MAKWAWA MALAWI NEWSLETTER 2015

Back to Africa

What are the current issues in Malawi

Malawi is a small and landlocked country, bordering Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. It has a rapidly expanding population (3 percent per year) and is regarded as a United Nations Population Fund global population 'hotspot'. The country is defined as low-income and ranks 174 out of 187 countries in the 2013 Human Development Index where it has stagnated for the last five years. Female-headed households experience higher poverty than those headed by men. Since 2012, economic shocks such as devaluation of the Kwacha by 49 percent and inflation of above 20 percent have contributed to high living costs, with Malawi ranking as the 13th worst performing economy in the 2014/15 Global Competitiveness report produced by the World Economic Forum. With a majority of livelihoods dependent on agriculture, the population is highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters such as annual dry spells and flooding.

Malawi's landholdings are generally small and densely cultivated, causing overuse and degradation of marginally productive agricultural land. Deforestation rates at 2.8 percent annually are the highest in southern Africa, exacerbating food and water insecurity. More than 80 percent of Malawians are smallholder farmers with access to an average 0.23 ha of arable land, compared with the sub-Saharan African average of 0.40 ha.

With a majority of livelihoods dependent on agriculture, the population is highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters such as annual dry spells and flooding – Malawi experienced both in 2015 with particularly severe floods in the south affecting as many as 1 million people. Large parts of Malawi continue to suffer from food insecurity on an annual basis, particularly during the lean season (usually between December and March), due to high

food prices and insufficient household crop production caused by prolonged dry spells and/or flooding.

According to the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, an estimated 2.83 million people will experience acute food insecurity during the 2015/16 lean season. Women are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity as their extensive home-based workload and care work does not usually translate into economic gain, limiting their ability to afford a balanced diet.

Malawi's food security situation is further aggravated by a high HIV infection rate (11 percent), which is the ninth highest rate in the world. Nutrition insecurity is also high. The stunting rate for children under age five is 42 percent. According to a recent Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) Malawi report, 10.3 percent of GDP is lost annually to child under nutrition and 23 percent of all child mortality cases are associated with under nutrition.

Malawi's food related challenges include: chronic food insecurity among poor and vulnerable households, including refugees; recurrence of natural disasters such as drought and floods; high prevalence of chronic under nutrition and widespread micronutrient deficiencies; high rates of school drop-outs, repetition and absenteeism among primary schoolchildren from food-insecure households; and low incomes among smallholder farmers as a result of poor agricultural market structures and policies.

MOSQUITOS & MOSQUITO NETS

A few facts about mosquitos

- **Mosquitoes are considered the deadliest "animal" in the world.** The *Anopheles* mosquito, in particular, is dangerous because it transmits malaria, which kills more than one million people every year, primarily in Africa. Alexander the Great is believed to have died of malaria in 323 B.C
- **A mosquito can drink up to three times its weight in blood.** Don't worry, though. It would take about 1.2 million bites to drain all the blood from your body.
- **Female mosquitoes can lay up to 300 eggs at a time.** Usually, the eggs are deposited in clusters – called rafts – on the surface of stagnant water, or they are laid in areas that flood regularly. Eggs can hatch in as little as an inch of standing water. Females will lay eggs up to three times before they die.
- **The average mosquito lifespan is less than two months.** Males have the shortest lives, usually 10 days or less, and females can live about six to eight weeks, under ideal conditions. The females lay eggs about every three days during that time. Females of species that hibernate may live up to six months.
- **Mosquitoes can smell human breath.** They have receptors on their antennae that detect the carbon dioxide released when we exhale. Those plumes of CO2 rise into the air, acting as trails that the mosquitoes follow to find the source
- **Sweat helps mosquitoes choose their victims.** Our skin produces more than 340 chemical odours, and some of them smell like dinner to mosquitoes. They are fond of octenol, a chemical released in sweat, as well as cholesterol, folic acid, certain bacteria, skin lotions, and perfume.
- **Body heat marks the target.** Mosquitoes use heat sensors around their mouthparts to detect the warmth of your body – actually, the blood inside it – then land on you and locate the best capillaries for tapping.
- **Mosquitoes feed day and night.** Some species, like the *Aedes* are daytime biters, while others, like *Culex*, start biting at dusk and continue a few hours into dark.
- **Malaria is caused by a parasite that lives in mosquitoes.** The parasite gets into mosquito saliva and is passed on when the insect bites someone. Mosquitoes can also carry and pass on canine heartworm.
- **Mosquitoes do not transmit HIV.** The virus that causes AIDS does not replicate in mosquitoes and is actually digested in their stomachs, so it's broken down without being passed on.
- **Dark clothing attracts mosquitoes.** Remember, they are drawn to heat and darker clothes retain more heat than light-coloured clothing.
- **Insecticides work, but only in the short term.** Permethrin, one of the most common chemicals used by local mosquito control programs, kills mosquitoes on contact by disrupting their central nervous systems. However, eggs and larvae often are not affected. Once the insecticide dissipates, mosquitoes can return.

