

# DISTRICTS, CITIES & TRADING CENTERS



## Districts

Malawi is divided into 3 regions and 28 districts. The Southern region is the most populated, the Central hosts the capital city of the nation, and the northern has the smallest population. The capital of the Northern region is Mzuzu, and is divided into six districts. The Central region hosts Lilongwe, the national capital, having nine districts within its borders. The Southern region is home to Blantyre, the commercial of the nation, and thirteen of Malawi's 28 districts.

## Cities

While the vast majority of Malawi's 20 million people live in the countryside, recent stretches of famine, weather-related calamities, and lack of employment have fueled ever increasing migration to the cities. Eight of Malawi's largest cities are Lilongwe (population 646,750), Blantyre (584,877), Mzuzu (175,345), Zomba (80,932), Kasungu (42,555), Mangochi (40,236), Karonga (34,207), and Salima (30,052).



## Trading Centers

Scattered throughout the countryside are small centers of commerce approximately 20 to 30 kilometers apart. This gives a population whose main means of transportation is walking, the ability to reach commercial locations and back home the same day. Major trading centers are located along the limited number of paved roads throughout the nation, and smaller centers can be found sprinkled along the back roads and bush paths.

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# VILLAGES

## Heartbeat of the Nation

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.

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 with most of their neighbors. Shared responsibility is a hallmark of village life.



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Life in the village is difficult, requiring long hours and the need for every member of the family to participate in providing for the family. Income is far below a standard of living that will sustain a comfortable lifestyle. In recent years poverty, famine, floods, crop failures and disease have all contributing to more and more young people from the villages moving to urban areas seeking a better lifestyle. The long term survive of the village will require some way for a village family to carve out a better lifestyle.