

# 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 82%); 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 third 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 46/1000 compared to the US about 6/1000) and life expectancy at birth is very low. Currently, a person born in Malawi can expect to live about 50 years. Much of this can be traced to the high level of HIV/AIDS infection in the country which has left over one millions orphaned children. Lack of access to good medical care also contributes to the crisis—there is only one doctor for approximately 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.

Thousands of HIV/AIDS orphans are being raised by their grandparents after their parents died. The grandparents themselves may have received little education and therefore do not value it. By keeping the orphaned children home and working on farms, they are risking a whole new generation of illiteracy and lack of an educational path that could lead to more professionals in the country.

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. In many of these small institutions, often one or two small buildings surrounded by land, orphans with no families are welcomed. They are also receive nutritious food and access to health care.

In Mzuzu, in the northern area of the country the Sisters of the Holy Rosary have also started up mobile units to go out and serve more of the people in need who cannot reach them for help. This project received

funding from Missionary Childhood in 2011.

Of course, where there is Missionary Childhood, there is also faith formation!

In the Diocese of Mangochi, children gather every year for a diocesan wide celebration of their Missionary Childhood membership. Last year their Bishop, Most Reverend Monfort Stima, joined them—just like Cardinal Seán does for our annual Mission Education Day! Bishop Stima told the MCA members, “The only way we can show our love to Jesus is when we love our friends, the poor, and the disadvantaged”.



MCA members wear their World Mission Rosaries in Malawi.

Last year Missionary Childhood members in Malawi sacrificed \$3,325.50 for their brothers and sisters who need to learn how



much Jesus loves them.

They received \$246,000 from their fellow members worldwide for projects like providing clean

water at schools and clinics, feeding programs, and schools for orphans. They are grateful to share their love, faith and

**Missionary Childhood Association**

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