

Malawi Visions Newsletter July 2022



Sustainability Thru Education

In today's world there are paths to dependence and paths to independence. Malawi Visions' strategic goal is the latter: independence through sustainability. Nelson Mandela once said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". The theme of this newsletter is creating sustainability of the most critical kind: through reading and education. This is the objective Malawi Visions and Ministry of Hope will partner and together accomplish in the years ahead.

Paul



Preface



Recently I read Creating Room to Read, a book by John Wood which describes his 20 years developing libraries in 3rd world remote villages throughout the world. While we were unaware of John, or his programs, his experiences and thoughts parallel so very well what we ourselves at Malawi Visions have been up to the past 10 years. With such similar goals, I don't think he'd mind my sharing some quotations from his book.

The motto of Room to Read might as well be ours: *"World change starts with educated children"*. But more poignantly are the words he heard from a remote villager in Tibet, demographically a cousin of Malawi : *"we are too poor to afford education. . . . but until we have education, we will always be poor"*.

In 10 years of traveling in Malawi, one thought that lingers is realization that the lives of the thousands of children we ourselves have encountered will never get better if they don't have education. In the words of John Wood *"We are all born with the same gray matter, and that talent is evenly distributed around the world. Every kid deserves a chance to unleash his or hers."*

Despite obstacles of every sort, it only took one trip to Malawi in 2009 to conceive Malawi Visions, and from then on work began in an every increasing crescendo of teamwork toward that goal. Fostering endless cycles of dependency was never an option for us, but rather seeking permanent and sustainable change through all we do.

This newsletter will communicate our thoughts, activities, and visions for the future. We are making notable change in our first learning center program at Khwamba, with a second coming online this year at Matapila. Eventually we hope to bring learning centers to all six of the MoH centers.

But we have reached the level where we can no longer go it alone. We look to others who equally love these vulnerable children of the world's poorest country to come alongside and partner with us financially in the years ahead.

Sustainability

Our most critical objective is sustainability. One form of sustainability is designing projects in such a way that local people participate in their building, use, and ongoing



maintenance. We intend for our programs and projects to continue well beyond our presence. Another example of sustainability is food security. Solar powered irrigation enables much greater local production of vegetables and fruits, particularly during the dry seasons in

Malawi. With irrigation three growing seasons are possible instead of one, hence stockpiling foodstuffs for the lean season is significantly reduced.



Chief Khwamba once wisely spoke of education as the path to sustainability. He said *“education is the number one priority: feeding is important,*



*Chief Khwamba
and daughter Matilda*

but everyone should not aim only at being fed.” He said he himself did not go far in school because of challenges he faced, but would love many children to utilize the opportunity to be educated.

Chief Khwamba recognizes the most essential form of sustainability is education, for one must know what is possible, and how to achieve it, in order to bring about change. Education is the vehicle toward building and sustaining improvement. And the foundation of education is reading.

There are many humanitarian organizations throughout the world that provide relief. But relief alone does not encourage and empower recipients with the “tools” to take upon themselves resolution of their needs. Without the focus of sustainability, all too frequently there is little resolution and change.

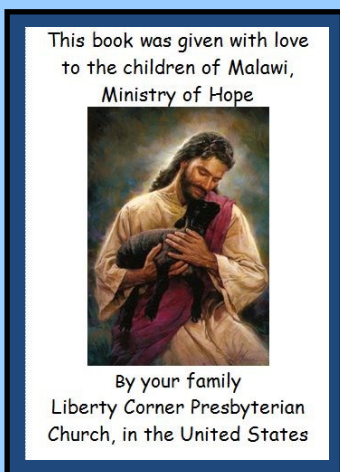
The Libraries

We believe that the libraries we have built and stocked with books at the MoH centers, and are now expanding into after-school learning centers, are key developmental elements toward lasting sustainability.



We have constructed free standing libraries at each of the six MoH centers. Our first library was constructed in 2017 at Mponela, and since then over 40,000 books have been collected via donations at home and shipped to Malawi. We collect “lightly used” books, and our focus has always been

quality books containing pictures and illustrations, for we have found that even when a child may not yet possess sufficient mastery of English to understand the words, the photos capture their attention and reinforce the desire to learn the language. Books about science, nature, geography, animals, easy readers, middle and advanced novels, Bibles & Bible stories, atlases, dictionaries. . . a complete library catalog!



Each book is inspected, receives a bookplate, and a category label on it's spine for recognition when shelved. After inspection the book team boxes books by category, and then the boxes are wrapped in plastic for protection from moisture and humidity during the long ocean voyage to Malawi.



Part of the MV Book Team

The Libraries. cont



Each library averages 6,000 to 7,000 books, and all are equipped with strong steel shelving as well as large wooden library tables at which 6 or more children may sit, read, and work, all obtained by donations and shipped from here at home. Of course all the libraries are brightly lit by the solar electricity we generate, facilitating the kids staying into the

night for reading or homework.

We work closely with Milca and Daniel so that the books are distributed among the center libraries according to center population, categories, and the reading culture at each individual center.



Operating a single library is a manageable task, but a network of six libraries brings considerable challenges. A library can only be of effective value if it is a welcoming environment for the students, with the library organized in a coherent way so that young readers can find age-appropriate books that interest them. Our first objective is for the children at each center to become familiar with the books in their library.

As the children become more accustomed to using the libraries, for reading pleasure and also to supplement their class work, it may become useful to access a book at one of the other locations. To do so, a catalog is necessary to search by title or subject. As the collections grow each year, a catalog is invaluable in the distribution of the additions. We have provided each of the six libraries a laptop computer with cataloging software.

Libraries need librarians to monitor book use, provide direction, sign books out, protect the books, and help in creating the computer catalog. Finding older kids interested in being employed as “part-time librarians” is our objective.



We are very excited about how the libraries are being used, and the difference they are already making in the children’s school performance.

The Malawi Visions Libraries



Khwamba



Matapila



Chimwang'ombe



Selengo



Mponela



Katondo

News from the Chimwang'ombe Library

This recent MoH report illustrates how the libraries, with the mentor programs MoH employs even before our after-school centers are introduced, are making very significant differences in creating reading and learning cultures.

EXCELLENT PASS RATE ON NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE LIBRARY AT CHIMWANG'OMBE



Chimwang'ombe Library

Chimwang'ombe is the largest of all the six MoH community centers and supports over 1700 children. Yet despite this large number, it has always lagged behind in the number of students receiving scholarship assistance. Before the Malawi Visions library, Chimwang'ombe center had an average of 10 students on education support for both college and secondary school.

But in the few years since the library was established, the situation has greatly changed. Currently, the center has 67 students in secondary schools and 14 in colleges.

The center has three primary and two secondary schools nearby, and as a result there are many children making full use of the library.

There, the older students assist and coach the younger ones on library usage for both reading and homework. College students return on breaks to help both secondary and primary school students by drilling them in key subjects such as mathematics and sciences so that they improve on their performances.

The Library at Chimwang'ombe has greatly contributed to the good performance of students in the area on all the national examinations. Students use the library during both day time and night times, thanks to the solar lights and the library facilities.



"Previously, the pass rate on all national examinations was very poor but with the coming of the library, the situation has tremendously improved at all levels," commented Gladys Mkuleza, the Center Supervisor for Chimwang'ombe.

News from the Chimwang'ombe library, con't



Gladys and student

No wonder the number of students attending secondary school and college levels in the area has increased. According to Gladys, the guardians and the students themselves are so grateful to Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church, the Malawi Visions Program, and MoH for the provision of the library services in their community and the financial support that the children are receiving to enable them continue with their education at both secondary and tertiary levels.

This is total human transformation. And history being made!. The five students from Chimwang'ombe who sat for the final secondary school exam have passed. And the four top students at the local secondary school are all MoH sponsored, and have been spending almost all their time at the library, reading and studying. The children have newfound hope for a bright future!



After-school Learning Centers

It has been exciting to see the impact of the libraries, operated by MoH's own mentorship programs, in developing the children's interest in books and reading and, as a result, significant improvement in school attendance and academics. Encouraged by the reported differences our libraries were making, we felt the development of organized after-school programs should be the next step in providing an active and increasingly effective means to improve the education of the children.



Of course education has many facets. In the words of John Wood, *“Just building a school or library won't suffice. Our goal is to monitor the programs carefully and to follow through with the necessary resources for student's ongoing success. Students need to learn the skills needed to make key life decisions, include financial management, self-confidence, communication skills, knowledge about health and body, and the advantages of delaying marriage and having children until finishing secondary school.”*

These are precisely the objectives of our own Teen Life Internship Program.

TEEN LIFE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 2020 a program called Teen Life Internship (TLIP) was introduced at Khwamba to address the challenges that most youth and children in the rural communities of Malawi face:



TLIP primary school kids

- Lack of role models; lacking life skills
- lack of mentors among peers: often w/o parents
- low performance at schools
- inability to adequately read and write English by most school students.

After-school Learning Centers. cont



The concept of TLIP is that high school teens coach and enrich primary school students in English, math, science, and music, and mentor them in life and behavioral skills and maturity. The teens in turn, receive intensive instruction themselves in life and professional skills from MoH leaders including Daniel, Milca, and

the center directors.

Essentially, TLIP is a two phased program which provides

Remedial and homework help and academic enrichment for the elementary children,

Development of maturity and leadership skills of the secondary school teen leaders/mentors



Mentor Training

TLIP is a novel concept in Africa, and throughout the world. It is a combination, and adaptation, of the principles of the New City Kids (NCK) program developed some 20 years ago in Jersey City, New Jersey, and the mentoring programs MoH has been employing at their centers for many years. In 2019, Daniel Moyo traveled to the U.S. and spent an intensive week learning about NCK which he brought back to develop TLIP.

The program provides after-school academic enrichment for students in grades (standards) 5, 6, and 7, meeting in groups of 20, for 3 hour-long classes twice a week, in English, science, and mathematics.



Khawamba TLIP students



TLIP Class

After-school Learning Centers. cont

In 2020 the program was piloted at the Khwamba center, after the library was expanded by adding 3 classrooms. The new classrooms were outfitted with blackboards, tables and chairs or benches, wall hanging teaching aids, and of course solar powered electric lights.



There is quite a difference between our TLIP classrooms, and those of public school!



VS

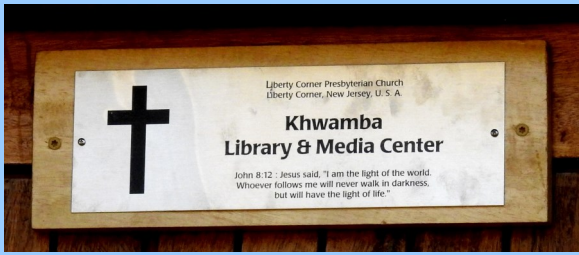


In Malawi, the school day begins at 7:30 AM and lasts until 12:00 noon. Secondary school teens and primary school kids arrive from their respective schools to begin the after school program after a lunch is served. One of the difficulties we found at Khwamba was that the secondary school is considerably farther from the center than the primary school, and the young ones were consistently arriving well before the secondary school mentors. We quickly realized the only solution was to purchase bicycles for the mentors to use and shorten their “commute” time!



Mentors and bicycles

After-school Learning Centers. cont



Although the pilot program was interrupted, and extended, by the pandemic's closing down school for 6 months in 2021, it has been a great success. Daniel wrote about it in a recent report:

Since the program began we have seen a big improvement for the primary students in academics, and for the secondary school mentors also in academics, but even more so in the mentor's spiritual and personal development and leadership skills. Spiritually they are being mentored by Daniel, Milca, and Felix, and are exercising their leadership skills by taking leadership roles in the program, helping maintain the classrooms and library, and showing good behaviors in their communities.

In academics there has been great progress since the program began in 2020. So far 2 classes of 40 each have graduated from the program, and the first class which started in standard 7 wrote their Standard 8 exams in 2021. (The second class will write their Standard 8 exams at the end of this year). Of those 40 children (only 1 year in the program) 18 children performed well enough to be selected to different, better Secondary Schools. This performance is well beyond anything in past years before the program.

In an interview with the head teacher from the primary school nearest to Khwamba (Bwevu school), he commended the program as having helped a lot in the performance of children at the school. He said in past years students had been repeating the entire final year of primary school as many as three times in order to retake the standard 8 closing exam which must be passed to be selected to attend a good secondary schools. Now, unlike previous years, the school registered passing scores in the same year! And not only are children performing well in the national exams but are also taking leading positions in their classes. For example, at the Bwevu primary school, positions from 1 thru 10 were taken by kids in TLIP. This is an amazing milestone, particularly after only the first year in a three year program!

After-school Learning Centers. cont

The same successes were seen with the teen mentors, who wrote their mid-secondary school exams in 2021. More passed well for the first time in the history of Chibanzi secondary school. In a class of 17 students, 9 passed their examination, and 7 of those were TLIP mentors. This showed the huge impact of the program compared to past years when the school often registered a zero pass rate and never more than 2 students. The skills these teen mentors acquire in TLIP has helped them perform well at school.

And finally, 18 students who have been participating in Malawi Visions computer classes have secured places in different colleges to pursue their tertiary studies. This will also have great impact upon the program since the younger kids will be inspired that our leaders have made it to college. When they are on holiday those who have made it into college return to present motivational talks to the kids in the program.

All in all, TLIP is having a huge impact as seen in the many lives that have been transformed even after only the first year. This year we are hoping that the numbers will increase even further.

Daniel

Despite the most encouraging results brought about by our libraries, and even more by the learning centers, we continue to seek to further lasting change in the life paths of the children. In our quest we began searching for greater insight into the Malawi educational system. We recognize our efforts must be congruent with the system within the children must operate, ultimately the determinant of success, or failure.

English is Our Objective

by

*Paul Sigmund, Director
Malawi Visions*



Malawi Visions has made terrific strides over the past 10 years in developing and building an infrastructure of solar electricity and well stocked libraries, neither before available in each of the six remote villages where we collaborate with our partner Ministry of Hope (MoH) to support 6,000

orphan children. Our objective has been to create a foundation upon which to enhance the education of these vulnerable children. To make change possible. The inception of our libraries alone, to which we have collected and shipped well over 40,000 books, is already making significant impact. MoH reported that last year alone the number of children seeking scholar-

