



# Malawi

## Capacity Overview

Habitat for Humanity started operations in Malawi in 1986. Our Malawi office addresses housing poverty and works to achieve our vision of a country where everyone has a decent place to live. Habitat works in partnership with households, government bodies, community organizations and other nonprofits, academia, and private companies to advance decent and affordable housing solutions.

Malawi has 4.8 million housing units, of which almost 60% are substandard homes. These houses are typically made of mud walls and grass thatched roofs. Families who live in such units have little hope of being able to afford a decent home. To meet the current housing demand, approximately 21,000 new units must be constructed over the next 10 years.

Anchored by the conviction that safe and affordable housing helps families improve their lives, Habitat has partnered with more than 41,000 families and diverse stakeholders to build

decent and affordable homes in Malawi. While housing is at the core of Habitat's operations, our programs fully integrate solutions related to areas such as land tenure security and water, sanitation and hygiene services to promote sustainable and resilient communities in line with the national development plans and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Our major sectors of programming include housing for vulnerable groups; water, sanitation and hygiene, or WASH; disaster response and preparedness; and land tenure security. Donors supporting our work in Malawi include the United Nations Development Programme, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Aktion Deutschland Hilft, insurance company Lloyd's Charities Trust, the Gale family, the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission, Hope and Healing Canada, and the governments of China and Japan.



## Country context

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a gross domestic product of US\$412 per capita in 2019. It is home to about 19 million people, and its annual growth rate is around 3.3%. The typical household in Malawi has five or six children.

Young people account for 70% of the population in Malawi. The unemployment rate is estimated at 40%, and the annual urbanization rate is around 5%. Malawi continues to have a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, at around 10% of the adult population.

Being a predominantly agricultural economy, with 80% of the population practicing subsistence farming, Malawi's economy is vulnerable to disasters driven by climate change. These include floods, drought, heavy rain and hailstorms. Over the past five decades, Malawi has experienced more than 19 major floods and seven droughts, which continue to increase in frequency, magnitude and scope.

Four out of 5 families, roughly 80%, live in substandard homes with little hope of being able to afford a decent house. A typical village hut is built of mud and daub, with a dirt floor and thatched roof, all of which requires frequent repair.

About 20% of Malawi's population – roughly 4 million people – has no access to a clean water source. Only 6% of the population has access to improved sanitation facilities.





# Assisting vulnerable families

Habitat Malawi is implementing housing programs in partnership with vulnerable groups to improve their living conditions and/or sanitation services. Habitat focuses on reaching orphans and people with disabilities in rural communities. As of 2021, Habitat Malawi had worked in partnership with more than 7,600 households.

Through our partnership with organizations like Hope and Healing of Canada, we have constructed homes suitable

for people with disabilities in the Salima district in the central region of Malawi. Habitat also trains caregivers and households on property rights and the development of wills to ensure that houses are safeguarded from property grabbing. Habitat Malawi also sponsors livelihood trainings with households, helping many families become self-sustainable.





## Water, sanitation and hygiene

Habitat's Malawi's WASH program seeks to improve sanitation and the well-being of slum dwellers in rural communities. Key interventions include installing sustainable and user-friendly WASH facilities, hosting hygiene and sanitation campaigns in communities, and developing WASH management structures. More than 12,000 people enjoy improved water and sanitation services through these interventions.

Habitat is empowering rural communities in the Lilongwe district of Malawi to achieve better health and quality of life through improved WASH practices. Through this four-year project funded by the German Federal Ministry

for Economic Cooperation and Development, Habitat has partnered with local communities to install 10 new community water points and repair 14 water points. We also advocate for improved water and sanitation facilities at community, district and national meetings with various stakeholders.

Another ongoing effort is a three-year WASH project for schools funded by the Jersey Overseas Aid Commission. It aims to improve WASH services and deliver 10 protected water points and 40 latrines in 10 schools in Chikwawa district in the south of Malawi.



# Disaster risk reduction and response

Habitat Malawi works in partnership with disaster-affected communities to prepare for, respond to and adapt to disasters and empower residents to build back better and safer. This program, which has partnered with more than 11,000 households to date, equips local masons with knowledge and skills on how to build houses that can withstand natural disasters.

Over the past year, UNDP Japan and UNDP China have provided US\$3.7 million for 380 disaster-resilient homes in Zomba and Phalombe districts in the southern part of Malawi. We also are developing four community markets for sustainable construction materials and six water points, while promoting participatory approach for safe shelter awareness, or PASSA, trainings to assess community vulnerabilities.

After Cyclone Idai devastated the Chikwawa district in 2019, Habitat partnered with Lloyd's Charities Trust to construct two rescue centers in Chikwawa and held PASSA trainings for community members. Additionally, Hope and Healing Canada and Aktion Deutschland Hilft are supporting Habitat's partnership with families whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged by Idai to build 324 disaster-resilient houses.

Between 2018 and 2020, Habitat Malawi implemented a project, funded by the EU, to offer informal trainings to disadvantaged youths. Young people took six-month courses on brick making, brick laying, carpentry and joinery. One hundred students in different cohorts have gone through the trainings.



## Land tenure security

Habitat Malawi advocates for increasing access to land and housing and promotes policies and systems that increase access to decent housing for vulnerable and low-income groups in Malawi. Recently, we have called for the

enactment of the National Urban Policy. With its partner families and households, Habitat Malawi is advocating for security of land tenure, especially for women and vulnerable children and their caregivers.

# The Habitat network

Habitat Malawi is a national organization of Habitat for Humanity International, a global leader in development that partners with a full range of stakeholders in approximately 70 countries. Our network implements appropriate solutions for more than 5 million people per year in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. Habitat advocates for policies that bring adequate housing within reach for the estimated 1.6 billion people worldwide who lack decent shelter, and we help make housing market systems more responsive to their needs.

Habitat for Humanity International has invested in an Africa Hub in Nairobi that allows Habitat to multiply our impact through regionally centralized programmatic support. The hub's resources and expertise can be flexed into countries such as Malawi to support program development and operations.

Habitat Malawi has access to the expert support in the Nairobi office of Habitat's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, which applies market systems development approaches to help fill the gap in affordable and quality housing. The Terwilliger Center works with the private sector to pilot new products and approaches related to housing finance, construction materials, services and practices, then scales the best of those innovations.

Habitat knows that low-income families around the world, including Malawi, are underserved by formal housing markets. They tend to build incrementally as their means allow, often with limited access to good construction advice and quality environmental materials. These incremental builders form a large but invisible segment of the housing market.



## Accountability

Habitat Malawi has a strong commitment to being accountable to the families and communities we work with, and to our donors and partners. We have developed systems for demonstrating our impact and ensuring we live up to our values, including financial responsibility; diversity and inclusion; and safeguarding our employees, partners and the people we work with every day.

Habitat Malawi employs a robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning system that has been set up to continually track and, if needed, modify and refine

approaches. This commitment to MEAL is a hallmark of all Habitat programs worldwide, including in Malawi. MEAL is used as an instrument for program quality assurance and for continuous organizational learning. We have dedicated MEAL experts at the global, regional and country levels, with a global leadership team steering and advancing the MEAL approach in Habitat Malawi's programs. Habitat Malawi also uses indicator performance tracking tables to track indicators that help us monitor achievements. Baselines and end-line surveys are conducted for most of our projects.

# everyone

## needs a place to call home

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