

MALAWI



THE NEED

Malawi faces the combined challenges of rapid population growth, high rates of poverty, chronic food insecurity, and increasingly frequent natural disasters. In rural areas, 59.5% of the population lives in moderate poverty and 23.8% in ultra-poverty. Agriculture remains a core driver of Malawi's employment, however the country is plagued by flooding, pests, and drought which threaten agricultural production reliant on rain-fed crops. Child malnutrition is a persistent problem, with stunting affecting approximately one third of children under age five, and only 8% of children aged 6-23 months meeting minimum acceptable dietary standards.



REGIONAL FOCUS:

Nation-wide;
Emphasis in Balaka, Zomba and Machinga Districts

OVERVIEW

PCI has worked in Malawi since 2007 when the organization led 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 prevention, treatment and care and support; food security; maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition; women's empowerment; vulnerability reduction among adolescent girls and young women; and disaster prevention, response and mitigation. Throughout the past five years, PCI led the Njira "Pathways" project, a \$27 million dollar USAID/Office of Food for Peace-funded development food aid program which is addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity in Malawi's Balaka and Machinga districts. By targeting the specific needs and opportunities facing food insecure populations, Njira strived to increase individual food and income availability, improve food and income utilization for family health, and strengthen resilience capacities to keep communities healthy.

INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND INCOMES

Over the past decade, PCI has implemented integrated food security programs in Malawi's Balaka and Machinga districts. Designed to improve maternal and child health, nutritional status, and food security for vulnerable households, these projects have provided farmers with training, tools and inputs required to grow high-yield crops using conservation agriculture techniques, small-scale irrigation systems to improve depleted soils and extend growing seasons, innovative livestock rearing and pass-on systems, and training of para-veterinarians with linkages to private sector drug suppliers.

Smallholder farmer training on conservation agriculture technologies has resulted in improved crop production practices for over 28,000 low-income households. These practices help farmers to achieve higher crop yields, better food security and improved incomes.

Additionally, PCI provides 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 health and family welfare. Over 33,000 women participated in Women Empowered social and economic empowerment groups, which have collectively saved over \$1.5 million dollars, enabling them to mitigate and cope with shocks, provide more diverse and nutritious food for families, invest in businesses, and increase their confidence and voice, contributing to enhanced participation in the community, and more equitable decision-making at the household and community levels.



FAMILY-CENTERED MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

PCI works to address the needs of vulnerable children in Malawi by forming women's and men's behavior change support groups at scale for caregivers of children under five years of age. In a series of bi-weekly group sessions and home visits, peer facilitators led information-sharing, discussions, and activities with caregivers on infant and young child feeding, maternal and child health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Over 74,000 families benefitted from peer group behavior change communication over the course of four years.

Through PCI's Every Premie SCALE project, PCI developed the Family-Led Care Model to improve survival among pre-term and low birthweight babies who frequently die in Malawi because they need special attention. This model has been adopted at the national level and is being scaled across 16 districts in Malawi.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

PCI is improving vulnerable households' resilience to shocks and stresses by strengthening the capacity of individuals, households, and institutions to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Program approaches such as participatory vulnerability assessments and mapping, simulation exercises, and strengthening the capacity of the disaster management system at the local and national-levels are collectively improving resilience among participating communities. With PCI's support, over 30,750 individuals have increased their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and 80 communities now have access to weather information, climate projections, and vulnerability assessments to inform decision making in farming.

RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS

PCI has also helped over 30,000 individuals to recover from droughts, floods, and armyworm infestations in Southern Malawi, where climatic shocks are the new norm rather than rare occurrences. In response to the extreme weather and flooding that displaced nearly 90,000 Malawians in 2019, PCI is helping over 13,000 families in Zomba and Machinga Districts gain access to clean water and is strengthening hygiene and sanitation practices to prevent the outbreak of water-borne disease. PCI reinforces the coping mechanisms of households in areas of high water scarcity by improving access to drought tolerant crops and by organizing community-wide projects to recharge aquifers, rehabilitate watersheds, and reforest landscapes. PCI also supports district governments to develop contingency plans for natural disasters, establish early warning systems for armyworm attacks; train civil protection committees on environmental disaster management, and conduct simulations for flood evacuation and first aid provision for victims.

ABOUT PCI

PCI (Project Concern International), a Global Communities Partner, is a global development organization that drives innovation from the ground up to enhance health, end hunger, overcome hardship, and advance women and girls — resulting in meaningful and measurable change in people's lives. Founded in 1961, PCI impacted more than 21 million lives in fiscal year 2019 through programs in 13 countries spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas.

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RECENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AMONG MALAWI'S ARMED FORCES

For nearly a decade, PCI partnered with the U.S. Department of Defense HIV/AIDS Prevention Program to deliver HIV/AIDS prevention strategies, testing, treatment and care and support to the Malawi Defense Forces, their family members, and surrounding communities across all 13 Malawi Defense Force units spanning nine districts in Malawi. A total of 94,743 people were tested for HIV from 2017-2019. This nation-wide program tested and scaled up innovative strategies, such as: engaging chaplains to disseminate HIV/AIDS prevention messages to youth and couples; moonlight HIV testing services in high-risk HIV transmission "hotspots"; formation of self-help groups for people living with HIV; engaging HIV-positive military personnel as peer educators; and promoting gender-based violence champions.