

RAYS
HOPE

Transformative Education

Quarter

REPORT

2022



From the Executive Director

I think this is one of my memorable quarters! No. I did not raise more money than expected, but our work continues to bear fruits, some that we never thought will come our way. I got a call from our programs manager who was visibly excited, sharing news that all of our students who took the grade 10 national exams have passed. Rabson got eight A's!

He continued. "...but Rabson, our best student, walks 12 kms daily just to attend school." He leaves home at 5am and gets back at 7pm. My heart sunk! We have resolved to meet his transportation needs.

Barely hours later, the Academy Teacher called me – our two students (Jedediah and Etta), are selected to join other two students to represent Malawi at the Robotics Competition in Geneva, Switzerland. I could not believe it! No, I could... We introduced mandatory tech electives at the Rays of Hope Academy, exposing our students to tech language and skills.

During the year, we took our grade 11 students to a robotic bootcamp, organized by the Robotics Malawi Foundation Limited. Clearly, our students stood out. These two were chosen to be part of the Malawi team!

A few days later, our teacher training coordinator called me – "Sir, I just wanted to let you know that Blantyre Rural education district has moved up in performance, again. It is now on position 27 from 29 last year". Wow! When we started, we the district was the last in performance out of all 34 districts. Too many successes to celebrate for!

Our work continues. We are in six education districts, reaching over 4,000 teachers, in 222 primary schools, serving 242,000 students at a cost of \$2.80 per beneficiary per year!

We thank God for these fruits. I am proud of the team for their diligence. I commend our partners both financial and strategic for their support.



Willie Mpasuka
Executive Director





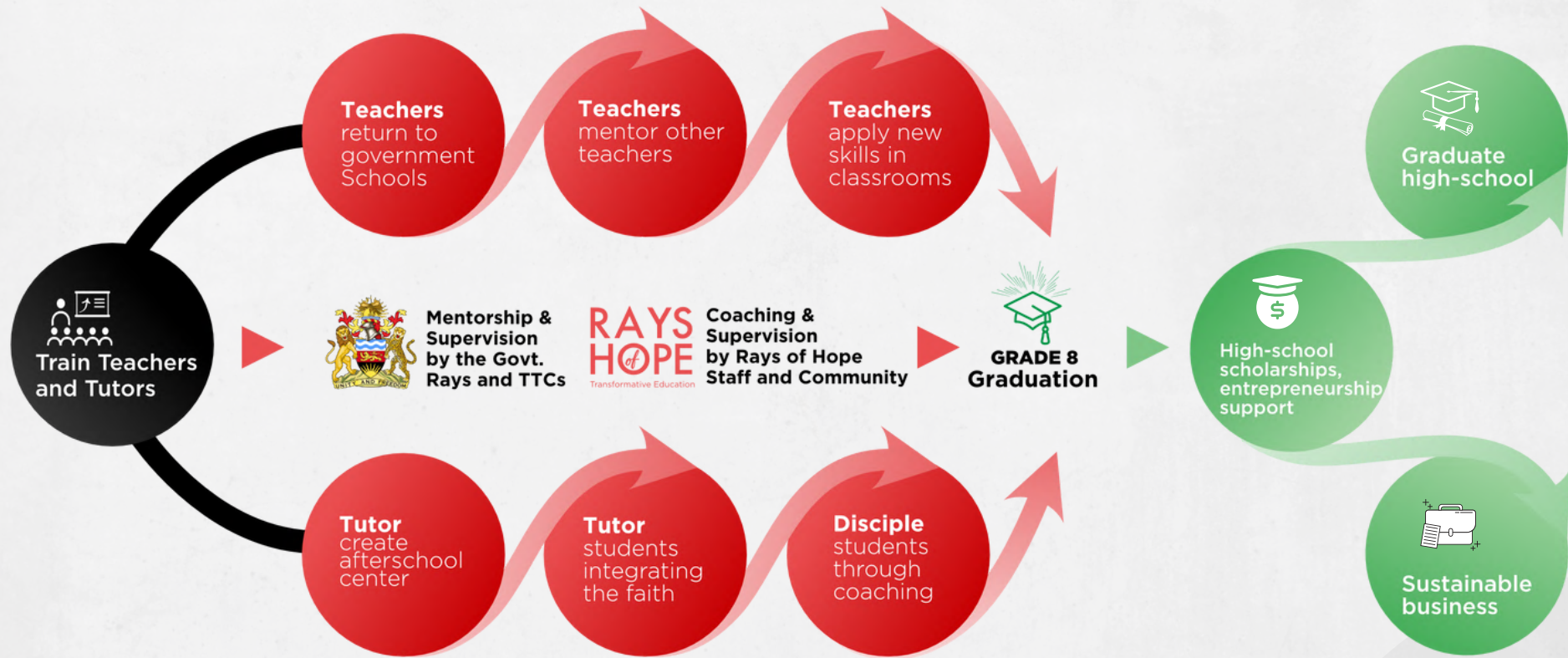
Rays of Hope exists to transform Malawi by equipping teachers and educating children in public schools. Our program areas are teacher training, remedial lessons, provision of bursaries/scholarships, and we run an excellent high-school for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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 vision is that every child and youth access transformative education.

