



*Fighting poverty through alcohol misuse
prevention in Malawi*

***A SURVEY OF ALCOHOL USE AMONG THE
ADULT POPULATION IN MALAWI***

Research Group

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Reference group

- FORUT, Norway
- Drug Fight Malawi
- Inter-ministerial Committee on Drug Control (IMCDC)
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security
- NGO Gender Coordination Network
- Task Force for a National Alcohol Policy (a working party that encompasses 15-16 ministries, government agencies and NGO networks) / Alcohol Policy Alliance
- The Norwegian Church Aid and their partners among faith-based organizations
- WHO Country Office for Malawi
- WHO Regional Office for Africa
- National Statistical Office (NSO) of Malawi



The ALMA project

The aim of the project is to meet Malawian policymakers' and stakeholders' expressed needs for empirical evidence that can be used in the development of national alcohol policies. Our main objective is to document, describe and explore patterns of alcohol use in the Malawian population.

Specific objectives:

- To study the prevalence of alcohol consumption and misuse in Malawi through a broad based survey, and to use this data to explore (WP2)
 - the association between alcohol use/misuse and different dimensions of poverty (i.e living standard, health and empowerment)
 - the association between alcohol use/misuse and gender
 - The general drinking pattern among adult population in Malawi
- To explore people's opinions and experiences of current and future policy and interventions related to alcohol use (WP3)



Methodology: Quantitative

- Our target was persons aged 18+
- Using a standard formula for calculating sample size we targeted 2000 households.
- We planned to administer 20 questionnaires per EA; hence we went to 107 EAs.
- Screening questionnaire was administered to 30,959 households in these 107 enumeration areas.
- 5,142 households were single headed households, 52 child headed households were taken out of the sample.
- We remained with 25,652 households from which we drew our sample and managed to interview 1811 households.
- In some Eas there were less than 20 households in which heads or spouses drank: in these EAs all were interviewed.
- For those EAs where there were more than 20 households we randomly selected 20 households.
- We wanted to collect data on those people who drink.
- Both heads of households and their spouses were interviewed.



Methodology-Qualitative

- A total of 70+ persons were interviewed
 - Traditional leaders: Tas and Village Headmen.
 - Law enforcers – community based police and police, district council staff
 - Community members
 - Local brewers
 - Teachers including head teachers.
 - Traditional healers
 - Medical assistants
 - Religious leaders
 - Owners of drinking places
 - MoH
 - NGO staff
- There were also some informal discussions with a wide range of people



Findings

- Misuse of alcohol is common in Malawi including among children
- Most informants talked about the cheap and commonly available sachets as a major challenge.
- Most informants suggested banning of sachets mostly due to its accessible pricing and availability (size of bag and amount of alcohol) in relation to children.
- Major producers of alcohol also tried to make sachets to compete with other producers of sachets but proces could not compare.
- Sachets may or may not be banned, but they are produced and very available.
- In the few years sachets have been available, children's drinking patterns have changed dramatically



Findings

- Opening hours formal alcohol sales
 - Current opening hours varies despite type of license
 - Many suggest stricter regulation with regards to opening hours, like for example opening later (after working hours) and closing earlier at night
- Age is difficult to enforce in Malawi – even children go and buy beer?



Findings

- Informal alcohol in relation to content and selling places
 - Informal alcohol can vary in alcohol percentage and content from brewer to brewer
 - Difficult to control production because it is produced in and sold from homes
 - Even our law enforcers go and drink there including community police.
 - Difficult to control opening hours
 - Kachasu is not included in any legal documents may be some bylaws?



Findings

- Understanding of harmful use
 - People's understanding of what is harmful can be questioned
 - Drinking in itself regardless of amount is not seen as harmful
 - Alcohol is considered harmful in the following situations:
 - Drinking without eating, drinking children, gender based violence, use of bad language, fights, traffic accidents and more
 - People do not see the connection between alcohol use and poverty
- There seems to be poor understanding of consequences of alcohol on living conditions among children, youth (and adults)



Findings

- Implementing of laws and regulations
 - Shortage of resources to implement, regulate and enforce laws (police, city and district assemblies)
 - Current fines to not deter illegal behavior
 - Knowledge of laws seems to be poor
 - «They cannot punish people for breaking laws they don't know about»



Findings

- National Day on no harmful use of alcohol
 - Seems to be supported by most community members
 - Awareness and education day
 - Some negative statements
 - People may use it as a day for drinking
 - Already too many national days, perhaps an overall awareness day would be better



Findings

- Some suggestions from the communities
 - Many state that people drink because they have nothing to do and have no work, several suggest to put people into activity in the community,
 - Loans to informal brewers to start alternative businesses
 - Loans to community members to ease poverty



Findings – national survey

- Among persons aged 18+ year, 14.8% reported to have drunk alcohol in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- Current drinkers of alcohol (Steps survey: 16.9%).
- Among heads and spouses in the households sampled, 28.5% of the men and 1.6% of the women reported drinking the last 12 months.
- Current drinkers of alcohol STEPS survey: 30.1% among men, 4.2% among women.
- The proportion of persons who reported any alcohol use in the last 12 months:
 - Centre: 18.4%
 - North: 16.8%
 - South: 10.4%.



