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From the Executive Director

I grew up in a small town in Malawi called Zomba and attended two elementary schools. In our time, corporal punishment (inflicting physical pain) to discipline students was the order of the day.

Teachers flogged students, many times at the praise of the parents. The school experience was horrible and synonymous with pain. Anything could warrant a punishment! I was a perpetual culprit for being late, failing in class, not wearing school uniform, and making noise.

Looking back, I clench. I mean... It was not my fault to walk two kilometers to school, let alone fail to have a school uniform because of poverty. No child should experience this today!

This is the reason we exist. We create safe havens for students in our afterschool activities. We serve 1,500 students daily, giving them academic support, meals, mentorship and discipleship.

I hope you have a minute to appreciate the sacrifice of the team serving these children.

God bless you!
Willie Mpasuka
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

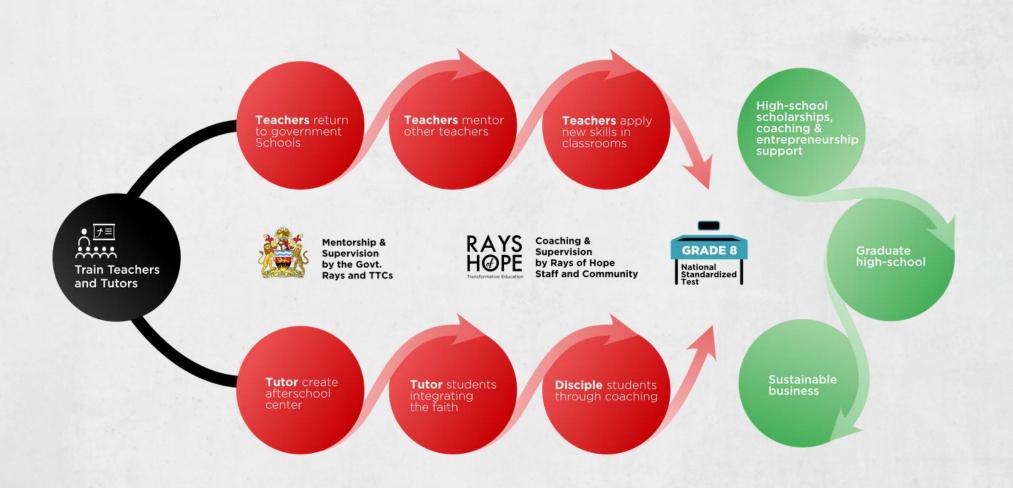




Rays of Hope exists to transform Malawi by equipping teachers and educate children in public schools. Our program areas are teacher training, remedial lessons, provision of bursaries/scholarships, and we run an excellent high-school for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We strive to nurture children and youth and empower them with abilities essential for life management, academic excellence, spiritual development to become leaders in their society.

We use a transformative education model to build teachers' capacity, support learners, and provide financial inclusion solutions to youth for a productive life.



Our Model

APPROACH/GOALS

ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Train 8,000 teachers in 7 education districts to reduce teachers' technical gaps.

Run after-school programs across 12 primary schools in Blantyre district and work with 1500 children.

Maintain 95% primary school completion rate among the 12 targeted primary schools in Blantyre.

ACADEMIC INCLUSION

Provide 380 secondary scholarships to needy students

Run coaching and mentoring activities with 300 students

Achieve 90% pass rate at grades 10 and 12 national examinations

ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Expose 200 youth to entrepreneurship opportunities

Provide capital to 10 innovative enterprise ideas from ideation to an actual business

Incubate 5 youth business groups

MILESTONES

What we have achieved



1,500+
learners fed and tutored



300 Scholarships disbursed



Youth serving groups have started a new cycle and are operational



Children clubs established in 30 school in Thyolo and Blantyre rural



210 students mentored





Youth trained and mentored in entrepreneurship and business acumen



5000+
teachers trained in various teaching methodologies for numeracy and literacy gains











Tutoring Activities

As mentioned, our team was very busy ensuring that the students we serve demonstrate the academic aptitude as a result of our interventions. We stayed consistent to our theory of change that ensures every child is accorded the right attention and care for their academic excellence as shown below.

