what households actually consume at relevant market prices provides a monetary measure of material welfare that can be compared across households once price differences are taken into account.

The welfare measure includes purchased goods and services, but it also includes items households consume without paying cash at the time of consumption. For example, maize grown and eaten by a household is included because it has value even if it was not purchased in a market. Similarly, the value of living in one's own house and the annual use value of durable goods are included because they provide real services to the household.

The key idea is that consumption should reflect the value of goods and services households actually use. Purchased goods are valued using what households paid. Own-produced food, gifts, housing, and

durable goods are valued using market or opportunity values, so that households are compared fairly.

2.3 The Cost of Basic Needs framework

The poverty line is constructed using the Cost of Basic Needs approach. This method asks a practical question: how much does a person need to spend each day to meet basic food needs and a minimum level of essential non-food needs?

The first step is to estimate the cost of a food basket that provides Malawi's minimum food-energy requirement of 2,215 kilocalories per person per day. This gives the food poverty line. The second step is to add an allowance for basic non-food needs, such as clothing, soap, transport, schooling-related costs, utilities, and other essential items. The sum of the food poverty line and the non-food allowance gives the total poverty line.

The food poverty line is also the ultra-poverty line. In this report, the term "food poverty" is used because it is easier to understand, while "ultra-poverty" is retained because it is the term used in previous Malawi poverty reports.

For IHS6, the food poverty line is MWK 1,071.1 per person per day. The non-food allowance is MWK 491.5 per person per day. The total poverty line is therefore MWK 1,562.6 per person per day. People whose household's real per capita consumption is below the total poverty line are counted as poor. People whose household's real per capita consumption is below the food poverty line are counted as food-poor, or ultra-poor.

The poverty line is absolute, meaning that it represents a fixed basic-needs standard. However, because prices differ across locations and over time, household consumption is adjusted before comparison with the poverty line. This ensures that people with the same real standard of living are treated consistently, regardless of where or when they were interviewed.

3.1 Welfare indicator: consumption aggregates

The IHS6 welfare indicator is real per capita household consumption. It measures the annual value of goods and services consumed by household members, including purchased items, own-produced food consumed by the household, gifts and other in-kind sources, the annual service value of durable goods, and housing services. The aggregate is not limited to cash expenditures. It aims to measure the value of what households actually use, valued at reported transaction prices where available and at defensible market or opportunity values where no cash transaction occurred. The household aggregate is deflated for spatial and temporal price differences and divided by household size so that poverty rates describe shares of people, not shares of households. The purpose of the consumption aggregate is to rank people from lower to higher material living standards using a comparable measure.

3.1.1 Food consumption

Food consumption is one of the most important components of welfare in Malawi. The food module covers 153 food items grouped into categories such as cereals, roots and tubers, pulses, vegetables, meat and fish, fruits, milk products, oils, sugar, beverages, cooked food, and other items. It records consumption from purchases, own production, gifts, and other sources during the previous seven days. Quantities reported in local or nonstandard units were converted to kilograms using the IHS6 conversion-factor file.¹ Free-text “other specify” responses were reviewed and manually matched to standard food items where possible, to recover as much valid consumption as possible. Where no defensible item, price, or calorie conversion could be established, the record was not forced into the food basket. Vendor foods with valid calorie conversion factors were included in food welfare and in the food basket. Restaurant and other vendor items without calorie conversion factors were retained in total welfare and in the non-food side of the Ravallion allowance, but excluded from the calorie-based food basket.

For purchased foods, the value is based on reported expenditure. For non-purchased foods, values are assigned using market-based unit values from similar transactions. Median unit values are used to reduce the influence of unusual prices or quality differences. When possible, prices are matched to the same item, location, and survey period. When too few observations are available at that level, prices from a broader but comparable level are used.

Households were allowed to report food quantities in local and nonstandard units, such as heaps, tins,

¹The conversion-factor file maps local and nonstandard units such as heaps, tins, cups, plates, bottles and pieces into kilograms. This makes quantities comparable before calories and values are calculated.

cups, plates, bottles, or pieces. These quantities were converted into kilograms using updated conversion factors. This step is essential because quantities must be in comparable units before calories, prices, and food values can be calculated.

The construction process also checks that the reported total food consumed is consistent with the amounts coming from purchases, own production, and gifts or other sources. When total consumption was reported but source details were incomplete, the total was retained as the best measure of actual consumption. When source information was more complete and internally consistent, it was used to support valuation and consistency checks.

Some food items, especially broad “other specify” categories, may not have enough reliable price or calorie information. Where a defensible price or calorie conversion could not be established, the methodology avoids creating artificial values. This is preferable to forcing uncertain values into the food basket.

Food eaten away from home and vendor foods are treated carefully. Vendor foods with valid calorie conversion factors are included in the food welfare component and can contribute to the food basket. Restaurant or vendor items without reliable calorie factors are included in total consumption where their value is observed, but they are not forced into the calorie-based food basket. This preserves consistency between the calorie requirement and the food poverty line.

3.1.2 Non-food consumption

The non-food component includes recurrent spending on goods and services such as education, health care, utilities, transport, clothing and footwear, communication, personal care, recreation, and other regular household needs. These items are collected using different recall periods depending on how often they are normally purchased. For example, some items are reported for the past week, others for the past month, three months, or year. All values are converted to annual amounts before aggregation.

Some expenditures are excluded because they do not represent regular household consumption. These include lumpy or irregular events such as weddings, funerals, and births; transfers to other households; and dwelling repairs or improvements that are better captured through the value of housing services.

Unlike food, most non-food items do not have meaningful unit values. A medicine, a transport trip, a school expense, or a phone service can differ greatly in quality and purpose. For this reason, the non-food component relies mainly on reported expenditure values rather than constructed unit prices.

Durable goods

Durable goods provide services over several years, so the aggregate includes their estimated annual service value rather than the full purchase price in the year of acquisition. The durable-goods module records current value, age, and quantity owned for selected assets. Where purchase-price histories are unavailable, the reported current value is used, after plausibility checks, as the best available proxy for the asset value.

For each item, expected lifetime is based on the observed duration of that type of good in the survey. Remaining service life is calculated as expected lifetime minus current age, with a minimum remaining life imposed where necessary to avoid implausible values. The annual service value is then calculated as current value divided by remaining service life. Reported values and ages are checked for implausible outliers, and assets used primarily for business purposes are excluded from household consumption.

Housing Services

Housing is also treated as a service that households consume over time. For households that rent their dwelling, reported rent is used as the starting point. For households that do not pay rent, including owner-occupiers, the value of housing services must be estimated.

This is important because otherwise the welfare of households living in their own homes would be understated relative to renters. The IHS6 approach estimates a rental-equivalent value using housing characteristics such as the number of rooms, wall and roof materials, floor type, water source, sanitation, electricity access, location, and survey timing. This makes housing values more comparable across households.

The rental-equivalent value is estimated using a hedonic rental model. The model relates rent to observable housing characteristics and location. Predicted rental values are estimated in logarithmic form and then converted back to levels.² Reported and predicted rental values are then checked for implausible outliers before entering the consumption aggregate.

3.2 Robust construction and quality checks

The construction process follows a robust-consistency approach rather than mechanical data deletion. The objective was to correct clear reporting, unit-conversion, and valuation inconsistencies while preserving genuine variation in living standards. Outlier checks were applied to unit values, food quantities, purchased food expenditures, non-food expenditures, durable-goods inputs, and imputed rents within relevant item, location, and time cells. Implausible extremes were top- or bottom-coded to cell-specific bounds where defensible; records were dropped only when they lacked the information needed to construct a valid value and no defensible imputation was available. The final welfare aggregate was checked against the COICOP component totals before poverty estimation.

For food, this means checking that quantities and values are plausible, converting local units to kilograms, using median prices, and avoiding artificial values where no defensible information exists. For non-food items, it means checking expenditure values within relevant groups and adjusting clear outliers. For durable goods and housing, it means estimating annual service values rather than using raw purchase or construction values.

This approach is consistent with the principle that poverty estimates should not be driven by a small

²A hedonic rental model predicts rental-equivalent values for owner-occupied and rent-free dwellings from observed rents and housing characteristics, so that housing services are included consistently across renters and non-renters.

number of implausible reports, but also should not erase genuine variation in household living standards.

3.3 Adjusting for cost-of-living differences

For poverty analysis based on household survey data, nominal consumption must be adjusted for differences in the cost of living across both time and space. A kwacha does not buy the same amount of goods in every month or in every part of the country. These adjustments ensure that welfare comparisons reflect differences in real living standards, rather than differences in prices.

3.3.1 Temporal adjustment

Temporal adjustment accounts for price changes during the survey fieldwork period. Because IHS6 was collected over several months, consumption reported by households interviewed in different months must be expressed in a common price base. In IHS6, household consumption is expressed in prices corresponding to the July–August 2024 reference period, which represents the beginning of survey implementation.

The temporal food price index is constructed using unit values derived from the household survey. For each urban and rural-region domain, a fixed food basket is tracked over the survey months. This gives a Laspeyres-style temporal food index, because the weights represent a fixed basket rather than changing household-specific consumption patterns.

For non-food items, official Consumer Price Index data are used. The non-food index is also normalized to the July–August 2024 base period. The food and non-food temporal indices are then combined using IHS6 survey budget shares, so that the overall temporal deflator reflects the consumption structure observed in the survey.

3.3.2 Spatial adjustment

Spatial adjustment accounts for cost-of-living differences across geographic areas. This matters because prices differ between urban and rural areas and across regions. Without this adjustment, households in lower-price areas and higher-price areas would not be compared on the same real basis.

For food, the spatial adjustment uses a Laspeyres-style common-basket index. In practical terms, the same national food basket is priced in each urban and rural-region domain. Food price differences are measured by comparing regional median prices with national median prices for the same items. National item weights are applied to all regions, so the index compares the cost of the same basket across areas.

Before constructing the index, extreme relative prices are treated to reduce the influence of reporting errors, unit-conversion problems, or implausible unit values. Basket coverage is checked by region after excluding invalid item-region cells. In the final construction, coverage exceeded 90 percent in all four urban/rural-region domains, supporting the reliability of the spatial food index.

For non-food items, spatial price differences are captured using CPI-based non-food price information. The food and non-food spatial indices are then combined using survey-based budget shares.

In IHS6, the national budget shares used in the combined price index are 64.8 percent for food and 35.2 percent for non-food. These are budget weights used to combine the food and non-food price indices. They differ from the 61.3 percent food and 38.7 percent non-food shares reported in Table C.2, which describe the observed composition of person-weighted nominal annual consumption per person. The price-index construction applies its own food and non-food classification, including the specified treatment of beverages, alcohol, and restaurant or vendor items. Food shares are higher in rural areas than in urban areas, reflecting the greater importance of food in rural household budgets.

3.3.3 Combined price adjustment

The temporal and spatial adjustments are combined into a single price index. The final welfare measure is therefore real per capita consumption: total household consumption divided by household size and adjusted to a common price base. This allows households interviewed in different months and living in different parts of Malawi to be compared fairly.

3.4 Poverty lines

The poverty line for Malawi is constructed using the cost-of-basic-needs (CBN) approach, which defines the minimum level of consumption required to meet basic food and non-food needs. Under this approach, the cost of acquiring adequate food for basic nutrition is first estimated, and then an allowance for essential non-food goods and services is added (Ravallion, 1998; Haughton and Khandker, 2009).

A household is considered poor if its per capita consumption falls below the total poverty line. Households whose consumption falls below the food poverty line are classified as ultra-poor.

3.4.1 Food Poverty Line

Reference Population and Caloric Requirements

As in previous rounds, the food poverty line in IHS6 is anchored on a reference population composed of households in the 5th and 6th deciles of the real per capita consumption distribution. These households are neither extremely poor—who may rely on very low-cost, nutritionally inadequate diets—nor relatively wealthy, who may consume high-cost calories. This group provides a realistic and behaviorally grounded basis for defining a representative food basket.

Malawi adopts a minimum caloric requirement of 2,215 kilocalories per person per day, consistent with national practice and aligned with FAO/WHO/UNU guidelines.³ This requirement reflects the demographic structure and typical activity levels of the population and serves as the benchmark for minimum nutritional adequacy.

³FAO/WHO/UNU refers to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations University.

Mapping Food Consumption to Calories

To translate reported food consumption into caloric intake, the IHS6 uses a survey-specific Nutrient Conversion Table (NCT) developed in collaboration with the FAO Statistics Division and Statistics Norway. Each food item is assigned a kilocalorie value per 100 grams of edible portion, along with edible portion factors to adjust for non-edible components.

Household-level food consumption is converted into total calories using these conversion factors and standardized quantities. While calorie adequacy is not directly used as a welfare indicator, it is fundamental for constructing the food poverty line.

Construction of the Food Poverty Line

The food poverty line is derived by pricing a food basket that delivers exactly 2,215 kcal per person per day. The basket composition reflects the consumption patterns of the reference population. The procedure ensures that all included items have valid (positive) median prices and that the total caloric content of the basket matches the required threshold.

Using spatially and temporally adjusted prices, the resulting food poverty line is estimated at MWK 1,071.1 per person per day. This also defines the ultra-poverty line.

3.4.2 Non-food allowance

The food poverty line is augmented with an estimated non-food allowance (following Ravallion, 1994). IHS6 estimates a lower-bound non-food allowance and an upper-bound non-food allowance using non-parametric bandwidth averages around the food poverty line. The lower-bound non-food allowance is based on households whose total welfare is close to the food poverty line, while the upper-bound non-food allowance is based on households whose food welfare is close to the food poverty line. The official IHS6 non-food allowance is the midpoint of these two bounds.

Let z_f denote the food poverty line, $b_j = j/100$ for $j = 1, \dots, 10$, m_h non-food welfare per person per day, f_h food welfare per person per day, y_h total real welfare per person per day, and $a_h = w_h n_h$ the person weight. For each bandwidth, define

$$\mathcal{U}_j = \{h : z_f(1 - b_j) \leq f_h \leq z_f(1 + b_j)\}, \quad (3.1)$$

$$U_j = \frac{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{U}_j} a_h m_h}{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{U}_j} a_h}, \quad (3.2)$$

$$\mathcal{L}_j = \{h : z_f(1 - b_j) \leq y_h \leq z_f(1 + b_j)\}, \quad (3.3)$$

$$L_j = \frac{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{L}_j} a_h m_h}{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{L}_j} a_h}. \quad (3.4)$$

The upper- and lower-bound non-food allowances and the selected non-food allowance are therefore

$$U = \frac{1}{10} \sum_{j=1}^{10} U_j, \quad (3.5)$$

$$L = \frac{1}{10} \sum_{j=1}^{10} L_j, \quad (3.6)$$

$$\text{NFA} = \frac{U + L}{2}. \quad (3.7)$$

This is the non-parametric two-bound implementation following Ravallion (1994). The upper-bound non-food allowance is based on non-food spending among households whose food welfare is close to the food poverty line; the lower-bound non-food allowance is based on non-food spending among households whose total welfare is close to the food poverty line. The bandwidths are percentages, so $b_j = 0.01, \dots, 0.10$.

For IHS6, this gives a food poverty line of MWK 1,071.1, a selected non-food allowance of MWK 491.5, and a total poverty line of MWK 1,562.6 per person per day.

3.4.3 Total Poverty Line

In IHS6, the selected non-food allowance is MWK 491.5 per person per day. The food poverty line plus the selected non-food allowance gives the total poverty line. This yields a total poverty line of MWK 1,562.6 per person per day. Households with per capita consumption below this threshold are classified as poor, while those below the food poverty line are classified as ultra-poor.

The poverty line is absolute, meaning it represents a fixed standard of living applied consistently across all households, regardless of their location. Adjustments for spatial and temporal price differences ensure that households with the same real consumption level are treated equivalently. All poverty lines are expressed in constant prices corresponding to the IHS6 reference period (July–August 2024), ensuring consistency with the welfare aggregate.

3.5 Poverty Measurements

Poverty is measured using the family of indices proposed by Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke (1984), henceforth FGT. These indices are derived from a single formula by varying one parameter. This makes it possible to report, in a consistent way, the share of the population living below the poverty line, the average shortfall from the line, and the severity of poverty among those furthest below it.

In IHS6, poverty is calculated from household real per capita consumption. A household's poverty status is assigned to all members of that household. The estimates are therefore person-weighted, not household-weighted. In implementation, the household sampling weight is multiplied by household size so that the results represent the share of people in the population.

The FGT measure used for survey estimation can be written as

$$P_{\alpha}(z) = \frac{\sum_{h=1}^N w_h n_h \left(\frac{z - y_h}{z} \right)^{\alpha} \mathbf{1}(y_h < z)}{\sum_{h=1}^N w_h n_h}, \quad \alpha \in \{0, 1, 2\}. \quad (3.8)$$

In this expression, h indexes households, N is the number of sampled households, w_h is the household sampling weight, n_h is household size, y_h is real daily per capita consumption, z is the relevant poverty line, and $\mathbf{1}(y_h < z)$ is equal to one when household consumption is below that line and zero otherwise.

This formulation is consistent with the person-weighting convention used throughout the report. It is also consistent with the IHS6 survey design used for reporting standard errors and confidence intervals, which accounts for clustering and stratification in the survey sample. The point estimates describe the population poverty profile, while the survey design is used to assess the uncertainty around those estimates.

3.5.1 Poverty headcount (P0)

When $\alpha = 0$, the shortfall term is raised to the power zero and every person living below the poverty line receives the same weight, regardless of how far below the line they are. The resulting measure, P_0 , is the poverty headcount rate: the percentage of the population living below the poverty line.

The headcount rate is the most widely cited poverty measure because it is simple and easy to interpret. However, it has an important limitation. It treats a person who is just below the poverty line the same as a person who is far below it. A policy that moves people just above the line can reduce the headcount even if the poorest people remain far below the line.

3.5.2 Poverty gap (P1)

When $\alpha = 1$, each poor person contributes in proportion to their shortfall from the poverty line, expressed as a share of the line. The resulting measure, P_1 , is the poverty gap. It measures the average shortfall from the poverty line across the whole population, counting people above the poverty line as having zero shortfall.

The poverty gap is useful because it shows the depth of poverty. A higher poverty gap means that poor people are, on average, further below the poverty line, or that a larger share of the population is poor, or both. Under a hypothetical perfectly targeted transfer with no administrative costs or behavioural responses, the poverty gap can also be interpreted as the minimum average transfer, expressed as a share of the poverty line, that would be needed to bring everyone up to the poverty line.

3.5.3 Poverty severity (P2)

When $\alpha = 2$, each shortfall is squared. This gives proportionally greater weight to people who are furthest below the poverty line. The resulting measure, P_2 , is the poverty severity index, also called the squared poverty gap.

