

The Yawo people of Malawi and Mozambique

The People Group

There are approximately 3 million Yawo living in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. They are predominantly agricultural people living in rural villages under traditional headmen. Daily challenges include accessing safe water to drink, food to eat, healthcare and education.

Due to their involvement with the slave and ivory trades with Arab merchants the Yawo are primarily Muslim. Their rituals and practices are heavily influenced by their traditional African and animistic beliefs.

Global Interaction team among the Yawo

For the cross-cultural team living among the Yawo, their main priority is nurturing relationships with local Yawo people. This means being involved in all aspects of Yawo life. From a seemingly simple visit to the local market for groceries, through to the solemn attendance of funerals, the cross-cultural team meet the Yawo in their everyday interactions and their times of great need.

In both Mozambique and Malawi, there are a growing number of people with an openness to hearing the message of Jesus. Our team is working to share the Gospel in culturally appropriate ways with those who are expressing an interest in Jesus for the first time, while encouraging a number of groups of believers through prayer, teaching and leadership training. The team also work with local Yawo to improve their quality of life through health and adult education opportunities. The team continue to develop the Ciyawo translation of the Bible so that the Yawo may have the opportunity to read God's story in their own language.

Prayer Needs

- As the team are invited to share in community life, opportunities would arise to build connections and deepen friendships
- God's wisdom for new Yawo believers as they discern how to live as a follower of Jesus within their Muslim culture
- Yawo people would be open to sharing stories with our team that will give them the opportunity to hear the message of Jesus
- Australian Baptists would respond to God's call and commit to serving among the Yawo

Pray for the Team Members

MALAWI

Adam and Natalie (candidates)
David and Susie (candidates)
Gary and Shirley (candidates)
Ian (based in Australia)
Jean-Claude and Joyce (candidates)
Jonno (team leader) and Heather
Tim and Mel

MOZAMBIQUE

Ben and Sam
Cam and Kath
Sally
Scott and Rebekah
Tobias and Heather

Stories of Hope from Malawi and Mozambique

Invited In

For the Yawo, significant cultural importance is placed on the initiation of girls and boys. For this reason, the team has felt incredibly privileged to be invited to be a part of this deep cultural experience. Last year Bek had the opportunity to spend time with two groups of girls aged between seven and fourteen years during their three to six week initiation period. With the guidance of older Yawo women, the girls learn what it means to be a Yawo woman through stories, proverbs, songs and games.

This year, Bek was again invited to go to the initiation, but this time she was offered the opportunity to share with the girls and input into what they were learning. How amazing! During this incredibly important cultural point in these girls' lives, Bek was able to share about God through Bible stories. The Yawo women present were also engaging with the stories and reiterated certain parts to the girls for emphasis.

Praise God for the mutual trust that is developing between the team and the Yawo community that has allowed Bek to be invited to be a part of these initiations. Pray for deepening relationships and a growing enthusiasm to hear more stories from God's Word.

Witnessing Growth

Ben is developing deep friendships with a group of Yawo men and mutual trust is growing. For the past six months, he has been regularly meeting with a small group to talk about stories from the Bible and pray together. The group is diverse and each brings their own unique perspective and is on their own journey with Jesus. Encouragingly, they have recently asked if they could meet more often to share Bible stories.

Ben and Sam feel honoured to be watching these Yawo men grow in their understanding of God and journey towards Him. They are praying that over time, the Yawo men will start to invite their friends and family to join in and grow in their understanding of God too. Pray that as this fledgling faith community will meet Jesus and experience whole of life transformation.

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