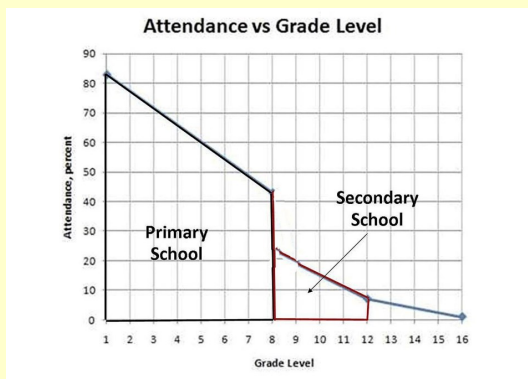


ships toward higher education doubled from 194 to 414, and credited Malawi Vision's ongoing programs for this unprecedented change. We believe our well-lighted libraries, and illustrated books, provide the children, for perhaps the first time, a reason to even attend school. Furthermore to want to learn to read and be stimulated by things "never before seen"!

But this is only the beginning! Two years ago, we began an "after-school enrichment program" at Khwamba, after adding three classrooms to our library there. There, secondary school students receive ongoing "development training" to become part time mentors and tutors to 5th thru 7th grade primary school children. We have now completed the expansion of a 2nd of our libraries to initiate the 2nd after school program at Matapila.

English is Our Objective, con't

It is said that Malawi has one of the most poorly resourced primary education systems in the world. In the remote villages in which we serve, where 85 percent of the population of Malawi lives, most are subsistence farmers. Although in Malawi, after 1994, primary education became compulsive and free, often village schools have few books, and the student per teacher ratio ranges as high as 100:1!



Nationwide, approximately 40 percent of children complete primary school, and only half of those go on to secondary school. Half again of that number fail to graduate, leaving a shocking 10 percent completing secondary school! Is it any wonder little changes?

While it is easy to assume possible reasons for the dramatic

decline in school attendance as grade level increases: need to work, lack of desire, inadequate resources, poor teachers, poor nutrition . . . these are not necessarily the case. The principal reason may be more complicated, yet something our efforts can do something about. In short: the need is doing everything possible to enhance English fluency for children in our programs. This is quite a different, and greatly more challenging objective from other international mission educational activities.

Understanding of the Malawian educational system, and teaching realities, is crucial in designing our after-school learning center programs. We've learned by working in Malawi these 10 years and consulting with our MoH counterparts, as well as gained insight via our own exhaustive literature searches of educators who have studied Malawi's educational system. Government research documents, international studies, and informative PhD theses have revealed a paramount need: to improve the development of English fluency in reading, writing, and speaking. This document will explain and highlight the unique and pivotal role Malawi Visions can in increasing measure play, in addressing the educational challenges in Malawi.

English is Our Objective, con't

The Educational System

While the “official” language of Malawi is English, among several regional dialects the “national” language is stipulated to be Chichewa. In the areas we work, Chichewa is exclusively the language of communication in the villages and homes. As a result children enter school with no knowledge of English: it is only learned and spoken in school. Furthermore,

All **primary and secondary** public-school curricula are standardized, formulated by government agencies, including textbooks, national exams, and classroom teaching.

All **primary schools** begin teaching English as a second language in 1st grade, and continue throughout primary school.

All classes in **secondary school** are taught in English, and use English textbooks.

History

When Malawi became independent of British rule in 1964, it was decreed that all primary school teaching (grades 1 thru 8), and school books, would be in the dialect of Chichewa.

In 1996, the primary school structure was changed so that from grade 5 on, all classes and school books, would be in English. Primary school classes from grades 1 thru 4 remained in Chichewa.

In 2014, the primary school structure was again changed, with all teaching and school books from the 1st grade on to be in English.

English is Our Objective, con't

The Language of Instruction

The result of the educational system is that all subjects: i.e., social studies, mathematics, science, etc. are being taught in a language to which children have not had prior contact before their first day in school. They enter school and are introduced to subject materials in a foreign language, English, which is being taught at the same time! As well as reading and writing in their own native Chichewa. A daunting task!

There was much disagreement with the 1996 decision that primary school classes would be taught in English from 5th grade, but at least then children had 4 years of English exposure. The controversy was exacerbated with the 2014 policy change, as there is now no pre-introduction to English. The debate continues today.

There is little, if any, opportunity to speak, write, or read English outside of the classroom. Most parents in remote villages are illiterate and can do little to augment school by providing the children opportunity to hear and practice English at home.

Studies report that village teachers are often untrained, perhaps only holding secondary school graduation certificates, and often not fluent in English. Primary school became free in 1994 and school enrollment virtually doubled over night. To accommodate the multitude of new entrants, 22,000 secondary school graduates were recruited, given 2 weeks of orientation, and sent to a school with students to teach: mostly rural schools. Coupled with student-teacher ratios that average 65:1 and range as high as 100:1, it is little wonder that rural public education is marginal at best.

Classroom participation is an important part of the learning process, and when students and teachers struggle with communication, less than good education results. It is reported that more often than not teachers read the English textbook material, but teach and discuss subject matter in Chichewa.

But there is still much more to consider.

