

Global Giving Report May - July 2023

Literacy Teacher Training to provide life-changing skills to Malawian children

"The learning crisis is not a result of COVID-19; the pandemic has only made it worse. Before the outbreak, 53 percent of children in low- and middle-income countries were living in Learning Poverty, that is, they were unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the figure was closer to 90 percent. By the time the pandemic will be over, learning poverty will most probably rise by at least 10 percent as the impacts of school closures, lost learning hours, and increased dropout rates take their toll. This makes Sustainable Development Goal 4's (SDG4) promise of a quality education for all drift even further from our reach." **Alicia Herbert OBE, Director of Education, Gender and Equality and Special Envoy for Gender Equality FCDO.** <https://www.edu-links.org/learning/urgent-need-focus-foundational-skills>



Standard 2 children's aspirations and potential, kindly supported by the Alan and Nesta Ferguson Trust

The global current economic issues are also impacted Malawi. In Malawi the economic crisis is further compounded by the Malawi local currency (Malawi Kwacha) continuing to decline. The cost of food in Malawi increased 39.30 percent in July of 2023 over the same month in the previous year (<https://tradingeconomics.com/malawi/food-inflation>) and the annual inflation rate in Malawi rose to 28.4% in July 2023, up from 27.3% in the prior month (<https://tradingeconomics.com/malawi/inflation-cpi>)



Pictured from left to right: Andrew, Senior Education Officer, Florence (Std 3), Thandi (Std 2) and Constance (Std 1) Specialist Literacy Teachers

With this challenging background our volunteer teachers have nevertheless continued to support the children at the school with fun and engaging lessons. We have successfully increased learning outcomes in foundational literacy and improved educational potential for 250 current learners, supported by classroom-based low-cost technical training and mentoring.

Our Senior Field Officer, Andrew Mchisa, has grown in capacity and responsibility, focussing on running the programme and taking the lead on management and classroom support.



Andrew Mchisa demonstrates teaching of new vocabulary using a word tree



Andrew providing a fun and memorable whole school assembly on short and long vowel sounds.

Andrew, has developed several literacy activities and fun Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources (TALULAR) resources, such as the 'CharChar Baby' (a dancing puppet made from scrap cardboard), which he uses to teach phonemes and phonics (letter sounds) to the whole school during the daily whole school assembly. Learners from Std1 - Std8 do their best to be at school on time not to miss these exciting, interactive sessions where learners (and teachers) sing and march as they learn new concepts such as English short and long vowel sounds. Government employed teachers have also benefited from these 'phonics assemblies' as they have also now learned that English vowels have two sounds, short and long. As a direct result of the visible successes in Standards 1, 2 & 3 primary classes the government employed teachers of the remaining classes (Standards 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8) have requested to receive additional training to improve their own knowledge of English letter sounds and phonics. We will need to fund-raise for this to be able to increase the current project reach.

Anecdotally, government employed teachers report that children have become more engaged with school life and that the absentee levels have reduced in the CharChar intervention classes.

We are pleased to be able to report that the government employed teachers in the CharChar intervention classes have also adopted some of the newly introduced practices. For example, arranging their classes in groups and using some simple strategies to support literacy acquisition such as the use of songs and games to reinforce learning together with simple TALULAR resources. These include flash-cards and word trees, together with everyday concrete objects, to improve comprehension and vocabulary.

A vital component of the programme is the engagement of the parents/guardians and wider community. In the fourth term, June, at Tsokamkanansi we held a reading fair open day to showcase the children's literacy progress to the local communities. The parents and guardians, often with low literacy themselves, commented that they were astounded at their children's progress!



A parent speaks to other families from the community



Andrew demonstrates locally made resources (left) A parent speaks to other families from the community during the open day. (right)

"In my community we have appreciated the introduction of this programme. We have witnessed for ourselves that our children are being able to read and write even in Standard 1 and Standard 2 for the first time." A parent representative from the school community.

In the Demonstration school we have been requested to support literacy instruction training throughout the school as the teachers do not have the required skills, and the learners in these classes are, like everywhere in Malawi, struggling with low literacy. However, with eight year groups, we are not able to undertake additional support without additional resources (personnel and finance).

CharChar Literacy Organisation

Working in Malawi through a small local team we have successfully supported our Education Field Officer, Andrew Mchisa, to grow in capacity and professional

development. Andrew has been mentored throughout the project period, via face-to-face sessions, by our volunteer in-country director and via online coaching from external volunteer education advisors. With your help we would like to see Andrew continue his professional development by increasing his role to full-time from the current 0.75FTE.



A Continuous Professional Development session for Standard 2 teacher Thandiwe - teaching short vowel sounds

We look forward to keeping you updated and thank you all for your kindness and generosity in helping us to maintain this lifeline of literacy to young Malawian children.

Warm regards
All the team at CharChar Literacy!