

Malawi



Malawi is a landlocked country located in southern Africa. It covers an area that is just a bit smaller than the state of Pennsylvania and its population is about one and one half times that state's. The capital city is Lilongwe. The official language of Malawi is English.



Lake Malawi is sometimes called the Calendar Lake—it is 365 miles long and 52 miles wide!

Most Malawians are Christian (about 85%); about 13% of the population are Muslim. The rest either identify as having no religion or belong to one of many small, independent faiths. Roman Catholics make up about one fifth of all

Christians. They number about two million. The Catholic faith was introduced by French missionaries in the late 19th century. After just forty years, the first local clergy—native Malawians—were ordained priests for their own Church.

Primary education is free in Malawi, it is not compulsory, even though their Constitution guarantees at least five years of education for all people. Only 65% of the population can read and write. Dropout rates are higher for girls than boys due to the risk of gender-based-violence along the long walks to school.

Infant mortality is very high (about 45/1,000 compared to the US about 6/1,000) and life expectancy at birth is very low. Currently, a person born in Malawi can expect to live about 60 years. Much of this can be traced to the high level of HIV/AIDS infection in the country which has left over one million orphaned children. Lack of access to good medical care also contributes to the crisis—there is only one doctor for approximately every 50,000 people.

MCA in Malawi

While most people (about 90%) have access to indoor running water, half of all Malawians do not have indoor toilets. This exposes the population to conditions that are easily spread from person to person such as dysentery. Easily dealt with in western cultures with good sanitation and health care, simple dysentery can be a killer in places where there is little medical care.



Missionary Childhood is working to improve the health care situation so the smallest children in Malawi. Recently, the Rosarian Sisters hosted a gathering of MCA Diocesan Directors at Atupele Community Hospital. The Sisters are very grateful that funding from MCA

members worldwide has allowed them to purchase infant-sized respirators, allowing them to give life-saving treatment to the many babies born in respiratory distress.

Another social problem being addressed by missionaries funded by MCA is that of HIV/AIDS orphans. Because of support from the Missionary Childhood Association, 42 local projects that provide homes for orphans with no family and street children have been built throughout the country. These homes are also connected to schools and health centers. In many of the dioceses, the facilities are placed at the Cathedral, giving them a central location. They are small institutions, often one or two small buildings surrounded by land. Orphans with no families are welcomed. Besides education and faith formation, they also receive nutritious food and access to health care.

Recently, Archbishop Protase Rugambwa, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies at the Vatican spoke on behalf of Pope Francis to the people of Malawi. He noted that while their own needs are many, they are very generous to the General Solidarity Fund in Rome, which ensures that all children in the missions have a chance at support.

Our last report shows that Missionary Childhood members of Malawi had sacrificed \$6,309.30 for their brothers and sisters around the world. Archbishop Rugambwa has indicated that the collection from Malawi this year increased by almost 40%!

These young missionaries have a lot of which they can be proud! In a country where their very lives may depend on the funding that comes to them from MCA through missionaries, they still find it in their hearts to pray and sacrifice for others. What an example!



MCA members in Malawi

Father Vincent Mwakhwawa, National Mission Director for Malawi, is especially proud. "It is a blessing to the people of Malawi who are able to change people's lives and build faith communities within and outside Malawi by their contributions. Through such offerings, many people will be served holistically," he said. Father Mwakhwawa encourages the Church in Malawi to continue to be generous with their spiritual and financial gifts, regardless of the economic challenges facing the country.

May we all do the same!

Missionary Childhood Association

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