

About Malawi



The
Malawi
Project



The Villages

Heartbeat of the Nation – Villages

When visiting Malawi one quickly realizes its heartbeat comes, not from cities or suburbs, but from the tiny villages that pepper the landscape. Village life is at the center of survival, security and safety. The customs and traditions of the various tribes radiate from ancient villages that hold tenuously to the past, while at the same time cautiously face the future. It is in this environment that one realizes, "It takes a village to raise a child". However, not only are the children vastly influenced by village life, so too is the entire family.



To recognize the extent of this connection one need only observe Malawians who have migrated to other countries. No matter how far they travel, and no matter how long they are away, the village remains home. The place of their birth is deeply imbedded in their hearts and remains their concern, interest and support for a lifetime.

Emphasis on Community

Unlike social development in the West, where emphasis revolves around the individual, development in Malawi focuses outward from the village. A family's possessions have common usage by all families. Not only are possessions common, but those who need help also share the income generated by an individual. While this community responsibility offers an umbrella of security it can also thwart individual achievement when the reward for hard work is seen going to others who did not labor for it.

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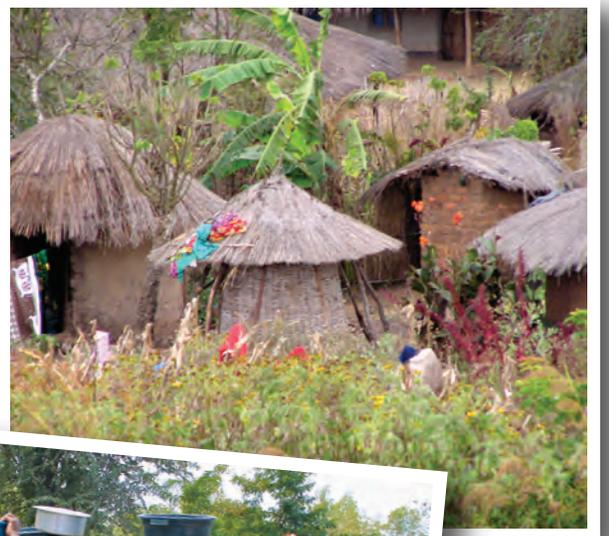
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Shared responsibility is a hallmark of village life. Thatching roofs, fixing fences, preparing meals, carrying water and wood, and many other community chores are shared. It is not unusual to see a number of men working together to re-roof a hut, or four or five women laughingly preparing nsima together, or going to the borehole as a group to get water for the day's meals.

Loosing Important Values

As modern technology and advancements in communication begin to infringe on village life, links to the past are beginning to fray. City life appeals to the village boy or girl with all of its sparkle and splash. It is different from the sheltered world of their early years. As young people move to the cities this new way of life threatens the future of the traditional village. Unrecognized by this new way of life is the loss of important values and traditions that thrive in the Malawi countryside. They must not, and should not be lost.



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Change

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