Due to Cyclone Freddy, students lost a lot of learning time since schools were closed. Regardless, the school calendar did not change to accommodate this disruption. Just like the COVID-19 times, the team distributed personalized Science and Mathematics workbooks to supplement the lost class periods. We love to provide resources for the learners when we can. We understand that many families find it hard to provide study resources for their children.

These resources were integrated in our normal tutoring sessions. However, we customized our delivery to offer individualized support to address specific learning needs and challenges faced by learners in various subjects. Each tutor dedicated time to provide assistance to individual students responding to the identified gaps. The adoption of the workbooks proved to be a timely resource to make up the lost learning time to Cyclone Freddy and the Cholera outbreak school closures.

We stayed faithful to provide holistic services to the students including our communities. In that bid, we continued providing lunch meals before tutoring activities. The provision of food enhances concentration during the tutoring activities. It is an important piece to our program since in many ways this could be the only meal for some students.

Mentorship & Discipleship

In addition to academic support, we deliberately make our tutors and the entire time become mentors for the students. Every Tuesday the team lead mentorship sessions with the students focusing on goal setting, spiritual growth, personal development, career choices and planning, time management and academic excellence. As part of this thinking, we took 500 learners to a field trip to Lengwe National Park to see wild life, which included Bible studies on God's creation.

This field visit is also a platform to develop the skills of our tutors - who are highschool graduates, committed to invest their life in ensuring that students are achieving their academic goals. During the trip, they went through some professional development focusing on pedagogy, child rights, and child safeguarding practices.



Community Engagement

We cannot successfully achieve our goals bypassing the key stakeholders present in our community. Intentionally, our work begs for support from the players present in our community. To ensure that this is done well, we engage teachers, parents, and conduct home visits as further explained.

Firstly, as usual, we work closely with the parents of the children in our communities ensuring that our program is a real resource to the children and the parents. In the past quarter we held meetings with the parents where we discussed the progress and challenges of individual learners and to jointly provide constructive recommendations to make sure their children are actually learning. These meetings take place at the beginning and ending of the academic term. In these meetings, we interacted with 405 parents.

Secondly, we cannot progress with our interventions if we do not collaborate with the teachers who spend time with our program participants in school. Every term we meet the teachers twice to update them on our efforts, learn from them regarding the performance of the students in their schools, and brainstorm on ideas that could work for the majority of our students. In the past quarter, we interacted with 62 teachers from Chilomoni and Machinjiri locations. In these meetings, the teachers appreciated the role Rays of Hope plays in the academic journey of the students. They admitted that improved performance of students lessens the burden of their work.

Thirdly, we believe that being proximate players in development means forming a close relationship with the communities we serve. One way of doing this is through the home visits. By design, we visit homes of our program participants making sure that we understand the living dynamics at play in their locations. This is pretty instrumental in reinforcing the commitment of parents/guardians, picking the most significant stories outside the school environment, and getting raw feedback of our program as part of a feedback loop to assist us in designing. In addition, home visits is a strategy to collect quality qualitative data for our program.

These collective efforts invested in the tutoring have resulted in several positive outcomes. We have witnessed improved academic performance, increased parents/guardian engagement, the strengthened community support, and increased support from the local schools. All the students present in our programs scored above average in their termly examinations conducted by the public schools where they attend.

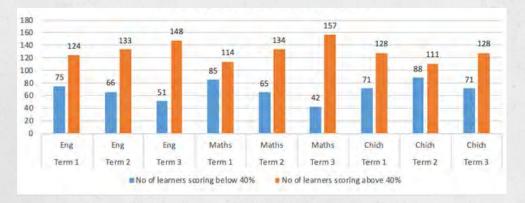


Teaching at the right level (TaRL) is an approach that aims to build foundational skills in math and reading for all children before exiting primary school. At the instructional level, the approach works by assessing children's learning levels using a simple tool; grouping children based on learning levels rather than age or grade; using a range of engaging teaching and learning activities; focusing on foundational skills rather than solely on the curriculum; and tracking children's progress.

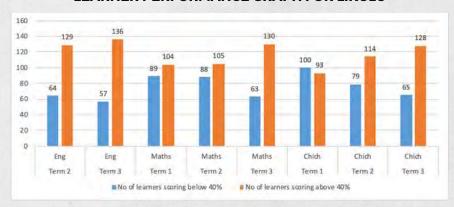
We are pleased to share with you the progress achieved so far with this initiative at Chilala and Likulu primary schools. This initiative has been instrumental in building the foundational skills in literacy and numeracy skills in standards 3 to 6.

