

# OXFAM IN MALAWI

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world – more than half the 13 million people there live below the poverty line.



## HOW OXFAM IS HELPING

Oxfam has been working in Malawi for more than 20 years. We aim to empower poor people to demand their rights around the key areas of livelihoods, governance, humanitarian assistance, HIV and AIDS, and gender equality.

Oxfam provides financial support to more than 15 partner organisations in the country. These organisations work with communities in the five districts of Balaka, Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Phalombe

and Thyolo to improve long-term food and income security, mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS, build the capacity of civil society organisations, and promote good governance, gender equality and the empowerment of women,.

## IN NUMBERS\*

**150,000**  
total people helped



Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith

Leyla Kayere working in her rice field. Thanks to an Oxfam-funded irrigation scheme, she and other farmers in her village are benefiting

## LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION AND PROTECTION

We work to ensure that poor people – mainly smallholder farmers – have food and income security.

Agriculture is an important sector in Malawi because it employs about 87% of the population and comprises 40% of the country's gross domestic product. Such reliance on the sector means that pressure from climate change, the loss of labour because of HIV and AIDS, and weak policies pose a serious threat to people's income and food security.

We work to promote soil and water conservation; supporting farmers to improve production; developing and promote irrigation; promote credit and savings; promote livestock production; influence policy and practice change.

\*Direct beneficiary figures for the period 2010-11

## HIV AND AIDS AND ACCESS TO BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

In Malawi about 12% of the population (more than 1 million people) is HIV-positive, and more than 650,000 children are orphaned by the disease. This has had a negative impact on all sectors of society, and will push many people into chronic poverty if not contained.

There is a lack of capacity in Malawi to deliver adequate health care services to those who need it, as well as support to keep orphans in school. Oxfam is working with local NGOs to prevent the further spread of the disease and to improve the

quality of life of those living with HIV.

We work to improve access to prevention and treatment services; improved access to support services; improved access to education for orphans; and promote policy and practice change.

Oxfam is also campaigning to ensure that basic drugs are accessible and available, particularly in rural clinics. This is a big campaign led by one of the local partners and is linked to the Oxfam International essential services campaign.



Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith

Oxfam trains and supports home-based carers like Sophina Shinkani

## HUMANITARIAN PREPAREDNESS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Malawi is prone to natural disasters such as droughts and floods, which negatively affect food and income security. Young people, elderly people, and vulnerable people living with HIV and AIDS are most affected by such disasters.

Oxfam is working with others to ensure people's right to life and security. We aim to strengthening resilience and preparedness in emergencies; respond to emergencies; speak out about climate change; and promote policy and practice change.

## GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Poor and vulnerable people in Malawi have limited opportunities to hold their representatives and assemblies accountable. As a result, many decisions that the Government makes are not in their best interests. Increasing the participation and influence of Malawi's poor and vulnerable citizens is critical to ensuring that government priorities reflect people's aspirations.

Oxfam is working with others to ensure people's right to be heard. We aim to increase the meaningful participation of citizens; improve Government responsiveness and accountability; and promote policy and practice change.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Gender inequalities restrict economic growth, exacerbate poverty and undermine Malawi's democracy by denying women and girls full enjoyment of their human rights. Gender equity remains a challenge in Malawi, but there are opportunities for Oxfam to improve the position of disadvantaged women.

Oxfam is working with others to ensure people's right to gender equality. We aim to reduce gender-based violence; improve women's participation in decision-making processes; reduce women's and adolescent girls' vulnerability to HIV and AIDS; and promote policy and practice change.



Subsistence farmer Flora Mphimba with all her maize to feed her and her family for the year

Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith