

MALAWI

FEEDING FAMILIES

HELP COMMUNITIES IN MALAWI TO GROW MORE FOOD
IN THE FACE OF CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS

CLIMATE CHANGE > FUNDING TARGET £130,000

YEAR 2 OF A 3 YEAR PROJECT

THE CHALLENGE

The majority of people in Malawi depend on small-scale farming for their food and livelihoods, and so rely on regular rainfall. But in southern Malawi, increasingly-prolonged dry spells mean that many families are experiencing extreme poverty, and people are regularly going hungry.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Your support will help communities to reduce the impact of changing weather conditions, and to ensure that food supplies are more reliable. This project will help thousands of families introduce improvements in land and water management and to diversify both their crops and sources of income to ensure they have enough to eat all year round.

▼ Farmer John Makina shows off his ripe maize at Nakatale irrigation site, Balaka district. Built by Oxfam last year, the new irrigation system provides water year round and helps avoid large crop failures.

Photo: Jessie Puwapuwa/BSHDC.



OXFAM PROJECTS DIRECT
Make a direct difference



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BACKGROUND

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa, with almost three quarters of the population struggling to get by on just a few pence a day¹. In Balaka and Blantyre, two of the country's poorest districts, most people are subsistence farmers who, even when conditions are favourable, can barely grow enough to feed their families for more than two months a year. Farmers are reliant on rainfall, but droughts are becoming more frequent and seasonal dry spells more unpredictable, which means potential disaster. People's awareness and understanding of climate change is low, and

they lack information and support to adapt their livelihoods to changing weather patterns to minimise the impact of disaster.

The devaluation of the national currency in 2012 has also inflated food prices, making the situation more desperate. Poor households have no option but to sell what limited assets they have to buy food, work for low wages in others' fields, or even beg for food. Traditionally, people have also resorted to collecting fuel wood to sell or burning wood for charcoal, both of which result in accelerating environmental degradation.



£14,700
DISTRIBUTE
250 FEMALE
GOATS TO 125
HOUSEHOLDS



Photo: Jessie Puwupuma/BSHDC.

MALAWI PROFILE

Population: 15.9 million
Development: 171 (of 187) on the HDI^A
GDP per capita: \$794 (UK \$35,155)
Life expectancy at birth: 54.2 years (UK: 80.2 years)
Population living below \$1.25 a day: 73.9%
Population undernourished: 27%^B

^A Unless otherwise stated, all figures are from the UNDP Human Development Report 2011. The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), is a composite measure of three dimensions of human development: life expectancy and health, access to knowledge and standard of living.
^B Global Hunger Index 2012, IFPRI.

◀ Kelita Aliku with her husband, in front of their goat pen. Kelita lives in Kumwetsa village, Blantyre. As she is HIV-positive, her community selected her to receive a goat in the first year of the project. "I have already started benefiting from the goat because I am using the droppings as manure on my small farm. I will also be able to have milk to drink and to sell to generate some income. The goat is a great asset."

THE PROJECT

Oxfam has worked in Malawi since 1987. Alongside the district government and Oxfam's long-term partner, Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC), this project supports 100 villages from ten communities in Balaka and Blantyre districts to improve food supplies and livelihood opportunities. It is also rolling out innovative climate adaptation and risk-reduction initiatives including: training in irrigation techniques, soil and water conservation, and drought early warning systems. This combination of mutually reinforcing activities will enable the poorest households to meet their food needs all year round. In addition, village savings and loans schemes, which have already brought about positive changes in the project's first year, will be scaled up, enabling women's groups to develop small food-related businesses.

PROJECT AIMS

- ▶ Improve farmers' incomes and agricultural production to ensure reliable food supplies by helping them grow more drought-resistant crops.
- ▶ Promote better land and water management by developing irrigation systems and providing training in soil and water conservation.
- ▶ Strengthen livelihoods and provide new ways to generate income by distributing livestock, diversifying crops, and establishing village savings and loans schemes.
- ▶ Enable communities to identify climate risks, prepare action plans, and understand and implement disaster risk-reduction measures.



Photo: Abbie Traylor-Smith/Oxfam.

Source: ¹ The UNDP Human Development Report 2011.

ACTIVITIES

IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION:

- Provide seeds, planting materials and training to help 1,000 farmers introduce soil-improving, drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum, cassava and sweet potatoes.
- Provide marketing training for 50 farmers and identify suitable markets for their produce.

ENHANCE WATER MANAGEMENT:

- Develop a small-scale irrigation site for 50 smallholder farmers – mostly women – to reduce reliance on rainfall, and train them in irrigation methods, basic marketing and group management.
- Supply 20 treadle pumps and extend the use of dams and canals to provide water for crop irrigation.
- Train and support 1,000 farmers in soil and water conservation.

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVES TO FARMING CROPS:

- Train 62 women's savings and loans scheme groups in business management, and support 15 village-level 'animators' to form new groups and provide monthly mentoring and supervision.

- Distribute 250 female goats to 125 mostly female-headed households, and train owners in livestock management.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PLANS AND STRUCTURES:

- Train 50 village development community members – half of them women – and ten drama groups to put on performances to raise climate-change awareness – including video and sound recordings and accompanying leaflets for distribution.
- Provide training to 20 local partner and government staff on how to design drought early warning systems at local level, and support them to train a further 50 village development and civil protection committee members to use the systems.
- Develop drought early warning systems and hold monthly discussions on drought response across the ten communities.
- Review and share community action plans with district officials through meetings and workshops, so plans can be integrated into district level activities.