Before the initiative, the majority of the students were not performing to the expected standard. Across the literacy and numeracy subjects, many students were scoring 40 percent below. In real terms, they were failing. In this quarter, however, we see an increase in many of the students performing better than they came into the program. The graphs shown below depicts the efficacy of TaRL in both schools.

LEARNER PERFORMANCE GRAPH FOR CHILALA



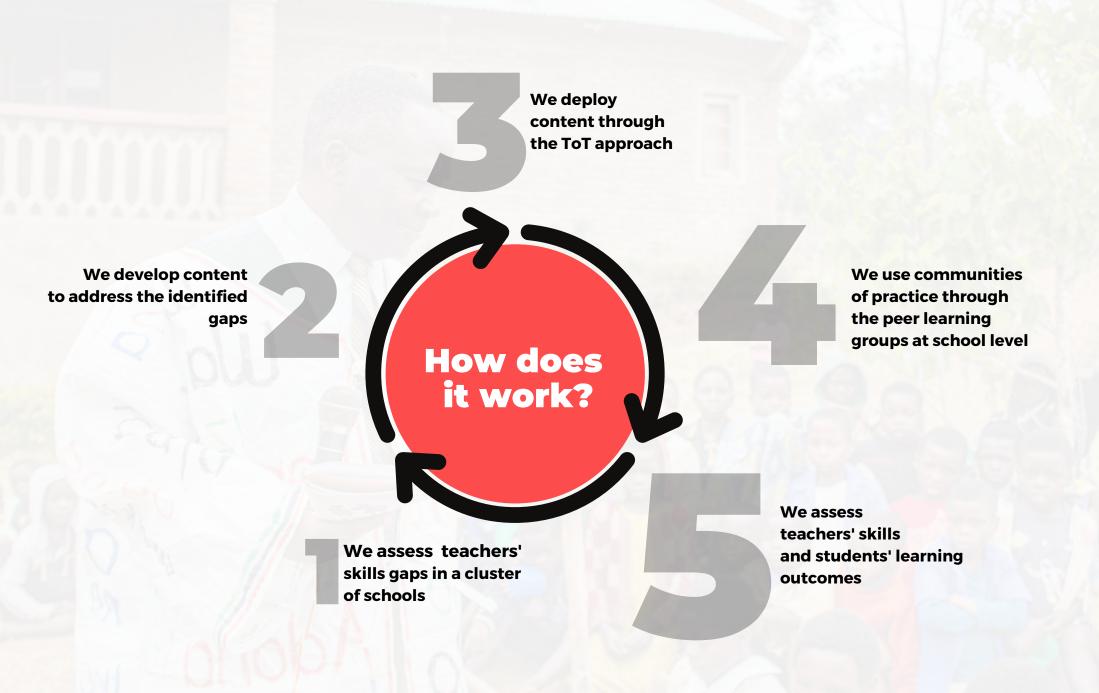
LEARNER PERFORMANCE GRAPH FOR LIKULU



We did not celebrate change alone but with the whole community. We organized an activity at Chilala and Likulu primary schools where we implemented TaRL to show the achievement we have seen through the implementation of this approach—the event aimed to celebrate the progress of the learners in foundational literacy and numeracy. The activity was attended by 395 enthusiastic learners and 40 adults, including teachers, village heads, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), community structures, and volunteers. This was the first public event in this initiative where we invited the communities to witness the progress. The learners excellently showed numeracy and literacy aptitude including Bible verses recitals.







Teacher Training Activities

Informed by our design, therefore, we offer trainings to teachers all year round, and the previous quarter was also a busy one for the team. We carried out several trainings and supported the peer learning groups, which are communities of practice. These trainings took place in Ntchisi, Mchinji, Zomba, Blantyre Urban, Blantyre Rural and Thyolo. All of our trainings respond to identified capacity gaps in these various locations. In the past quarter, we managed to reach 5,000+ teachers directly and through the communities of practice.

Rays of Hope teacher training initiative is present in 269 primary schools, serving more than 259,000 students greatly improving their learning outcomes. In the past quarter we covered the following training areas: inclusive education principles, creating inclusive classrooms, and literacy and numeracy teaching skills.