The poverty severity index captures inequality among the poor. Two areas can have the same poverty headcount and even a similar poverty gap, but one may have more people living far below the poverty line. The severity index gives more weight to those deeper shortfalls and is therefore useful for identifying whether improvements in the headcount or poverty gap conceal continued deprivation among the poorest.

3.5.4 Food poverty and ultra-poverty measures

The same FGT logic is applied to the food poverty line. The food poverty headcount measures the share of the population living in households whose real per capita consumption is below the food poverty line. The food poverty gap measures the average shortfall from the food poverty line. The food poverty severity index gives greater weight to those furthest below the food poverty line.

In this report, the food poverty line is also the ultra-poverty line. For IHS6, the food poverty line is MWK 1,071.1 per person per day, and the total poverty line is MWK 1,562.6 per person per day. People are counted as poor when they live in a household whose real per capita consumption is below the total poverty line. People are counted as food-poor, or ultra-poor, when they live in a household whose real per capita consumption is below the food poverty line.

3.5.5 Scope of estimation and reporting

The poverty headcount, poverty gap, and poverty severity measures are computed using the total poverty line. The corresponding food poverty headcount, food poverty gap, and food poverty severity measures are computed using the food poverty line. Results are reported at the national level and for key population groups, including urban and rural areas, the three regions, the four urban and rural-region domains used in the price-deflation framework, districts, and sex of household head where relevant.

Because the welfare measure is defined per person and the estimates are person-weighted, all poverty rates in this report should be interpreted as shares of people, not shares of households.

RESULTS OF THE POVERTY ANALYSIS FOR MALAWI DERIVED FROM IHS6

4

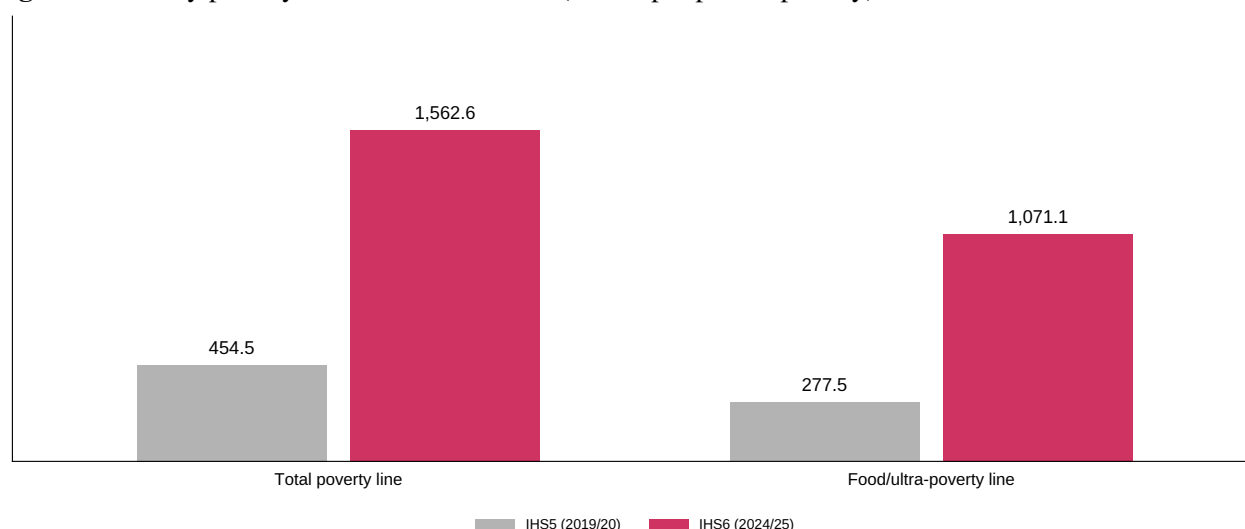
Key messages

- National poverty declined from 50.7 percent in IHS5 to 47.3 percent in IHS6, while ultra-poverty increased from 20.5 percent to 24.0 percent.
- Poverty remains concentrated in rural Malawi and in the Southern Region. Rural South records the highest rural-domain poverty and ultra-poverty rates.
- The poverty gap and squared poverty gap declined moderately, but the ultra-poverty gap and squared ultra-poverty gap increased, confirming deeper food-poverty pressure.
- Inequality increased modestly, with the Gini index rising from 37.9 to 39.9.

4.1 Poverty lines

The IHS6 food poverty line is MWK 1,071.1 per person per day. The non-food allowance is MWK 491.5 per person per day, giving a total poverty line of MWK 1,562.6 per person per day. The food poverty line is also the ultra-poverty line. Because the IHS5 and IHS6 lines are expressed in their respective survey price bases, the nominal values should be read as poverty-line components rather than as direct measures of welfare change; the daily total and food poverty lines used in the two survey rounds are compared in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Daily poverty lines, IHS5 and IHS6 (MWK per person per day)

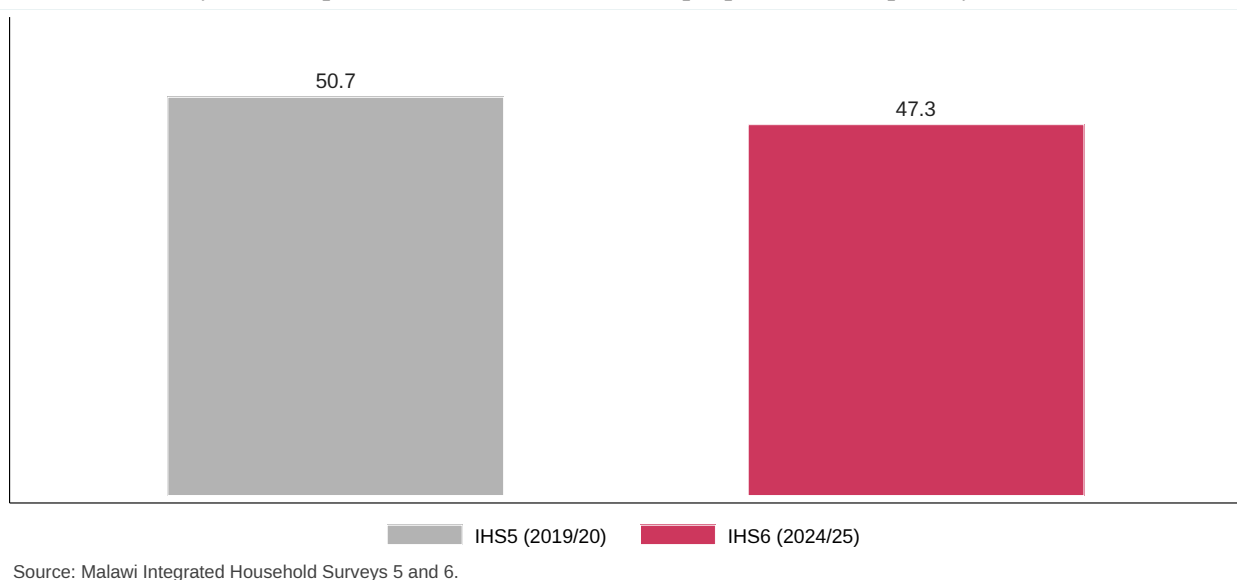


Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6. Nominal lines shown in each survey price base.

4.2 Poverty rate

The poverty headcount is the share of people whose household's real per capita consumption is below the total poverty line. It is the most direct measure of how widespread poverty is, but it does not show how far below the line poor people are. The national poverty headcount declined from 50.7 percent in IHS5¹ to 47.3 percent in IHS6, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Poverty rate comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)



Rural poverty remains much higher than urban poverty. In IHS6, 52.6 percent of people in rural areas are poor compared with 20.9 percent in urban areas. Compared with IHS5, rural poverty declined from 56.6 percent to 52.6 percent, while urban poverty increased slightly from 19.2 percent to 20.9 percent (Figure 4.3).

Regionally, the Southern Region records the highest IHS6 poverty rate at 55.8 percent. The Northern and Central Regions are lower, at 41.0 percent and 40.4 percent, respectively. The regional pattern changed from IHS5, when the Central Region had the highest poverty rate at 55.8 percent (Figure 4.4).

Secondary profiles

The rural-domain, sex-of-household-head, child-headed-household and household-size profiles show where poverty is concentrated within the national average. Rural South has a poverty rate of 62.3 percent, compared with 46.1 percent in Rural North and 44.4 percent in Rural Centre. People living in female-headed households have a poverty rate of 53.8 percent, compared with 44.8 percent among people in male-headed households. Poverty incidence was estimated at 43.6 percent among people in child-headed households, compared with 47.3 percent among people in adult-headed households. Although the point estimate is lower for child-headed households, this comparison should be interpreted

¹The IHS5 main-results series reports 50.7 percent nationally; the published Appendix A table reports 50.8 percent. Table B.1 reproduces the published appendix.

Figure 4.3: Poverty rate by place of residence, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)

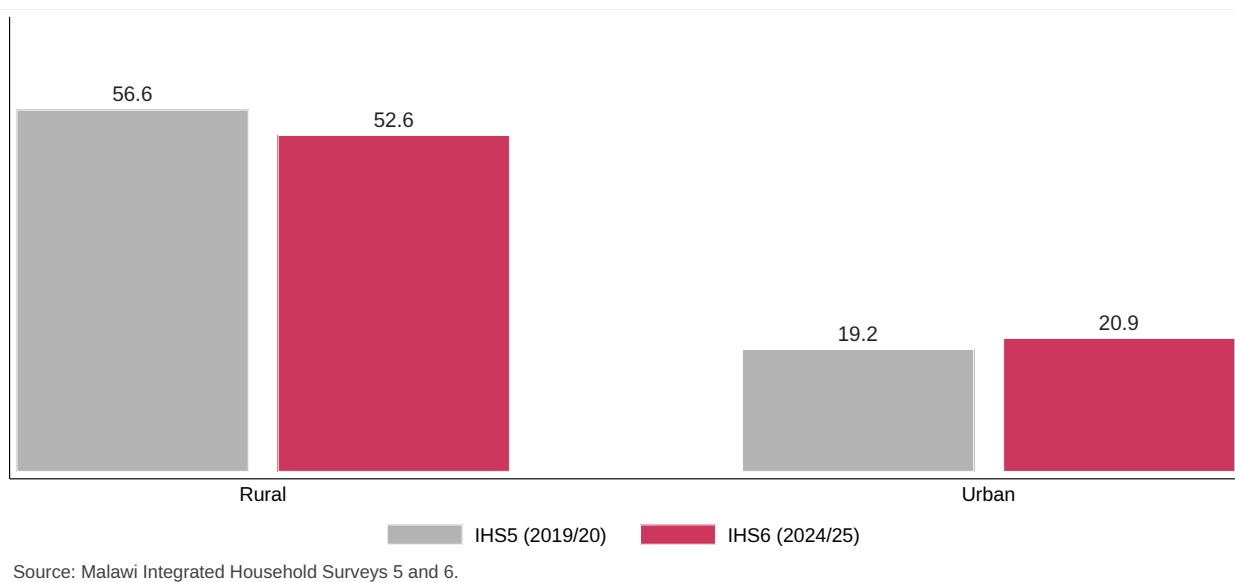
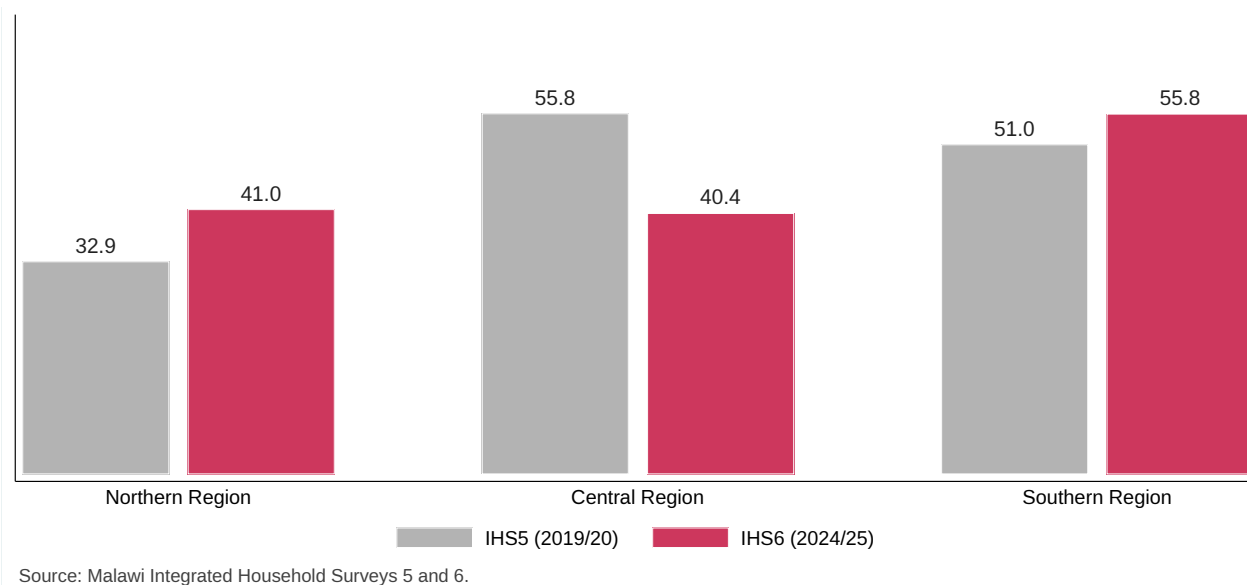
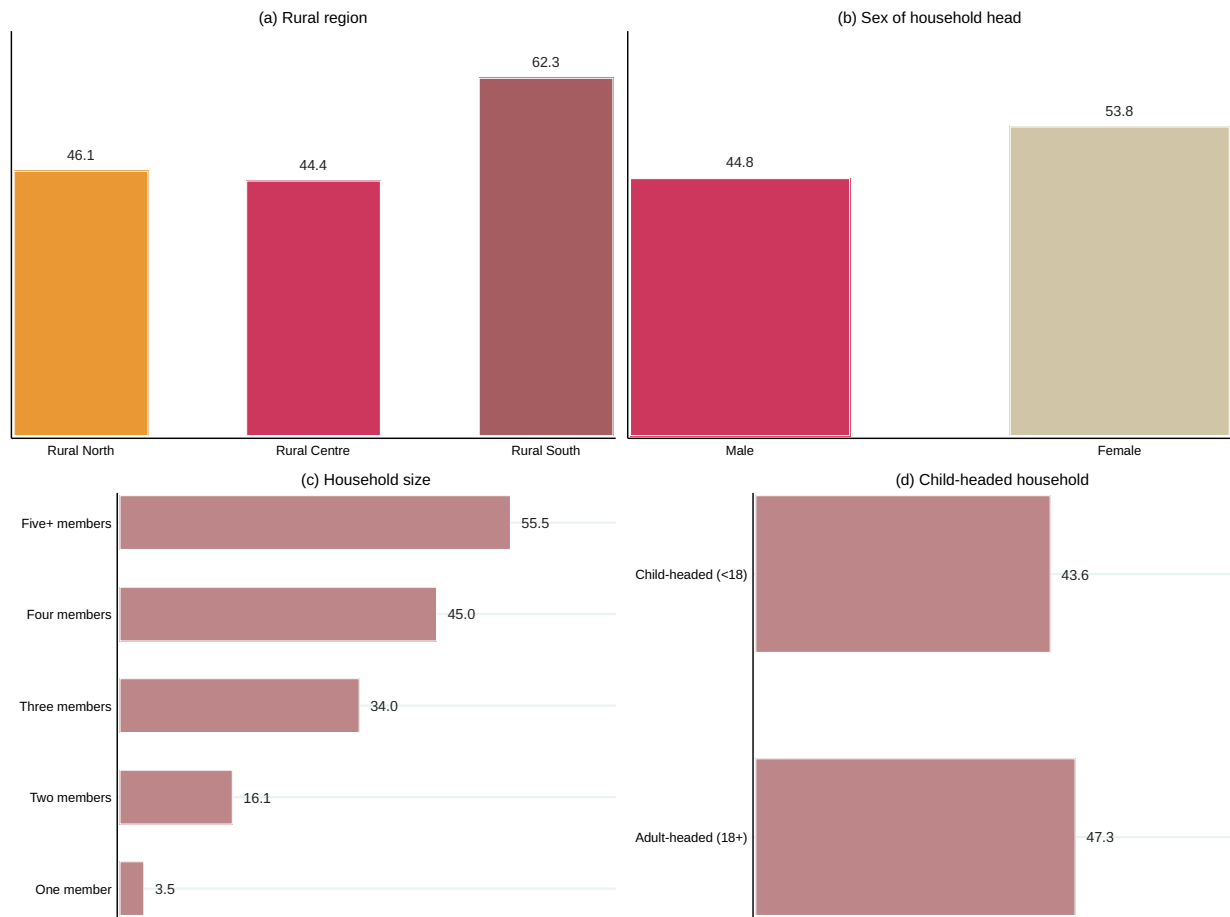


Figure 4.4: Poverty rate by region, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)



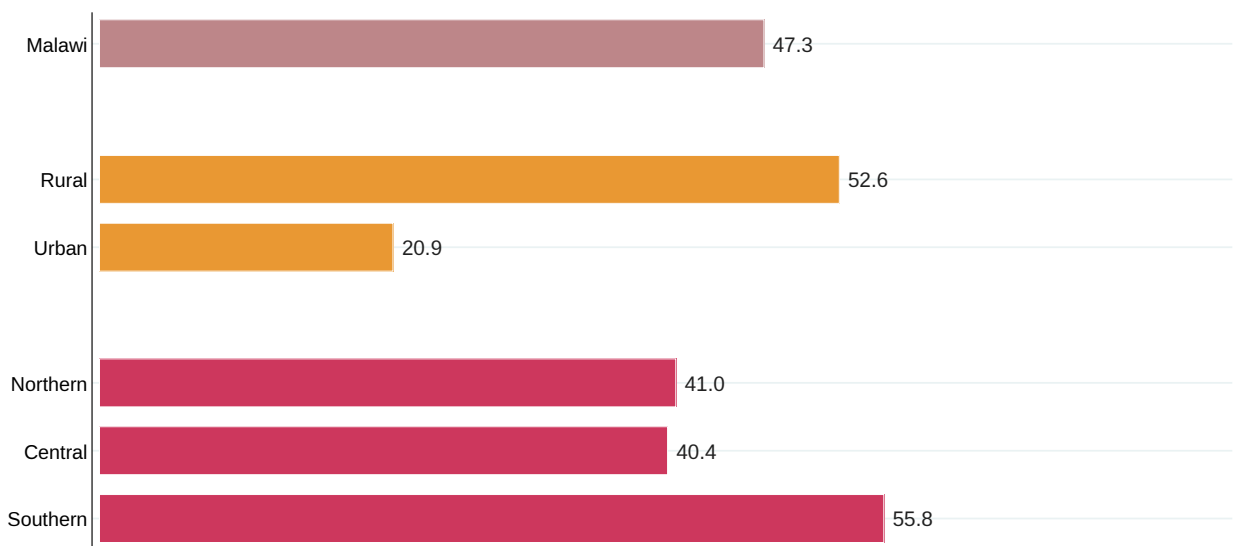
cautiously because child-headed households constitute a relatively small group and confidence intervals are not reported for this disaggregation. Poverty also rises strongly with household size: 55.5 percent among people in households with five or more members, compared with 45.0 percent for four-member households, 34.0 percent for three-member households, 16.1 percent for two-member households, and 3.5 percent for one-member households. A combined residence-region profile reinforces the same spatial pattern: poverty is much higher in rural than urban areas, and the Southern Region has the highest rate among the three standard regions. The four secondary profiles and the combined national, residence and regional profile are presented in Figures 4.5 and 4.6, respectively.

