

See Our World

An essential part of Plan's work is to help create spaces for children and young people to discuss together the issues which affect their lives, then ensure adults respect their views so that children may be involved in community decision-making. This communication has been prepared with and by children directly and is intended to give a general sense of the kinds of issues children discuss and how they work together.

Introducing the Children's Parliament in Malawi

Meet us

Hello! We are a group of boys and girls coming from all the districts of Malawi representing our fellow friends from all corners of this lovely country. We would like to share with you our experiences and involvement in children's parliament. The Children's Parliament which is facilitated and supported by Plan has now become a national annual event where representatives of children from all districts of Malawi meet to discuss and debate issues that affect their lives. A report from



Some of the child parliamentarians together with Plan Malawi and Government officials in a group photo

these discussions is shared with the main national parliament to act on during their debate and deliberations.

Our concern

As Children, we face a lot of challenges that affect our growth and development. In most cases, these challenges are to do with the prevention by individuals and systems, for us to enjoy our rights in full. Examples of these rights are the right to protection, the right to health and survival and the right to education. The situation is made worse by lack of supportive structures and

platforms that give the opportunity to us to discuss and voice out issues we feel affect our growth and development.

When Plan introduced to us the idea of a children's Parliament, we were so excited to know that now we will have a national platform to voice out our concerns which cannot be ignored. The idea of a children's parliament was welcomed by all of us children.

Our Parliament

The Children's Parliament has a similar set up as the national parliament. We have a speaker together with his clerks and the house is divided into the proposers and opposers.

Each year a topic to be discussed and debated upon is proposed and agreed upon by all involved.

This year's child parliament had a representation of 123 children from all the districts in Malawi. Last year's parliament sessions was centered on two topics, child labor and the national registration bill. These two topics have become a major concern to us children as their contribution to the deprivation of children rights is huge.

After the session, a petition in a form of a communiqué on the national registration bill and child labor was sent to the government through the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Gender and Child Development to be handed over to the national parliament.



Our Speaker, led by the sergeant at arms making an entrance to start the discussions

Our achievements and the way forward

So far we have seen the national registration bill, which we have been pushing for so long, been debated and passed by the national parliament. The national registration bill calls for all children to be registered at birth and given birth certificates. Thanks to Pan's facilitation, we have also seen many consultation meetings taking place in different areas concerning the issue of child labor and witchcraft. At the moment, a lot of children are being taught witchcraft and the perpetrators cannot be tried in a court of law, because there is no legislation covering the issue of witchcraft in the country. Different non-governmental organizations including Plan have joined us to have this bill tabled at the national assembly. We are proud that through the children's parliament, our suggestions, concerns and initiatives are being recognized and taken seriously. We would like to thank Plan and its partners for making the Children's Parliament a reality.

We feel that the future of our child parliament is really bright. In the future we would like to see more issues affecting children coming out from children themselves and we want our government to be responsible in responding to those issues. We also would like to increase our parliamentary sessions to at least twice each year as a way of increasing our discussion topics and at the same time allowing many children to participate in the debates and discussions.

Some of the children who contributed in the production of this document are Chimwemwe Jere, Lugano Mkuna, James Ngoma, Wandile Mhlanga, Zion Nyirenda, Declerk Chirwa, Cotilida Rebello, Faith Chikapa, Charles Kabena, Macferson Lole, Tamandani Chimombo, Rodrick Gatoma, Rebecca Chinsewu