

MALAWI

**THE NEED:**

A landlocked country in Southern Africa, Malawi has one of the lowest Human Development Index rankings in the world: 171 out of 187 countries. Agriculture is the primary industry, employing over 80% of the working age population. Food insecurity is chronic, and is exacerbated by extensive mono-cropping of maize (corn) and an over dependence on rain-fed agriculture. Food security and human development are further constrained by malaria, HIV/AIDS and high infant and maternal mortality rates – adult HIV prevalence is 11% and is 47% for children.

OVERVIEW

PCI has operated in Malawi since 2007, when it began activities by leading an innovative Global Development Alliance initiative to strengthen aquaculture value chains for fish farmers and other related micro, small and medium enterprises in the southern Zomba River basin. Since that time, PCI has expanded its efforts to include important initiatives in HIV/AIDS care and prevention; food security; maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition; women's empowerment; and disaster prevention, response and mitigation.

COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY

In 2009, in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), PCI helped initiate the integrated *Wellness and Agriculture for Life Advancement* (WALA) program in Southern Malawi's Balaka and Machinga districts. Designed to improve maternal and child health, nutritional status, and food security for over 200,000 vulnerable households, this five-year program is providing farmers with training, tools and inputs required to grow high-yield crops using conservation agriculture techniques and small-scale irrigation systems to improve depleted soils and extend growing seasons. Mother and Father Care Groups promote improved health and nutrition behaviors at the community and household levels. Additionally, PCI is providing training to help communities start and manage savings and loan groups to support women's empowerment and leadership development, entrepreneurship and other productive investments in the health and welfare of families and communities.

Smallholder farmer training on conservation agriculture technologies have resulted in improved crop production practices for 21,187 low-income households. These practices will help farmers to achieve higher crop yields, better food security and improved incomes.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF RECURRENT DROUGHT

In early 2013, PCI initiated Project ARC (Addressing Root Causes), a project funded by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to mitigate the root causes of widespread food insecurity in Malawi caused by drought and late or erratic rainfall. The project targets households in Balaka, where climatic and economic challenges are further compounded by reliance on drought intolerant crops and poor land management practices, resulting in high levels of land degradation, erosion, inefficient irrigation, poor soil fertility, low water table levels, and rampant deforestation. PCI is reinforcing the coping mechanisms of households in areas of high water scarcity through the introduction of drought tolerant crops and improved production technologies, as well as community-level projects to increase natural water retention in soils and recharge aquifers.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AREAS: Nation-wide; Emphasis in Balaka and Machinga Districts

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE: Economic Development; Agriculture Value Chains; Food & Nutrition Security; HIV/AIDS; Disaster Risk Reduction; Maternal, Neonatal & Child Health



CURRENT FUNDING PARTNERS: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Catholic Relief Services, U.S. Department of Defense, Kirk Humanitarian



With current programs in Botswana, Malawi and Zambia, PCI has reached over 65,000 service members and their families since 2003.

FAMILY-CENTERED MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

Since 2010, PCI has been addressing the needs of orphans and other vulnerable children in Malawi through organizing and maintaining Care Groups for caregivers of these children through the USAID/CRS-funded IMPACT project. In FY12, these Care Groups empowered 1,339 caregivers by allowing them the opportunity to participate in peer-to-peer education in maternal and child health with a focus on infant and young child feeding; water, sanitation and hygiene; reproductive health; and HIV/AIDS prevention. Caregivers involved in PCI's Care Groups have shown substantial changes in behavior, resulting in health gains for the target population of orphans and vulnerable children. PCI also assisted with child abuse and exploitation response, promoted primary school retention, and increased financial and academic support to participating children. Because of PCI's rich experience with Care Groups, the organization was recently awarded a USAID/TOPS-funded grant to study whether the application of the Care Group methodology among fathers increases household and community behavior change in reproductive, maternal and child health practices. This unique, gender-dynamic research initiative is expected to begin in mid-2013.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

In Malawi, where the national HIV prevalence rate is 11%, PCI has cumulatively reached over 28,000 people with prevention messaging and almost 12,000 people with HIV testing through the Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program since 2009. The Malawi program's unique features include the engagement of chaplains for disseminating HIV/AIDS prevention messages to youth and couples using the True Love Waits/True Love Stays methodology; self-help groups for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) focusing on empowerment, prevention, and care and support for PLHIV; training HIV positive military personnel as peer educators to strengthen prevention efforts among soldiers who are HIV positive; utilizing Theatre for Development, a behavior change communications methodology employing live interactive performances; and supporting income-generating activities for PLHIV.

RECENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Building Local Capacity in Aquaculture:** Between 2007 and 2010, PCI implemented an innovative aquaculture program designed to significantly improve the production and commercialization of pond-raised fish by providing small scale, low-income producers with training, improved feeds, fish fingerlings, and access to credit with the goal of increasing their production, income and food security. This three-year *Captive Fisheries for Income and Strengthened Households* (C-FISH) project developed and disseminated a wide range of technological and commercial advances which fostered increased entrepreneurship and profitability along aquaculture value-chains in Malawi. Through this program, PCI and its partners promoted important scientific and production advances in the areas of fish breeding, production operations management and feed manufacture, which is helping both small farmers and larger commercial entrepreneurs to improve the profitability and sustainability of their operations.
- **Integrated HIV and Food/Nutrition Security (FNS) Programming:** From 2006-2009 PCI led a multi-agency initiative which aimed to bring to scale integrated food, nutrition, and livelihood security along with HIV/AIDS interventions throughout Africa. The initiative's three central strategies included: 1) Communities of Practice, which were established in Ethiopia and Malawi to promote field-based learning on promising practices in integrated HIV and FNS programming; FANSHA, an advocacy group with the purpose of strengthening awareness about HIV/FNS and influencing key policy and donor decisions; and Africa Forums 2006 & 2009, which brought together local practitioners, public health and development organizations, and select policy makers to share experiences in integrating HIV/AIDS and FNS programming.

PCI /MALAWI
Beverly Hinton
Country Director
bhinton@pcimalawi.org
ph: 265(0)1-879-478

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
5151 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320
San Diego, CA 92123
ph: (858) 279-9690
www.PCIglobal.org

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
1220 19th Street NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20036
ph: (202) 223-0088

SEATTLE REPRESENTATIVE
ph: (206) 708-1942
pciseattle@pciglobal.org