

# MALAWI

Known as the 'warm heart of Africa', Malawi is among the smallest and least-developed countries in the world. The economy is heavily reliant on agriculture and, as such, 90 per cent of Malawi's population live in rural areas while 10 per cent live in urban areas. Typical homes in a rural community are built with mud bricks, dirt floors, and thatched roofs and the substandard living conditions throughout the country put four out of five families at risk of contracting diseases like malaria. Though Malawi's dependence on foreign aid for development projects has decreased over the years, the housing deficit exceeds the country's capacity and supply to meet it – requiring the construction of approximately 21,000 new units annually for the next 10 years.

## Habitat for Humanity Malawi

Habitat for Humanity Malawi was established in 1986 and has since succeeded as the largest non-governmental organization in Malawi, serving more than 20,000 people in 15 districts since its founding. Habitat Malawi works to break the cycle of poverty through projects focused on affordable shelter and increasing access to water, sanitation, and hygiene. By providing simple, decent and safe shelter solutions, Habitat Malawi is transforming the lives of low-income families, with a special focus on orphans, slum dwellers, and other vulnerable groups.

## Project Context

The housing deficit is especially acute amongst Malawi's special needs community due to the exclusions they suffer. According to the 2008 Malawi Population and Housing Census report, four per cent of the total population, 500,000 people, live with disabilities. Complex social issues have resulted in the exclusion of people with disabilities from mainstream society, creating further barriers for them in accessing fundamental social, political, and economic freedoms and doubly marginalizing them.

In the Salima District of Malawi, there are 18,000 people with disabilities and 8,000 families with disabilities living in substandard shelter. Although Malawi's government has developed a National Policy on Persons with Disabilities which includes housing as a focus, there has been little tangible results in addressing immediate shelter needs.



## Country Facts

Capital	Lilongwe
Population	18.5 million (July 2016 est.)
Urbanization	16.3% live in cities (2015)
Life expectancy	61.2 years (2016)
Unemployment rate	7.5% (2014)
Population living below the poverty line	52.4% (2004)
Access to improved water sources	90.2% (2015)
Access to improved sanitation facilities	41% (2015)

Sources: World Factbook



## Country Map



# EMPOWERING FAMILIES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In partnership with cbm Canada, Habitat for Humanity is working towards the goal of improving the physical living conditions and quality of life of 60 families with disabilities in the Salima District. This partnership will enable Habitat for Humanity to further its efforts in addressing the housing needs of these vulnerable families by providing fully subsidized homes equipped with ventilated washrooms within their existing communities. Besides the provision of decent homes and latrines, the project will also undertake training on the care and support of people with disabilities, encouraging the transfer of knowledge to strengthen their families, improve their livelihoods, and encourage an inclusive, holistic community.

## Project Objectives

1. Improve the physical living conditions of 60 families with disabilities through: construction of accessible homes complete with toilet facilities and semi-detached (adjacent) bathrooms.
2. Improve the life skills and resilience of 60 families with disabilities through conducting training in property and inheritance rights and care and support.

## Project Impact

The financial and expertise that both organizations bring to this project will better serve the unique needs of this community. The "Empowering Families of People with Disabilities" project will significantly improve the physical living conditions of families who live with disabilities – not only reducing their vulnerability to intrusion and diseases, but also improving their hygiene and health while increasing their economic and social participation.

This project also encourages learning and knowledge transfer by training not only partner family members, but also community leaders, child protection workers, community based organization representatives, and other influential members of the community. Local leaders will be trained in property and inheritance rights and will-writing, and members of the wider community will also be provided training on the care and support of people with disabilities. This kind of training is essential in creating awareness about property and inheritance rights and protecting vulnerable families from property-grabbing. Technical knowledge acquired will lead to better handling of property and tenure-related issues including increasing security of tenure for trainees, and encouraging community-wide integration of those with disabilities.

## Meet Bertha Likeke

After the sudden death of her husband, the sole breadwinner of the family, Bertha and her five children were left homeless and destitute. Bertha returned to her birth village with her children where they lived in a one-room mud-brick thatch roof structure that leaked heavily during the rainy season and attracted insects. They were also forced to cook and sleep in the same room as their goats. Malaria and diarrhea became such a consistent fact of life that the children had to stop attending school. However, the local chief recommended Bertha and her family to Habitat Malawi as a potential partner family. Bertha could not believe the home was hers until she spent the first night there. She says just having a toilet that is clean, safe and dry is a miracle to her. A clean environment to live and sleep in also meant less disease and more frequent school attendance for her children.

