

Supporting HIV/AIDS orphans in Malawi



Gravin Smith/Eyevine/ActionAid

Introduction

There are currently 43 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. It is the most devastating disease the world has ever faced. Of the three million people who died of AIDS-related illnesses in 2005, over 500,000 were children. At the last count, 12 million children had been orphaned – equivalent to more than all of the children in the UK.

Malawi has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the world. The disease has reduced life expectancy from 59 years to just 38 years in the space of a decade. The country also has one of the highest numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans. With the adult population devastated, there is no one to look after the orphans, leaving many children neglected or having to fend for themselves.

Stolen childhoods

The vulnerability of AIDS orphans starts well before the death of their parents. They often have to care for their ailing parents at an early age, and then have to deal with the unimaginable trauma of watching them die.

Although children in Malawi face daily horrors, they also represent a tremendous window of hope for the future of the country – only 2% of children aged 5-14 are infected with HIV. However, it is likely that 20% of them will be infected by HIV in adulthood unless they are given access to the services they vitally need – education, nutrition, healthcare and emotional support. If action is taken now to provide children with these services, the younger generation of Malawi could begin to turn the tide on this devastating disease.

real lives:

Zainabu's story

Zainabu Kassim is 12 years old and lives in Machanga district. Her parents both died of AIDS when she was very young. She lives with her brother and three younger sisters. Zainabu is now the sole income provider for her family, and has no time to attend school or make friends her own age.

“I stay at home most of the time when I'm not working. I haven't really got time to play with the other girls and they sometimes say bad things. I would like to go to school if I had more time. I see others going and would like to have a better future too – I would like to be a nurse.”



Simon Molloy/ActionAid

how you can help

By supporting this project, you can provide children like Zainabu with the education, nutrition, healthcare and emotional support they so desperately need.

The project – building an *Ufulu* centre in Malawi

In Chichewa, Malawi's main language, 'Ufulu' means freedom, wellbeing and comfort.

This project will set up one *Ufulu* centre which will provide a lifeline for communities in Malawi torn apart by HIV/AIDS. The centre will provide healthcare, testing facilities, access to antiretroviral (ARV) treatments, basic education and emotional support. Children will benefit from a nutrition-feeding programme, which guarantees them a daily meal.

This centre will directly help 400 children. Special focus will be given to orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS, but the centre will be open to all children. This is particularly important for the integration of orphans, to increase their confidence and their ability to build valuable friendships. By coming to ActionAid's *Ufulu* centre, hundreds of children will be able to reclaim their stolen childhoods.

What your support means to children like Zainabu

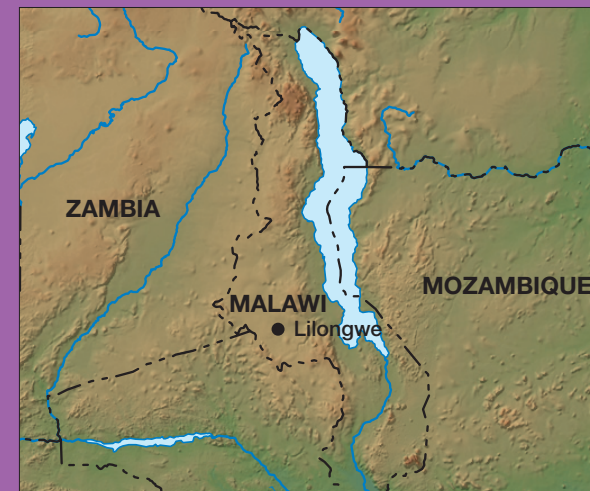
£20 could pay for a hand basin at an *Ufulu* centre

£40 could mean that 400 children can have nutritious porridge for one week – sometimes the only guaranteed meal they receive

£60 could provide a child with ARV treatment for two months

£90 could equip an *Ufulu* centre with toys, materials and play equipment for 400 children

£380 could pay for enough memory books for 400 children, enabling children to remember their parents through drawings and poems



Malawitoday

- ◆ 1 in 7 people in Malawi is living with HIV/AIDS
- ◆ In Malawi someone dies every 9 minutes from AIDS-related illnesses
- ◆ Almost half the population lives on less than 65p per day

The bigger picture

- ◆ ActionAid has been working on HIV/AIDS since 1987, giving practical support to people living with the disease in 23 countries.
- ◆ ActionAid also campaigns and lobbies rich governments and international institutions to make access to drugs, care and treatment fair and unbiased.
- ◆ ActionAid had a huge campaign breakthrough at the G8 summit in 2005. In response to our campaigning the G8 leaders committed to ensuring access to AIDS treatment for everyone who needs it by 2010.



Helen Yeomans/ActionAid



Gavin Smith/Eyevine/ActionAid