We found a net supplier (Mosquito nets r us) who were having a stock clearance and with the help of donors we took 150 large/double rectangular and conical mosquito nets to give to the villagers of Mponda. The village chief (a teacher) and Shy Busman (the Scout Leader) identified the village families in greatest need of protection. After a morning at the school prize giving it was off to the village to distribute the nets

STARVING FROM FAMINE AGAIN

In 2002, 2003 and 2005 we supplied funds so that the villagers could buy maize as there were famines resulting from a failed harvest caused by a lack of rain.

Yet again there is a drought in Malawi with the same outcome. We have sent three tranches of money to the village chief so that sufficient maize could be purchased for 67 families and we will probably have to send some more

Jaine (my sister) and her family visited Malawi this year for the first time and helped with the purchase and distribution of the maize.

SCHOOL SPEECH DAY and SCHOOL FEES

WOW! I never remembered speech day like this. There was dancing, singing, speeches about circumcision, plays by local actors about the benefit of going to school, a steel drum band, everyone got a present and everyone's name was read out. All of this was held outside the school buildings and everyone brought their own set of bricks as a chair

In the "primary" school there are seven standards. It does not matter how old you are to be in any given standard (you can be 7 or 17 or 27). Primary school is funded by the Government

There is no limit as to how many students there are in each standard/class and all are taught by one teacher. In standard 5 there were over 100 students. The classrooms did not have desks and chairs because there was not enough space to get them in, so you sat on the floor. There were over 800 students in the primary school

4 students were not able to make speech day or take their level 7 exams as they were having babies!

Once you have passed your standard 7 exams that's education over with unless you can afford to pay Secondary School Fees. As the majority of parents do not have employment and, if they do, they earn less than £1 per day. Not really enough to pay school fees!

Loveness and Manfred were identified by the Headmistress and fellow staff as two of the most gifted students having passed standard 7 but whose mothers could not afford to pay school fees. Their fathers/husbands had died from AIDS and leaving Mum to provide for their 6 children on their own. Both Loveness and Manfred achieved 100% in their Maths and English Exams

After discussions with the Domasi Mission Secondary School Headmaster and Treasurer it was agreed that Makwawa Malawi would pay the school and boarding fees for Loveness and Manfred hopefully up to University education and beyond. It was insisted by the School that the students would be boarders so that family pressures and duties were avoided allowing them to concentrate on their studies

PUMULANI ORPHANAGE

Due to the strong presence of AIDS (11% of the population has HIV) and the effects of malaria coupled with poverty, famine and drought, orphans are prolific

Loris runs an orphanage at Pumulani voluntarily. She works at the Lake Malawi Pumulani Safari Lodge as a waitress and then goes home to look after her own two children and 16 orphans. She obtained some funding from the Government to extend her home were there are 4 to a bedroom all on double bunk beds. All meals are eaten in the kitchen in the garden

In order to make ends meet she organises her wards to make cardboard boxes for packed lunches, photo albums and writing paper from recycled paper from the Safari Lodge. They have two manual sewing machines (no electricity) to make their own and other villagers' clothes, curtains etc and the inevitable African wood carvings

Apart from footballs we left most of our own clothing at the orphanage when we left

FOOTBALLS

Footballs for Fun (a UK Charity) provided us with 15 footballs (together with pumps) to distribute to different deserving causes in Malawi. Adorned with the Malawian Flag these were given to Club Makolola Staff Football team, Makwawa Scouts, Majeti Safari Park Football Club, 7 (one for each class) were given to Domasi Primary School and to the Pumulani Orphanage

Thanks go to Beckenham Cricket Club for providing 24 crickets shirts together with 24 pairs of football socks for the Domasi Primary School football and netball teams