Figure 4.5: Poverty rate secondary profiles, IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. Child-headed: head younger than 18.

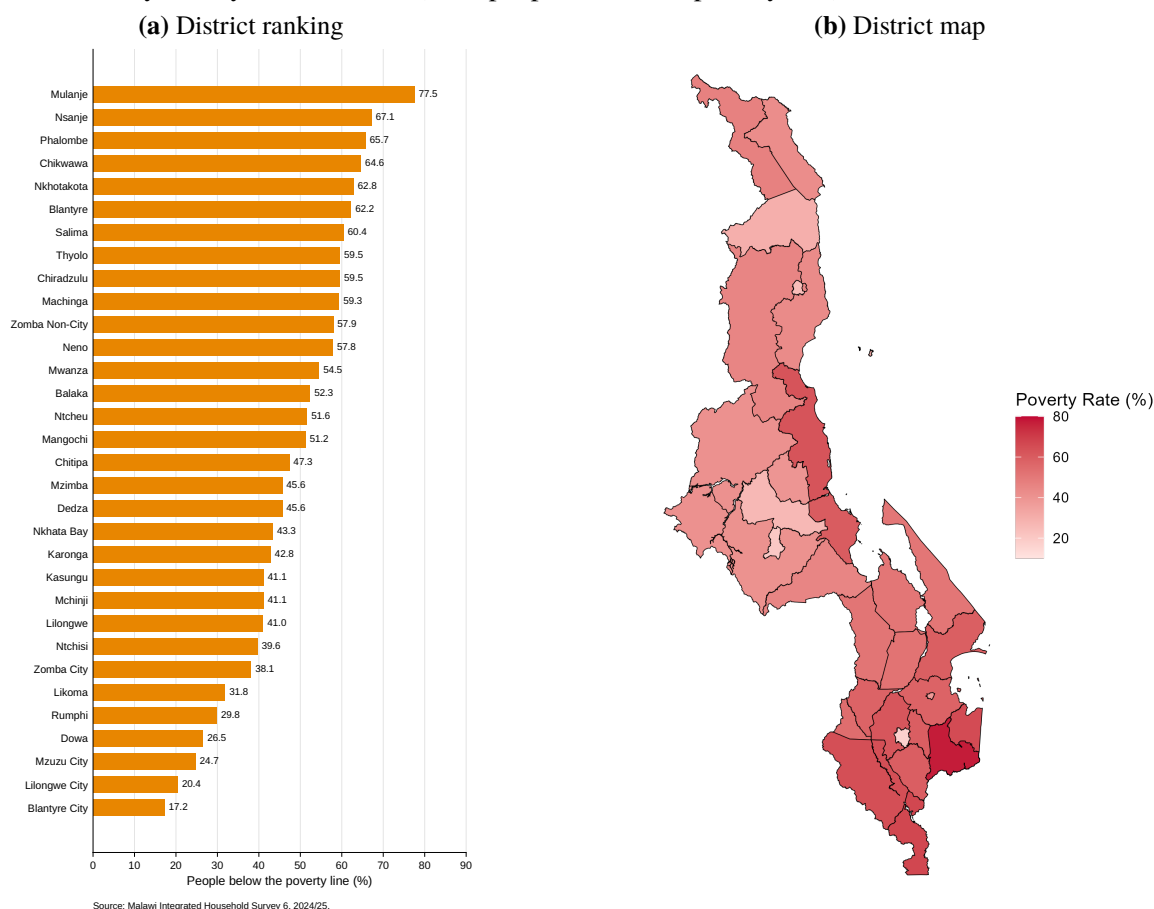
Figure 4.6: Poverty rate by place of residence and region, IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25.

District results reveal substantial heterogeneity. The highest IHS6 poverty rates are observed in Mulanje (77.5 percent), Nsanje (67.1 percent), Phalombe (65.7 percent), Chikwawa (64.6 percent), Nkhosakota (62.8 percent), and Blantyre District (62.2 percent). The lowest rates are in Blantyre City (17.2 percent), Lilongwe City (20.4 percent), Mzuzu City (24.7 percent), Dowa (26.5 percent), Rumphi (29.8 percent), and Likoma (31.8 percent; Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Poverty rate by district, IHS6 (% of people below the poverty line)



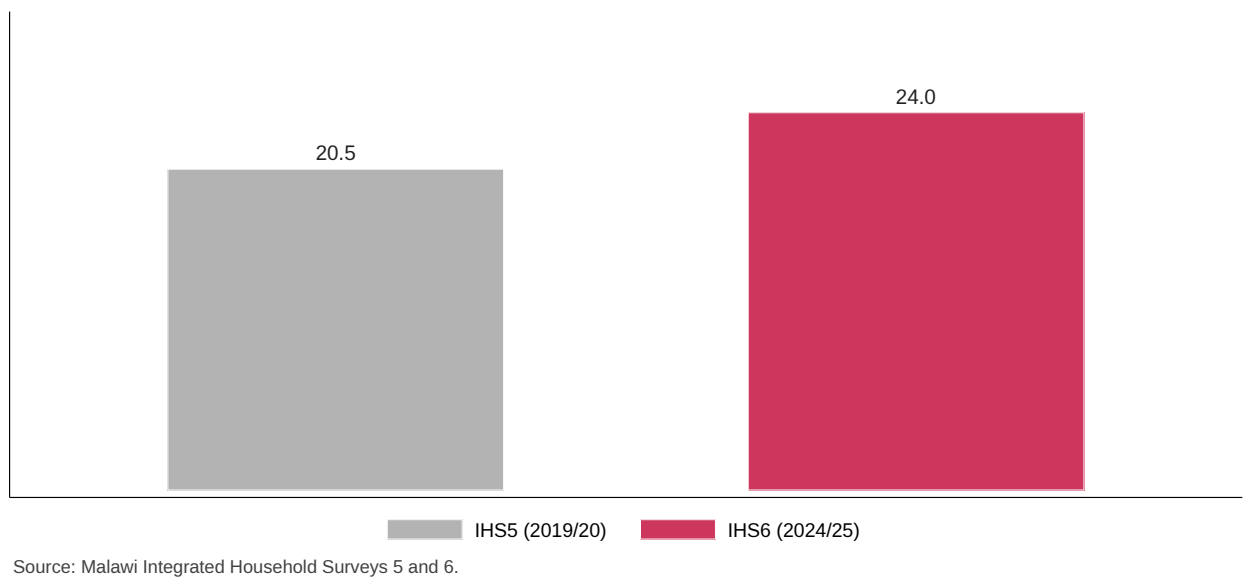
District rankings should be read with Annex B, Table B.1. Using the conservative rule that non-overlapping 95 percent confidence intervals indicate a clear difference, Mulanje's estimate of 77.5 percent has a 95 percent confidence interval of 71.3–82.6 percent and overlaps with the intervals for Nsanje and Phalombe. These districts should therefore be treated as a high-poverty group rather than as a precise ranking. Mulanje's interval does not overlap with those of Chikwawa, Nkhosakota or the lower-poverty domains of Blantyre City, Lilongwe City and Mzuzu City, indicating clearer differences from those domains.

4.3 Ultra-poverty rate

Ultra-poverty uses the food poverty line. It identifies people whose household's real per capita consumption is below the cost of the minimum food basket and is therefore a measure of food-poverty pressure. Ultra-poverty moved in the opposite direction from total poverty: the share of the population

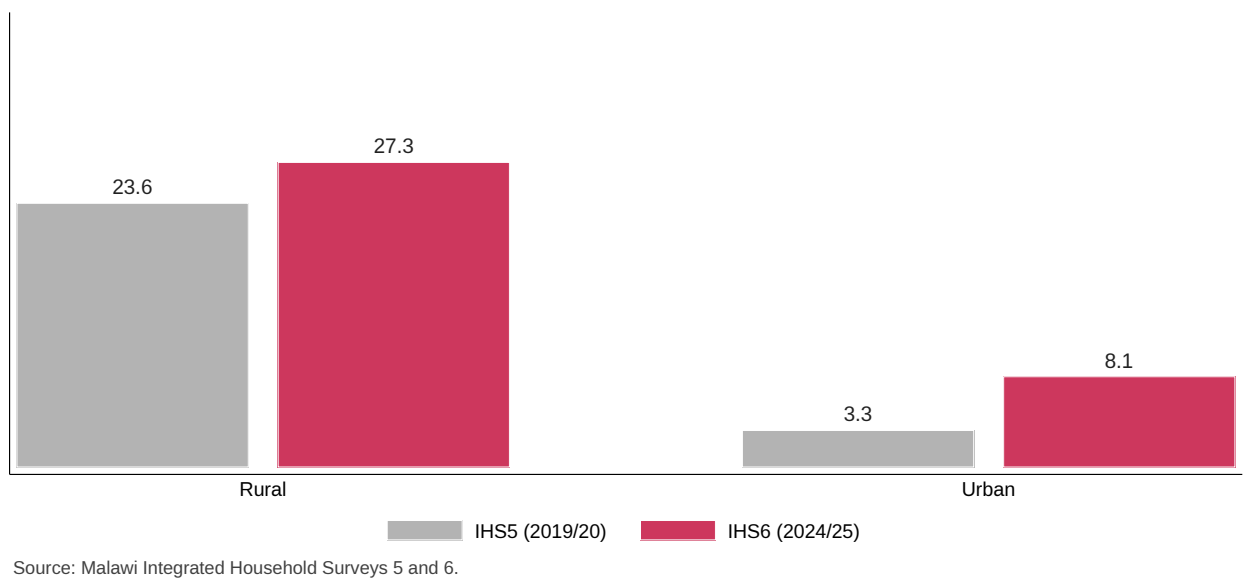
below the food poverty line increased from 20.5 percent in IHS5 to 24.0 percent in IHS6 (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8: Ultra-poverty rate comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)



Rural ultra-poverty is 27.3 percent, compared with 8.1 percent in urban areas. Unlike total poverty, ultra-poverty increased in both rural and urban areas between IHS5 and IHS6: from 23.6 percent to 27.3 percent in rural areas and from 3.3 percent to 8.1 percent in urban areas (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Ultra-poverty rate by place of residence, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)

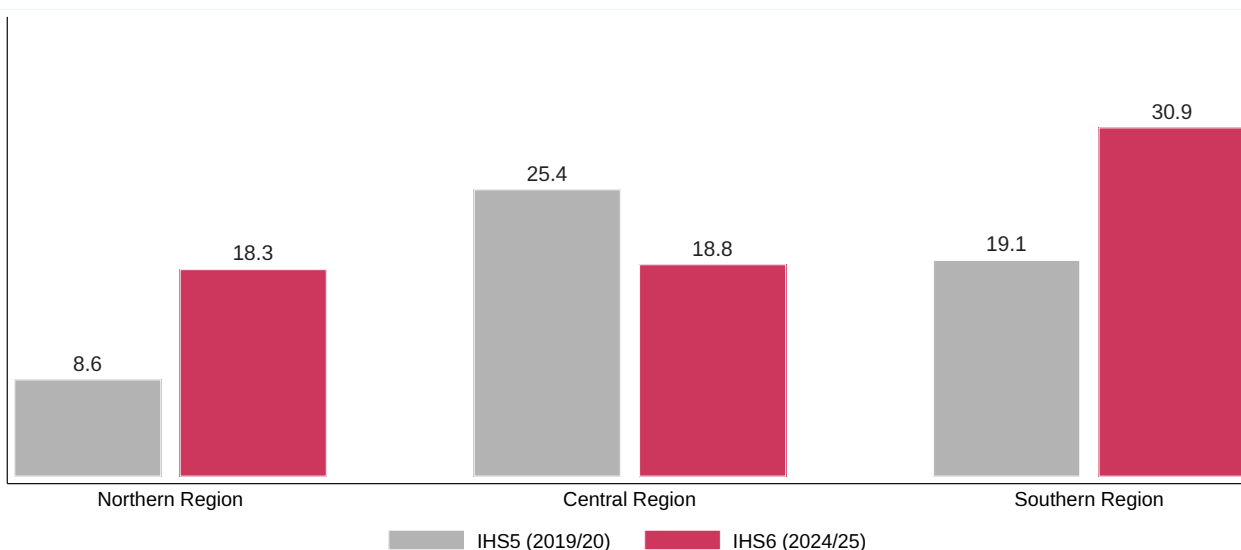


The Southern Region carries the highest IHS6 food-poverty burden at 30.9 percent, compared with 18.3 percent in the Northern Region and 18.8 percent in the Central Region (Figure 4.10).

Secondary profiles

Within rural domains, Rural South has the highest ultra-poverty rate, at 35.0 percent, compared with 21.1 percent in Rural North and 21.0 percent in Rural Centre. People living in female-headed house-

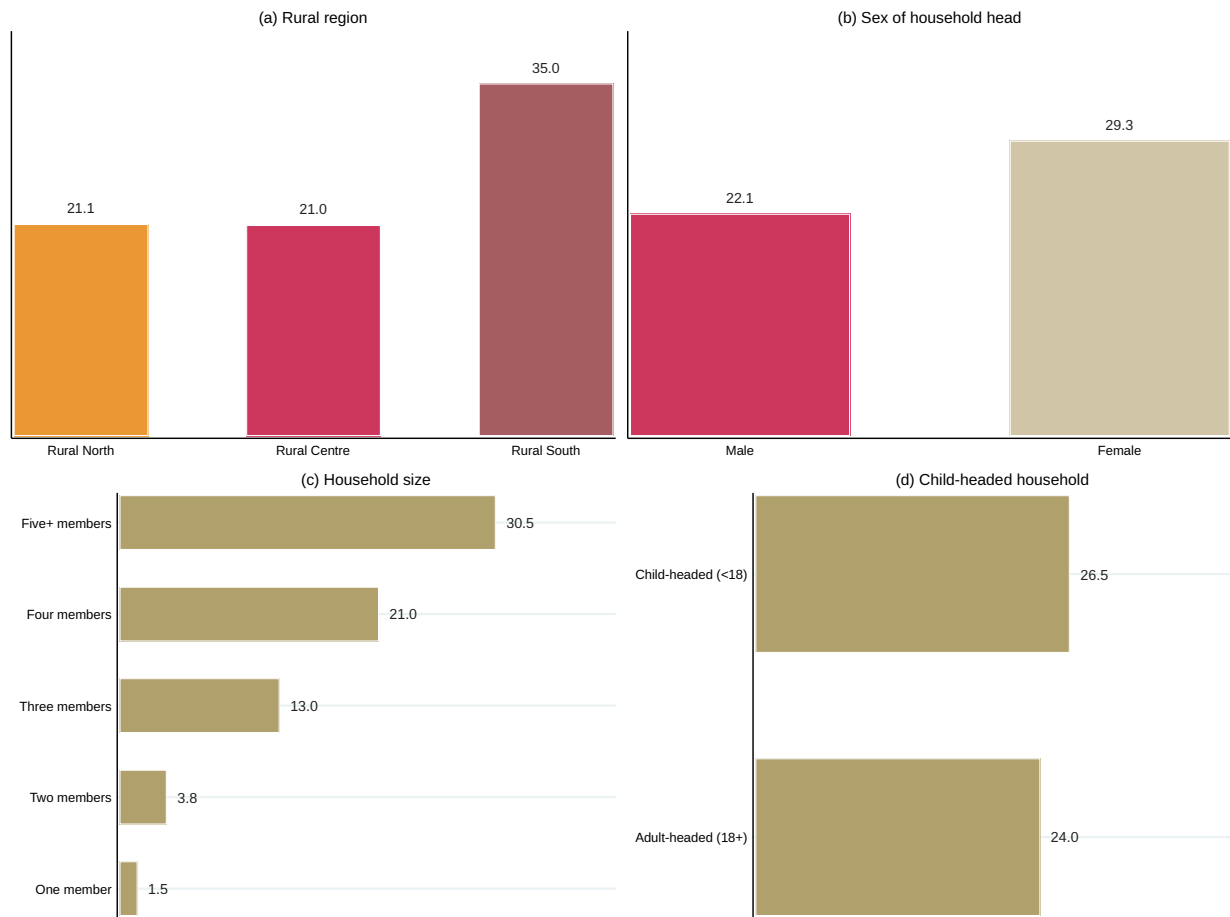
Figure 4.10: Ultra-poverty rate by region, IHS5 and IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6.

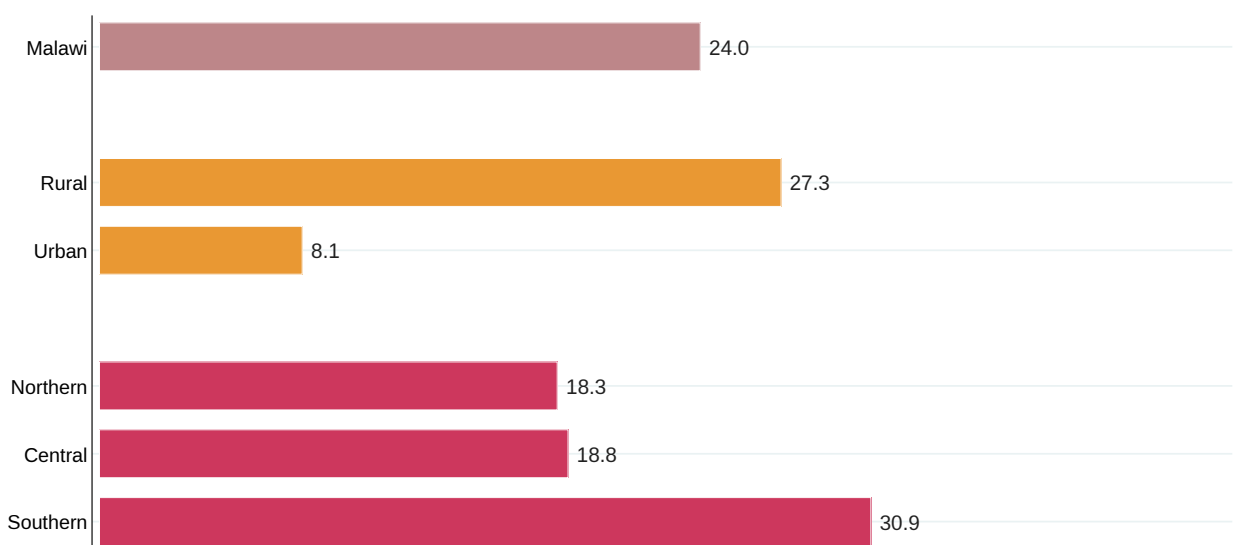
holds also face higher ultra-poverty, at 29.3 percent compared with 22.1 percent among people in male-headed households. The ultra-poverty rate is 26.5 percent among people in child-headed households and 24.0 percent among people in adult-headed households. Ultra-poverty also rises with household size: 30.5 percent among people in households with five or more members, compared with 21.0 percent among four-member households, 13.0 percent among three-member households, 3.8 percent among two-member households, and 1.5 percent among one-member households. The combined residence-region profile again shows that food poverty is concentrated in rural areas and in the Southern Region. The four secondary profiles and the combined national, residence and regional profile are presented in Figures 4.11 and 4.12, respectively.

