

Lilongwe

Malawi

Positive changes are happening in Lilongwe. Learn more about how we're supporting children and girls' rights through our collaborative, equality-driven work.

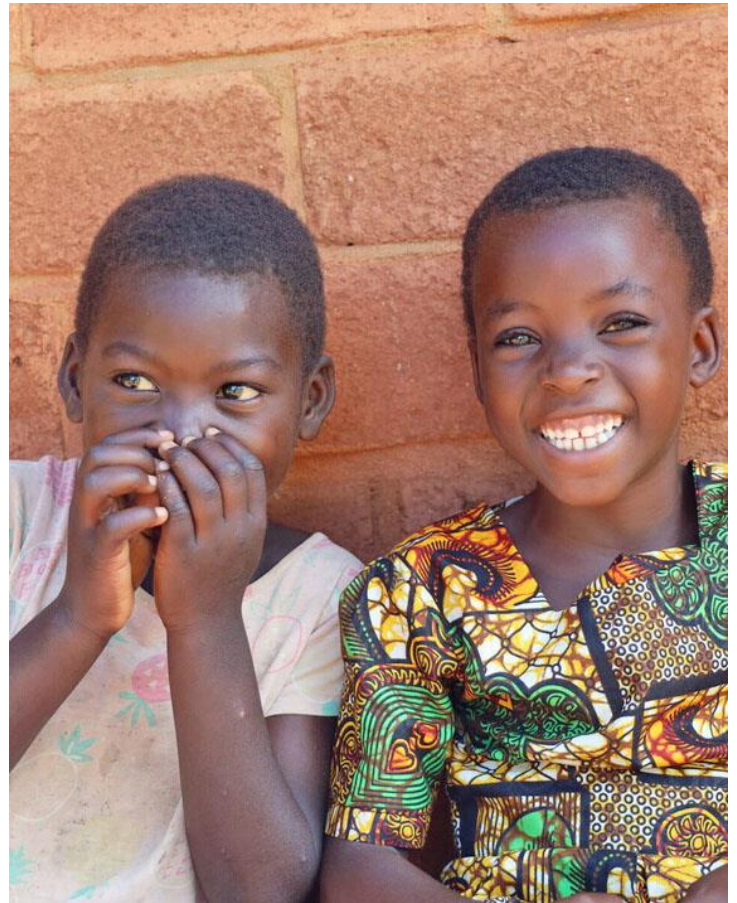
Plan International has been a proud partner of communities in Lilongwe since 1994.

Most of the land in Lilongwe is used for farming, both commercial and subsistence. Tobacco and maize are the primary crops in the region, though local farmers have struggled with erratic rainfall and floods due to climate change. In March 2023, the President of Malawi declared a state of emergency in 23 of the country's 28 districts – including Lilongwe – due to extended dry periods.

This year, with your help, we worked with 1,678 families across Malawi to strengthen climate resilience. 230 households nationwide, including Janet's (pictured below), have received goats as part of an effort to reduce food insecurity and generate additional income.

"Thanks to our new goats and compost, we're harvesting more than before."

– Janet (14)



55% of people in Lilongwe are under 18 years of age.

Impact in Numbers

400

**desks donated to
local schools**

762

**students have new
textbooks**

430

**adults know how to
manage child
protection cases**

Knowledge Is Power



NAME:

Hannah

AGE:

14 years old

HOBBIES:

**Playing Games and
Cycling**

“Plan has helped me focus on my classes more. I’m doing a lot better in school now.”



Meet Hannah

Like many girls in Lilongwe, Hannah is optimistic about achieving her goals and building a strong future.

Hannah was a star student until she dropped out in 2020. In partnership with a local parenting group, we were able to bring this promising student back into the classroom.

Overcoming Obstacles

Illiteracy and school dropout are the main factors contributing to poverty in Malawi. Due to unequal beliefs about gender, parents are more likely to pull their daughters out of school than their sons. High rates of child marriage or teen pregnancy also cause girls and young women to leave education early.

Hannah excelled in school until 2020. That year, obstacles started to get in the way of her education – a problem shared by many girls in Malawi. For many girls, their schools are simply too far away for them to safely walk there and back. In other cases, taboos around menstruation and a shortage of menstrual hygiene supplies force girls to stay home from school during their periods, causing them to fall far behind their classmates.

Breaking Free

Plan International’s Break Free project is a collaborative effort with local mothers in Malawi. When Break Free members noticed that Hannah had stopped attending school, they connected with her parents to find out what was going on.

With the help of Break Free, Hannah returned to school in 2022. Today, she is in Grade 7, and is again at the top of her class.



Hannah, back in the classroom.

We Currently Work With 5,754 Sponsored Children In Lilongwe

Projects That Support Lasting Change

My Future Is Bright

Almost 9% of Malawians aged 15 to 49 are HIV-positive.

Since January 2020, we have been working with community members of all ages to foster accessible, engaging and intergenerational conversations around these topics through Theatre for Development performances, YouthWyze leadership group and the Masukani Pa Zaumoyo Wanu radio programme. Between October and December 2023, 17,216 people tuned in to radio shows about sexual health and reproductive rights.

Our Champions of Change programme empowers youth leaders to become peer educators about sensitive issues related to adolescent health and girls' rights. Until now, our motivated youth activists in Lilongwe have educated 1,321 of their peers about sexuality, gender-based violence and sexual health.



Members of the Theatre for Development Group.

1,321

**Teenagers know more
about sexual health**



Esme, a sponsored child, wants to be a teacher.



Youth leaders are speaking up about gender equality in education.

Staying in School

As of 2018, only 9% of adolescent girls in rural parts of Malawi were attending secondary school.

Poverty is one of the main barriers to education for girls and women in Malawi. For many girls and women, the alternative to school is not a choice: child labour, teen pregnancy and forced marriages are also reasons why girls leave education earlier than boys.

Esme was one of these students. After passing her exams to graduate from primary school, she was devastated to learn that her family could not afford her education. 'Being the first born, I was in pain knowing that I couldn't continue my studies, but just help with the chores,' she told Plan. Today, Esme is one of 127 students (77 girls and 50 boys) who are not only staying, but thriving, in school with the help of bursaries that cover the costs of their tuition and exam fees.

"Plan's scholarship has helped me believe my dream of becoming a teacher can still come true."

— Esme (15) from Lilongwe

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



A Theatre for Development performer in action.

Together, we're working to create a more just world.

- 43% of sponsored families in Lilongwe do not have a consistent source of income to cover the costs of their children's education. Our Village Savings & Loans programme helps community members build financial literacy, start small businesses and coordinate mutual aid systems.
- Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world. We will collaborate with local leaders, parents and young people to develop Child Protection Committees to address issues of gender-based violence.
- 40% of young people in Lilongwe are unemployed. We will pair young people with vocational skills trainings that suit their interests.

Message from Plan Staff

"Your generous support has enabled us to implement crucial education, health, and livelihood projects for children in Lilongwe. Through your sponsorship, you're empowering these young minds to build brighter futures. Thank you for your commitment.."



Daniel Kapatuka,
Programme Area
Manager,
Lilongwe

The Plan Effect

Sponsored children are at the centre of everything we do, and they help plan our programmes based on what's important to them. Sponsors' donations are a gateway into a community. This helps build trust and credibility to attract even more funds from new sources. This makes more sustainable programmes possible in sponsorship communities. This powerful synergy is something we call The Plan Effect.

Progress in Numbers

1,262 people discussed
child marriage

500 farmers have
more resources

50 school
handwashing
stations installed

697 students' tuitions
paid