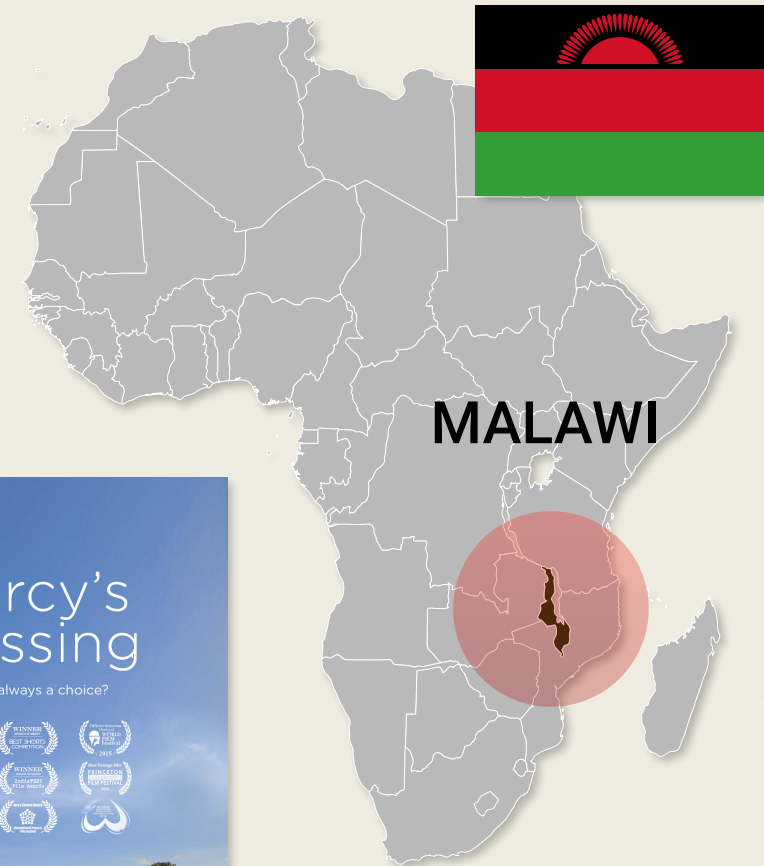


Pregnancy, Transactional Sex and HIV

- Many girls drop out of school as a result of pregnancy.²⁰
- 35% of all pregnancies involve teenagers.²¹
- Approximately 66% of girls (ages 10-18) reported ever involvement of sexual relations for exchange of money/gifts (Transactional Sex).²²
- The HIV prevalence is the 9th highest in the world and 45% of all new HIV infections are among young people (15-to-24 age group).²³
- Girls are three times more likely to be HIV-positive than boys.²⁴
- Transactional sex is a commonly accepted practice in Malawi and Sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty pushes girls into having sex as a means to support their basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, paying for school fees, books, uniforms and school supplies etc).^{25 26}
- When sex is directly exchanged for money or other resources, women lose the ability to negotiate safe sex.²⁷
- Transactional sexual relationships are associated with unsafe sexual behavior, low condom use, pregnancy and increased risk for HIV.^{28 29}

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Facts & Statistics

General

- Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world.¹
- The population is around 16 million, 80% of whom live in rural areas.²
- 61% of the population lives below the poverty line of US\$1.25 per day.³
- 45% of the population is under the age of 14.⁴
- Approximately one million children are orphans.⁵

Girls' Education

- Less than 25% of girls finish elementary school.⁶
- Only 5% of girls complete their secondary education.⁷
- If a family has to choose between educating a boy child or a girl, it is usually the boy who will stay in school.⁸
- Educational inequalities for women are driving factors in early marriage, pregnancy, relative poverty for women and increasing underdevelopment for entire communities.⁹

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Facts & Statistics

Child Marriage

- Malawi has the 8th highest rate of child marriage in the world.¹⁰
- Nearly 50% of girls are married by 18, and some are as young as 9 or 10 years old.^{11 12}
- 66% of women with no formal education were child brides compared to 5% of women who attended secondary school.¹³
- Child marriage is deeply entrenched in Malawi's traditions and patriarchal culture. Social and economic pressures compel parents to force girls into early marriage.¹⁴
- UNICEF finds that poverty and lack of education are inextricably linked to the prevalence of child marriage.¹⁵
- With the majority of people living below the poverty line, marrying off their daughters gives families one less mouth to feed, and a little additional income. Many families struggle to look beyond the short term.^{16 17 18}
- Education is seen as the most powerful tool in the fight against child marriage.¹⁹

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