

Muslim Yao in Malawi



Though the Yao originated from Mozambique, the majority of Yao people now live in Malawi. The Yao migrated in the 1800s due to famines and tribal divisions and befriended their new neighbors. These neighbors, the Swahili Arabs, drew the Yao into the trade of ivory and slaves for guns and cloth. Through this trade agreement, the Yao became one of the most powerful tribes in southeastern Africa. The Yao lost their major export but retained the new religion they had found – Islam – which was adopted around the turn of the 20th century.

Ministry Obstacles

Perhaps due to a Christian playing a hand in ending their economic empire, the Yao have insulated themselves against Christianity. In the process, they have also insulated themselves against the only Savior and salvation by grace.

Outreach Ideas

Reaching the Yao in their own language may be the most effective way to share about Jesus. They also have significant medical challenges such as malaria and HIV, so medical outreach would likely be an open door to share the gospel.



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POPULATION: 2,109,000

LANGUAGE: Yao

RELIGION: Islam

BIBLE: Complete

STATUS: Unreached

Prayer Focus

Pray that cultural barriers would be brought down by God's almighty power. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Yao of Malawi.

SCRIPTURE And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Joel 2:28

PRAY that this people group receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as they turn to the Lord.