DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

“The war on corruption is too vast to be waged or won by one person or one agency. It needs Malawians of courage and integrity”

- President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera

Malawi’s landmark 2020 election and peaceful transition of power is a shining example of democracy for the region and the world. Building on this democratic momentum, the United States is working alongside the Government of Malawi and civil society to ensure that democracy delivers by providing high quality public services, using scarce public resources efficiently, preventing and penalizing corruption, and safeguarding human rights. We partner with Malawian institutions to strengthen democratic processes such as elections and legislation, as well as governance issues that affect sustainable development in the health, education, agriculture, and natural resource management sectors.

OUR IMPACT

100%
USAID support helped local governments increase their usage of the Government of Malawi financial management system from 40 to 100 percent.

1/2
USAID support helped Malawi prioritize hiring to bolster the public service, cutting local government vacancy rates by half and increasing human resources for more efficient service delivery.

5 million
Since 2016, USAID support helped reach more than five million Malawian citizens with civic and voter education messages.
Malawi’s struggle to build a vibrant democracy is challenged by slow economic growth, limited educational opportunities, and basic concerns such as health and food security that prevent citizens from actively engaging with government. Fiscal constraints lead to insufficient and undermotivated staff in public institutions, inadequate resources to deliver needed services, and challenges in state capacity. To help address these challenges, USAID works with national and local government institutions, Parliament, and independent agencies to identify cost-effective and evidence-based approaches to strengthen democracy, protect human rights, and support local governance. Our assistance builds professional skills and introduces advanced techniques in public administration, law enforcement, and other governance-related fields, while emphasizing transparency and accountability to maximize the effectiveness of limited resources. Civil society faces similar challenges, and USAID supports Malawian organizations to advocate for policy reforms and monitor government performance more effectively. Corruption exacerbates the problem of resource scarcity, and USAID supports efforts to prevent and combat corruption across Malawian institutions.

- USAID, through the joint US-UK Tackling Serious and Organized Corruption project, works with Malawian law enforcement to investigate and prosecute complex financial crimes. The project has a particular focus on asset forfeiture and recovery, returning illicitly obtained resources back to Malawian citizens.
- USAID supports Parliament to strengthen the ability of key committees to legislate and conduct oversight, and to constructively engage with independent agencies and the public to increase accountability and fight corruption.
- USAID partners with local government and communities to address bottlenecks to effective service delivery, focusing on challenges related to human resource management, public financial management, and policy implementation.
- USAID supports Malawian civil society organizations to counter trafficking in persons, engage citizens in community development, and combat early child marriage.

RESULTS

- USAID partners have trained and mentored more than 80 civil society organizations in the past five years, enhancing their ability to effectively drive change in their communities and expanding our opportunities for new partnerships. Following USAID support, local partners have mobilized more than $29 million for their respective initiatives.
- During the 2020 tripartite elections, USAID partnered with the European Union to deploy more than 6,000 observers across the country and trained 250 political party master trainers that fielded thousands of election monitors. These robust observation efforts strengthened confidence in the process and fostered widespread acceptance of the results.
- USAID and UK partners have advised Malawian law enforcement in developing a coordinated law enforcement strategy and establishing an Asset Forfeiture Unit. This has facilitated the seizure of $150,000 from illicit gains, and the freezing of $3,750,000 worth of property from a security aide to the former President of Malawi.
- USAID support has helped Malawian counterparts to advance 108 laws, policies, regulations, and administrative procedures that strengthen the integrity of the electoral system, improve accountability in the public service, tighten financial reporting requirements, and devolve authorities to local authorities.