Photo: Jessele Puwapauiwa/BSDFHC.

£4,615
TRAIN 50 FARMERS
IN SMALL-SCALE
IRRIGATION
METHODS

▲ Village chief Sikochi Malaizani in his field, at Nakatale irrigation site, Balaka district. *"I encourage my community to get involved in the project and practise irrigation farming. This will help them harvest crops even during dry spells and become self-reliant. We will consume part of the food we produce using the new irrigation system which was built by Oxfam and sell the rest. This year we hope the village will be food secure – something we have not managed for a long time now. It will be great to see people happy and have food; it will make me proud."*

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Results will be measured against the project baseline survey through regular monitoring, reviews and community feedback sessions. Key target indicators include: changes in crop yields; number of months that households

have access to food; number of women-led businesses; and the number of community plans being implemented to reduce the impact of the changing climate.



£9,300
TRAIN 1,000 FARMERS
IN SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION

◀ Charcoal sellers on their way to Blantyre market. To increase their income, many families resort to tree felling and burning of wood for charcoal, causing widespread environmental degradation.

▲ Local farmers and water experts check levels in a new Oxfam-built canal that feeds the Nakatale irrigation scheme.

IMPACT

AS A RESULT OF THIS PROJECT, WE EXPECT:

- By year end, over 500 women will participate in or own profitable small businesses, thanks to the savings and loan schemes – over 1,000 women will be involved in such businesses by project end.
- People's awareness of, and ability to adapt to, climate change will increase, with ten communities implementing risk reduction action plans, and establishing three district/community drought early warning systems by year end.
- After three years, 8,000 families will be able to feed themselves year round, as they continue to diversify their crops, adopt improved land and water-management techniques, and implement new income-generating activities.
- Improved water and land management help preserve water supplies and soil fertility; fewer people will resort to tree felling and charcoal burning to make a living, further protecting natural resources.

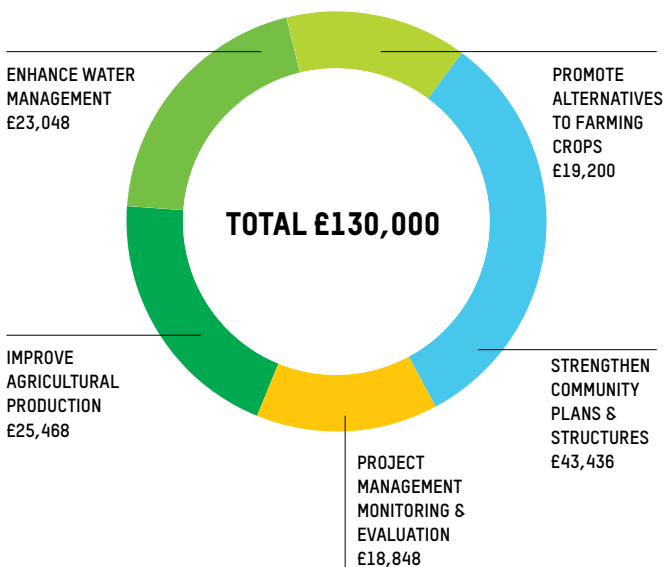
WHO WILL BENEFIT?

- ▶ This year, around 4,000 households (20,000 people) from 100 villages in the Balaka and Blantyre districts will benefit directly. In all, some 40,000 people, mainly from female- and child-headed households, will directly benefit by project end.
- ▶ Indirectly, over 70,000 people will benefit from the combined activities of drought warning systems, small-scale irrigation, improved land management, and livestock distribution.

SUSTAINABILITY

District irrigation authorities will continue to provide technical support for the irrigation scheme. Communities will have learned how to maintain the facilities and growers will have the skills to continue producing soil-improving, drought-tolerant crops after Oxfam's exit. Savings and loans groups will have developed a solid sense of ownership, as they are able to generate their own capital and establish their own rules and regulations, ensuring that repayment default is minimised and the system is sustainable in the long term.

THE BUDGET



LUCY'S STORY



Photo: Jessie Puwepuwa/BSHC

▲ Lucy Nyambalo (right) counting the money she has saved through her village savings and loans scheme in Galufu village, Blantyre district.

Mother-of-three Lucy became a member of her village savings and loans scheme when it was set up by the project in 2012. Like other members, Lucy invested 200 Kwacha (about 40p) in the group in July 2012 and has since been able to borrow 19,000 Kwacha (about £38) from the group to start a small trading business. By December that year, her group had saved over 419,000 Kwacha (around £923). Members save and repay their loans fortnightly.

"I have been a subsistence farmer all my life, mainly planting maize. But recently it has been almost impossible to rely on rain-fed farming alone. Before I joined the savings and loans group, I was always searching for work and money for survival. Now thanks to the project, we have alternative means of support.

I am so excited! I have seen how beneficial joining the village savings and loans scheme can be. From the savings, I have managed to buy a goat on my own as well as some kitchen utensils. Now, others in the village admire us. I am encouraging other women to join or form their own savings and loans groups, so they can start contributing to improving their own lives."

The savings and loans schemes have already enabled around 400 women to set up small businesses. They will be expanded to include more people this year.

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FOOD FOR ALL