

# U.S. ASSISTANCE

## in Malawi

### PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Social and cultural norms and economic insecurity imperil Malawi's girls and women, limiting their ability to contribute to a more prosperous family, community, and nation. **Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW)** are the fulcrum of all U.S. development goals in Malawi.



Globally, Malawi's women and AGYW still fare worse than their peers.

Malawi ranks **148<sup>th</sup>** of 160 countries on the UN Gender Inequality Index

Malawi has the **12<sup>th</sup>** Highest child marriage rate in the world

#### Malawi's young women face many threats to their well-being:

##### Education

 Only **1 in 3** 15 – 19 year olds have completed primary school

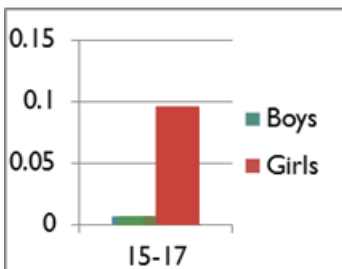
 **3 in 4** rural girls are out of school and unlikely to return

##### Reproductive Health

 **2 in 5** young women's 1st experience of sexual intercourse was unwanted


 **1 in 3** girls are mothers by the age of 18

#### AGYW fare worse than their male peers:



HIV prevalence among 15-19 year-olds is over three times higher among young women as young men and over six times higher among 20-24 year-olds.

 **1 in 2** girls are married by 18, compared to

 **1 in 20** boys

 Young women represent **1 in 3** enrollees in technical and vocational courses throughout Malawi.

One significant reason for their lack of interest and drop-out incidence is **gender-based violence.**

## The U.S. Government works to ensure that Malawi's women and girls are:

### Equipped with Education



- **Ensuring Girls' Literacy in Primary School:** USAID utilizes gender-sensitive approaches to help the GOM ensure that girls in Standards 1 to 4 students learn to read.
- **Increasing Seats in Secondary Schools:** A major new program will construct secondary schools throughout Malawi to keep girls in school and reduce their lifetime risk of HIV, demonstrating to other African countries the public health benefits of keeping girls in school.
- **Pathway to Higher Education:** A new five-year USAID program will increase access to higher education, motivating AGYW to complete secondary school by building a pathway for transition from secondary to tertiary education.
- **Study in the U.S.:** Each year the Embassy awards numerous scholarships to Malawi's young women to attend American Universities.

### Equipped with Skills and Jobs



- **Embassy's Girls' Science, Tech, Engineering, Art and Math Camps:** In past years, American scientists and an astronaut meet with Malawian girls to promote their interest in science.
- **Increasing Women's Incomes:** USAID utilizes the Gender Action Learning System approach to increase women's empowerment and men's support of gender equity within the household as it works with men and women in farming.
- **Equitable Access to Land:** Through work with vulnerable households, USAID encourages joint household decision-making and equitable resource-decisions around land, finances, and division of labor.
- **Increasing Access to Credit and Productive Resources:** A USAID credit-guarantee allows local banks to disburse credit to women-owned businesses and helps women farmers access improved inputs through a farmer-friendly loan program.

### Leaders in Society



- **Peace Corps' Girls Leadings Our World (GLOW) Camps** build girls' self-esteem, confidence and leadership abilities while creating an environment where girls can speak freely about difficult topics affecting themselves, other girls, and their communities.
- **Increasing Women's Leadership in Local Government:** USAID strengthens women's participation in local government decision-making, and supports assistance to women seeking public office.
- **Women's Leadership in Public Policy:** USAID supports gender-responsive program planning, budgeting, and monitoring.

### Healthy and Nourished



- **DREAMS:** The U.S. Government supported DREAMS public-private partnership provides "whole of girl" programs in three districts to keep girls in school, reduce early pregnancy, prevent and respond to child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV), and keep girls HIV-free.
- **Youth-Friendly Health Services:** To combat the country's alarming rates of teen pregnancy, USAID supports youth-friendly health services in 16 districts.
- **Women's and Maternal Health:** USAID works to decrease maternal mortality through work with health care workers and communities to remove gender inequalities women experience in clinics. This includes improving women's nutritional outcomes during pre-conception, pregnancy, and lactation.

### Free from Violence



- **Strengthen Systems to Prevent GBV:** The U.S. Embassy's anti-GBV program works with religious and traditional leaders to prevent GBV through social norms change and community mobilization and dialogue. U.S. investments also help Malawi scale up mobile courts for GBV response in high GBV-burden districts.
- **Working with Men and Boys:** U.S. agencies, across all programs, work with men and boys to increase their willingness to change gender norms to increase gender equality within homes, communities, and Malawian society.
- **Preventing Child Marriage:** By highlighting stories of courageous teens who avoided teen marriages, of parental involvement in advancing girls' education; and girls' success in school against long odds, the U.S. works to reverse national child marriage statistics.
- **School-Related GBV:** A pilot of a School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) Measurement Toolkit will soon enable the GoM to actively monitor incidence of GBV in schools.

- **Engendering the Energy Sector:** Building on the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact contributions, USAID works with Malawi's power generation company to improve gender-sensitive hiring practices.
- **Increasing Women's Leadership in Agriculture:** USAID works with NGOs and private sector partners to recruit more women to lead agricultural cooperatives and organizations, farmers, and input suppliers, among other private sector actors.