



SHEAMA university scholarship recipient mentoring secondary school students in Rumphi District, Malawi

Strengthening Higher Education Access in Malawi Activity

Each year, more than 80,000 secondary school students in Malawi face economic and social impediments that prevent them from accessing higher education to obtain the skills needed for jobs and business ownership. In response, government, universities and international donors are forming partnerships to innovative approaches that extend higher education opportunities to youth in more impoverished rural communities.

The Strengthening Higher Education Access in Malawi Activity (SHEAMA) is a 4-year, USAID-funded project focused on *increasing Malawi's skilled and employable workforce* – especially rural adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and vulnerable young men.

The project will achieve this goal through interventions that deliver the following results:

1. Improved access to higher education for the most vulnerable
2. Increased access to quality distance learning and short-term training
3. Improved bridging to employment

SHEAMA is partnering with universities, private industry, government, and organizations at national, district and community levels to expand Open and Distant Learning (ODL) opportunities to earn four-year degree, diplomas, and certificates leading to market-based employment in private industry, self-employment and enterprise development. Winrock supports work to provide access to scholarships and enhanced student support to AGYW and other vulnerable students and improve engagement of universities with the private sector to develop market responsive ODL programs and increased jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

SHEAMA is implemented by Arizona State University with its consortium partners: Winrock International, Overseas Strategic Consulting, and Malawi's five public higher education institutions:

- Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST)

- Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR)
- Chancellor College, University of Malawi
- Mzuzu University (MZUNI)
- University of Malawi, the Polytechnic

Strategic Approach

SHEAMA is working with university partners, private sector and government to develop an ODL model that is feasible and sustainable in **increasing access, quality, and relevance of ODL courses and degree**. Key elements of SHEAMA’s approach include:

- Increased capacity of university leadership, faculty, and staff to design, deliver, and evaluate ODL programs;
- Increased use of technology and innovation for ODL design and delivery;
- Diversification of ODL offerings to accommodate different/more learners;
- Improved linkages of course content to employment and enterprise development opportunities through more effective university coordination with market actors;
- More deliberate response by universities and market actors to address barriers to higher education for AGYW and other vulnerable students; and
- Improved coordination and collaboration between universities.

Key Interventions

To ensure the best opportunity for student success, SHEAMA is designing with university and industry partners interventions that include:

- Scholarships provided for traditional face-to-face and ODL university programs and shorter courses
- Support and mentoring to AGYW and other vulnerable students from community day secondary schools in the rural areas

- Information sharing and outreach to secondary schools in rural communities
- Expanded and improved career placement services, internships, job information by ODL students; and
- Training and support to private sector employers to provide internships, on-the-job training, and decent work to ODL graduates.

FAST FACTS

DONOR: USAID

TIMEFRAME: January 2019 – December 2022

FUNDING LEVEL: \$9.5 Million

LOCATION: Malawi

TARGET BENEFICIARIES: SHEAMA will reach 1,188 AGYW and vulnerable men with scholarships and direct student support and strengthen university partners to deliver effective market responsible ODL programs to over 14,000 students.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS: The SHEAMA project office is located in capital city, Lilongwe. The project focuses on rural communities in six districts: Balaka, Mulanje and Chikwawa districts in the Southern Region; Kasungu and Salima in the Central Region; and Karonga in the Northern Region.

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WEBSITE: <https://www.winrock.org/project/growing-malawis-skilled-workforce/>

Map of SHEAMA

