

GIRLS INITIATIVE FOR RESILIENT LEARNING AND SUPPORT (GIRLS) PROJECT

Gender transformative education offers a critical route out of poverty and to combat gender inequality. But, too often, girls and young women face significant barriers to learning. Oxfam is working with a network of partners in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia to help change this.

Together, we're providing scholarships to girls and women, including those with disabilities, as well as wrap around activities – such as mentorship, counselling, career guidance, teacher capacity strengthening on Gender Transformative Education, and others.

This Scottish Government-funded project focuses on supporting girls and women to ensure access, retention, completion, and transition across secondary, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and/or Tertiary education in Malawi, Rwanda, and Zambia. Working in partnership with government ministries, departments and agencies responsible for education and gender, the project runs over a five-year period from 1st July 2024 to 31st March 2029.

The project brings together several partnerships: Oxfam in Africa (OIA) collaborating with Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Rwanda, Oxfam in Southern Africa working alongside Concerned Youth Organisation (CYO) in Malawi and YWCA in Zambia. Oxfam Great Britain (OGB), through Oxfam Scotland, holds the contract with the Scottish Government.

WHERE IS THE PROJECT WORKING?



MALAWI (Machinga and Balaka Districts)

The GIRLS project in Malawi, working with CYO, aims to promote gender equality in education by addressing key barriers that prevent girls and vulnerable children from accessing quality education, particularly in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The project will provide scholarships to 500 girls and young women per year. Activities will also boost wrap-around support, challenge harmful gender norms that act as a barrier to girls accessing education, and support efforts to ensure safe learning environments.

Pupils celebrating after the project was officially launched in kabwe





Students during Mental Wellbeing Session

"While gender-based violence and teen pregnancy continue to force many adolescent girls out of school, lack of school fees and learning materials is another huge stumbling block for many rural girls that come from poor families. The inclusion of the bursaries and support towards the learners will therefore ensure that many girls in the impact districts remain in school" Twambilire Kayuni, Project Officer, Oxfam



ZAMBIA (Kabwe, Kapiri, Serenje and Chitambo Districts)

The GIRLS project in Zambia, working with the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) aims to enhance access, retention, and successful completion of education for girls and vulnerable children in Zambia. 2,800 scholarships will be awarded to girls in 40 schools at secondary and tertiary levels (two universities), ensuring they stay in school and build brighter futures. Project activities also include the creation of Girl Power Clubs and study circles within schools.



RWANDA (Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, Bugesera, Kayanza, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ngororero, Gicumbi, Rubavu and Musanze Districts)

The GIRLS project in Rwanda, through Oxfam in Africa (OIA) collaborating with Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), aims to give opportunities to around 200 vulnerable girls to access tertiary education in STEM and Technical Education. It will provide scholarships to those girls who have graduated from secondary education and who could not secure any kind of sponsorship to continue their education, with particular efforts to support teen mothers and those with a disability. The project has already provided more than 100 bursaries across three Higher Learning Institutions, the Catholic University of Rwanda, the Muhabura Integrated Polytechnic College and INES-Ruhengeri.

"Empowering vulnerable girls through inclusive education is not just a mission, it's a movement. By expanding girls' access to STEM and TVET, YWCA Rwanda is ensuring that no one is left behind and this creates opportunities for girls, including those with disabilities, young mothers, and the economically disadvantaged learners. The bursaries, mentorship programmes, and psychosocial support summatively creates a safe a supportive environment for the target groups to thrive, complete their education, and become leaders of change in their community." – Lydia Mitali, Project Officer, YWCA, Rwanda.



Malawi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Patricia Nangozo Kainga, MP (right), accompanied by Oxfam in Malawi Country Representative, Ms. Lingalireni Mihowa and a young learner during the official launch of the project in Malawi. Photo: Veronica Mwale/ Oxfam

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Find out more via the Education Community of Practice and Influencing (ECPI).