Figure 4.11: Ultra-poverty rate secondary profiles, IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. Child-headed: head younger than 18.

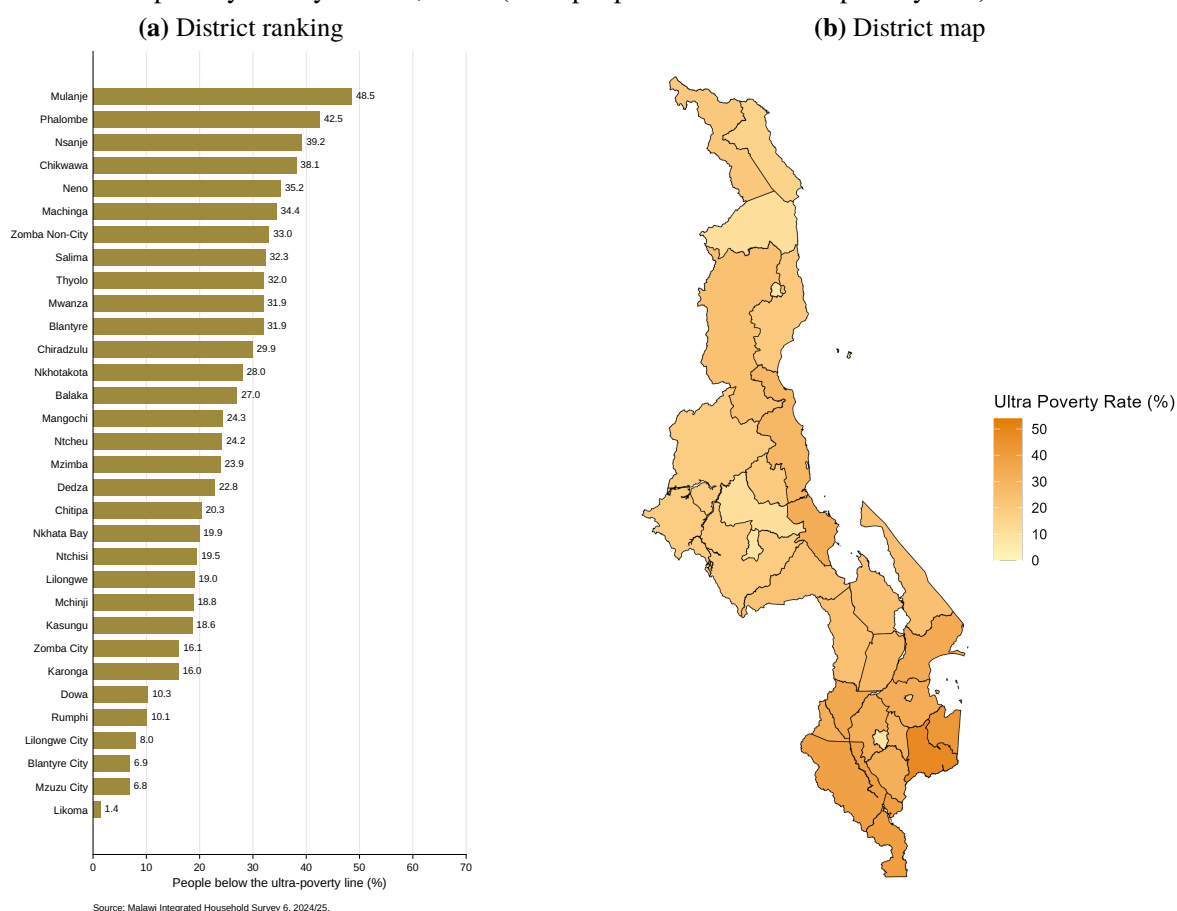
Figure 4.12: Ultra-poverty rate by place of residence and region, IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25.

At district level, the most severe food-poverty concentrations are in Mulanje (48.5 percent), Phalombe (42.5 percent), Nsanje (39.2 percent), Chikwawa (38.1 percent), Neno (35.2 percent), and Machinga (34.4 percent). The lowest ultra-poverty rates are in Likoma (1.4 percent), Mzuzu City (6.8 percent), Blantyre City (6.9 percent), Lilongwe City (8.0 percent), Rumphi (10.1 percent), and Dowa (10.3 percent; Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13: Ultra-poverty rate by district, IHS6 (% of people below the ultra-poverty line)



The district ultra-poverty results should be interpreted with Annex B, Table B.2. Mulanje’s estimate of 48.5 percent has a 95 percent confidence interval of 41.9–55.1 percent and overlaps with the intervals for Phalombe, Nsanje, Chikwawa, Neno, Machinga, Zomba Non-City and Chiradzulu, forming a broad high-ultra-poverty cluster. Its interval does not overlap with those of low-ultra-poverty districts such as Likoma, Mzuzu City, Blantyre City, Lilongwe City, Rumphi and Dowa.

4.4 Poverty gap

The poverty gap measures the average shortfall from the total poverty line as a share of that line, counting people above the line as having zero shortfall. It therefore adds depth to the headcount measure: two areas can have similar poverty rates but different average shortfalls. The national poverty gap declined from 17.0 percent in IHS5 to 15.7 percent in IHS6. In IHS6, the poverty gap is 17.8 percent in rural areas compared with 5.6 percent in urban areas. By region, the Southern Region has the highest

poverty gap at 19.8 percent, while the Northern and Central Regions are lower, at 12.2 percent and 12.6 percent. The national comparison and the IHS6 residence-region profile are presented in Figures 4.14 and 4.15, respectively.

Figure 4.14: Poverty gap comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (Average shortfall from the poverty line)

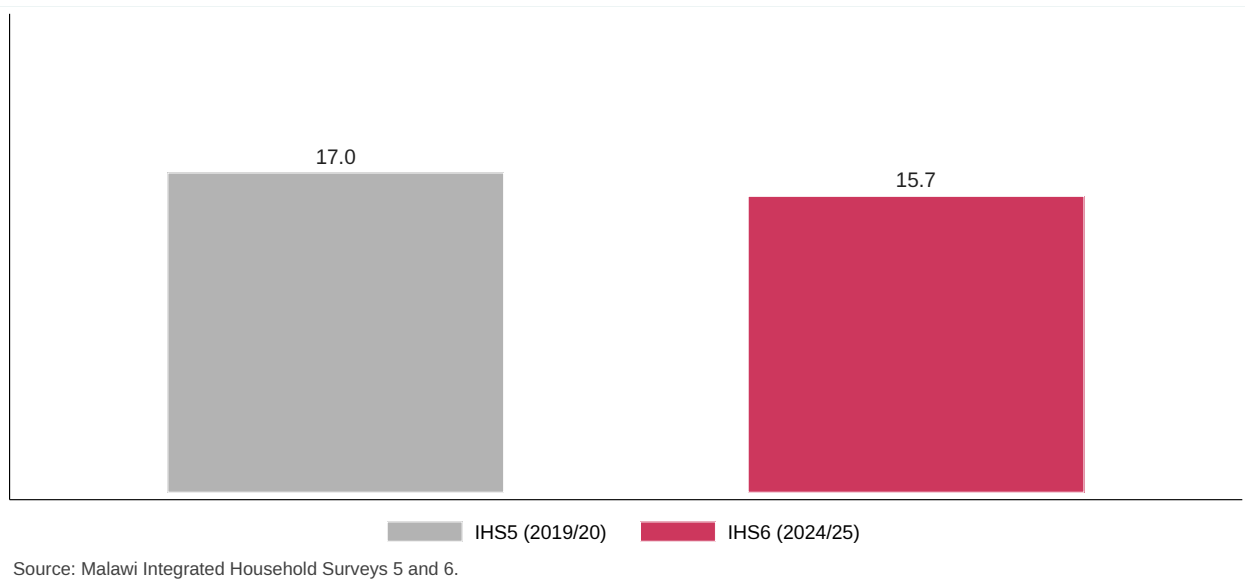
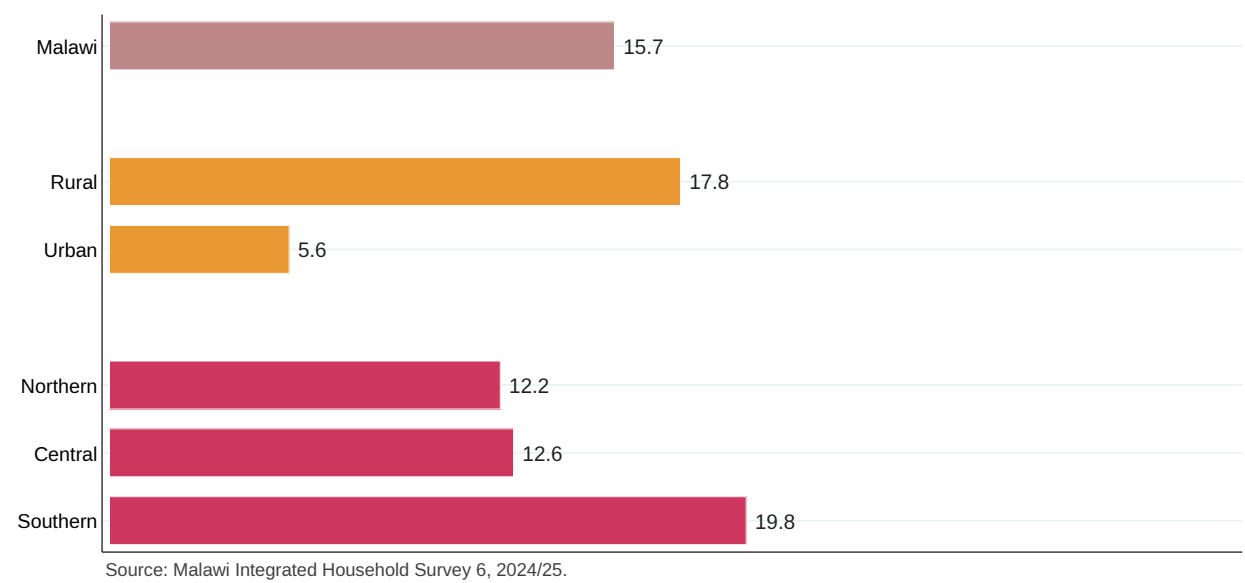


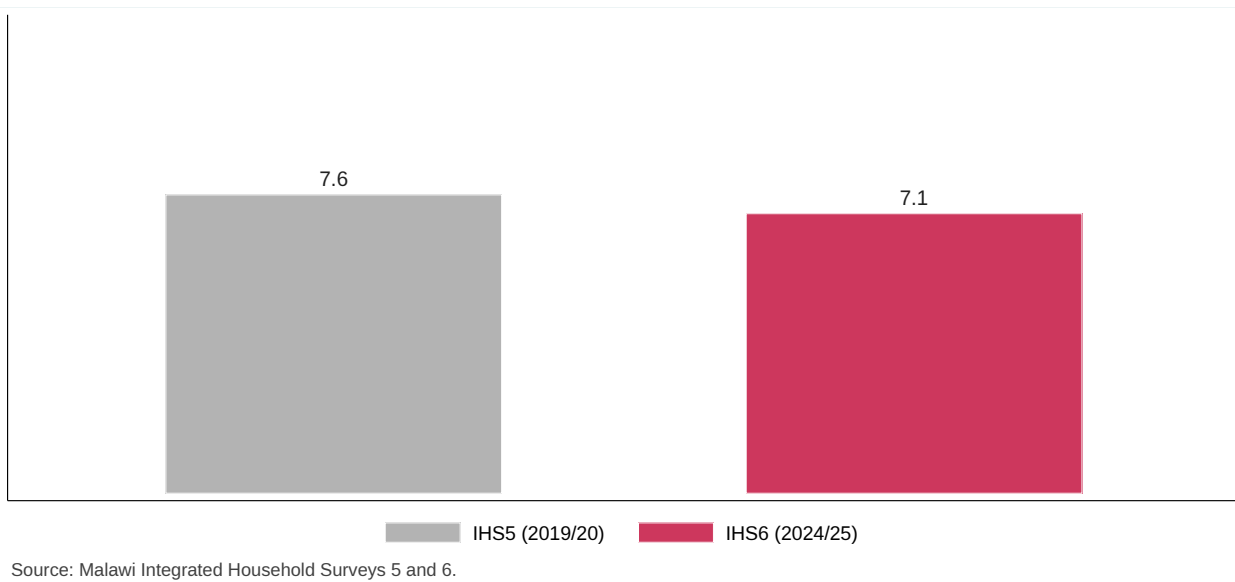
Figure 4.15: Poverty gap by place of residence and region, IHS6 (Average shortfall from the poverty line)



4.5 Squared poverty gap

The squared poverty gap gives greater weight to people who are furthest below the poverty line. It is therefore a severity measure: higher values indicate that deprivation is concentrated further below the line. The national squared poverty gap declined from 7.6 percent in IHS5 to 7.1 percent in IHS6 (Figure 4.16).

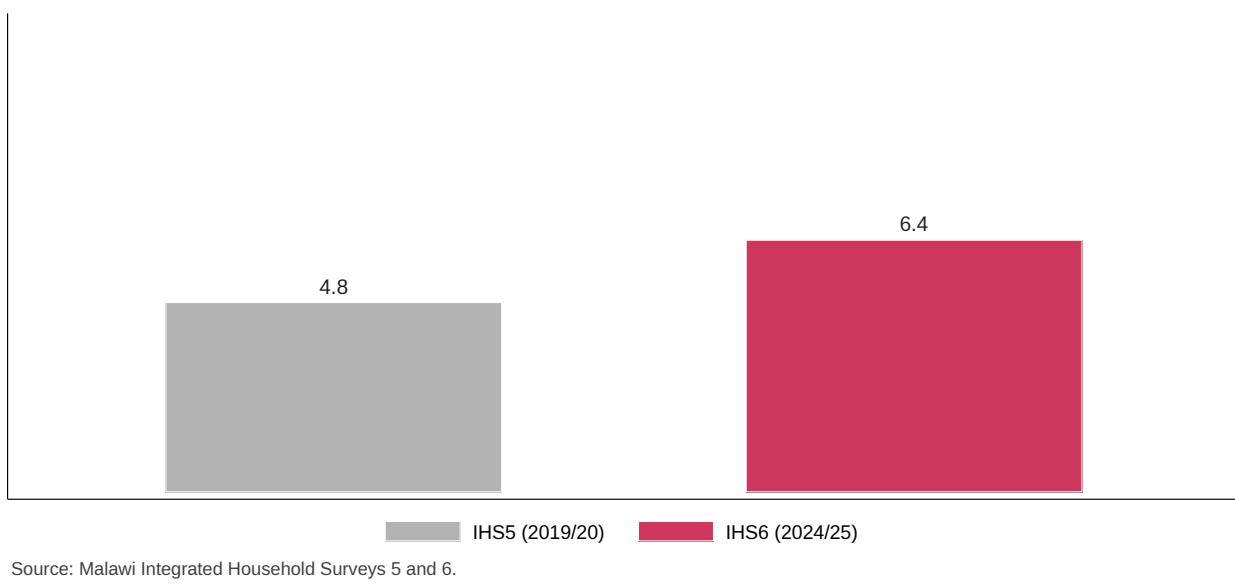
Figure 4.16: Squared poverty gap comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (Severity of poverty)



4.6 Ultra-poverty gap

The ultra-poverty gap measures the average shortfall from the food poverty line. It rose from 4.8 percent in IHS5 to 6.4 percent in IHS6, indicating that food-poverty depth worsened even though total poverty declined (Figure 4.17).

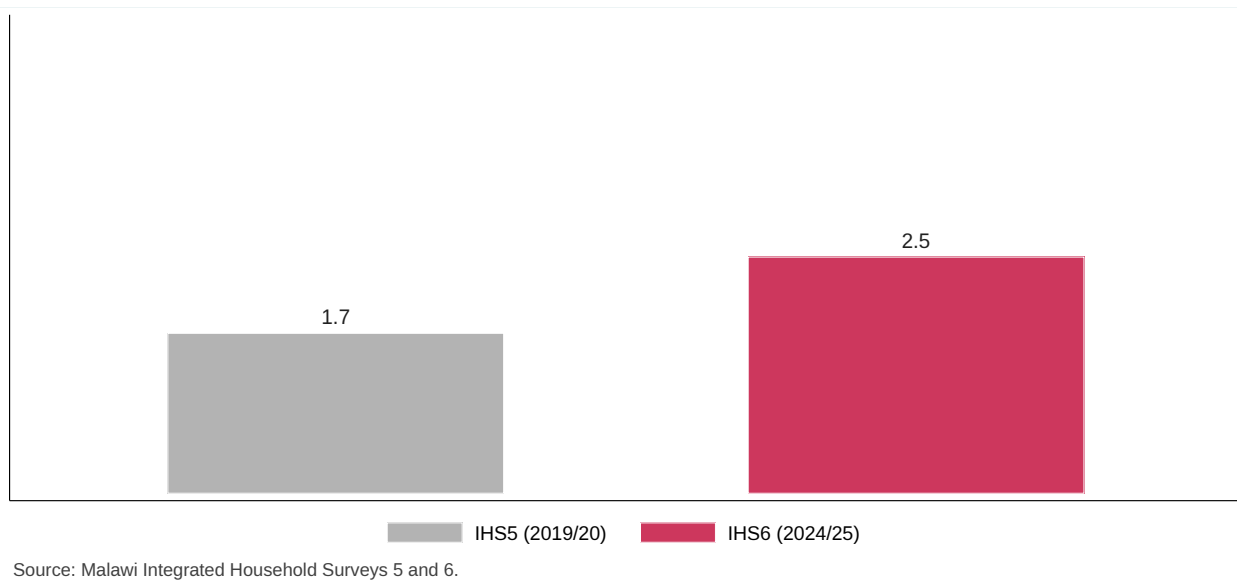
Figure 4.17: Ultra-poverty gap comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (Average shortfall from the ultra-poverty line)



4.7 Squared ultra-poverty gap

The squared ultra-poverty gap captures the severity of food poverty among those furthest below the food poverty line. The national squared ultra-poverty gap increased from 1.7 percent in IHS5 to 2.5 percent in IHS6 (Figure 4.18).