Our model



Approach & Goals



Academic Innovation

Train 4,000 teachers in 6 education districts to reduce technical gaps.

Run after-school programs across 10 primary schools in Blantyre district and work with 1100 learners.

Maintain 95% primary school completion rate among the 10 targeted primary schools in Blantyre.



Academic Inclusion

Support 300 secondary school students with bursaries

Run coaching and mentoring activities with 260 secondary schools on our bursary program



Economic Integration

Expose 100 youth to entrepreneurship opportunities


Support 10 innovative enterprise ideas from ideation to an actual business

Establish 20 youth village saving groups in Blantyre

Quarterly Milestones

 **4,153**
teachers trained


 **100%**
JCE pass rate


 **47**
Youth trained on record keeping and cash flow management

36%
PSLC selection rate 

261
students on scholarships and mentorship 

\$10k
Earmarked for Youth businesses 

 **99%**
pass rate at primary school leaving certificate exams

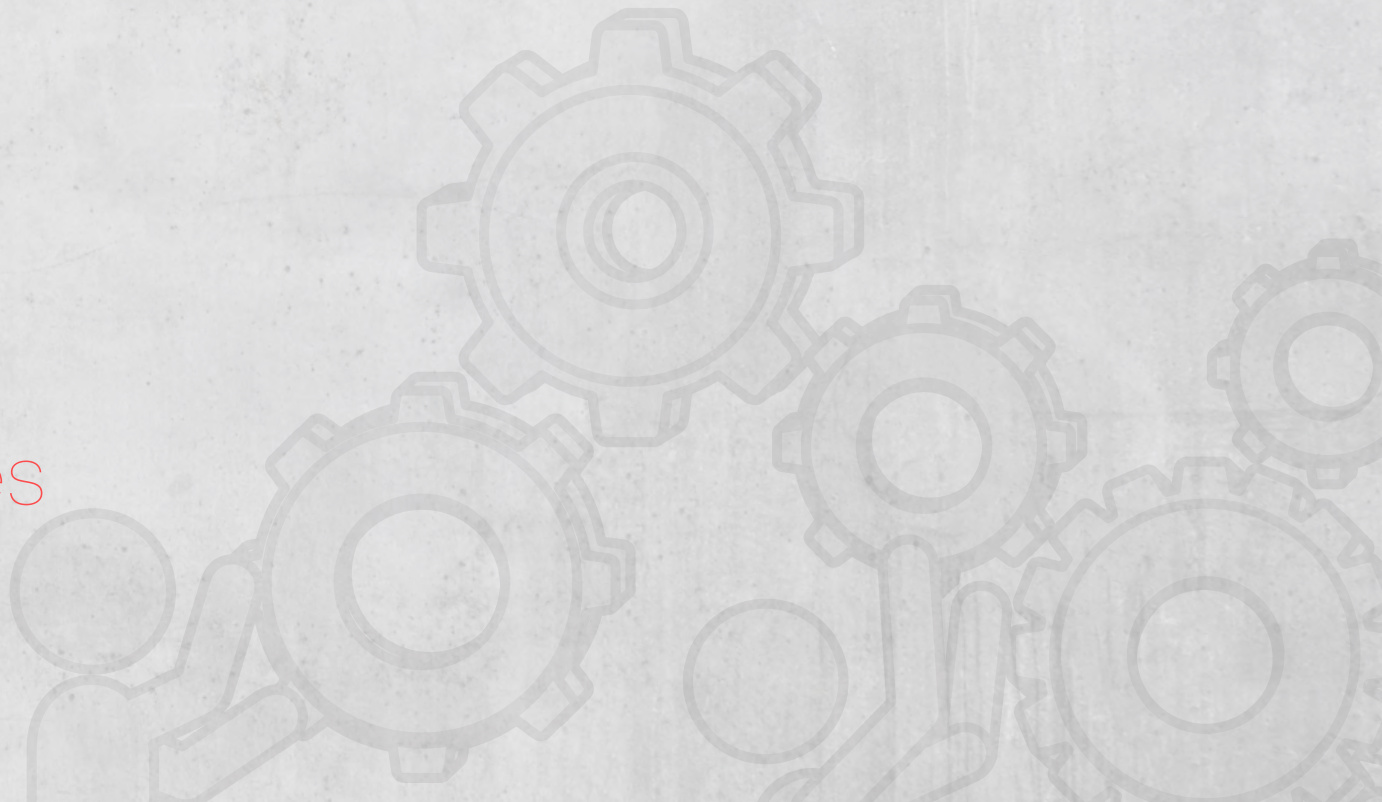
 **0%**
Dropout rate for all students on bursaries

 **15**
Youth Savings Groups created so far



Quarter

Program Updates




Academic Innovation

Teacher Training

The context

1:98
*Malawi's classroom
to student ratio*

A stylized illustration showing a teacher figure on the right and several student figures on the left, representing a classroom setting.