Part of our teacher training initiative focuses on making the learners to be active participants. We do this by creating child driven clubs, which are structures present at every school where we carry out teacher intervention activities. The main objective of these clubs is to hold teachers accountable to their responsibilities, and to become a support system to the students' fraternity, making sure that they stay in school. Over time, these clubs have become quite instrumental achieving both objectives. In one case, students raise resources to buy school uniforms to their friends. In another case, a drinking joint was ordered to be closed during school hours.



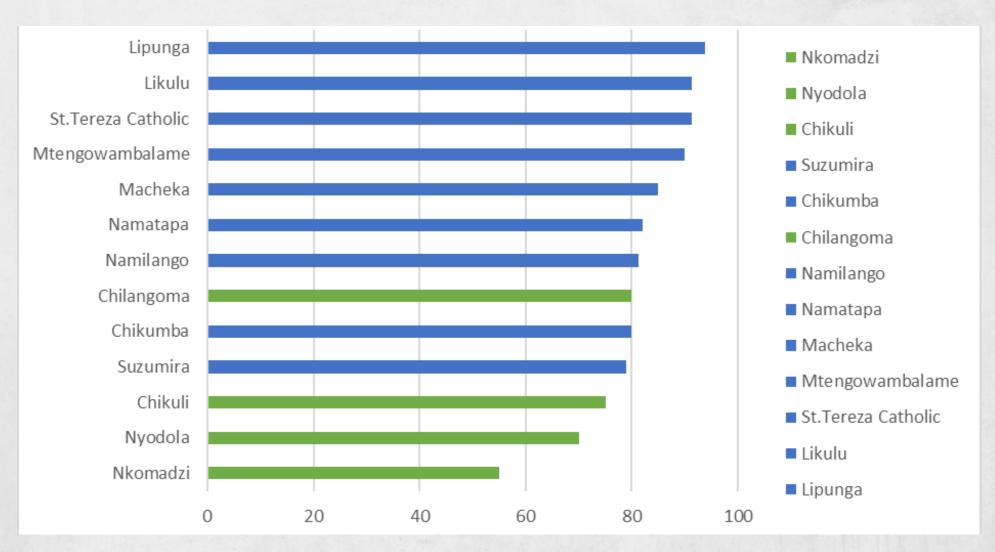


Teacher Monitoring and Supervision

Apart from continuing with our usual training and supervision activities, we took a bold step to see how beneficial our program is performing in comparison to other schools we do not serve. We sampled 37 primary public schools where our teacher training program is in operational; we also sampled 7 schools, which were used as a control group to see the difference in the efficacy of our offering. Our assessment focused mainly on the effectiveness of the program on the skills of teachers. In general, our program is truly improving the skills of the teachers in these schools. All the assessed teachers demonstrated usage of befitting teaching pedagogy they got in our trainings; lesson plans were consistently used, and they used locally available resources. In addition, we also witnessed the functionality of the peer learning groups.

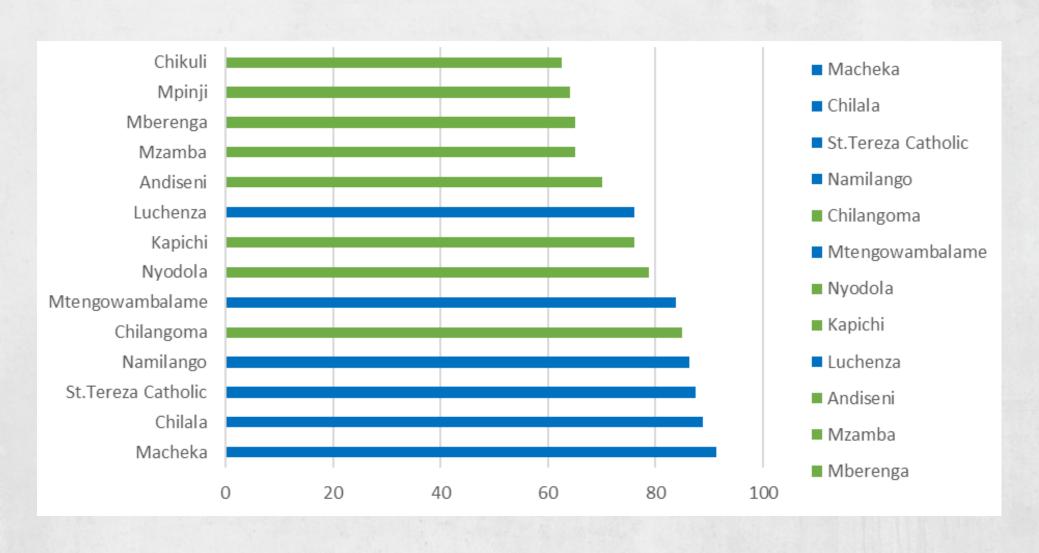
The graph below compares the performance of the teachers in our program, and those who are not part of the program. Those in blue are the schools we are present, and those in green are the ones outside our impact areas. This graph shows the performance of teachers in English lesson delivery.

