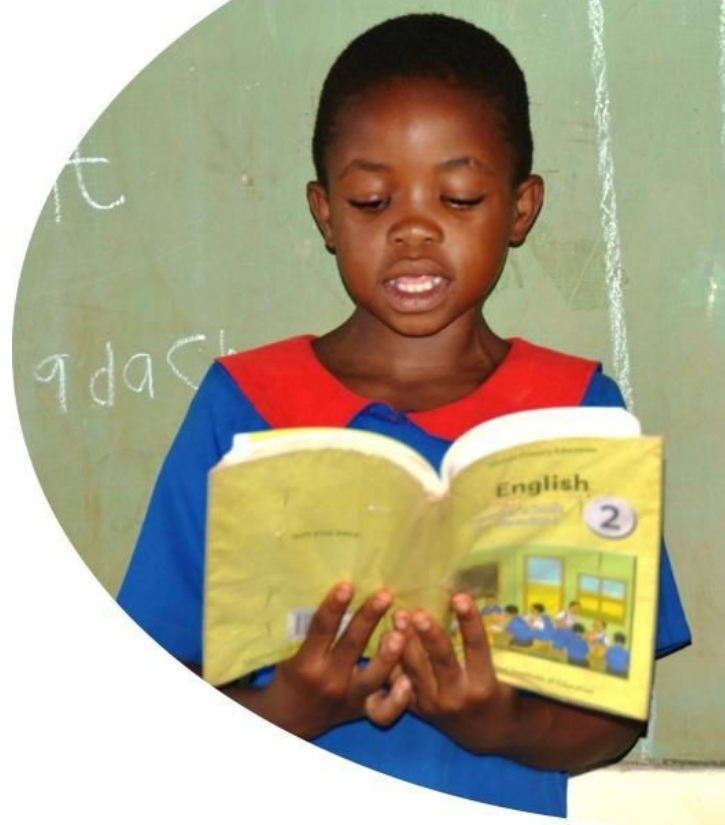




USAID | **MALAWI**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EDUCATION

“Before the early grade reading activity, our Standard I (first grade) students were not reading, even at the end of the year. Now there are many students in my class who are reading, and we are barely halfway through the school year.”

– *Melia Swaley, Standard I Teacher*

More children in Malawi are attending school than ever before. Poor education quality and the low transition of girls and boys to higher levels of education, however, mean that less than two in 10 students complete their high school education. USAID works with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and other development partners to address those challenges to ensure that students acquire the essential skills they need to succeed and lead Malawi towards greater economic prosperity and self-reliance.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

THE MALAWI NATIONAL READING PROGRAM (NRP)

Malawi’s educational performance has continually ranked at the bottom within the Southern African Region. As a result of USAID’s investments in Malawi’s National Reading Program (NRP), however, new materials, methodologies, and teacher training are leading to measurable learning gains. USAID is also focusing on key interventions to improve parental and community engagement, system structures to support teaching and learning, identifying struggling students and providing tailored support, and instruction for students with disabilities.

In 2016, as a result of the NRP, MoEST lengthened the academic day for learners in Standards 1-8, which led to a doubling of Standard 1-4 Chichewa and English instructional time. To date, the NRP has reached over 4.4 million learners in Standards 1-4 in all 5,603 public primary schools nationwide with improved Chichewa and English reading instruction. The NRP has trained and coached over 48,000 Standard 1-4 teachers and over 8,000 MoEST head teachers, primary education advisors, school inspectors, teacher training college lecturers, and district education managers. The program has trained over 24,000 teachers and administrators on NRP continuous assessment and remediation to help teachers gauge student learning and to make adjustments as necessary. It has also developed 16 new Chichewa and English textbooks and teacher guides with the MoEST and printed and distributed over 10 million Chichewa and English textbooks to achieve a 1:1 student-to-textbook ratio for the first time ever in Malawi. The NRP has also developed, printed, and distributed over 5 million supplementary reading materials, teacher guides, and manuals, and in the process improved the capacity of Malawian printers to support quality national print runs that create new jobs in Malawi.

SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

National education data for Malawi shows that 62% of girls who enroll in Standard 1 continue through Standard 5 and only 29% to Standard 8. Of the 29% of girls who complete Standards 1-8, only 35.8% transitioned from primary school to secondary school in 2017. Even fewer girls who enter secondary education access higher education. The top three reasons why girls drop out of school before graduating high school are marriage, pregnancy, and family responsibilities. Thus, USAID works with youth, particularly adolescent girls, in upper primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions along with teachers, mothers' groups, universities and colleges, and community leaders to help girls stay in school, succeed academically, and develop confidence and resilience to lead more productive and healthy lives.

Through the Secondary Education Expansion for Development (SEED) activity, school construction nationwide will bring secondary schools closer to where the most vulnerable girls live. Priority will be given to areas with high HIV burden as well as long distances to secondary schools. Activities include the addition of classrooms in existing urban schools (phase 1) and the development of new secondary schools in rural and urban areas, including adequate latrines, access to clean water, appropriate school furniture, and the provision of teaching and learning materials (phase 2).

Anticipated results include an increase in girls' (and boys') enrollment in secondary schools, a decrease in early marriage, and a reduction in new HIV infections among girls 11-19 years old. Higher education initiatives also bring learning closer to where students are through enhancing and expanding open distance learning (ODL) centers to provide short-term courses that reflect current and future market needs as well as fostering collaboration among higher education institutions in Malawi to increase the access, quality, quantity, relevance, and success of ODL courses and degrees.

IMPACT

- By the conclusion of the 2017-2018 academic year, Standard 2 and 4 students nationwide improved on 22 out of 24 key reading indicators in Chichewa and English after only one year of NRP implementation.
- The number of Standard 2 students who scored zero on the letter sound identification test fell by 10.1 percentage points (from 84.2% in 2017 to 74.3% in 2018) and students who received a zero score for English oral reading fluency fell by 8.3 percentage points (from 86.9% in 2018 to 78.6% in 2018).
- In Standard 4, the national average for reading comprehension in Chichewa increased by 9 percentage points (from 28.8% in 2017 to 37.8% in 2018).
- The number of Standard 4 learners reading Chichewa at grade level has nearly doubled after one year of NRP implementation (from 7.8% in 2017 to 15% in 2018).
- In targeted districts, from 2015 to 2018, the transition rate to secondary school improved from 39% to 60%; pass rates on the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination increased from 60% to 82%; and repetition rates decreased from 23% to 16%.
- USAID built 11 Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) and an additional five CDSSs in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture and World Food Programme in order to increase secondary education capacity.

IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS/PARTNERS

Activity Name	Total Estimated Cost	Implementation Period	Implementing Partner
Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity (MERIT)	US \$65 million	September 2015 – September 2020	RTI
Textbook Procurement – Phases I & II	US \$9.3 million	May 2016 – August 2019	Kris Offset Printers
Yesani Ophunzira (YESA) “Assess the Learner”	US \$15.3 million	February 2018 – February 2022	Abt Associates
Reading for All Malawi (REFAM)	US \$3 million	February 2019 – July 2021	Juarez and Associates
Apateni Mwayi Atsikana Aphunzire (AMAA) “Give Girls a Chance to Learn”	US \$10.5 million	December 2016 – December 2020	Save the Children
AMAA External Evaluation	US \$1.5 million	December 2016 – December 2020	NORC at the University of Chicago
USDA-funded AMAA-Aligned Secondary Schools	US \$7 million	September 2017 – March 2019	World Food Programme
Secondary Education Expansion for Development (SEED) Phase I	US \$5.2 million	TBD	Feps Gmb
Secondary Education Expansion for Development Architecture and Engineering	US \$8.7 million	April 2019 – September 2022	Tetra Tech, Inc.
Strengthening Higher Education Access in Malawi Activity (SHEAMA)	US \$10.7 million	December 2018 – December 2020	Arizona State University