

Malawi: Support to the implementation of social protection for the ultra-poor people in Malawi

The Social Protection Programme (SPP) is strengthening systems to implement the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II

The challenge

In the face of chronic poverty, food insecurity and frequent climatic shocks, Malawi's efforts to provide social support remain inadequate and fragmented. Even though there has been progress, more than two thirds of the population still live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day.

To reduce poverty and vulnerability the timely provision of social support and social protection is crucial. Therefore, improved coordination within and beyond the social protection programme is pressingly needed.

Our approach

SPP supports Malawi's Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms in implementing the Malawi *National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II* through a holistic system strengthening approach that operates both on national and district level.

SPP's first priority is to strengthen *coordination* for successful implementation of the MNSSP II. Therefore, the formation and harmonisation of District and Community Social Support Committees is supported.

Capacity Development at district level is the second priority of SPP. The focal activity is the development and implementation of a training course on social protection for extension workers. Hereby one of the major observed obstacles to successful social support programming at district level, the limited knowledge of frontline workers in the communities is tackled.

An improvement of the *management* of MNSSP II at district level, the third priority, is supported through the development of a harmonized Programme Implementation Manual



Project name	Support to the implementation of social protection for the ultra-poor people in Malawi
Commissioned by	BMZ, co-funded by UK aid and the EU
Implementing organisation	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	Malawi
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and Public Sector Reforms
Duration	01.07.2018 – 31.12.2021
Financial volume	EUR 17.55 million

(PIM). The manual will serve as a one-stop shop for all operational guidelines of the MNSSP II and will contribute to a harmonized implementation of social protection programmes at district level.

Applying *harmonized tools* to implement MNSSP II is the fourth priority of SPP. This includes the further development of the Unified Beneficiary Registry (UBR) and its promotion as a one-stop-shop for all the social protection programmes. Another tool is an e-payment mechanism for cash-based programmes like social cash transfers and public works. A further tool to improve programme efficiency and quality is a harmonized grievance and redress mechanism that allows beneficiaries of all social protection programmes to use one common channel to issue grievances and feedback on programmes.



Photo left: Head teacher standing in a school garden created by Public Works Programme beneficiaries @ GIZ

Photo right: Community verification process for the Unified Beneficiary Registry @ GIZ



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Photo left: Social cash transfer beneficiaries receiving their transfers © GIZ

Photo right: Public Works beneficiaries working on maintaining a road © GIZ

The final SPP priority area aims at creating *linkages* between different measures to increase the resilience of the population and to support a graduation pathway out of poverty for beneficiary households. Here, for instance, watershed management measures and public works programmes are linked. In addition to watershed management, SPP will support beneficiaries link up to other complementary services such as nutrition, livelihoods and other services.

Results in figures will be...

Through the support of SPP in 11 districts and 110 communities, *harmonized social support committees* will be functioning. More than four million households living in these areas will benefit from the establishment of the committees to further improve on the coordination of the different social support programmes.

By the end of 2021 80% of all extension workers and district staff, out of which approximately 40% are women, in 15 districts will have received *capacity development* training on social protection. The training is expected to increase their knowledge on Social Protection considerably and its application in their work.

The *Programme Implementation Manual (PIM)* will be drafted and rolled out to 6 districts. This tool will serve as one instrument to further ensure the harmonised implementation of the MNSSP II at district level.

SPP's support of the development and roll-out of e-payment will benefit 50% of Social Cash Transfer and Public works beneficiary households in nine districts. These are approximately 250,000 beneficiary households who are expected to benefit from a smooth and harmonised payment transaction. The *harmonisation of tools* further incorporates that 70% of the submitted complaints in five districts regarding any of the social protection programmes are closed according to the guidelines.

Finally, SPP will target 10,000 additional beneficiary households, out of which at least 5,500 are female-headed households that are considered to be ultra-poor and recipients of

the Social Cash Transfer, to participate in *complementary interventions* like livelihood projects or nutrition-sensitive interventions. Moreover, it will be ensured that more than half of the target households are female-headed. By 2021, 12 Village Action Plans in four districts will include watershed activities as climate adaption measures with a clear division between voluntary community work and work conducted and remunerated through the Public Works Program. These inter-programme linkages will support graduation and a sustainable path out of poverty.

... and in stories

Through the support of GIZ SPP the nation-wide first certificate course on "Integrated Social Protection" was launched in October 2019 at Magomero Community College. 40 highly motivated students are currently undergoing the first cohort of the one-year certificate course. Through the course, currently employed government frontline workers from the sectors of social welfare, community development and agriculture will be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of social protection and a deeper knowledge of the social protection programmes in Malawi. In early 2021, the first cohort of frontline workers will graduate and take all the knowledge and experiences back to the districts and communities into their daily work.

Since September 2020 the World Bank funded Enhanced Public Works Pilot (EPWP) is being implemented in 10 districts in Malawi. In the EPWP a couple of innovations are currently being piloted with the support of GIZ SPP. One of the innovations is to engage the communities more through voluntary contributions of their time and work in addition to the work remunerated through the programme. Further, the communities are engaged in constructing community assets under the EPWP that are related to climate-smart agriculture and watershed management rather than primarily focusing the attention on infrastructure development, such as roads. Examples include the establishment of tree nurseries and rain water trenches.

Published by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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Layout: GIZ
As at: December 2020

In cooperation with: Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
and Public Sector Reforms
On behalf of: German Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development

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