English is Our Objective, con't

National Standardized Exams

Further complicating the educational process is that national standardized exams are used to make crucial life decisions about students. And these exams are given exclusively in English!

As equal access to education decreases from one level to the next, these exams are used to decide those who should proceed, and those who should not. Furthermore, students are placed into categories based upon perceived competence in a specific area covered by the exams. Again, fluency in English is the paramount “decider.”

In Malawi, there are 3 levels of school: primary school, junior secondary school (grades 9 & 10), and senior secondary school (grades 11 & 12). Nationwide standardized exams are given at the completion of each of these 3 levels. In order for a student to advance to the next level they must pass the respective exam. If they fail, they must repeat the entire previous year before retaking the exam. Often, failing students simply drop out of school.

At the end of 8th grade, the **Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC)** exam is given. It is difficult not to believe that failure upon this exam is a principle reason for the precipitous fall off between completion of primary school and beginning of secondary school, as the previous graph illustrated.

Then there is a **Junior Certificate Exam (JCE)** administered half way through secondary school, culminated by the **Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)** exam administered at the end of four years of secondary school. Again, all administered in English. The pass rate of the MSCE is on the order of 20%!

English is Our Objective, con't

Ultimately, the issue is that one government policy of student's not being left behind, moving them from grade to grade with often marginal learning, "collides" with another policy of mandatory standardized exams, with rigid adherence. How might the situation change if English fluency were greatly improved along the way?

Village School Realities

If it were not enough to expect children to learn basic school subjects in a different language from their everyday life, one that they are concurrently being taught by teachers perhaps less than fluent themselves, the rural schools' facilities are often inadequate and devoid of resources.

One investigator, who surveyed dozens of rural Malawian village schools stated *"The most striking thing about the classrooms was the absence of educational wall hangings such as posters, displays of pupil's work, charts, reading boards, and anything that helps to create a learning environment in the classroom. No attempts were made by the teachers to create a literate environment in the classrooms for the children to practice and enjoy reading."*



Our Mission

The Malawian educational system is extremely challenging, and seems far from structured toward successful learning. From all standpoints, improving the education of English appears the "common denominator" and therefore must be the most critical objective of our after-school programs. Everything Malawi Visions has developed, and continues to do, positions us with the unique opportunity to make significant improvement in the education of the children under the care of our partner in Malawi.

English is Our Objective, con't

How Do We Do This?

In earlier years Malawi Visions funds were spent primarily on infrastructure capital projects (solar lighting, building libraries, agricultural irrigation). The past couple years, despite the pandemic preventing our travel to Malawi, our funds have gone to our educational initiatives in converting a library, and now a 2nd, to 4 room learning centers. Our first learning center pilot program has demonstrated very positive results. But a critical challenge is undertaking ongoing operating expenses: the commitments of paying salaries for an in-country director of our programs, an intern, and dozens of mentors. With these commitments, and with our long-term goal of eventually operating learning centers at all 6 of MOH's locations, our financial challenges seem overwhelming. In rough numbers, our fixed annual cost of in-country supervision is \$12,000. Inflation has not spared Malawi, and it costs about \$20,000 to expand each library into a 4 room learning center, including the necessary expansion of our solar capacity at that location each time. And finally, the annual cost of operating each after-school program is about \$10,000. It's easy to see that concurrent operation of multiple facilities soon becomes limiting, particularly with ongoing commitments of stipends and salaries. We will only expand to additional centers when we have funds in place for the expansion, operation, and reserve to buffer revenues, and at present time do not see the way toward operating beyond at best 3 learning centers.

Conclusion

While Malawi's educational dilemma has parallels with other African nations, such as Kenya's English-Swahili language duality, coupled with abject poverty, lack of natural resources, and rural demography, the criticality of enhancing the educational process in Malawi's villages is of utmost importance among the principle developmental variables. And, we firmly believe, is within Malawi Visions' programs, plans, and capacity to bring about life-changing growth for the most vulnerable of children, and ultimately the region.

Steps to English Fluency

Now understanding the criticality of English throughout the entire educational process, what do we do? This year Malawi Visions will be increasing our emphasis upon helping the children develop English fluency. All the time remembering our after-school enrichment programs must remain “supplemental” to the in-school learning structure.

The 4th Grade English Intervention

We are expanding our after-school enrichment program enrollment of Standards 5, 6 and 7 to include an intensive “English intervention” program for Standard 4. That will be a one hour “class” twice a week. The selection of children to participate in TLIP will therefore begin in Standard 4: a year earlier than before. The Standard 4 kids that complete this one year English segment will move into the in-place program the following year.



While these younger students will already be studying the level 4 standard English curriculum in public school, as our investigations suggest many entering our program will have a less than adequate mastery of those first 3 levels. In addition to enhancing the Standard 4 school curricula, review of Levels 1 thru 3 will most likely be valuable in ensuring the fundamentals have been mastered. In future years these “English intervention” classes might be extended to earlier grades.