Findings

- 8.5% of the females who reported drinking drank on average 1.52 liters of pure 100% alcohol in a year. This is equivalent to 33.7 liters of Carlsberg beer with 4.5% alcohol content.
- 98.3% of the males who reported drinking drank on average 7.76 liters of pure 100% alcohol in a year. This is the same as 172.3 liters of Carlsberg beer with 4.5% alcohol content.



Average number of litres of alcohol by region

Region	N MEN	Mean Number of Litres MEN (7.16***)	N WOMEN	Mean No. Of Litres WOMEN (1.46ns)
South	631	9.16	47	1.99
Centre	876	7.07	86	1.41
North	273	6.77	21	0.93
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52

Average number of litres of alcohol consumed by rural/urban

Site	N Men	No. Average No.	N Women	Average No. Of litres
		Men (NS)		Women (NS)
Rural	289	7.80	20	1.14
Urban	1491	7.76	134	1.58
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52



Drinking by religion

Religion	N Men	Average No. Of Litres Men (NS)	N Women	Average No. Of Litres Women (NS)
Catholic	463	7.46	50	1.43
CCAP	220	6.70	15	1.05
Anglican	52	6.95	1	0.27
Seventh Day Adventist/Baptist	63	8.77	0	-
Other Christian	665	7.68	51	1.55
Muslims	103	8.76	6	1.49
No religion	152	10.19	18	2.01
Other	58	6.41	13	1.75
Total	1776	7.76	154	1.52



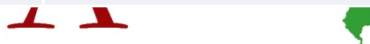
Drinking by whether they were active members of the church

Are you an active member of teh church or Not	N Men	Average No. Of Litres Men (NS)	N Women	Mean No. Of Litres Women (NS)
Yes	776	8.19	70	1.43
No	1004	7.44	84	1.60
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52



Drinking by Tribe

Tribe	N Men	Mean Number of litres Men (NS)	N Women	Mean Number of Litres Women (NS)
Chewa	657	7.07	69	1.25
Tumbuka	170	6.50	8	0.55
Lomwe	338	8.26	26	1.70
Tonga	32	7.03	1	0.86
Yao	110	9.21	4	1.54
Sena	48	8.61	2	2.56
Nkhonde	31	10.86	5	2.75
Ngoni	254	7.76	27	2.29
Mang'anja	45	10.31	1	0.77
Nyanja	43	8.72	2	2.13
Other	49	8.8	9	0.84
Total		7.75	154	1.52



Drinking by age groups

Age	N Men	Mean No. Of litres M (NS)	N Women	Mean no. Of Litres Women (NS)
Lowest up to 24	132	4.42	10	1.03
25-29	263	8.91	12	0.75
30-34	299	8.02	16	0.81
35-39	280	8.75	20	1.17
40-44	211	7.26	15	1.08
45-49	157	7.28	14	1.75
50-55	108	8.88	14	2.91
55-64	181	6.72	34	1.93
65+	149	7.16	19	1.76
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52



Drinking by main occupation

Occupation	N Men	Mean No. Litres Men (NS)	N women	Mean No. Of Litres Women (NS)
Employed (White collar)	135	9.11	9	0.97
Employed (Blue collar)	315	7.91	22	1.62
Self employed/business	437	8.04	30	0.99
Farmer	843	7.25	86	1.66
Homemaker	1	17.06	0	-
Retired	17	8.31	1	0.09
Receiving grants	20	5.33	5	2.67
Unemployed	12	17.58	1	4.62
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52



Drinking by how much one contributes to household income

Contribution to household income	N Men	Mean no. Of litres Men	N Women	Mean no. Of litres women
All of it	9	5.81	6	1.14
More than half	46	7.52	4	1.57
About half	361	7.57	38	1.27
Less than half	683	7.57	62	1.71
None	681	8.11	44	1.52
Total	1780	7.76	154	1.52



Conclusion

- Less than one in three adult males drank alcohol 12 months prior to the survey.
- A very small percentage of women drink alcohol.
- Alcohol use was more common in central and northern Malawi as compared to the southern region.
- Drinkers from Southern Malawi drank more than alcohol users in the Central and Northern Malawi.



Conclusions

- Strengthening communities will ensure positive role models
 - Empowering Chiefs, Village headmen and Traditional Authorities seems to be the key
 - Empowering parents

