Nsanje is one of the flood-prone areas in the country.

And, out of all the areas across Nsanje, the most hit—from 1989 to 2015—is Traditional Authority (TIA) Nyachikadza.

In 1997, the government declared TIA Nyachikadza a flood-prone area and ordered people in the area to relocate upland, the neighbouring TIA Nt chimba being the nearest safety point. But the government's calls, as well as other efforts employed by various stakeholders to convince the people of T/A Nyachikadza to move upland, have fallen on deaf ears.

A Deliberative Polling, an innovative public consultation method which is championed by Centre for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, was employed in T/A Nyachikadza and Nt chimba under the Resilient Africa Network. The network—being led by South Africa Resilience Innovation Lab working with Donald Makoka of Centre for Agricultural Research and Development of the Li longwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources—wanted to get people's voices and, in turn, provide evidence for responsible advocacy.

According to Deliberative Polling consultation, communities of TIA Nyachikadza do not want to relocate because they argue that their area has more fertile soils than other areas in Nsanje; there is not enough land in T/A Nt chimba where they are asked to move to; and that the land from Nyachikadza is ancestral and they cannot desert it.

"We cannot allow the government to move us from our land because we have seen people being moved from their lands to other districts such as Mangochi and Thyolo in the Kudzugu Malo Project, but we have received reports of their struggling to settle down," says Group Village Head Alfazema from TIA Nyachikadza.

Alfazema claims that, in trying to force the people of Nyachikadza to move upland, the government has, among other things, deprived them of social amenities such as health facilities and schools and, yet, when it is time for elections, authorities find their way to the area to woo people to participate.