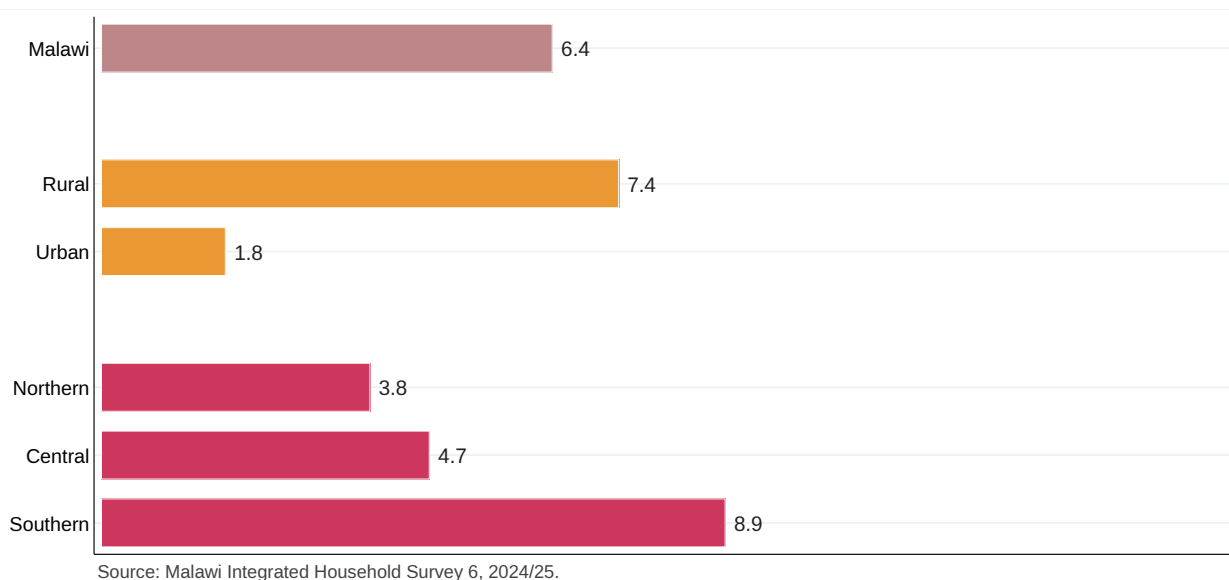
Figure 4.18: Squared ultra-poverty gap comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (Severity of ultra-poverty)



Spatial profile of the ultra-poverty gap

The non-squared ultra-poverty gap is 7.4 percent in rural areas and 1.8 percent in urban areas. By region, the Southern Region has an ultra-poverty gap of 8.9 percent, compared with 4.7 percent in the Central Region and 3.8 percent in the Northern Region (Figure 4.19).

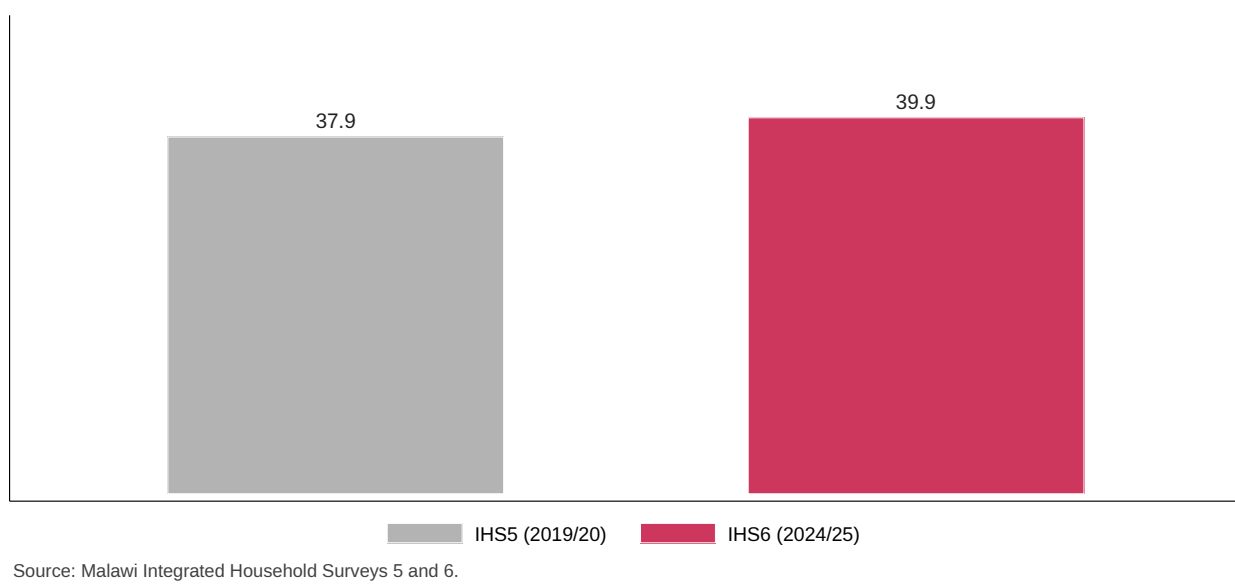
Figure 4.19: Ultra-poverty gap by place of residence and region, IHS6 (Average shortfall from the ultra-poverty line)



4.8 Gini index

The Gini index is reported on a 0–100 scale in this report, where 0 represents complete equality and higher values indicate greater inequality. National inequality increased modestly between IHS5 and IHS6, with the Gini index rising from 37.9 to 39.9 (Figure 4.20).

Figure 4.20: Gini index comparison, IHS5 and IHS6 (Inequality in annual real per capita consumption)



The residence comparison shows a small increase in the rural Gini, from 33.2 in IHS5 to 33.9 in IHS6, and a larger increase in the urban Gini, from 39.0 to 45.6. Across regions, the Northern Region changed little, from 35.2 to 35.0, while the Central Region increased from 38.4 to 39.3 and the Southern Region from 37.4 to 41.2. The residence and regional comparisons are presented in Figures 4.21 and 4.22, respectively.

Figure 4.21: Gini index by place of residence, IHS5 and IHS6 (Inequality in annual real per capita consumption)

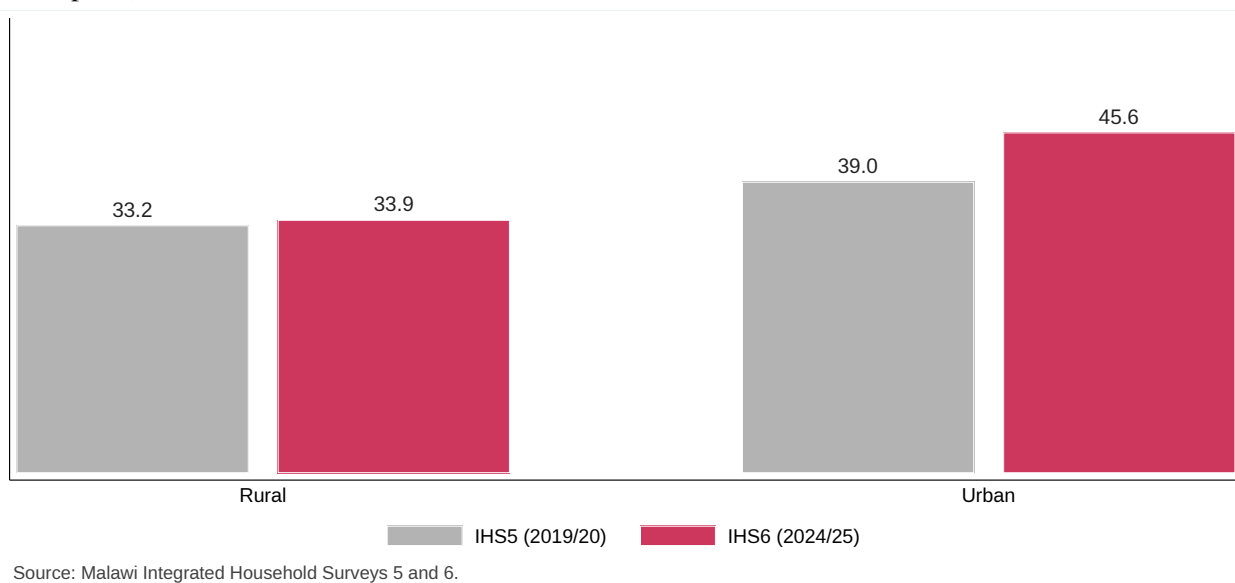
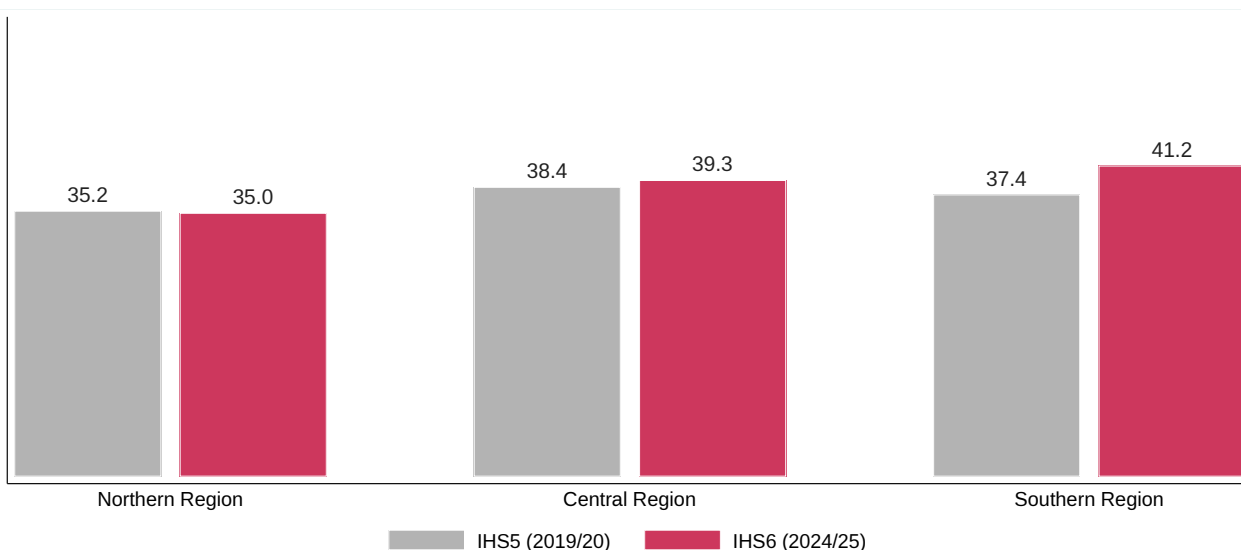


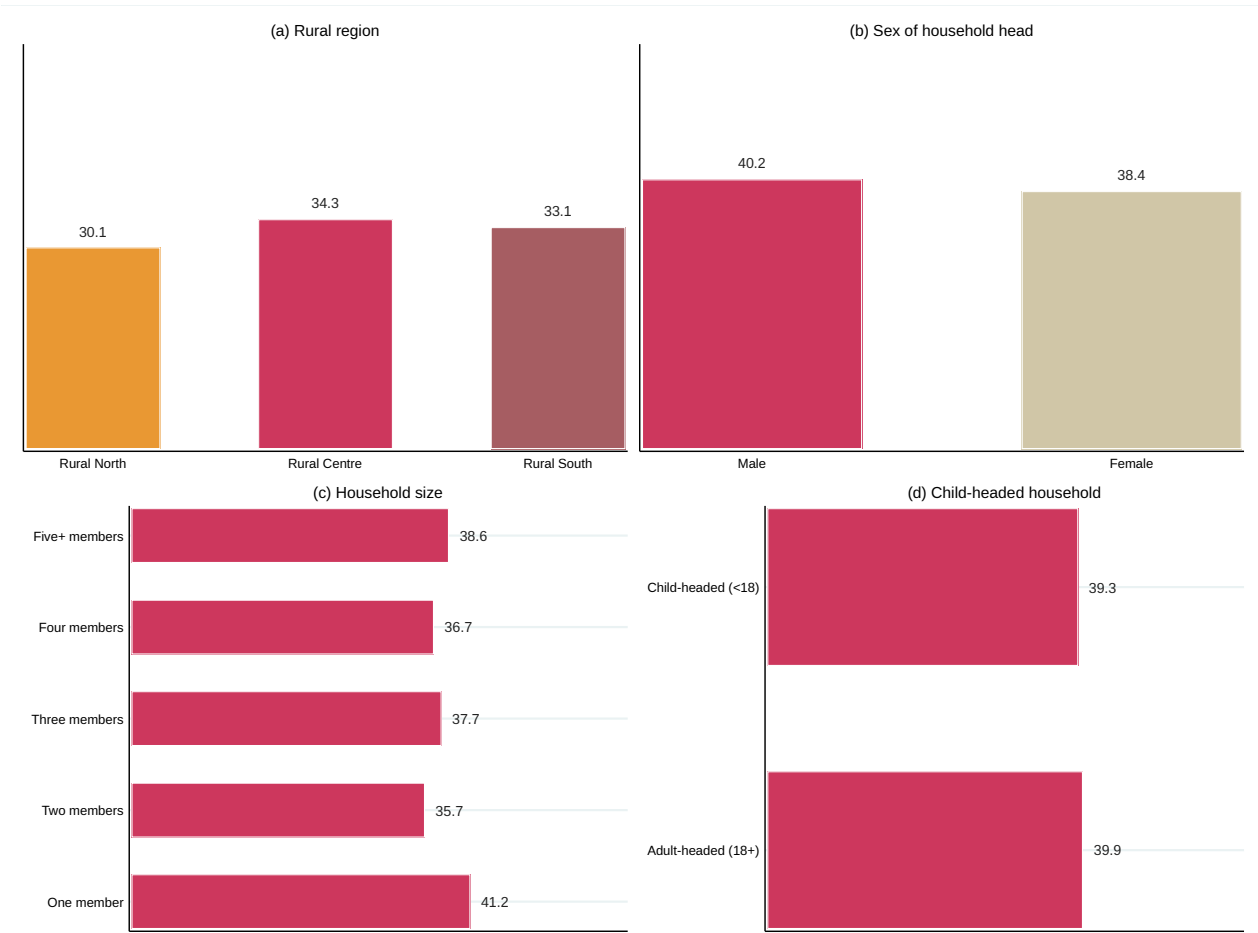
Figure 4.22: Gini index by region, IHS5 and IHS6 (Inequality in annual real per capita consumption)



Within rural domains in IHS6, Rural Centre has the highest Gini at 34.3, followed by Rural South at 33.1 and Rural North at 30.1. Inequality is slightly higher among people in male-headed households (40.2) than among people in female-headed households (38.4). The relationship between household size and inequality is non-monotonic. Single-person households have the highest Gini (41.2) and two-member households the lowest (35.7); among households of three members or more, the index ranges from 36.7 to 38.6. The Gini is 39.3 for people in child-headed households and 39.9 for people in adult-headed households (Figure 4.23).

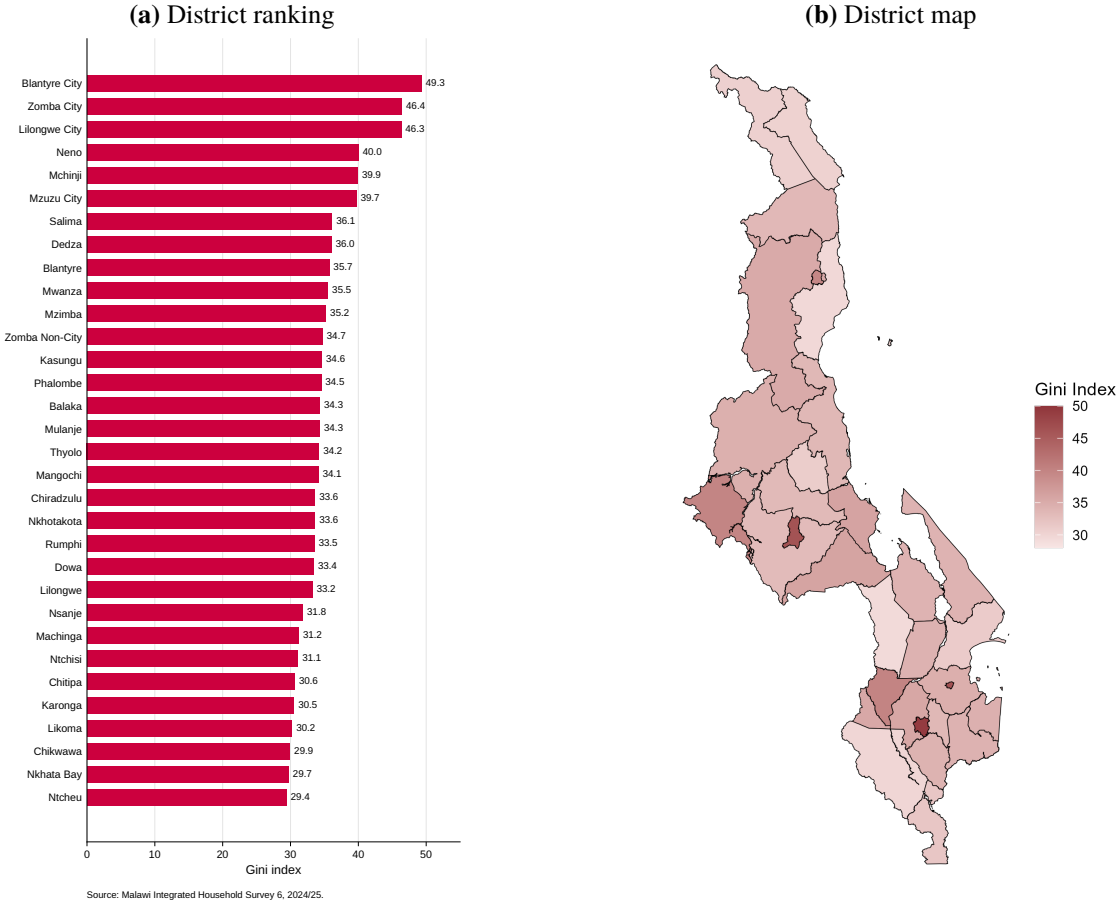
District Gini values show wide variation. The highest district or city Gini values are in Blantyre City (49.3), Zomba City (46.4), Lilongwe City (46.3), Neno (40.0), Mchinji (39.9), and Mzuzu City (39.7). The lowest values are in Ntcheu (29.4), Nkhata Bay (29.7), Chikwawa (29.9), Likoma (30.2), Karonga (30.5), and Chitipa (30.6). These results should be interpreted together with poverty rates: a district can have low poverty but high inequality, as in Blantyre City, or high poverty with a comparatively compressed consumption distribution, as in Chikwawa and Mulanje (Figure 4.24).

