

Smaller Families, Healthier Families in Dowa District

Family size matters for better access to social services and resources

- Population density in Dowa District has increased by three-quarters in the last two decades, from 106 to 184 people per km².
- Seven out of 10 households have an improved source of drinking water.



9 out of 10 households use a form of wood for cooking; 3 in 100 have access to electricity.



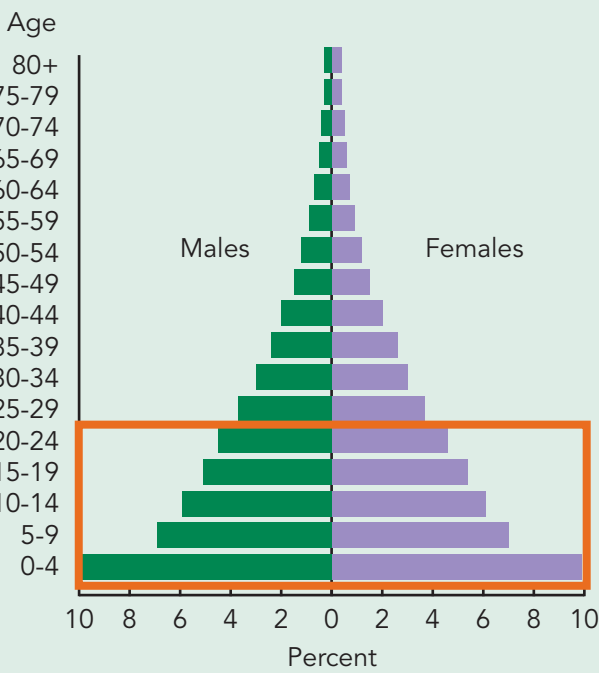
Only 2 in 100 women and 4 in 100 men complete secondary education.

- Two out of 3 women and 4 out of 5 men are literate.
- Thirteen out of 100 women and 5 out of 100 men are unemployed.
- Distance to the nearest health facility is a serious problem for 3 out of 5 women who try to get treatment when they are sick.

Benefits of family planning

Smaller family size can help parents invest more in each child's education and increase future employment opportunities. Slower population growth makes it easier to plan and manage improvements in social services and resources such as access to clean water, health care, and transportation.

Two out of every three people in the district are under the age of 25



Source: National Statistical Office of Malawi, *Population Projections Malawi*.

Family size matters to the health and well-being of women and their families



Women have an average of 5 to 6 children each during their lifetimes, but they report that they would prefer to have 4 children.



1 in 6 women ages 15-19 has begun childbearing.

- One in 4 women gives birth at home.
- One out of 2 married women uses a method of family planning; 1 out of 4 reports using family planning to limit their births.
- One out of 5 women and 1 out of 6 men believe a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances.

Benefits of family planning

One in 6 deaths of women 15 to 49 years old is due to maternal-related complications. Family planning allows young women to delay pregnancies and avoid the health risks associated with early childbearing. A woman's ability to space and limit births has a direct impact on her health and well-being. Children whose mothers die are less likely to thrive and complete school.



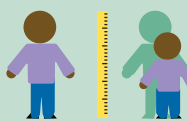
In Malawi, 1 woman dies every 2 hours from maternal-related causes.



1 infant less than 12 months old dies every 5 hours.

Family size matters to the survival and welfare of children

- One out of 8 children under age 5 is underweight.



1 out of 2 children under age 5 is stunted.



Among children under 5 years of age, there is 1 death every 3 hours.

Benefits of family planning

Family planning improves child survival by allowing couples to adequately space births and limit pregnancies. Babies who are born three or more years apart are more than twice as likely to survive as babies who are born less than two years apart. With smaller family sizes, parents are better able to provide adequate care and nutrition for their children.