

Mzuzu

Malawi

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

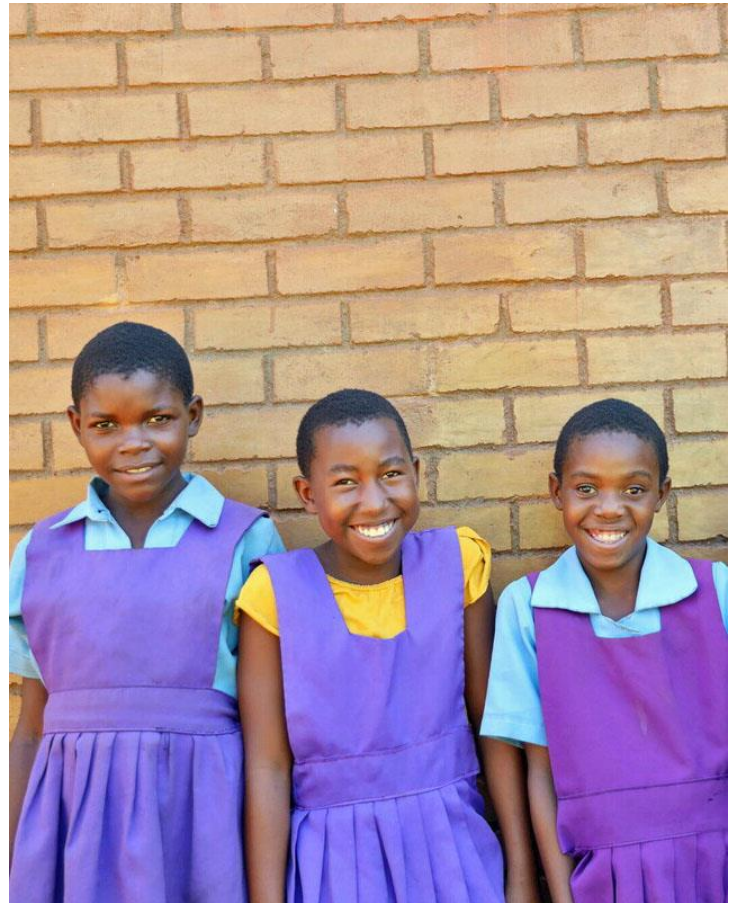
Plan International has been a proud partner of communities in Mzuzu since 1997. 68% of the families we work with are subsistence farmers, relying heavily on crops like tobacco and maize to survive.

Between climate change, limited irrigation and land degradation, sponsored families in Mzuzu have become increasingly vulnerable to food insecurity and poverty caused by poor harvests.

With your help, 876 farmers in Mzuzu now have additional skills in marketing and business management. Nationwide, 230 households, 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)



51% of people in Mzuzu are under 18.

Impact in Numbers

108

farmers practising water conservation

500

goats donated to sponsored families

79

child marriages stopped

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 Mzuzu, 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 end their 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 walk there and back safely. 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 5,624 Sponsored Children In Mzuzu

Projects That Support Lasting Change

We Can Do Anything

More than 19% of girls in Malawi drop out of school by Grade 7.

School dropout rates in Malawi have multiple root causes, including child marriage, early pregnancy and inaccessibility for students with disabilities. With your help, we are working with primary schools in Mzuzu to make education more accessible to everyone.

We have partnered with more than 200 primary school teachers in Mzuzu to discuss gender equality in the classroom. Together, we have discussed approaches to gender-sensitive learning, empowering girls and young women to continue their education, with the tools to rise above financial, familial or social pressures.

We are also working with young people to equip them with meaningful vocational and entrepreneurship skills. Most recently, sponsored young people in Mzuzu have learnt more about installing solar panels.



Eleni uses her new maize mill to pay for her children's education.

200

Teachers created gender-inclusive classrooms



A youth leadership meeting in action.

Safer Together

Though HIV and teen pregnancy rates are high in Malawi, only 13% of young people have visited youth-friendly health clinics.

These clinics destigmatise sexuality, sexually transmitted infections and reproductive health for young people, but less than 32% of young women nationwide even know that such services exist.

With your help, 29,893 young people – including 22,772 women – accessed local health services. 7,804 of these young adults received more information about contraception, while 1,273 people received testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. We have also partnered with all of the senior chiefs in the region to discuss gender inequality, ranging from child marriage to school dropouts. Today, senior village chiefs in Mzuzu are bringing these topics to discuss with the community at the annual Umthetho festival, which celebrates local culture and history.



Anna was able to return to school with the help of her youth club.

“I didn’t get pregnant on purpose. I always wanted to go back to school, but I couldn’t afford it until now.”

– Anna (19) from Chigude, Mzuzu

You're Supporting a More Equal Future



75 people in Mzuzu have new bicycles, part of an effort to increase community safety.

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

- 43% of young women in Mzuzu are married before their 18th birthday. We will facilitate important intergenerational conversations about girls' rights.
- Less than 40% of young people in Mzuzu have access to sexual health services. We will help to implement and maintain inclusive, easy-to-reach health services for young people.
- 38,605 households in Mzuzu have been affected by a prolonged dry spell, threatening their food security. We will team up with local farmers to practise climate-resilient agricultural techniques.

Message from Plan Staff

"It has been exciting and impressive to witness the positive changes our programmes have had on the lives of young people, and especially girls, in Mzuzu over the last 12 months. Thank you for your support."



McDonald Mumba,
Programme Area
Manager, Mzuzu

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

2,478

**students learnt
about sexual
health**

5,938

**people reached by
mobile health
services**

30

**youth leaders
became peer
educators**

239

**students
returned to
school**