TEACHER SCORES ON ENGLISH LESSION DELIVERY



The following graph shows the performance of teachers in Mathematics lesson delivery. Please note that Chilangoma is an outlier since it is close to a local teacher training and gets occasional support.

TEACHER SCORE ON MATHEMATICS LESSION DELIVERY









Rays of Hope continued to provide financial assistance to 300 secondary students, enabling them to pursue their education with reduced financial burdens. Another layer of our support is given through mentorship and coaching, which ensured that girls remain in school regardless of other social-related pressures. We are glad to report that none of our girls dropped out of school due to pregnancy.

Mentorship Session for Student Encouragement

Further, as part of our commitment to coaching and mentorship, Rays of Hope organized sessions to inspire and motivate students to work hard. These series of activity mainly targeted grades 10 and grade 12 as they were expected to sit for their national standardized test in the months of June and July. The mentorship session aimed to instill a sense of determination and self-belief in the students, empowering them to overcome challenges and strive for excellence in their academic pursuits.

Monitoring of Study Groups within Bursary Initiative

In line with our commitment to fostering a supportive learning environment, we closely monitored the study groups formed among students benefiting from our bursary initiative. These study groups were established to enable students to support each other in their academic endeavors. Our team regularly visited these study groups to assess their progress and provide guidance. The study groups have proven to be a valuable resource for students, promoting teamwork and knowledge-sharing. In total, 287 students in secondary schools participate in these study groups across the 15 schools we partner with.

Joint Meeting with Parents and Students

At the beginning of the quarter, a joint meeting was organized with parents and students participating in the initiative. A total of 200 parents and guardians were present. The purpose of this meeting was to review and reflect on the progress of the bursary initiative. During the meeting, parents were briefed on the financial support provided and its impact on their children's education. We also discussed the importance of parental involvement in their children's academic journey and ways they could support their children effectively. The meeting served as a platform for open communication and strengthened the partnership between parents, students, and Rays of Hope.

2023 National Exams

With gratitude, we announce that this year, all students in grades 10 and 12 participated in the National standardized test. Our aspiration is for every student enrolled in our bursary program to successfully complete their secondary education and secure admission to universities, marking the fulfillment of their transformative journey.







Youth Savings Groups

To encourage a savings culture among youth, the initiative facilitated the reestablishment of eight youth savings groups. These groups successfully completed a savings cycle, accumulating a total of about \$7000. This achievement demonstrates the commitment of the youth to financial independence and stability.

Moving forward, three of these groups have embarked on a new savings cycle, while the remaining groups are set to begin their next cycle in September. Our team is ready to provide necessary support to the groups with various mentorships on personal financial management skills.



The team conducted targeted business training sessions for a diverse group of communities in the program. These included university graduates, youth enrolled in the loan program, and individuals who completed vocational training in beauty and hairdressing.

The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of fundamental business principles, financial management, marketing strategies, and customer engagement. By equipping participants with these skills, the program aims to empower them to initiate and manage their own enterprises successfully.





Follow up on Vocational Scholarship Beneficiaries

During this reporting period, our primary focus has been on evaluating and following up with vocational scholarship beneficiaries, particularly those who completed training within the past two years. We concentrated our efforts on 22 youths trained in videography, tailoring-fashion design, and beauty-hairdressing. Out of these, we successfully connected with 7 individuals, gaining insights into their successes and challenges.

