

Malawi



Where is Malawi?

Malawi is a landlocked country in central Africa. It consists of three distinct regions; the Northern region which is mountainous, the Southern region which is mostly flat and low, and the Central region which is an even plateau - this is where most of the food is grown. It lies next to Zambia, but is separated by Lake Malawi (the 3rd largest lake in Africa) from Tanzania and Mozambique. Its capital city is Lilongwe, and is named after the nearby Lilongwe River.



What is the climate like?

The temperature of Malawi gets hotter at lower altitudes, so the South is very hot (up to 40°C) and the North is more moderate (around 14°C). The average UK temperature can range between 4-17°C). The rainy season comes from November to March, with a hot climate and lots of heavy storms. Then through the rest of the year there is only a fine mist blanketing the highlands and very rarely any rainfall at all.



Education

Primary school is not compulsory but everyone is entitled to at least 5 years in school and in 1994 primary school education became free. In 2007 enrolment rates were at 75% and this is primarily due to improved learning materials in schools and enhanced school systems. Attendance rates for primary schools within the UK are 98%.



Quick Facts

- Population: 13,900,000 (UK 2009: 61.8 million)
- Area: 118,000 square km (UK: 242,900 square km)
- Life expectancy (years): 44.1 (men) and 43.6 (women)
- Major languages: Chichewa, and English.
- Major religions: Christianity and Islam.
- Malawi became independence in 1964.

People and Culture

Malawi's population is made up of the Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni and Ngonde, as well as populations of Asians and Europeans. Major languages include Chichewa, an official language spoken by over 57% Chinyanja (12.8%), Chiyao (10%) and Chitumbuka (10%). English is also an official language.



Justina collects her water from a traditional shallow well at Chawuruma Village Lusangazi



Justina shows her healthy maize store from which she will be able to pay her seed loan

Poverty

- Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries.
- The economy is mainly agricultural which accounts for over 90% of export revenues. The economy depends on substantial international aid.
- Over 80% of the population depends on agriculture, mostly subsistence farmers working small plots of rain fed crops. Rainfall is erratic and less than 20% of the land is irrigated.
- The government faces many challenges including developing a market economy, improving educational facilities, facing up to environmental problems, dealing with the problems of health and HIV/AIDS and improving the transport infrastructure.

Did you know?

- Nsima, made from ground corn, is a staple food throughout much of Malawi.
- The Chongoni Rock Art Area features rock paintings which date back to the stone age.
- Tea is the second biggest export crop of Malawi.
- 1/3 of Malawians will probably not live to 40 years of age.
- Scotland has long had special ties with Malawi. Dating back to the work of Scottish missionary explorer Dr David Livingstone, Scots have been working with the people of Malawi for almost 150 years to develop education and health systems.

Self Help Africa in Malawi

- Increasing incomes and assets from small businesses
- Improving household food and nutrition security
- Increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS and help people to cope with its negative effects
- Enabling 'Lead Farmers', who are skilled and motivated, to support neighbouring fellow farmers in new farming practices.
- Livestock training and distribution
- Improving access to water
- Sustainable Agricultural Support
- Facilitating farmers' networks to share information and lessons