

Here's a summary of the responses from the participants in Lilongwe regarding the theme "Crisis on Financial Hardship and Poverty," categorised according to the three questions discussed:

1. What is the role and place of the church in Malawi in responding to the crisis of Financial Hardship and Poverty?

- The church is tasked with changing the mindset of its members towards financial management. It should conduct special meetings and sermons to impart financial literacy, teaching members how to manage their finances effectively and understand broader economic impacts. The church's role extends to promoting a savings and investment culture and providing tangible examples of financial management to encourage practical application.

2. What are three practical steps that the church in Malawi can take to respond to the crisis on Financial Hardship and Poverty?

- **Financial Training:** Provide training on financial management, business operations, and the importance of diversifying income sources to ensure stability and growth.
- **Vocational Training:** Offer vocational training to equip people, particularly the youth, with skills in various trades such as carpentry or electrical work, enabling them to secure employment or start their own businesses.
- **Direct Financial Support:** Use profits from church-owned businesses to support members in need, such as paying school fees for students from impoverished backgrounds, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent church members from pursuing education or business opportunities.

3. What are three practical steps that your church community can take to respond to the crisis on Financial Hardship and Poverty?

- **Establish Vocational Training Centres:** These centres would be managed and run by the church to provide skills training directly related to the community's needs.
- **Create Church-Operated Businesses:** Develop businesses like schools, clinics, or farms that can serve as revenue sources for the church and provide employment opportunities for community members.
- **Promote Life Skills and Independence:** Encourage members to develop their existing skills and foster a spirit of independence, reducing reliance on external aid and enhancing self-sufficiency.

The discussions reflect a comprehensive approach where the church not only addresses spiritual needs but also plays a critical role in economic education and empowerment. By providing financial literacy, vocational training, and direct economic support, the church aims to alleviate financial hardship and foster long-term economic stability among its members and the wider community.

