

July 2020 update on Malawi Mission Action Plan project

The Community Integrated Intervention Programme (CII), implemented by the Anglican Council in Malawi (ACM), aims to improve the standard of living in four parishes of the Anglican Council Dioceses in Malawi, by improving

- school retention and completion rates among girls
- livelihood - income and food security (access to markets and financial services for 1000 households)

The results so far include:

Girls' education:

- in 10 targeted schools, the girls' drop-out rate reduced from 54% (2015) to 19% (2019), while girls' enrolment increased from 51% to 73% - support included providing uniforms, books, chalks, and sanitary pads
- there was some success in returning girls to school after dropping out – remarkable given that re-admission is very rare
- construction of girls' toilets, dormitories and classrooms was absolutely key

Improved livelihoods:

- improved farm yields
 - training was given on modern farming methods and technology
 - hybrid seeds and manure were provided which helped to increase maize yield, especially in Kayoyo and Msomba which receive good rainfall
- engagement in Voluntary Savings and Loan (VSL)
- new skills in business enterprise, farming, and savings, among others

The CII programme was welcomed by the community and with much enthusiasm from participants. A Tiyanjane irrigation group member said “ACM provided irrigation farming management training...and two treadle pumps. We contributed funds through our VSL scheme and purchased two more treadle pumps and seeds ourselves.”

A hygiene and sanitation intervention focused on hand washing and safe drinking water. Two parishes continue to implement this component.

Initially priests facilitated project activities. Field Officers were then recruited from the community and trained, but drop-out rates were high. Trained Parish committee/priest involvement is needed throughout.

Significant benefits accrue from church, community and stakeholders working together:

- enhanced ownership and relationships
- improved cost effectiveness
- reduced direct project costs (beneficiaries contributing sand, stones, bricks etc, district stakeholders facilitating training)

Coronavirus in Malawi

On 20 March, the Malawi government declared Coronavirus a national disaster and announced a number of preventive measures to curb the spread of the virus. These measures included: closure of all schools, restricting social gatherings to no more than 100 people, the need to practice good hygiene and social distancing, and all public events such as sports were banned. On 25 March the government issued further guidelines relating to traffic, hotels, places of worship, hospitals and shopping centres. On 7 April, the government issued further directives to include the banning of church gatherings and reducing funeral attendance to less than 50 people.

At the time of writing borders are still open with large numbers of people crossing daily from neighbouring countries (Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique). These countries all have increasing cases and it is likely that infections in Malawi will therefore increase exponentially. The initial sharing of information began late, mostly using electronic media, with the result that it largely targeted the urban population. It is taking longer to reach the majority of the rural population.

Despite the increase in public awareness, the challenge remains of a lack of resources to curb the spread of virus. The cheapest, most effective measure of protecting against the virus is hand washing, yet only 13% of the population practice this. For many, especially the rural poor, this basic measure is out of reach as there is no access to soap or hand-washing facilities at home.

Malawi's very fragile public health system is not ready to respond to the pandemic. Hospitals are congested, there is a critical drug shortage and there is a lack of sufficient health workers.

The Anglican church in Malawi has 5 hospitals and 15 health centres which are facing similar issues to the public sector. In some parts of the country the church health services are the only health facilities available to the local community due to the distance between public health centres. There are serious financial implications in order to ensure that proper infection control measures are in place, that isolation centres and personal protective equipment (PPE) are available, and that communities are educated on the spread and preventative measures to control Covid-19.

USPG has supported the Anglican Council in Malawi to be able to supply PPE – including gowns, aprons, N95 facemasks, goggles, and biohazard bags- as well as an isolation tent, and basic drugs such as paracetamol and amoxil for the treatment of symptoms. These supplies were sent to the 5 hospitals – St Peters, St Andrews, St Annes, St Lukes, and St Martins, in the Dioceses of Northern Malawi, Lake Malawi and Uppershire.

11 minute video on the programme can be found [here](#).

Further information or if you would like to support this programme personally please contact John Neilson on johnneilson@blueyonder.co.uk