

WHY WE HAVE RETIRED THE 90kg RICE CHALLENGE

Many of our long-standing customers will remember our 90kg Rice Challenge, which encouraged schools, churches, Fair Trade groups and community organisations to sell 90kg of Kilombero rice – enough to help a farming family pay for a child's secondary school education for a year.

The challenge was built around a genuine need at the time. However, from January 2026, the Government of Malawi began introducing free secondary education in state schools, abolishing tuition fees and, from April 2026, removing many other charges, including examination fees.

While there remain significant questions about how the policy will be funded and implemented in practice, and many schools continue to face serious pressures around resources and capacity, the original link between selling 90kg of rice and paying secondary school fees is no longer accurate.

For that reason, we have decided not to relaunch the 90kg Rice Challenge as a distinct product at this time. You are of course always welcome to buy large amounts of Kilombero rice (90kg or another amount to suit your group) and to carry out your own challenge and we can still provide some supporting materials but please be aware these have not been updated to reflect the changing context in Malawi.

None of this means the need has disappeared. Farming families in Malawi continue to face rising living costs currently created by the war with Iran, the rising cost and shortages of fertiliser, fuel and other household essentials are having a massive impact on farmers at the moment as well as climate challenges and economic uncertainty. By choosing Kilombero rice, you're still helping create sustainable markets for smallholder farmers, enabling them to earn a fairer income, invest in their families and build more secure futures. We will continue to look for meaningful ways to share that impact with our customers as the situation in Malawi evolves.