Remarkably, a number of these beneficiaries have made substantial strides in their respective fields. Among the four videography trainees, one now works as a videographer at a studio, while another thrives as a content creator with Telekom Malawi Limited TNM. Similarly, four out of nine beauty trainees have secured positions as skilled beauty artists in reputable salons, with an additional member excelling as a beauty instructor at a prominent college in Lilongwe. Our commitment remains strong as we continue our pursuit to track down the remaining beneficiaries, providing them with tailored entrepreneurial support. These achievements stand as a testament to the positive impact of our youth vocational scholarship program on their career pathways.

As we approach the forthcoming quarter, our enthusiasm grows as we prepare to award vocational scholarships to ten more deserving youths. Our unwavering dedication to nurturing education and empowerment propels us forward, driven by the desire to forge fresh avenues and sculpt more promising horizons for these individuals. These scholarships embody our ongoing commitment to equip young minds with the essential tools and wisdom required not only for their personal success but also to emerge as catalysts of progress within their communities. Our mission continues, resolute in its pursuit of fostering growth and igniting positive change through education.

A Transformative Journey:

Dorothy's Progress in TaRL

Dorothy Chabwera is one of the TaRL program participants in Blantyre Rural hailing from Undani Village. She is only 10, and ready to transition to grade 6 in the next couple of months. She often scored below average in literacy and numeracy skills, just like other students who are in the program before TaRL.

We placed her in the first level as a beginner in this initiative. Since then, Dorothy improved greatly, just like other students, and it has been truly inspiring to us.

Dorothy's reading skills, sentence construction, and computing of mathematical problems have shown remarkable growth. Her dedication and hard work have paid off. She finds it surreal how a big community celebrates her achievement including family relations, school authorities and her own teachers.

She has secured a place in the top ten students in her class for the first time in her academic journey. This achievement does not only reflect her commitment to learning, it also demonstrates the effectiveness of the Teaching at the Right Level approach and the commitment of the team.

We are immensely proud of Dorothy's accomplishments, and we commend her for the determination and resilience in pursuing excellence.







Safety First!

We are thrilled to announce our partnership with Total Energies in an initiative to raise awareness about the safety of learners on their way to and from school. At Rays of Hope, we believe in creating a safe and secure environment for students, and this collaboration will enable us to empower young individuals with knowledge and practices to ensure their well-being during their daily commute.

With support from Total Energies, our dedicated team alongside experts from the Malawi Road Traffic, embarked on an exciting journey of educating/coaching students about risks and safe practices on their way to and from school, through interactive sessions and engaging activities.

Below are topics that were tackled during the sessions:

Understanding traffic signs and signals, Crosswalk and pedestrian safety, The importance of wearing reflective, clothing or accessories, Safe crossing techniques, Identifying potential hazards on the road, and Using designated, walkways and sidewalks.

By empowering our young learners with this knowledge, we aim to instill a sense of responsibility and raise a generation of safety-conscious individuals.

Empowering communities for an inclusive mindset towards education

In the reporting period, Rays of Hope organised and led the Pamodzi for Inclusive Education in South-East Africa (consortium) in implementing advocacy activities, in Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya. In Malawi, Rays of Hope conducted pieces of trainings to bring awareness to local committees the need for inclusive education in their communities.

The activities involved constituency community gatekeepers and other structures who were enlightened on national budget processes. This is instrumental in helping the district councils in the allocation of resources. Respective communities successfully developed action plans to increase investment into the inclusive education space.



BUILDING EDUCATION FOUNDATION THROUGH INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY



Rays of Hope has partnered with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), One Billion (OB), and Imagine World (IW) to implement the Building Education Foundations through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) program. The goal of the program is to improve primary school children's acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. The program is a national rollout of a tablet-based learning intervention to all pupils in Standards 1-4 in Malawi's public primary schools, supplementing teacher efforts and ultimately reaching ~3.8 million learners in 6,000 public primary schools. Rays of Hope was assigned the role of an Implementation Support Partner (ISP) to provide operational and implementation support to the Ministry's implementing structures in four districts namely: Neno, Mwanza, Chikhwawa, and Nsanje.







