



Social Policy Programme in Malawi

Social Policy works in the following main areas:

Social Protection: Through this strand of work, we aim to ensure that the Government has an integrated child sensitive social protection system targeting the most vulnerable households. The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) is our flagship social protection intervention. Since 2006, when the SCTP began, UNICEF has supported the Government through extensive technical assistance in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program. The SCTP is currently operational in all the 28 districts in the country reaching about 270,000 households and approximately 1,134,000 individuals of whom over 641,000 are children.

Child Poverty: UNICEF supports the Government of Malawi to measure child poverty in all its dimensions. The Section also engages in upstream policy work to make a case for the Government to design policies and strategies that are age and individual specific which take into consideration the multidimensionality of child poverty, as highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III) and Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP II) are strategic opportunities to foster a multidimensional understanding of child poverty in Malawi.

Public Finance for Children (PF4C): UNICEF works to ensure that public spending on child focused sectors and programs is adequate, equitable, efficient and effective and is undertaken within transparent and inclusive public finance management processes. It is only through increased and improved quality of public spending that the Government of Malawi can sustainably deliver essential services such as health, child protection, education, nutrition and social assistance to all children.

Child Rights and Non-Discrimination: We support the Government to create a supportive environment for the implementation of children's rights, outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols. UNICEF also supports the government to honour its reporting and accountability obligations under the CRC, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and other international commitments on children's rights.

Child Participation: UNICEF is advocating for and working with civil society, including child led organizations, to ensure children and young people meaningfully participate in policy, planning, budgeting and service delivery. We aim to ensure that child participation is meaningful by supporting the creation of sustainable platforms and mechanisms for children to be heard in decision making on issues that affect their lives.

The main mandate of the Social Policy Section is to support the Government of Malawi to address social exclusion, inequality and deprivations amongst children through evidence building, analysis, policy advocacy, technical assistance and other forms of capacity building.

The Section also aims to ensure that the Government (at national and district-level) has improved capacity and accountability mechanisms for child rights-based planning, policy formulation, budgeting and reporting.





Ferguson Kasonga, a government accountant at Mchinji District Social Welfare office makes social cash transfers to Mayase Nthiwatiwa at Kamwendo SCTP Cluster Centre.

Photo Credit: ©UNICEF Malawi 2016/Amos Gumulira

The Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) is our flagship social protection intervention.

The programme is implemented by the Government of Malawi with support from the European Union, the German Government, the World Bank, Irish Aid and UNICEF. Under the SCTP, identified ultra-poor and labour constrained families receive a monthly cash transfer of about MK7000 (US\$10) to help them meet their basic needs. In addition, some families receive a bonus of MK 800 for each child enrolled in primary school and MK 1,500 for each child enrolled in secondary school.

A UNICEF commissioned longitudinal impact evaluation of the SCTP conducted between 2013 and 2016 has shown positive impacts of the SCTP on households in health seeking behaviour, school enrolment and retention, food security and diet diversity and delay in sexual debut amongst adolescents.

UNICEF is also supporting the Government to better align humanitarian action and social protection. During the 2017/2018 lean season, for example, UNICEF supported the first Vertical Expansion of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme, granting emergency food assistance to more than 2,500 households living in drought affected areas through Social Protection programmes.

UNICEF is also assisting the Government to generate evidence and analysis to inform social protection policy formulation and program design, including during emergencies.

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