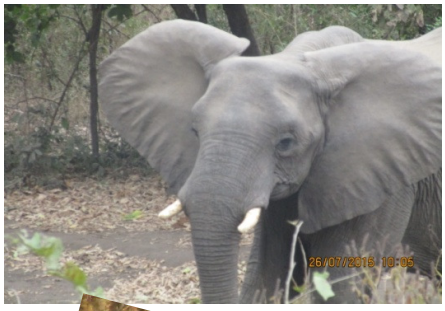
EDWARD LEARNS TO DRIVE ON SAFARI

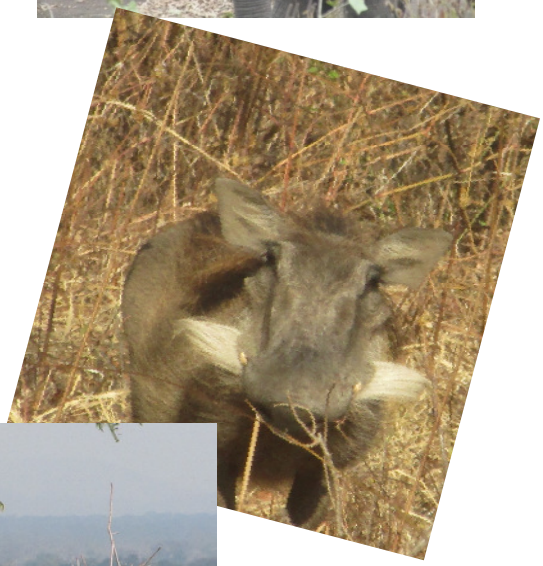
It would not be appropriate to ignore our safari at Majete National Safari Park

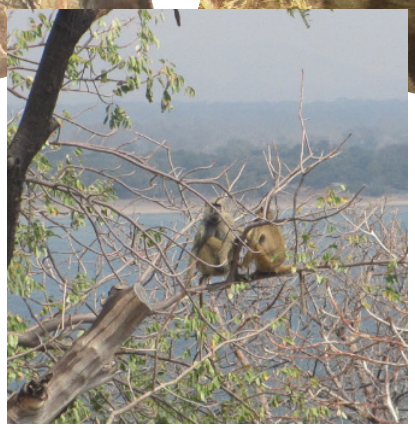
We stayed at Mkulumadzi Safari Lodge run by Heath and Bridget from Zimbabwe

Fantastic, well looked after, food was great, staff was friendly, helpful and cheerful, loads of wildlife. We were woken by Hippos every morning as the sun came up at 5 am for our morning drive, monkeys, impala, hundreds of birds, water buck, baboons, zebra, buffalo and warthogs. Back for lunch, snooze, off again for the evening drive, elephants, kudu, tracking the rhino but never seeing one and at night leopards & lions

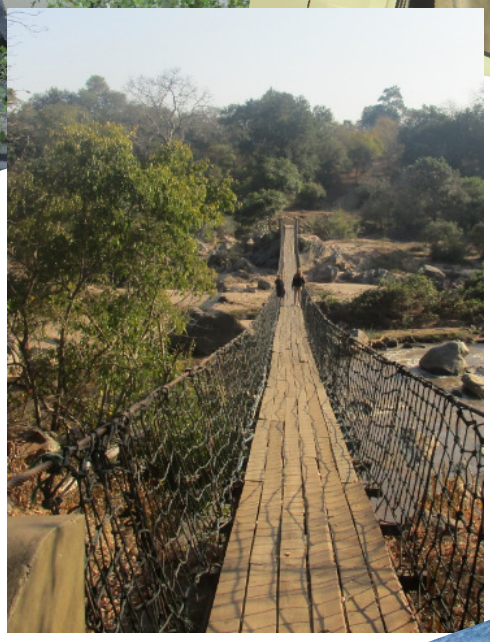
You have to go! It supports the local economy! Book through Robin Pope Safaris







But the greatest feat was Edward(aged 9) learned to drive a manual 4WD Safari Truck fully laden with paying guests across a crocodile infested flowing river in true Top Gear style. Well done Edward



Stanley’s Health Clinic

The H Parker Sharp Health Clinic was funded by a USA Trust but this funding has diminished over the years. It is situated next to the Domasi Primary School. It is run by Stanley Mweiwa , who is the only qualified doctor for at least twenty miles, and his assistant nurse. The Clinic has not enough money to pay anyone else

The Clinic does not have sufficient funding to have soap or toilet rolls as it spends all of its funding on AIDS and malaria drugs, and running the maternity clinic

Makwawa Malawi donated 2 x 1000 tablet bottles of Paracetamol, 100 toilet rolls and 40 bars of soap to the Clinic. Good luck and keep going Stanley!

Stanley is not very good at administration which can be seen by the state of his office and he has little time to organise it. If you want an unpaid job for a few months he would appreciate some help

YOUR DONATIONS

PLEASE BE GENEROUS - THESE PEOPLE NEED YOUR HELP

Send cheques to:

Makwawa Malawi

26 Station Approach
Hayes
Bromley
Kent
BR2 7EH

Internet Banking

Bank Details

NatWest:

Sort Code: 60-02-12

Bank Account No: 54106869

Account name: Makwawa Malawi

MAKWAWA MALAWI
Charity No: 1096827

GIFT AID DECLARATION

By completing the form below the Charity can reclaim Income Tax paid by you on your donation. On a donation of £80 this amounts to recovery of £20

Thank You for your generosity

Full Name……

Address……

……..

……

Post Code……

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like the tax to be reclaimed through the Gift Aid Scheme on my donation to the above charity amounting to £…….

And on any future donations that I may make to the Charity

Signature……

Date…….