Early Reader Books

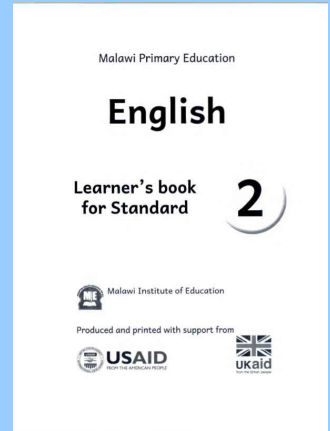
Before you can get a child in the habit of reading, he or she has to learn how to read. We’ve focused this year on collecting books for early-grade readers, with fewer words and more illustrations. These will be shelved on specific bookshelves identified in the libraries, and employed in learning-to-read programs.



Steps to English Fluency. cont

Standard Malawi English Curricula

We have acquired copies of the Malawi National Learner's Books, and Teacher's Manuals for Standards 1, 2, 3, and 4. These will be helpful in identifying the subject matter of the standardized school English programs as we plan our enrichment programs.



Teaching Aids

Among the public school shortcomings evaluations have mentioned is the absence of teaching aids. Our objective will be acquisition of such aids, including wall alphabets, word posters, flash cards, pictures, etc. Brightly painted walls and children's art filling the interior. Audio/visual aids can be provided for use thru flat screen/ laptops we've previously provided. These would be implemented in all our libraries as well as the TLIP English classrooms.

Text Books

Typically public schools don't provide Learner's books for each student; at best one copy is shared by groups of students. Our programs provide individual copies the students can use in class. It will be helpful for the children to actually see the subject material they have just covered in public school that same day.

Enrichment Books

We are purchasing sets of easy-reader books, such as "I Can Read Books" at the appropriate level for the children. With one book per child to read in class, aloud and together. We seek culturally sensitive books and Bible stories to help children in reading development.



Steps to English Fluency. cont

Take Home Books

Studies have shown there to be significant benefit when children are allowed to take books home. A child who carries a book home is able to read to themselves, or aloud to a parent, friend, or sibling, allowing learning to take place outside of the school day.

We have devoted significant effort this year collecting and organizing “easy reader” books for the kids to take home. Even if those “home listeners” don’t understand English themselves, the exercise of reading, and the self-esteem it creates, has been found throughout the world to be a valuable learning opportunity.

We will pilot a “take-a-book-home” program at Khwamba, where books will be signed out, and the personal responsibility of the student. Heavy-duty plastic bags will be provided to protect the books. We will also begin providing books as permanent rewards for exemplary academic performance.

Community Involvement

Encouragement is so very important to children. Working with Daniel and Milca we hope to meet with village chiefs and others to help form community reading support groups. Last year it was reported that Chief Khwamba spoke emphatically to a TLIP graduation ceremony, encouraging both parents and kids to take part in the program. The Chief spoke highly of all the Malawi Visions projects, and he thanked Malawi Visions for bringing this development in his area. Community residents appreciate being asked to help enforce the belief that education is a way for children to live a better life than their parents.

Mentor English Enrichment

Our mentors need help with English fluency too. We have asked Milca and Daniel to enlist more local high school graduates (“gap kids”) with good English skills to lead English mastery “sessions” classes for the mentors. And we have collected more intermediate level books for the libraries that the mentors will find enjoyable to read for their own enjoyment.

Libraries and Learning Centers Create Opportunities **for Visitor Engagement**

Visitation to the MoH centers by supporting groups is reported to have waned a bit in recent years, notwithstanding the pandemic. We believe our libraries and learning centers can renew enthusiasm by providing myriad opportunities for visitors to become a part of the learning process. Selecting books from our libraries, visitors could read to the younger children. Just hearing English would be a big boost to learning that new language. Or donate a dozen books, for example The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, and read aloud while the kids followed along. Or lead a group to all read aloud together!



Visitors could be guest teachers: informed of the curricula in English, science, or math, visitors could spend a few hours leading a class or two. Or helping with homework.

Visitors could give a talk about their own career subjects: an engineer, artist, doctor, lawyer, teacher, musician, nurse, librarian, electrician. . . All could provide great insight into previously unknown career possibilities!

They could plan and perform science experiments. Provide additional instruction in our sewing classes, or computer classes. Lead art projects. Bring “show-and-tell” items and presentations. Present advanced agricultural teaching. Explain solar energy, or irrigation systems. Give lectures in any topic they would like. The more English the kids become accustomed to hearing, the better!

The focus is enhancing English fluency. There are unlimited opportunities for creativity! The classroom infrastructure we have created: blackboards, flat screen TV monitors connected to laptop computers, electric lights, desks and tables . . all can be employed by guests for all sorts of educational opportunities. Visitors might follow up specific students when they get home. They might help support the mentors; undertake the cost of posters and teaching aids; even fund a library expansion!

