

# Life in Malawi



A photographic exhibition celebrating the work of the Anglican Church in Malawi.

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**The majority of Malawi's 15 million population faces poverty and many hardships. But there is also hope, inspired by the gospel.**

Malawi ranks as one of the world's ten poorest countries and is prone to natural disasters of both extremes – from drought to heavy rainfalls.

Around 90 per cent of Malawians are subsistence farmers but agricultural land is under severe pressure from rapid population growth. As a result, around three million people live with constant malnutrition, and many survive on just one meagre meal a day.

Malaria and TB are rife, and a million people are HIV-positive (UNICEF), but healthcare is severely limited – in fact, Malawi has the lowest doctor/population ratio in the world, with only one doctor per 200,000 people (St Andrews University), compared to one doctor per 500 in the UK.

Malawi's attempts to rebuild itself have been hindered by world trade restrictions that do not favour African nations. For example, Malawi has been encouraged to grow tobacco for export to the west, instead of growing traditional crops such as soya beans and groundnuts. But with tobacco prices falling, farmers are not earning enough money to buy food – and traditional food crops are in short supply.

In this context, the church in Malawi is

doing what it can to reach out to communities in practical ways.

The Rt Revd James Tengtenga, Bishop of Southern Malawi, explained: 'The church's ministry is to bring fullness of life, which is the knowledge that God cares for you even when you think nobody else does. We are under strain from HIV and AIDS, malaria and hunger. In this context, the fullness of life is about mitigating the effects of all these things and bringing hope. It means getting involved in the political, social and religious life of the people. It means being a voice for that which is good and ethical, and it means catering for physical needs.'

The Anglican Church in Malawi is working alongside communities, providing healthcare, education, literacy programmes, baby clinics and agricultural programmes.

Bishop James said: 'The gospel is alive! We are a growing church, preaching the gospel everywhere and wherever possible. The gospel is relational, it is incarnational and it is personal – and sometimes that personal touch can mean more than our lack of finances and resources.' ■

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This is USPG-supported Malosa Secondary School. A student told USPG: 'My education is everything to me. If you grow up without being able to read or write or learn about the world, it's like living in a box: being in the dark and cut off. When I leave school I want to get a degree. I would like to become an accountant and help my country.'



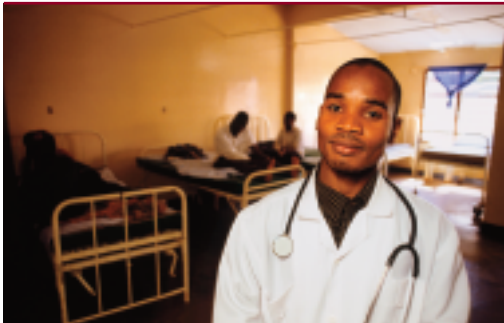
Approximately 16 per cent of Malawi's population lives in urban areas. Most people survive through subsistence farming. Many try to earn extra income by trading in markets, like this women selling peanuts in Chilema.



Burning rubbish by the roadside, in Malosa. Keeping Malawi's streets clean is an ongoing concern. People tend to dispose of waste indiscriminately, leading to infestations of flies and rats, and water contamination.



There is a hope in Malawi that a good education will lead to well paid employment – but the reality is less promising. While primary school education is free, it isn't compulsory and many children do not attend. Girls, in particular, are often kept at home to work in the house or look after young siblings.



This is medical assistant San Honde, at the USPG-supported St Luke's Hospital, in Malosa. San said: 'I would like to be a doctor in Malawi. The more Malawian doctors there are, the more we can assist our country.' Malawi has a critical shortage of medical staff due to the so-called 'brain drain', which has seen qualified personnel leave Africa in search of better-paid jobs.



Life is precarious for children in Malawi. Young children typically require treatment four or five times a year for malaria, coughs and diarrhoea.



Mathilda Chiutula (left), based at St Luke's Hospital, was inspired to become an HIV co-ordinator after her six siblings died from the virus. Mathilda said: 'The Christian faith is important to me. If you are a Christian you have the aim of assisting other people. At St Luke's Hospital we have the spirit of Christianity, which is very important.'



Patients queue for anti-retroviral drugs at St Luke's. Bishop James Tengatenga, of Southern Malawi, said: 'We have to comfort and counsel the people. We give as much information as possible about HIV. At confirmation services I talk about HIV prevention and the need for testing. Each parish has set up an AIDS committee.'



Elizabeth James, a widow, brought up four children single-handedly, but not all her children survived so she has taken in seven grandchildren. She has always struggled to feed her family.



Employment opportunities are scarce in Malawi, especially for women. Elizabeth earns a tiny wage tending neighbours' gardens, after which she goes into the bush looking for vegetables to cook or firewood to sell for a little extra income.



Elizabeth believes that schooling is important for her children and grandchildren because it could lead to secure employment and a better standard of living.



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The Rt Revd James Tengatenga, Bishop of Southern Malawi



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