



PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO ORPHANS

Malawi Red Cross

CASE STUDY

Photo description: Malawi Red Cross volunteers conducting session at community based child care centre
Photo credit: Malawi Red Cross

ifrc.org



Photo description: Community gardens developed through project to support nutritional needs of orphans and children in vulnerable situations

Photo credit: Malawi Red Cross

Background

The Malawi Red Cross Society implements a project named, “Basic Health and Psychological Care for Children Infected and Affected by HIV and AIDS.” This work has had several phases with the current phase being delivered between 2024-2027. Funding and technical support for the project is through a partnership with the Japanese Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The project is being implemented in Ntchisi district targeting 5 Group Village Heads: Nthondo, Chikupila, Mpanang’ombe, Kanjeza and Chiziko.

The overall objective of the project is to support the empowerment and resilience of the communities in each target district of Ntchisi.

Who was Supported and How

To start the current phase of the project, the Malawi Red Cross conducted a comprehensive assessment. The project has been designed to help meet the needs identified in the assessment.

Among the key assessment findings were:

- There are multilayered child protection concerns: teenage pregnancies, child marriage, and sexual and physical abuse, and child labour. A notable proportion of respondents indicated that little or nothing is being done to address these challenges.

- Absenteeism from school is linked to illness and an inability to afford school-related costs such as fees, uniforms, and supplies. Local communities are taking action to promote school retention. This includes providing counsel to learners, mobilizing educational support, reporting child abuse cases to authorities, involving mother groups. Although there remains scope to strengthen coordination and linkages with formal protection systems.
- In terms of access to education for children with disabilities, the most cited barrier was lack of mobility, followed by poor infrastructure, and financial constraints.
- Access to Child-based Community Centres (CBCCs) was primarily hindered by lack of porridge for children. CBCCs are pre-schools established through the community's own initiative where children go to learn, play and socialize with their peers.
- Children receive mental health and psychosocial support.

Successes

Through the project, a number of successes have been achieved.

- 1,735 orphans and children affected by or infected with HIV have received regular free and nutritious porridge (corn soya blend) through support to 5 CBCCs. Of these children 812 were males and 923 were females.
- 43 orphans (20 males and 23 females) supported over 8 locations to access school through tuition fees, school supplies, and uniforms.
- 27 orphans assisted in mentored with livelihood skills.
- Approximately 400 children participating in child and youth clubs to support skills development and for peer-to-peer support.
- 16 youth and women's livelihood groups were supported to enhance local employment and economic sustenance and thereby support families of children in vulnerable situations. The focus was on supplying goats.
- Local farmers were provided fertilizer and certified maize and soya seeds. The farm inputs are provided as one way of ensuring that CBCCs are able to produce their own homegrown food for sustainability of the facilities while the corn soya blend is distributed during lean period.

Challenges and Difficulties

The leading challenge for the project has been the devaluation of the Malawian currency, the Kwacha, by 44%. This has affected the project implementation through process increasingly rising and translating into less materials for a higher cost than planned. For instance, the cost of porridge at CBCCs, tuition fees, and school supplies have all rapidly grown beyond what was planned and budgeted for.

Another key challenge has been persistent rainfall leading to floods and making transport inaccessible at time. This has reduced the speed and efficiency of implementation.

Lessons Learned

- 1- **Collaboration and coordination with the district council** is instrumental in successfully implementing activities, especially when there is no district based paid staff.
- 2- **Volunteers and community members can sustain project activities**, if well equipped with necessary skills through training and supervision.
- 3- **Adequate resources play vital role** in accelerating planned activities

Red Cross is paying my school fees. This is helping me manage without both of my parents. Please thank the people who are supporting this."

- Child participant

"I am happy to see my 4-year-old eating very nutritious porridge at the Community-based Child Care Centre, and is able to write his numbers. Continue this support."

- Parent of child participant