Libraries and Learning Centers Create Opportunities **for Visitor Engagement, con't**

Music, which is a component of TLIP, provides another tremendous opportunity. Each learning center will have a keyboard, drums, and a guitar. The children could perform musical performances for the visitors. Visitors could participate, perform for and with, the students. The opportunities to work with a smaller group, and then perform for the larger center, are limitless.

Then there are library functions. Book to be cataloged, volunteering as a librarian, the never ending questions kids ask about finding books!

We're working on building up the science rooms . . . A few microscopes, a couple human skeletons, and a telescope have been sent so far. Do you have access to quality science equipment we could ship for you?

And finally the libraries and learning centers, are brightly illuminated by solar power. Evening and even overnight activities could be planned. Bible stories and studies. Star gazing!



Contact us or Daniel! We can begin working together!

Malawi Visions “All Stars”

Our young artist Katie

When one of our young Malawi Visions members, Katie White, learned about the absence of teaching aids and posters in schools, she decided to help the children in our programs with English and reading. What a creative innovator! She studied the Malawi Standard 1 and 2 Learner’s books, determined the words being taught with the letters, and created 6 sets of alphabet cards that will be installed around the walls in our libraries and learning center English classrooms. She also created “flash card” versions, and laminated all of her work for protection! Katie is 12 years old, just completed 6th grade, is the daughter of Stuart (who traveled to Malawi in 2019) and Elizabeth White, and has a brother Nathan. Well done Katie!



Katie

Gladys Philips

Malawi Visions would like to recognize Gladys Phillips who has been an important part of our “Sewing” Ministry. A former teacher, she is an excellent seamstress and also has a kind heart for clothing the Malawi orphans. Gladys has sewn over 100 skirts and shorts since 2021. Moreover, she responded to the urgent need for masks by making 100 masks for the children which accompanied the skirts and shorts. Gladys lives in Seville, Ohio (near Akron), almost 600 miles away, and is a wonderful example of how our ministry has grown and that distance is not a deterrent. Thank you, Gladys, for your kind heart and generosity of time devoted to this effort.

Gladys is a friend of, and was introduced to Malawi Visions by, Jean Skidmore, who has contributed work from North Carolina, another “long distance” team member!

Our 11th Shipment



Special thanks to Farren International and Todd Kouflie in handling our crates before shipment

Our 11th shipment is underway! And the largest ever, with 3 crates weighing-in loaded at 11,500 lbs! Packed (ever so tightly) are 4,500 books, 6 treadle sewing machines, steel library shelving, skirts, shorts, baby clothes, 36 tables for class desks, and a great deal more including a Christmas tree!



We're booked on the Maersk Visby.. Departure date from NY is June 29 with ETA in Durban, S.A. of July 12. Hoping crates will arrive in Lilongwe, Malawi by September 1. We will be again following shipment via satellite.

Our 11th Shipment

Building the Shipping Crates



Each year we construct plywood shipping crates to transport our library books, restored treadle sewing machines, and much more the 8,000 miles to Durban, South Africa by ship, and then 1,200 miles overland to Malawi. It was wonderful to have many volunteers this year to build our 3 crates! Thank you all!

Our 11th Shipment

Preparing the Shipment



We would never be able to ship so many thousands of pounds (11,500 lbs this year!) of specific items and materials except by the time and hard work generously provided by so many Malawi Visions team members, who prepare the shipment and fill the crates after they are constructed! Each of a hundred book boxes are plastic wrapped for protection, sewing machines are refinished and restored, crates are carefully packed . . . the list is endless!

Malawi Visions is a great Team Effort!

Malawi Visions Childrens Book Drive



CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR MALAWI ORPHANS

To a child who has never held a book . . .
a personal book is a
lifelong treasure!