Figure 4.23: Gini index secondary profiles, IHS6 (Inequality in annual real per capita consumption)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. Child-headed: head younger than 18.

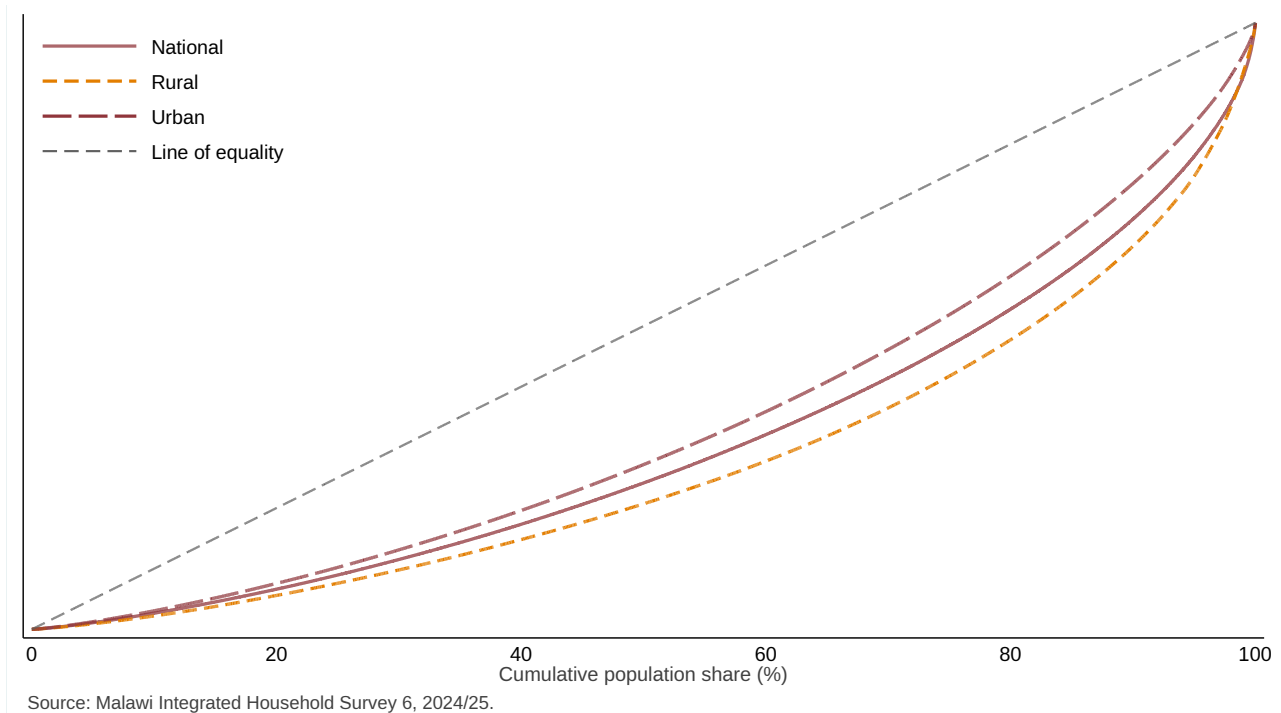
Figure 4.24: Gini index by district, IHS6 (Inequality in annual real per capita consumption)



4.9 Lorenz curve

The Lorenz curve shows the cumulative share of consumption held by the cumulative share of the population, after people are ranked from lowest to highest consumption. Curves farther below the line of equality indicate greater inequality. The urban curve lies farther below the line of equality than the rural curve, while the national distribution lies between them. This confirms that urban areas have greater dispersion in consumption even though the poverty rate is much lower than in rural areas. Such a pattern can be consistent with urban labor markets in which returns to education and skills are more dispersed, generating greater inequality alongside higher mean welfare. The national, urban and rural Lorenz curves are presented in Figure 4.25.

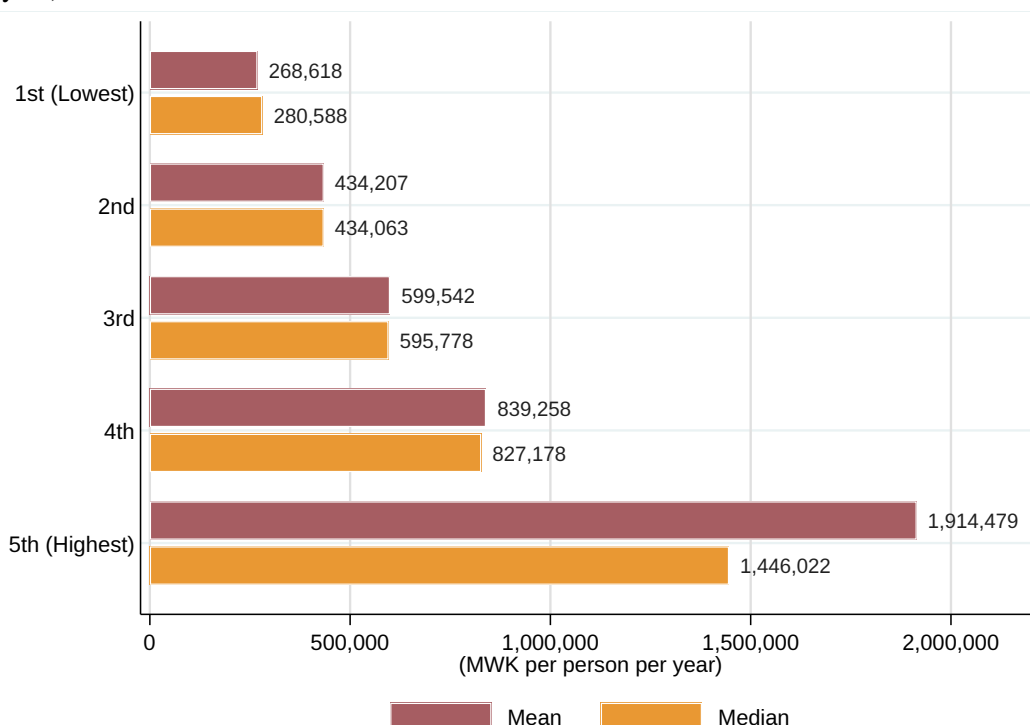
Figure 4.25: Lorenz curve: national, urban and rural, IHS6 (Distribution of annual real per capita consumption)



4.10 Consumption levels and distribution

Mean and median consumption provide additional context for the poverty and inequality results. The mean is sensitive to high-consumption households, while the median represents the middle person in the distribution. In IHS6, annual real per capita consumption increases sharply across welfare quintiles: the lowest quintile has mean consumption of MWK 268,618 and median consumption of MWK 280,588, while the highest quintile has mean consumption of MWK 1,914,479 and median consumption of MWK 1,446,022. These values help explain why poverty and inequality should be read together: a fall in the headcount can coexist with rising food poverty or widening dispersion across the distribution, as shown by the mean and median across welfare quintiles in Figure 4.26.

Figure 4.26: Mean and median annual real per capita consumption by welfare quintile, IHS6 (MWK per person per year)



Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. Values in MWK per year.

The composition of nominal annual consumption per person is documented in Annex C, Tables C.2 and C.3. Table C.2 shows that food accounts for 61.3 percent of nominal consumption nationally, 66.1 percent in rural areas and 49.1 percent in urban areas. Table C.3 provides a broader category profile covering food, clothing and footwear, housing and utilities, health, transport, education and other consumption at national, residence and regional levels. These nominal component values are distinct from the real annual consumption levels in Table B.5, which are adjusted for spatial and temporal price differences to the common July–August 2024 price base.

The IHS6 results point to a mixed picture of welfare. Total monetary poverty declined moderately, but food poverty and the food-poverty gap increased. These results show that the story is more nuanced. The national poverty rate summarizes the share of people below the total poverty line, but it does not show all movements around the line. Some households moved above the total poverty line, contributing to a decline in total poverty, while food poverty and the food-poverty gap increased, showing that food hardships worsened among more vulnerable households. The correct interpretation is, therefore, not that welfare simply improved or worsened, but that poverty became more uneven across households and regions. Policy interpretation should, therefore, distinguish the total poverty line from the food poverty line.

The findings point towards a need to protect food access while continuing to address the structural drivers of rural poverty, especially in the Southern Region and Rural South. Households in rural areas face high levels of deprivation but relatively lower inequality, while poverty rates are lower in urban areas but inequality is rising. In this regard, policy responses should be spatially differentiated and should consider both poverty rates and the number of poor people in each district.

The increase in the Gini index suggests that distributional issues remain important. Urban areas have lower poverty but higher inequality, so urban policy should not focus solely on averages. Rural areas have lower inequality but much higher deprivation, which calls for policies that raise rural productivity, reduce vulnerability, and stabilize food access. Inclusive regional (i.e. urban) growth should be supported through housing, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) financing and labour market reforms.

The district profile identifies areas where poverty and ultra-poverty are both high. Districts such as Mulanje, Nsanje, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Neno, Machinga, and others in the Southern Region stand out as hot spots for high and ultra-poverty. These districts should be prioritized for food security, adaptive social protection, and livelihood support. However, effective policy targeting is required to cater for the share of the population that is poor, not only the poverty rate, because a smaller district can have a high rate but fewer poor people than a larger district with a lower rate.

Several policy issues emerge from the report. The persistence of food poverty despite a decline in overall poverty highlights the delicateness of household food security. Regional disparities suggest the need for geographically differentiated interventions. Rising inequality in urban areas signals that averages mask significant distributional challenges, while the uneven welfare outcomes across households show that poverty reduction strategies must be inclusive and aim to build resilience.

Based on the findings, a set of recommendations can be drawn, including the following:

- Protecting food access must be a priority, through targeted food assistance and nutrition programs, alongside investments in climate-smart agriculture to strengthen resilience.
- Adaptive social protection systems should be scaled up to provide shock-responsive cash transfers and safety nets, ensuring that vulnerable groups are not left behind.
- Raising productivity in rural areas through irrigation, improved inputs, and stronger market linkages can help households move beyond subsistence farming.
- Urban policies should focus on reducing inequality by promoting inclusive growth, expanding housing opportunities, supporting small and medium enterprises, and reforming labour markets.
- Strengthening good governance, institutional integrity, and transparency is critical to ensure that poverty reduction programs are transparent, accountable, and responsive to local needs.
- Decentralized service delivery should be promoted to empower district-level authorities for effective delivery of services.
- Interventions aimed at promoting food security, enhancing social protection, improving rural productivity, reducing urban inequality, and promoting good governance are essential in addressing both the immediate challenges of food poverty and the longer-term structural drivers of deprivation and inequality.

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Annex A. Methodological details for the IHS6 monetary poverty estimates

A.1 Purpose and replication standard

Purpose. This annex documents the construction of the IHS6 consumption-based welfare indicator, price deflators, poverty lines, and poverty measures. The objective is to make the official poverty estimates transparent and reproducible for technical users.

Replication note. Full numerical replication requires access to the IHS6 household microdata and associated survey-processing documentation, available subject to the NSO's data-access procedures.

A.2 Survey file, weights, and estimation population

- The poverty estimates use the final IHS6 poverty estimation file of 12,502 households.
- Poverty estimates are person-weighted. For household *h*, the person weight is the household sampling weight multiplied by household size.
- The poverty-status indicator is assigned to all members of the household because welfare is measured at the household level and expressed per capita.
- Survey-design standard errors account for the IHS6 strata and primary sampling units.

A.3 Welfare indicator

Definition. The welfare indicator is real per capita consumption. It is constructed by summing annual household consumption values across food, non-food goods and services, housing services, and durable-goods service flows; adjusting for cost-of-living differences; and dividing by household size.

Component	Treatment	Annualization/value basis
Food	Food consumed from purchases, own production, gifts, and other sources; includes vendor foods with valid calorie factors.	7-day recall, annualized.

Component	Treatment	Annualization/value basis
Non-food recurrent goods and services	Education, health, utilities, transport, clothing, communication, personal care, recreation, and other regular household needs.	Different recall periods annualized.
Durable goods	Annual service value of selected consumer durables, excluding business-use assets.	Current value divided by estimated remaining service life.
Housing services	Reported rent for renters and rental-equivalent value for non-renters/owner-occupiers.	Annualized actual or imputed rent.

A.4 Food aggregate construction

Food item universe and sources. The IHS6 food module covers 153 food items. For each item, reported consumption can come from purchases, own production, gifts, and other sources. Purchased food is valued using reported expenditure. Own-produced, gifted, and other non-purchased food is valued using estimated market unit values for the same or comparable item, location, and period.

Cleaning and reconciliation. Records with no quantity, unit, value, or other consumption information are excluded from the food item file. When total consumption and source-specific quantities are inconsistent, the construction reconciles source and total information using deterministic rules. When total consumption is available but source details are incomplete, the total is retained as the best measure of actual consumption. When source information is more complete and internally consistent, it is used to support valuation and consistency checks.

Manual recovery of “other specify” items. Free-text “other specify” responses are standardized and matched manually to existing food item codes where the description is sufficiently clear. This recovers as much valid consumption as possible and avoids losing consumption that was reported outside the structured item list. The standardized classifications are retained as part of the survey-processing documentation used to construct the official consumption aggregate.

Local and nonstandard units. Households could report quantities in local and nonstandard units such as tins, heaps, cups, plates, bottles, pieces, sachets, tablespoons, and teaspoons. These units are standardized and converted to kilograms using the IHS6 conversion-factor file. Free-text unit responses are standardized before matching. Fallback rules are used only when they are transparent and defensible; for example, generic units are mapped to item- and region-specific conversion factors where no size-specific information is available.

- Duplicate item records created by recoding or unit conversion are aggregated after conversion to comparable units.
- Extreme unit reports that clearly reflect unit entry mistakes, such as liter/milliliter and kilogram/-gram scale errors, are corrected using documented rules.

- Watermelon reported as generic “piece” is mapped to the regional medium-watermelon conversion factor.

A.5 Valuation of food and price cascade

Unit values. Purchased food observations with positive expenditure and positive standardized quantity generate household-item unit values. These unit values are cleaned for implausible extremes and then used to value non-purchased quantities.

Price cascade. When a household has non-purchased food requiring valuation, the method assigns the lowest-level reliable median unit value available. The cascade starts with item-district-month prices and then moves to broader cells if too few observations are available. A minimum count threshold is used before accepting the more granular median.

Cascade level	Cell	Use
1	Item x district x survey month	Preferred level when enough purchase observations are available.
2	Item x urban/rural-region x survey month	Used when district-month evidence is too thin.
3	Item x urban/rural-region	Used when monthly evidence is too thin.
4	Item, national	Final fallback for valid items with insufficient local price evidence.

A.6 Food away from home and vendor foods

Treatment. Food away from home and vendor foods are retained in total consumption. For the calorie-based food basket and food CPI component, vendor foods with valid calorie conversion factors are included as food. This includes the standard vendor-food items and the expanded IHS6 vendor-food items with valid calorie factors. Restaurant meals and broad “other cooked foods from vendors” without reliable calorie factors, especially G02-829 and G02-830, are retained in total consumption and treated on the non-food side for the non-food allowance and CPI weighting, but they are not forced into the 2,215 kcal food basket.

IHS6 item group	Calorie treatment	Welfare treatment
Vendor foods 820-828. 831–837/838 where valid	Valid calorie factors; included in food basket where applicable.	Included in food welfare and total welfare.
Restaurant/other vendor items 829-830	No reliable calorie factor; excluded from calorie basket.	Included in total welfare and treated on the non-food side for the non-food allowance.

A.7 Non-food aggregate

Included items. The non-food aggregate includes regular goods and services used by the household, including clothing and footwear, utilities and fuels, transport, communication, health, education, personal care, recreation, selected household items, and miscellaneous goods and services. Values are annualized according to the recall period in the questionnaire.

Excluded items. Expenditures that do not represent regular current household consumption are excluded. These include transfers to other households, lumpy ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, mortgage principal payments, and dwelling repairs or improvements that are better treated through housing services rather than as current consumption.

Valuation. Most non-food items are valued using reported expenditures because quantities and unit values are not meaningful for services and heterogeneous goods. Outlier checks are applied within relevant groups to reduce the influence of clear reporting errors.

A.8 Durable goods

Concept. Durable goods provide services over several years. Including the full purchase price in the year of purchase would overstate welfare for recent buyers and understate welfare for households that purchased the same good earlier. IHS6 therefore includes the annual service value of durable goods, not the full purchase price.

- Assets used primarily for business are excluded from household consumption.
- Reported current value is used as the asset value when purchase price information is not available.
- For most durable goods, expected lifetime is estimated as the maximum duration of a good reported within the survey.
- Remaining service life equals estimated total lifetime minus current age. If this produces an implausibly low or negative remaining life, a minimum of two years is imposed.
- Annual durable service value equals current value divided by remaining service life.

A.9 Housing services and rent imputation

Concept. Housing is treated as a flow of services consumed during the year. For renters, actual rent is the starting point. For owners and households living rent-free, a rental-equivalent value is estimated so that welfare is comparable between renters and non-renters.

Model. The IHS6 approach uses a hedonic rental model that relates actual rent to housing characteristics and location. Covariates include housing structure and service characteristics such as number of rooms, wall, roof and floor materials, water and sanitation access, electricity, location, and survey timing. Variables are selected using 10-fold cross-validated LASSO, after which the final log-rent equation is estimated by weighted ordinary least squares on 1,915 renter households. Location effects are represented by selected district and urban/rural-region indicators, together with survey-year controls. The final model has an R^2 of 0.7679 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.7606. Predicted rental values are converted back to levels using a weighted smearing factor of 1.0994.

Stratum	Mean actual rent	Mean model rent	Scale factor
North rural	11,989.49	12,516.53	0.9578928
North urban	37,067.24	33,966.39	1.0912920
Central rural	17,446.62	16,454.43	1.0602990
Central urban	44,877.32	42,200.51	1.0634310
South rural	16,687.83	16,125.13	1.0348960
South urban	37,339.21	38,412.55	0.9720574

- The model predictions are scaled within region $\times$ urban/rural strata so that mean predicted rent aligns with observed renter rent among renters with positive rent.
- Predicted rent outliers are controlled before scaling.
- After scaling, imputed rents above the 99th percentile of positive observed rents among renters in the same stratum are capped.

A.10 Outlier treatment and robust construction

Principle. The IHS6 poverty aggregate is constructed using robust rules designed to reduce the influence of implausible records while preserving genuine welfare variation. The method does not mechanically trim the household welfare distribution. Instead, it reviews and treats extreme values in the underlying components where reporting or unit errors are most likely.