We hosted visitors from Ore university-USA, at

Blantyre offices/camps

Coaching session with our tutors at Liwonde National Pack -

Liwonde





Camper leaving the camp site with relief food items - Chilala Primary
School



Safe mobility awareness session in South Lunzu LEA primary school - Blantyre

Machinjiri Camp

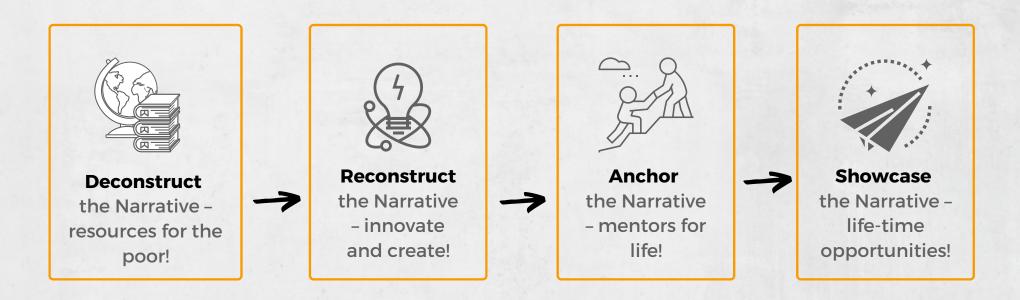
Teacher training session in progress primary school -

Mdeka TDC





The model



ABOUT

Rays of Hope Academy is a fee-paying secondary school that enables income generation for Rays of Hope Ministries. Our Academy is posed to nurture young and raw talent through an education that is built on meaningful innovation and sincere integrity.

QUARTERLY GOALS

Celebrate 12 graders for completing secondary school.

Implement Targeted
Academic Support for
10/12 graders in
preparation for national
examination

Maintain 100% passrate in all classes

Quality Delivery

Rays of Hope Academy enhanced its curriculum to align with the MSCE exam syllabus, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all relevant subjects. Experienced educators and subject matter experts collaborated to develop engaging lesson plans, study materials, and practice resources that targeted specific exam requirements.

Intensive Instruction

Dedicated teachers provided intensive instruction in core subjects, including mathematics, English, and science. Students were obliged to attend extra instruction hours before their regular classes and to remain for prep/group studies in the afternoon. These sessions focused on clarifying difficult concepts, reinforcing key principles, and practicing exam-style questions to build students' confidence and proficiency.

Mock Examinations

To familiarize students with the format the MSCE exams, teachers challenged the candidate with several weekly mock examinations. These simulations replicated the actual exam conditions, allowing students to practice time management, refine their exam strategies, and identify areas for improvement. On the same matter, Malawi National Examination Board visited the campus to examine the school's capacity. We are happy to share that Rays of Hope Academy was successful and given a go ahead to register its students for (MSCE) national exams.

Beyond academic achievement, we hoped our programming would nurture students' personal and social skills. , instilled discipline, perseverance, and effective study habits, empowering students with valuable life skills that extend beyond the realm of examinations.



Celebrating Achievements and Honoring Students

Rays of Hope Academy hosted a joyous graduation ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of our dedicated students. It was a memorable occasion where students received their well-deserved completion certificates and special awards, marking the successful completion of their educational journey. The event was followed by a delightful lunch and a fun-filled afternoon by the swimming pool, providing a lasting experience for all.

Looking forward

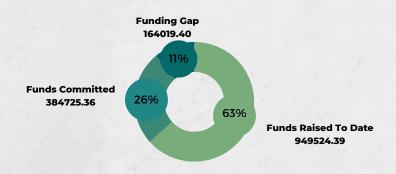
Rays of Hope Academy is excited about enrolling new students into the form one class as the current students move up to grade 10 in the upcoming academic year. The team has already established a recruitment strategy, which will be implemented during the upcoming summer. Additionally, the academy is eagerly anticipating the release of the national standardized results for grades 10 and grade 12. Over the past three years, the academy has achieved a commendable 100% score, and they are determined to sustain this impressive record.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

BUDGET UPDATE

This year, our budget is **US\$ 1,498,269.15** with a funding gap of 11%.



INCOME & EXPENDITURE

INCOME	MWK	USD
From Foundations and	978,010,121.70	949,524.39
Individuals		
	978,010,121.70	949,524.39
EXPENSES		
Program	396,267,120.80	389,960.42
Administrative and Personel	72,286,265.20	70,180.84
	473,945,497.80	460,141.26
ASSETS		
Furniture	8,658,950.00	8,406.75
Equipment	4,807,675.00	4,667.65
(=)	13,466,625.00	13,047.40















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