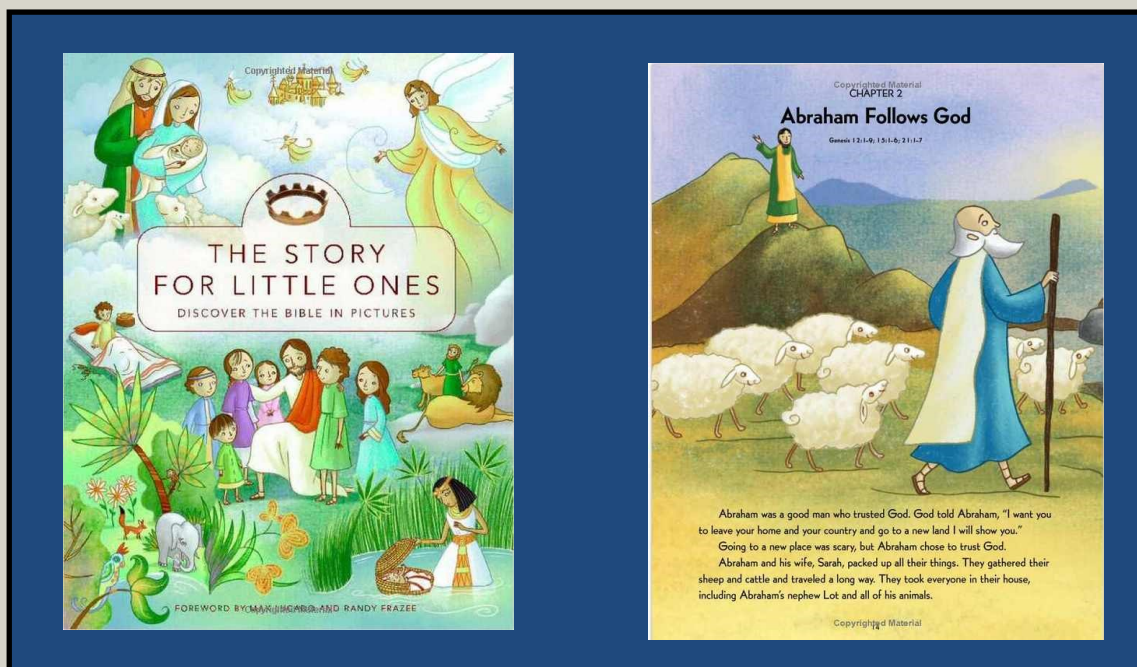
**You can help
make a difference!**

We are seeking gently used Easy-reader and children's
books to help our kids in Malawi learn to read.



Please bring books to TCC office, or contact Carolyn Stewart
cks731@yahoo.com

As we focus upon English fluency, our book efforts this year were “easy reader books, and our favorites were Bible stories, particularly this one below:



Would you help us purchase more of these?

Milcas Report



Libraries

Monitoring of all libraries and media centers has shown that development of reading culture continued in all the centers. Books are being taken care of, cleanliness and library order is being observed.

“Gap” (between secondary school and college, sometimes requiring 1 to 3 years) kids and high school kids continued helping in library activities, as reading programs have been introduced in some centers to help primary school children read books. Of particular note Chimwang`ombe and Khwamba gap kids were very active in helping children read English books and having simple English learning activities like spelling competitions to help them understand what they read in the library. From the records, easy reader, animals, and middle reader categories were the most used. The reason being that most of the children who attended were in primary school.

Of special interest on the libraries is the new and more spacious library at Khwamba center, which continues to be the main center of information in the community. Both primary and secondary school students are now finding it easy to study the books in the library due to its big size and good ventilation. All the books in the library are well taken care of and the librarian records all books and ensures that the library room is mopped regularly. The Khwamba library, among the others, has helped to increased children’s vocabulary and general performance in schools. The library has also promoted the culture of reading among children. Secondary school graduates, intern students, and team leaders continue assisting the small children with reading the books in the library.

Milcas Report

Laptop Classes: Computer classes continued both at Khwamba and Matapila centers. The program continues to equip “gap” kids with knowledge as they prepare for college. This program has impacted many children: since the program began 18 students have gone on to college with computer knowledge that helped them do their assignments on the computer, (3 from Matapila and 15 from Khwamba). Currently there are 22 new students learning computer (10 from Matapila and 12 from Khwamba).

KHWAMBA TEENLIFE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Teen Life Internship programs continued at Khwamba center. Spiritual development activities were also continuing in the month with Bible studies and memory verse reciting by primary school kids. Every week kids are taught verses so that they can recite them in English. Personal devotions were also encouraged.



Specific news items include

- the head teacher for Khwamba’s local Chibanzi Secondary School was approached for feedback on the performance of teen mentors. He thanked the program stating that it has helped greatly in the performance of the TLIP children compared to the other students.
- Boniface Mtuta, one of the leaders, will be going to Mzuzu University this month where he will be studying to become a science teacher. He has served as a leader since the program started in 2020. We are so happy to have helped him, through TLIP, to achieve this milestone in his life. He will continue to be a resource to us as he will return during the holidays to help in teaching teen mentors with their school work.

Milcas Report

MATAPILA TEENLIFE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Preparation training for the initiation of TLIP at Matapila was completed, with both teen mentors and leaders knowledgeable in the program. Development of lesson plan and teaching aid formulation was completed as the teen mentors prepare to begin tutoring primary school children. Our MV Intern, Innocent Chaona was part of all the meetings, and will be the one overseeing TLIP at Matapila.

TLIP officially opened at the Matapila center in May, and includes 6 Leaders who are gap kids waiting to go to college, 12 Teen mentors who are secondary school students in form 1 and 2, and 120 primary school children.



Stakeholders at Matapila

A meeting with education stakeholders in the area was conducted to introduce them to TLIP as it was about to start at the center. Attending the meeting were the head teacher for Matapila Primary School, the head teacher for Matapila Secondary School and the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Matapila zone. They were invited as they work with the children selected to TLIP. It was a fruitful meeting as it laid a good foundation of the program before it began. The meeting helped create relationships with the people working in the education field to achieve good coordination among the team.

Milca

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Malawi Visions
Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 55
Liberty Corner, NJ 07938