Component	Detection logic	Treatment
Food unit values	Log unit values by item and urban/rural-region month; household weights used because unit values are household-item price observations.	Flagged lower and upper values are bottom/top-coded to the cell-specific bounds.
Purchased food expenditure	Log purchased expenditure per capita by item and urban/rural-region month.	Flagged values are bottom/top-coded and then used in food value construction.

Component	Detection logic	Treatment
Food quantities	Log quantities per capita for purchased, own-produced, and other-source quantities by item and urban/rural-region month.	Flagged quantities are bottom/top-coded; own-production and gifts are revalued after quantity treatment.
Non-food expenditure	Reported values checked within relevant module/category groups.	Implausible values adjusted where clear; lumpy/non-consumption items excluded by design.
Durables	Reported current values and ages checked for implausible values before service-flow calculation.	Annual service values calculated after treatment.
Housing/rent	Log predicted rent and scaled imputed rent checked; p99 cap based on observed positive renter rents.	Outliers adjusted while preserving right-skewed housing-service distribution.

A.11 Price deflation

Objective. Nominal consumption is adjusted for differences in prices across interview months and geographic domains. The final welfare measure therefore compares households in a common price base rather than in the prices they happened to face when and where they were interviewed.

A.11.1 Temporal deflation

Food. The temporal food price index is constructed from survey unit values. Within each urban/rural-region domain, a fixed food basket is tracked over survey months. The index is Laspeyres-style because the basket weights are fixed within the domain.

Non-food. The temporal non-food index uses official non-food CPI series normalized to the July-August 2024 base period. Food and non-food temporal indices are combined using IHS6 survey budget shares.

A.11.2 Spatial deflation

Food. The spatial food price index prices the same national food basket in each urban/rural-region domain. Regional median prices are compared with national median prices for each item, and national item weights are applied to every region. Basket coverage is checked after invalid item-region price cells are excluded.

Combined deflator. Food and non-food indices are combined using survey-based budget shares. The national IHS6 shares used in the combined price index are 64.8 percent food and 35.2 percent non-food. As described in Section 3.3.2, these are budget weights used to combine the food and non-food price indices. They differ from the 61.3 percent food and 38.7 percent non-food shares reported in Table C.2, which describe the observed composition of person-weighted nominal annual consumption per person. In the CPI-weighting definition, non-food includes non-food components, alcohol, and restaurant/other

vendor food without calorie factors; food includes core food, beverages, and vendor foods with calorie factors.

A.12 Poverty lines

A.12.1 Food poverty line

Reference population. The food basket is based on the consumption pattern of households in the 5th and 6th deciles of real per capita consumption. This group is close enough to basic-needs standards to represent realistic food choices among lower-welfare households, while avoiding diets that are too constrained or too high-cost.

Calorie requirement. The IHS6 food poverty line is anchored to 2,215 kilocalories per person per day. Food quantities are converted to edible quantities and then to kilocalories using the nutrient conversion table. The basket is scaled so that the priced basket delivers exactly 2,215 kcal per person per day.

A.12.2 Non-food allowance using two Ravallion bounds

Concept. The estimated non-food allowance is derived from observed spending of households near the food poverty line (following Ravallion 1994). IHS6 uses a non-parametric bandwidth approach to estimate a lower-bound non-food allowance and an upper-bound non-food allowance, and reports their midpoint as the selected non-food allowance.

$$b_j = \frac{j}{100}, \quad j = 1, \dots, 10, \quad (\text{A.1})$$

$$\mathcal{U}_j = \{h : z_f(1 - b_j) \leq f_h \leq z_f(1 + b_j)\}, \quad U_j = \frac{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{U}_j} a_h m_h}{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{U}_j} a_h}, \quad (\text{A.2})$$

$$\mathcal{L}_j = \{h : z_f(1 - b_j) \leq y_h \leq z_f(1 + b_j)\}, \quad L_j = \frac{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{L}_j} a_h m_h}{\sum_{h \in \mathcal{L}_j} a_h}, \quad (\text{A.3})$$

$$U = \frac{1}{10} \sum_{j=1}^{10} U_j, \quad L = \frac{1}{10} \sum_{j=1}^{10} L_j, \quad \text{NFA} = \frac{U + L}{2}. \quad (\text{A.4})$$

Here z_f is the food poverty line, f_h is food welfare per person per day, y_h is total real welfare per person per day, m_h is non-food welfare per person per day, and $a_h = w_h n_h$ is the person weight.

This is the non-parametric two-bound implementation following Ravallion (1994). The upper-bound non-food allowance is based on non-food spending among households whose food welfare is close to the food poverty line; the lower-bound non-food allowance is based on non-food spending among households whose total welfare is close to the food poverty line. The bandwidths are percentages, so $b_j = 0.01, \dots, 0.10$.

Line/component	Daily MWK	Annual MWK	Method
Food poverty line / ultra-poverty line	1,071.1075	390,954.24	Cost of 2,215 kcal basket.
Lower-bound non-food allowance	366.1082	133,629.49	Mean non-food welfare where total welfare is near the FPL, averaged across 1%-10% bands.
Upper-bound non-food allowance	616.8190	225,138.93	Mean non-food welfare where food welfare is near the FPL, averaged across 1%-10% bands.
Selected non-food allowance	491.4636	179,384.21	Midpoint of the lower- and upper-bound non-food allowances.
Total poverty line	1,562.5710	570,338.42	Food poverty line plus selected non-food allowance.

Note: Annual values are calculated from unrounded daily estimates; minor differences from multiplying the displayed daily values by 365 reflect rounding.

Important interpretation. The total poverty line is the sum of the food poverty line and the selected non-food allowance. This summation applies to monetary line components, not to poverty rates. The ultra-poverty headcount is calculated by comparing total real per capita consumption with the food poverty line.

A.13 Poverty measures

FGT formula. Poverty is reported using the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke class of measures. Let h index households, w_h be the household sampling weight, n_h household size, y_h real daily per capita consumption, z the relevant poverty line, and α the FGT parameter. Then:

$$P_\alpha(z) = \frac{\sum_h w_h n_h \left(\frac{z-y_h}{z}\right)^\alpha \mathbf{1}(y_h < z)}{\sum_h w_h n_h}, \quad \alpha \in \{0, 1, 2\}. \quad (\text{A.5})$$

- $\alpha = 0$ gives the headcount ratio.
- $\alpha = 1$ gives the poverty gap.
- $\alpha = 2$ gives the squared poverty gap or severity index.
- For total poverty, z is the total poverty line. For ultra-poverty/food poverty, z is the food poverty line.

Annex B. Statistical tables

The tables in this annex provide the statistical detail behind the report's poverty, ultra-poverty, inequality, and consumption results. Tables B.1 and B.2 reproduce the published IHS5 estimates, standard errors, and confidence intervals from the Malawi Poverty Report 2020. For IHS6, the tables report person-weighted estimates and Taylor-linearized standard errors under the stratified cluster survey design, with logit-transformed 95 percent confidence intervals. Percentage estimates, standard errors, confidence limits, and Gini indices are shown to one decimal place. Generalized Entropy coefficients retain three decimals because they are technical indices. The published IHS5 appendix reports the national poverty estimate as 50.8 percent, while the IHS5 main-results comparison series uses 50.7 percent; Table B.1 retains the published appendix value.

Table B.1: Poverty incidence by place of residence, rural region and district, IHS5 and IHS6

Domain	IHS5 (2019/20)				IHS6 (2024/25)			
	Estimate	Std. error	95% confidence interval		Estimate	Std. error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound			Lower bound	Upper bound
Malawi	50.8	0.5	49.8	51.7	47.3	0.9	45.5	49.0
Rural	56.6	0.5	55.6	57.6	52.6	1.0	50.7	54.5
Urban	19.2	0.9	17.5	20.9	20.9	1.5	18.2	23.9
Rural Region								
Rural North	35.9	1.2	33.6	38.2	46.1	2.4	41.4	50.9
Rural Centre	62.8	0.8	61.1	64.4	44.4	1.6	41.4	47.5
Rural South	56.7	0.7	55.3	58.2	62.3	1.3	59.6	64.9
District								
Chitipa	38.6	2.5	33.7	43.5	47.3	3.5	40.4	54.2
Karonga	41.1	2.5	36.1	46.0	42.8	4.0	35.1	50.7
Nkhata Bay	22.0	2.3	17.5	26.4	43.3	4.5	34.8	52.2
Rumphi	26.4	2.4	21.6	31.1	29.8	4.6	21.5	39.6
Mzimba	38.6	2.7	33.3	43.9	45.6	4.8	36.4	55.1
Likoma	25.9	7.9	10.5	41.3	31.8	4.2	24.2	40.5
Mzuzu City	11.5	1.6	8.3	14.7	24.7	3.2	19.1	31.4
Kasungu	67.0	2.4	62.3	71.7	41.1	4.8	32.1	50.8
Nkhotakota	43.0	2.6	37.8	48.1	62.8	4.5	53.7	71.1
Ntchisi	55.2	2.7	49.9	60.5	39.6	6.1	28.5	51.9
Dowa	65.1	2.6	60.0	70.2	26.5	3.6	20.1	34.0
Salima	62.4	2.5	57.5	67.4	60.4	4.4	51.5	68.7
Lilongwe	63.5	2.0	59.5	67.4	41.0	3.5	34.3	48.0
Mchinji	68.5	2.5	63.6	73.3	41.1	3.9	33.8	48.8
Dedza	61.6	2.6	56.6	66.7	45.6	5.1	35.8	55.7
Ntcheu	56.8	2.6	51.6	62.0	51.6	3.9	43.9	59.2
Lilongwe City	15.6	1.6	12.6	18.7	20.4	2.1	16.5	24.9
Mangochi	63.5	2.5	58.7	68.4	51.2	5.4	40.7	61.6
Machinga	62.3	2.6	57.2	67.3	59.3	4.6	50.1	68.0
Zomba Non-City	48.8	2.7	43.5	54.0	57.9	5.4	47.1	68.0
Chiradzulu	38.4	2.6	33.3	43.4	59.5	4.4	50.6	67.8
Blantyre	43.9	2.6	38.8	49.0	62.2	3.4	55.2	68.7
Mwanza	47.0	2.8	41.6	52.5	54.5	4.8	44.9	63.7
Thyolo	49.4	2.6	44.4	54.4	59.5	4.4	50.6	67.9
Mulanje	54.8	2.6	49.7	59.9	77.5	2.9	71.3	82.6
Phalombe	63.7	2.6	58.7	68.8	65.7	3.9	57.7	72.8
Chikwawa	61.2	2.6	56.1	66.3	64.6	3.4	57.7	71.0
Nsanje	62.8	2.6	57.7	67.9	67.1	4.9	57.0	75.9
Balaka	62.7	2.5	57.8	67.7	52.3	4.9	42.8	61.6
Neno	40.1	2.7	34.7	45.4	57.8	5.2	47.4	67.5
Zomba City	13.5	1.9	9.8	17.1	38.1	3.6	31.3	45.4
Blantyre City	14.9	1.9	11.2	18.6	17.2	3.0	12.0	24.0

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6.

Notes: IHS5 estimates, standard errors, and confidence intervals are reproduced from the Malawi Poverty Report 2020. The IHS5 main-results series reports 50.7 percent nationally, while the published Appendix A table reports 50.8 percent; the IHS5 column above reproduces the published appendix. IHS5 confidence intervals use the published linear (symmetric) approximation and can show negative lower bounds for small estimates. IHS6 estimates are person-weighted and calculated using the IHS6 stratified cluster survey design. Taylor-linearized standard errors are reported, and 95 percent confidence intervals use a logit transformation and are bounded between 0 and 100 percent.

Table B.2: Ultra-poverty incidence by place of residence, rural region and district, IHS5 and IHS6

Domain	IHS5 (2019/20)				IHS6 (2024/25)			
	Estimate	Std. error	95% confidence interval		Estimate	Std. error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound			Lower bound	Upper bound
Malawi	20.5	0.4	19.7	21.2	24.0	0.7	22.6	25.5
Rural	23.6	0.4	22.8	24.5	27.3	0.9	25.6	29.0
Urban	3.3	0.4	2.6	4.1	8.1	0.9	6.5	10.1
Rural Region								
Rural North	9.8	0.7	8.4	11.2	21.1	1.9	17.7	24.9
Rural Centre	29.5	0.8	28.0	31.1	21.0	1.3	18.6	23.6
Rural South	22.0	0.6	20.8	23.2	35.0	1.3	32.4	37.7
District								
Chitipa	14.3	1.8	10.8	17.8	20.3	3.4	14.3	27.8
Karonga	10.6	1.6	7.5	13.7	16.0	2.7	11.4	22.0
Nkhata Bay	0.4	0.3	-0.3	1.0	19.9	3.3	14.1	27.3
Rumphi	2.9	0.9	1.1	4.7	10.1	2.4	6.4	15.8
Mzimba	12.3	1.8	8.7	15.9	23.9	3.4	17.9	31.2
Likoma	5.3	4.0	-2.6	13.2	1.4	0.5	0.7	2.7
Mzuzu City	0.4	0.3	-0.2	1.1	6.8	1.8	4.0	11.4
Kasungu	26.2	2.2	21.8	30.6	18.6	2.9	13.6	24.8
Nkhotakota	19.7	2.1	15.6	23.9	28.0	4.6	19.9	37.8
Ntchisi	20.9	2.2	16.5	25.2	19.5	4.8	11.7	30.8
Dowa	27.4	2.4	22.6	32.1	10.3	2.7	6.1	16.8
Salima	31.8	2.4	27.0	36.5	32.3	4.5	24.2	41.7
Lilongwe	32.8	2.0	29.0	36.6	19.0	3.1	13.7	25.9
Mchinji	33.7	2.5	28.7	38.6	18.8	2.4	14.5	24.1
Dedza	29.1	2.4	24.3	33.9	22.8	3.8	16.3	31.1
Ntcheu	27.3	2.4	22.6	32.0	24.2	3.5	18.1	31.7
Lilongwe City	2.3	0.6	1.0	3.5	8.0	1.7	5.3	12.0
Mangochi	29.5	2.3	24.9	34.1	24.3	3.8	17.6	32.5
Machinga	24.0	2.3	19.5	28.5	34.4	4.4	26.4	43.5
Zomba Non-City	17.4	2.0	13.5	21.4	33.0	5.7	22.9	44.9
Chiradzulu	13.0	1.8	9.5	16.5	29.9	5.6	20.1	42.0
Blantyre	13.4	1.8	9.9	16.9	31.9	3.9	24.8	39.9
Mwanza	19.7	2.2	15.3	24.1	31.9	3.8	25.0	39.8
Thyolo	14.7	1.8	11.2	18.3	32.0	4.7	23.6	41.7
Mulanje	21.7	2.2	17.5	25.9	48.5	3.4	41.9	55.1
Phalombe	24.5	2.3	20.0	29.0	42.5	4.8	33.4	52.2
Chikwawa	23.4	2.3	19.0	27.9	38.1	3.5	31.5	45.3
Nsanje	28.1	2.4	23.4	32.8	39.2	3.8	32.0	47.0
Balaka	22.9	2.2	18.6	27.2	27.0	4.4	19.4	36.4
Neno	8.0	1.5	5.0	11.0	35.2	5.2	25.8	45.9
Zomba City	3.1	1.0	1.3	5.0	16.1	2.6	11.6	21.8
Blantyre City	1.5	0.6	0.2	2.8	6.9	1.8	4.1	11.3

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6.

Notes: IHS5 estimates, standard errors, and confidence intervals are reproduced from the Malawi Poverty Report 2020. IHS5 confidence intervals use the published linear (symmetric) approximation and can show negative lower bounds for small estimates. IHS6 estimates are person-weighted and calculated using the IHS6 stratified cluster survey design. Taylor-linearized standard errors are reported, and 95 percent confidence intervals use a logit transformation and are bounded between 0 and 100 percent.

Table B.3: Poverty incidence and population distribution, IHS6

Domain	Poverty (%)	Ultra-poverty (%)	Population share (%)	Share of poor (%)	Share of ultra-poor (%)
Malawi	47.3	24.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban	20.9	8.1	16.9	7.5	5.7
Rural	52.6	27.3	83.1	92.5	94.3
Region					
Northern Region	41.0	18.3	12.7	11.0	9.7
Central Region	40.4	18.8	43.2	36.9	33.7
Southern Region	55.8	30.9	44.1	52.1	56.6
District					
Chitipa	47.3	20.3	1.3	1.3	1.1
Karonga	42.8	16.0	2.0	1.8	1.4
Nkhata Bay	43.3	19.9	1.5	1.4	1.3
Rumphi	29.8	10.1	1.3	0.8	0.5
Mzimba	45.6	23.9	5.1	4.9	5.0
Likoma	31.8	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.0
Mzuzu City	24.7	6.8	1.4	0.8	0.4
Kasungu	41.1	18.6	4.8	4.2	3.7
Nkhotakota	62.8	28.0	2.2	2.9	2.6
Ntchisi	39.6	19.5	1.9	1.6	1.5
Dowa	26.5	10.3	4.5	2.5	1.9
Salima	60.4	32.3	2.8	3.6	3.8
Lilongwe	41.0	19.0	9.2	8.0	7.3
Mchinji	41.1	18.8	3.4	2.9	2.7
Dedza	45.6	22.8	4.7	4.5	4.4
Ntcheu	51.6	24.2	3.8	4.2	3.9
Lilongwe City	20.4	8.0	6.0	2.6	2.0
Mangochi	51.2	24.3	6.9	7.5	7.0
Machinga	59.3	34.4	4.5	5.7	6.5
Zomba Non-City	57.9	33.0	4.2	5.1	5.7
Chiradzulu	59.5	29.9	1.9	2.4	2.4
Blantyre	62.2	31.9	2.6	3.4	3.4
Mwanza	54.5	31.9	0.8	0.9	1.0
Thyolo	59.5	32.0	3.9	4.9	5.2
Mulanje	77.5	48.5	3.8	6.3	7.8
Phalombe	65.7	42.5	2.5	3.5	4.4
Chikwawa	64.6	38.1	3.2	4.3	5.0
Nsanje	67.1	39.2	1.6	2.3	2.7
Balaka	52.3	27.0	2.6	2.8	2.9
Neno	57.8	35.2	0.8	0.9	1.1
Zomba City	38.1	16.1	0.6	0.5	0.4
Blantyre City	17.2	6.9	4.3	1.6	1.2

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25.

