

PROFILE: MALAWI



Malawi, known as 'the warm heart of Africa', is landlocked between Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. Lake Malawi, at the southern end of the Great Rift Valley, dominates the geography of the country.

More than 75 per cent of Malawi's population is rural and depends on agriculture. The famine of 2001–2002 affected 3 million families in Malawi, though most have now recovered thanks to government intervention. Still, the number of families without enough food or permanently reliant on food aid remains significant.

Many factors prevent families from producing enough food, such as prolonged illness, droughts, floods, environmental degradation, climatic changes and increased pressure on land due to growing population.

Access to safe water and sanitation is another problem, with women and girls shouldering the burden of fetching water in rural Malawi. This can prevent children – especially girls – from attending school, despite free primary education.

Although the government of Malawi is making efforts to provide life-enhancing anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV, poor nutrition can compromise their effectiveness.

Pressure on rural families is driving children to live on the streets of Malawi's two main cities, Lilongwe and Blantyre. Others are forced to beg or work on the streets if they lose one or both parents to AIDS-related illness.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN MALAWI

Tearfund works in partnership with 11 Christian organisations and church development departments across Malawi, focusing in particular on disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, food security, children at risk, HIV, water and sanitation, as well as advocacy. Our work began in 1998 through the Evangelical Association of Malawi, and through partners this work is reaching now more than a million people.

In April 2008, Tearfund established a country office in Lilongwe to provide administrative as well as technical support to the 11 partners who are implementing the various projects and programmes. This has improved the quality of services to poor communities through increased capacity building and monitoring of partners' project activities.

In recent years, Tearfund supporters have been introduced to our long-term work in Malawi through the evolving story of Fombe village in the southern region of Chikwawa.

Tearfund partner Eagles began working in Fombe, among other villages, during the food crisis of 2002, and has moved beyond providing emergency relief to mobilising the church to respond to the development needs of the community.

As a result of the church's work, the community has created vegetable gardens, established community-based childcare centres and drilled boreholes to provide clean safe water. Before, most women could not read or write, but now, thanks to an adult literacy school, 65 per cent of women in the village can read.

➤ **Pray for people living in poverty in Malawi.**

➤ **Please pray for our partners as they seek to help others.**

➤ **And pray for the country of Malawi, for justice, peace, good health and hope for everyone.**