



# Girls' Education Results in Malawi



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EDUCATION

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# Girls' Education Results in Malawi

The TEAM Girl Malawi project reaches girls (and boys) who face multiple, complex and often intersecting barriers to education. Through community-based learning centres, girls learn to read, write and count, as well as being supported to develop resilience, self-esteem and sexual health knowledge. When they graduate, learners choose their own pathway into mainstream education, vocational training or employment.

The project recognises that the barriers girls face do not exist in a vacuum. We work with communities, school leaders and government to create lasting change for girls beyond the life of the project.

In 2021, we invited an external evaluator to visit our project at its midpoint and explore where we have been most effective to date. The evaluation was designed to be forward-looking, answering questions which would inform planning and implementation in the final 18 months of the project.



5,250 girls



1,050 boys



105 community learning centres

# Teaching and Learning

Community-based learning centres deliver lessons three hours a day, four days a week. They use a special curriculum, developed in partnership with the Ministry of Education, to help learners catch up on what they have missed by not attending regular school.

We saw great results from this approach:

- Improved learning
- Better attendance
- Inclusive teaching

“I didn’t even know how to write my own name, but now, I know how to write it.”

Learner

## Improved Learning

Secondary school graduates from the local community were trained to become facilitators. Using an inclusive education approach, facilitators tailored lessons to support each child’s needs, considering factors such as gender, disability, and poverty. We also provided assistive devices, such as glasses and wheelchairs, to learners who needed them.



88% of girls improved in reading



86% of girls improved in maths



# Teaching and Learning

## Better Attendance

There are many reasons why girls might struggle to attend regular school which the project addresses head on. Participants praised the community learning centres for:

- Holding lessons at a time and place that suits them better than school
- Providing access to childcare and support during pregnancy for young mothers
- Teachers who provide special additional support to girls who need it, with small groups and take-home work that was tailored to their needs
- Building in strong protections so that girls felt safe to attend



96% of girls and 89% of community members reported that the project had increased access to education

## Inclusive Teaching

We provided ongoing mentoring to facilitators to help them reflect and improve their methods. Efforts focused on integrating children with additional support needs or disabilities to ensure they could get the most out of their lessons.



80% of facilitators reported using at least one of Link's child-centred teaching methods

**“The programme has really helped...to reveal those disabled that were kept in houses instead of going to school. Disabled children know that they have the right to education, and to play.”**

Community member



# Wellbeing

Confidence and self-esteem are essential for girls to pursue their education. Through weekly Girls' Clubs, the project supports girls' personal development, covering topics such as menstruation, sexual health, early pregnancy, HIV prevention and resilience.



83% of girls showed improved life skills

“One CBE facilitator felt the health personnel visits were a great idea that ‘saved [the girls] from becoming pregnant, and this really needs to continue’. She described family planning as particularly effective support.”

External evaluator



# Keeping Girls Safe

The project strengthens community-based child protection systems to support a culture of safety for girls. We provide training and support to existing reporting structures, as well as delivering interactive radio and drama to build community support.



93% of girls felt safe at our community-based classes, compared with just 74% at primary school



94% of girls believed that they would be supported if they reported abuse.



“The data provided a wealth of clear, unequivocal responses about how child protection had improved since TEAM Girl Malawi began operating... Respondents provided detailed, specific examples and stories which make this one of the most dependable, evidence-supported areas of the qualitative investigation.”

# Sustainability

The project engages with all levels of the education system, from local communities to district and national structures to promote ownership and support for girls' education.

The evaluation found that TEAM activities are embedded in community-level and district-level processes, structure and staffing. Nearly all respondents felt positive about community ownership of improving education for girls.

“We are part of these teams as they train the facilitators and as we work with the communities, they are always together, and they are making an impact together... they are just one in the work.”

District Official





## Next Steps

The results from the project so far have been shared with everyone the project touches, from government officials to community leaders, schools and learners. We are actively seeking feedback that will help us to continuously improve our work and adapt to changing needs.

We look forward to developing the project in the coming months to ensure we provide the very best support and care to some of Malawi's most marginalised girls. We will continue to co-create our project through adaptive management systems with stakeholders at all levels, including by working closely with government.



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