Table B.4: Inequality indices by place of residence, region and district, IHS6

Domain	GE(-1)	GE(0)	GE(1)	GE(2)	Gini index
Malawi	0.305	0.267	0.320	0.603	39.9
Rural	0.223	0.191	0.204	0.286	33.9
Urban	0.416	0.347	0.398	0.669	45.6
Region					
Northern Region	0.219	0.201	0.233	0.394	35.0
Central Region	0.293	0.257	0.303	0.530	39.3
Southern Region	0.324	0.286	0.358	0.760	41.2
District					
Chitipa	0.179	0.157	0.168	0.231	30.6
Karonga	0.169	0.151	0.159	0.204	30.5
Nkhata Bay	0.158	0.144	0.151	0.184	29.7
Rumphi	0.201	0.180	0.185	0.219	33.5
Mzimba	0.219	0.206	0.256	0.533	35.2
Likoma	0.147	0.147	0.170	0.248	30.2
Mzuzu City	0.287	0.256	0.288	0.422	39.7
Kasungu	0.221	0.194	0.204	0.258	34.6
Nkhotakota	0.210	0.192	0.230	0.375	33.6
Ntchisi	0.219	0.171	0.173	0.233	31.1
Dowa	0.208	0.183	0.196	0.278	33.4
Salima	0.246	0.219	0.252	0.401	36.1
Lilongwe	0.210	0.183	0.195	0.274	33.2
Mchinji	0.287	0.263	0.317	0.553	39.9
Dedza	0.246	0.220	0.259	0.448	36.0
Ntcheu	0.181	0.147	0.142	0.159	29.4
Lilongwe City	0.431	0.356	0.400	0.631	46.3
Mangochi	0.212	0.189	0.202	0.266	34.1
Machinga	0.185	0.160	0.161	0.189	31.2
Zomba Non-City	0.271	0.208	0.206	0.258	34.7
Chiradzulu	0.230	0.191	0.196	0.253	33.6
Blantyre	0.237	0.209	0.226	0.301	35.7
Mwanza	0.285	0.218	0.229	0.346	35.5
Thyolo	0.237	0.199	0.217	0.316	34.2
Mulanje	0.218	0.195	0.217	0.308	34.3
Phalombe	0.239	0.200	0.214	0.308	34.5
Chikwawa	0.150	0.143	0.156	0.205	29.9
Nsanje	0.190	0.172	0.198	0.311	31.8
Balaka	0.207	0.192	0.218	0.325	34.3
Neno	0.317	0.270	0.326	0.655	40.0
Zomba City	0.430	0.355	0.383	0.558	46.4
Blantyre City	0.516	0.410	0.468	0.794	49.3

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. Indices are person-weighted and based on annual real per capita consumption.

Table B.4a: Gini index by place of residence, region and district, IHS5 and IHS6

Domain	Gini IHS5	Gini IHS6
Malawi	37.9	39.9
Rural	33.2	33.9
Urban	39.0	45.6
Region		
Northern Region	35.2	35.0
Central Region	38.4	39.3
Southern Region	37.4	41.2
District		
Chitipa	30.6	30.6
Karonga	32.4	30.5
Nkhata Bay	27.5	29.7
Rumphi	32.0	33.5
Mzimba	32.9	35.2
Likoma	29.6	30.2
Mzuzu City	40.0	39.7
Kasungu	28.9	34.6
Nkhotakota	33.1	33.6
Ntchisi	29.2	31.1
Dowa	31.2	33.4
Salima	39.1	36.1
Lilongwe	34.5	33.2
Mchinji	31.8	39.9
Dedza	34.6	36.0
Ntcheu	31.8	29.4
Lilongwe City	38.8	46.3
Mangochi	32.9	34.1
Machinga	29.9	31.2
Zomba Non-City	33.9	34.7
Chiradzulu	33.2	33.6
Blantyre	37.9	35.7
Mwanza	34.8	35.5
Thyolo	29.2	34.2
Mulanje	32.2	34.3
Phalombe	32.1	34.5
Chikwawa	29.5	29.9
Nsanje	34.0	31.8
Balaka	34.7	34.3
Neno	31.7	40.0
Zomba City	39.0	46.4
Blantyre City	37.9	49.3

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6. Gini indices are shown on a 0–100 scale.

Table B.5: Mean and median consumption per person by place of residence, region and district, IHS5 and IHS6

Domain	Mean IHS5	Mean IHS6	Median IHS5	Median IHS6
Malawi	218,222	811,382	163,778	595,778
Rural	185,418	677,632	151,157	549,836
Urban	395,706	1,470,004	296,627	938,024
Region				
Northern Region	269,893	820,706	211,506	653,532
Central Region	201,719	888,266	150,759	659,929
Southern Region	219,106	733,431	163,575	527,371
District				
Chitipa	215,500	710,794	188,728	602,025
Karonga	231,352	758,283	191,024	618,032
Nkhata Bay	285,487	706,194	251,921	608,918
Rumphi	282,220	973,197	239,045	791,412
Mzimba	237,055	767,630	196,131	608,255
Likoma	276,140	932,056	235,189	774,159
Mzuzu City	491,272	1,176,161	367,724	846,907
Kasungu	157,485	802,868	133,867	636,798
Nkhotakota	209,290	621,475	179,828	492,299
Ntchisi	180,638	739,078	153,326	647,914
Dowa	161,977	1,032,535	141,472	867,034
Salima	185,406	641,851	134,557	509,995
Lilongwe	168,274	788,807	133,987	686,616
Mchinji	154,883	913,555	126,599	671,285
Dedza	173,683	749,313	142,232	599,837
Ntcheu	173,566	634,723	143,588	562,024
Lilongwe City	406,334	1,520,595	308,839	935,021
Mangochi	173,988	720,927	141,018	562,377
Machinga	169,759	578,789	145,925	502,020
Zomba Non-City	211,528	608,059	170,233	513,044
Chiradzulu	231,906	610,991	187,551	503,209
Blantyre	241,456	625,888	178,098	482,885
Mwanza	208,466	648,200	172,135	512,360
Thyolo	198,982	615,000	167,540	503,300
Mulanje	188,657	487,163	151,433	393,576
Phalombe	173,324	548,548	146,375	443,969
Chikwawa	170,486	560,328	146,083	466,175
Nsanje	172,087	542,115	136,118	453,126
Balaka	183,361	704,979	138,360	558,274
Neno	222,941	708,070	184,123	515,814
Zomba City	446,577	1,172,330	322,709	699,813
Blantyre City	432,077	1,758,307	321,024	1,019,784

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6. IHS5 mean and median consumption values reproduce Table A-5 of the Malawi Poverty Report 2020. IHS6 values are person-weighted annual real consumption per person in the July–August 2024 price base.

Table B.6: Mean and median consumption per person by rural regions and consumption quintiles, IHS5 and IHS6

Domain	Mean IHS5	Mean IHS6	Median IHS5	Median IHS6
Rural Region				
Rural North	242,366	707,191	197,897	601,901
Rural Centre	166,751	764,718	137,568	619,319
Rural South	186,615	585,766	152,265	484,491
Consumption quintiles				
1st (Lowest)	76,823	268,618	79,445	280,588
2nd	121,091	434,207	120,955	434,063
3rd	165,025	599,542	163,778	595,778
4th	231,286	839,258	228,286	827,178
5th (Highest)	496,998	1,914,479	398,789	1,446,022

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Surveys 5 and 6. IHS5 values reproduce Table A-6 of the Malawi Poverty Report 2020. IHS6 consumption quintiles are calculated from the person-weighted national distribution of real annual consumption per person.

Annex C. Classification of consumption items by COICOP and IHS6 survey modules

Malawi Integrated Household Survey 2024/25

This annex first presents the broad COICOP-to-questionnaire mapping used for the IHS6 consumption aggregate, followed by tables describing the nominal food/non-food split and the broad-category composition of consumption. It concludes with the additions, new lines, wording expansions, replacements and removals identified in Modules G, I, J, K and L.

The IHS6 questionnaire expanded or refined the coverage of selected food products; household cleaning supplies; transport, communication and recreation services; personal-care products; housing-related goods and services; and consumer durables. It also consolidated some clothing and footwear categories and removed superseded standalone lines to improve classification and reduce duplication. Changes that affected only the recall period or questionnaire placement are not classified as new items. Table [C.4](#) lists the changes by COICOP.

Table C.1: COICOP classification and IHS6 questionnaire mapping

COICOP Purpose group		Main IHS6 questionnaire source(s)	Consumption-aggregate treatment / notes
01	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	Module G food consumption; selected education, health, tourism and food-away-from-home records where relevant	Purchased, own-produced, gifted and other food consumed by the household is valued and annualized.
01.1	Food	G02-101 to G02-837, subject to the food/non-food treatment of vendor items	Includes cereals, roots and tubers, pulses, vegetables, meat, fish, animal products, fruit, milk products, oils, sugar, spices, prepared foods and other food items.
01.2	Non-alcoholic beverages	G02-901 to G02-907, 909, 910, 912, 916 and 917	Includes water, soft drinks, tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic beverages.
02.1	Alcoholic beverages	G02-908, 911, 913, 914 and 915	Alcoholic beverages are classified separately from non-alcoholic beverages.
02.2	Tobacco	I02-103	Cigarettes and other tobacco products.
03.1	Clothing	J02-301 to J02-322, J02-350 and relevant education clothing lines	The revised Module J consolidates several boys/men and girls/women lines; the item-level changes are listed in Table C.4.
03.2	Footwear	J02-323 to J02-326, J02-351 and I02-224	Includes footwear, footwear repair and shoe-care products.
04	Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels	Module F housing; Modules I, K and L where relevant	Actual or imputed rent and regular utilities are included. Mortgage principal and dwelling improvements are excluded from current consumption or reflected through housing services.
05	Furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance	Modules I, J, K and L	Recurrent household supplies are annualized. Consumer durables enter through estimated annual service value rather than full purchase price.
06	Health	D10-D16, D12_1 and D48	Includes medicines, consultations, hospitalization, preventative care, medical transport and other health-related expenditure included in the aggregate.
07	Transport	Modules I, J, K, L and Y	Includes public and private transport services, vehicle operation and selected licensing or testing fees, subject to the consumption-aggregate rules.
08	Communication	F32, F35 series; Module I communication services; Module L communication durables	Includes airtime, internet, courier and related communication services; communication equipment enters through durable-goods service value where applicable.
09	Recreation and culture	Modules I, J, K, L and Y	Includes media subscriptions, entertainment, cultural services, selected printing services and recreation-related durable goods.
10	Education	C22A-C22M and related education expenditure lines	Education subcomponents are used where available; total fallback values are used only under the documented reconciliation rules to avoid double counting.
11	Restaurants and accommodation services	G02 vendor/restaurant items; J02 lodging; Module Y domestic tourism	Food-away-from-home and accommodation are classified according to their item treatment and available calorie conversion information.
12	Miscellaneous goods and services	Personal care and personal effects in Modules I and J; selected administrative, insurance and childcare lines	Includes personal care, personal effects and other eligible services. Transfers, lumpy ceremonies and other excluded expenditures remain outside regular current consumption.

Table C.2: Mean annual nominal consumption per person and component shares, IHS6

Domain	Total consumption		Food		Non-food	
	Mean annual nominal MWK/person	Share (%)	Mean annual nominal MWK/person	Share (%)	Mean annual nominal MWK/person	Share (%)
National	960,077	100.0	588,072	61.3	372,005	38.7
Rural	822,937	100.0	544,266	66.1	278,671	33.9
Urban	1,635,397	100.0	803,786	49.1	831,612	50.9

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. **Notes:** Values are person-weighted mean annual nominal consumption in MWK per person. Component shares are calculated relative to mean total nominal consumption. Non-food consumption equals total nominal consumption minus food consumption. Displayed amounts and shares may not sum exactly because of rounding. Nominal amounts are not adjusted for spatial and temporal price differences and should not be interpreted as real welfare comparisons.

Table C.3: Mean annual nominal consumption per person by broad category, IHS6

Panel A: Mean annual nominal amount (MWK per person)						
Category	National	Rural	Urban	Northern	Central	Southern
Food	588,072	544,266	803,786	635,962	627,379	535,796
Clothing and footwear	22,930	20,512	34,840	21,142	25,624	20,809
Housing and utilities	134,456	109,720	256,262	117,913	149,640	124,357
Health	16,294	14,581	24,727	17,394	17,476	14,820
Transport	63,546	38,306	187,831	58,917	70,131	58,432
Education	31,086	18,406	93,523	31,176	31,786	30,374
Other consumption	103,694	77,145	234,429	102,491	115,135	92,841
Total consumption	960,077	822,937	1,635,397	984,996	1,037,172	877,428

Panel B: Share of mean total nominal consumption (%)						
Category	National	Rural	Urban	Northern	Central	Southern
Food	61.3	66.1	49.1	64.6	60.5	61.1
Clothing and footwear	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.4
Housing and utilities	14.0	13.3	15.7	12.0	14.4	14.2
Health	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.7
Transport	6.6	4.7	11.5	6.0	6.8	6.7
Education	3.2	2.2	5.7	3.2	3.1	3.5
Other consumption	10.8	9.4	14.3	10.4	11.1	10.6
Total consumption	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Malawi Integrated Household Survey 6, 2024/25. **Notes:** Values are person-weighted mean annual nominal consumption in MWK per person. Each category's share is calculated relative to mean total nominal consumption. Food comprises COICOP Division 01—food and non-alcoholic beverages. Housing and utilities comprise COICOP Division 04, including actual and imputed rent, water, electricity, gas and other household fuels. Other consumption is calculated residually so that the unrounded categories sum to total nominal consumption. Displayed amounts and shares may not sum exactly because of rounding. Nominal amounts are not adjusted for spatial and temporal price differences and should not be interpreted as real welfare comparisons.

Table C.4: Questionnaire additions, new lines, wording expansions, replacements and removals in Modules G, I, J, K and L

Change	Module	Code	Questionnaire item
COICOP 01: Food and non-alcoholic beverages			
New addition	G	119	Grain Mill (Gramil)
New addition	G	120	Popcorn
New addition	G	315	Soya pieces
New addition	G	323	Mixed beans
New addition	G	415	Eggplants (aubergines), fresh or chilled
New addition	G	416	Carrots, fresh or chilled
New addition	G	509	Other poultry (guinea fowl, doves, quails, etc.)
New addition	G	516	Offal, liver, blood and other parts of slaughtered animals
New addition	G	517	Sausages, minced meat, meatballs and other processed meat
New addition	G	616	Watermelons, fresh
New addition	G	917	Energy drinks
Wording expansion	G	112	Buns, scones, muffins
COICOP 03: Clothing and footwear			
New addition	J	350	Women's/girls' tights
New addition	J	351	Repair of footwear
Replacement	J	303	Men's/boys' trousers
Replacement	J	304	Men's/boys' shirts
Replacement	J	305	Men's/boys' jackets
Replacement	J	306	Men's/boys' undergarments
Replacement	J	307	Men's/boys' shorts
Replacement	J	308	Men's/boys' T-shirts
Replacement	J	309	Other garments for men or boys
Replacement	J	313	Women's/girls' blouse or shirt
Replacement	J	314	Women's/girls' dress or skirt
Replacement	J	315	Women's/girls' undergarments
Replacement	J	316	Women's/girls' other clothing
Replacement	J	323	Men's/boys' shoes
Replacement	J	325	Women's/girls' shoes
Removed	J	310	Men's jackets
Removed	J	311	Men's undergarments
Removed	J	312	Men's other clothing
Removed	J	317	Women's blouse or shirt
Removed	J	319	Women's dress or skirt
Removed	J	320	Women's undergarments
Removed	J	322	Women's other clothing
Removed	J	324	Men's shoes
Removed	J	326	Women's shoes
COICOP 04: Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels			
New line	K	–	Corrugated iron sheets
New line	K	–	Estate/housing agents services

Continued on the next page

Table C.4: Questionnaire additions, new lines, wording expansions, replacements and removals in Modules G, I, J, K and L – continued

Change	Module	Code	Questionnaire item
New line	K	–	Iron bars
New line	K	–	Plumbing pipes
New line	K	–	Plywood, wooden doors and wooden door frames
New line	K	–	Plumbing, electrical, carpentry, building and electricity-installation services
New line	K	–	Tiles
COICOP 05: Furnishings, household equipment and routine maintenance			
New addition	I	227	Insecticides (spray, coil)
New addition	I	228	Disinfectants and cleaners (chlorine, toilet cleaner, Handy Andy, etc.)
New addition	I	229	Dishwashing bar soap, liquid or paste
New addition	I	230	Methylated spirits
New line	L	–	Charcoal stove
COICOP 07: Transport			
New addition	I	232	Tolls on motorways
New addition	K	–	Driving licences, lessons and tests
New addition	K	–	Road worthiness tests
COICOP 08: Communication			
New addition	I	233	Courier services for letters and parcels
New line	L	–	Mobile phone and accessories
COICOP 09: Recreation and culture			
New addition	I	234	Music, film and television streaming services
New addition	I	235	Subscription to satellite television (DStv, GOtv, Zuku, StarSat, Azam)
New addition	J	346	Photocopying, printing, scanning and typing services
New addition	K	–	Portrait and event photography or video-coverage services
New line	L	508	Tape or CD/DVD player; hi-fi; home theatre or stereo music system
New line	L	530	Satellite dish, decoder and television box
COICOP 12: Miscellaneous goods and services / personal care			
New addition	I	236	Deodorant, perfume
New addition	I	237	Hand and body lotion
New addition	I	238	Sanitary towels, panty liners and cotton wool
New addition	J	343	Make-up (for example, lipstick and nail varnish)
New addition	J	344	Hair braids, weaves, wigs and hairpieces
COICOP 12: Miscellaneous goods and services / personal effects			
New addition	J	345	Travel bags, handbags, wallets and purses
COICOP 12: Miscellaneous goods and services			
New addition	K	–	National identity cards, passports and visas

Notes: These entries document questionnaire changes. The IHS6 consumption aggregate was constructed on a harmonised basis to preserve comparability with IHS5. Items were not mechanically included or excluded solely because they were added, removed or replaced; their treatment followed the equivalence and classification rules in Table C.1 and Annex A, including appropriate recognition of substitution among comparable goods and services over time. Module K construction-material additions under COICOP 04—including corrugated iron sheets, iron bars, plumbing pipes, plywood, wooden doors and frames, and tiles—and related building or installation services when they represent dwelling improvements are excluded from current consumption, consistent with Annex A.7.

ANNEX D. TECHNICAL TEAM

The technical team for the Poverty and Inequality Report included officers from the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Department of Economic Planning and Development (EP&D).

Table D.1: Technical team by institution

Name	Position
National Statistical Office (NSO)	
Hector Kankuwe	Director, Economics and Agriculture Department
Simeon Yosefe	Deputy Director, Economics and Agriculture Department
Imran Chiosa	Principal Statistician
Samuel Chipokosa	Senior Statistician
Department of Economic Planning and Development (EP&D)	
Adwell Zembele	Director
Charles Chinkhuntha	Deputy Director
Esnart Phiri	Chief Economist



Poverty and Inequality Report

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2024/25

National Statistical Office

Government of Malawi

The Commissioner of Statistics

National Statistical Office

Off Chimbiya Road

P. O. Box 333, Zomba, Malawi

Website: www.nsomalawi.mw

Email: commissioner@nso.gov.mw