Our teacher training program is designed to respond to the gaps that exist in the teacher education and related services. Generally, we have inadequate number of teachers in public schools. According to the latest publication by the Ministry of Education in Malawi, the country has 76,794 teachers (including unqualified ones) in primary school, with a student population of 4,943,633 students in grades 1 to 8. On average, **Malawi has a teacher to student ratio of 1:65, and a classroom to student ratio of 1:98.** This is worrying on many fronts as follows.

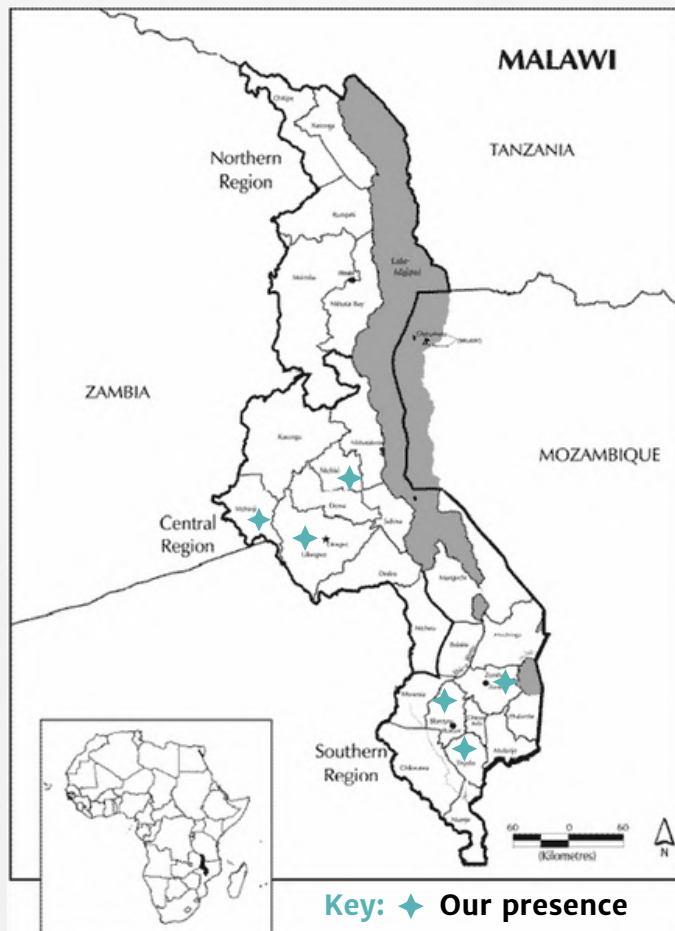
The same publication reported that the system has at least five per cent of unqualified teachers. In short, not all teachers possess the same quality and ability to teach students in primary school. To put it differently, these numbers seem to say that five per cent of students in the primary public education system get a raw deal – they are taught by unqualified teachers.

Second, the same publication hinted at the absence of supervision and coaching in primary school. We only got data for secondary school, which invites more worries than hope. In the current year, the document says that in the first and second school terms, 87% of schools were not visited, and in the third school term 88% of schools were not visited. It basically means that teachers are not properly supported or coached once they are in their schools.

Third, our education system does not have adequate resources to professionally develop in-service teachers. Again, the document is silent on continuous professional development, a recognized strategy in teacher education in Malawi. The need for this cannot be emphasized. We carried out a baseline on teacher skill gaps and in two districts, and on both over 95% of the teachers report not to have skills to teach Expressive Arts, which is an examinable subject.

Academic Innovation

Teacher Training



Our Model in Practice

Existing challenges in teacher education and professional development give credence to the need for our program. Teachers need to be supported. Period. However, we do not walk in as experts, we thrive on partnerships with other like-minded stakeholders.

First, we walk into a cluster of schools together with the Ministry of Education officials, representatives from local teacher training colleges, and the Rays of Hope team to assess teacher skill gaps.

Second, we analyze the findings and build content that speaks to such gaps. Emphasis is placed on the pedagogy, content masterly, and the school leadership.

Third, we deliver the content through the Trainer of Trainers (ToTs) approach. The ToTs then cascade the learnings to the rest of the teachers. Schools commit to use their resources to cascade the knowledge to the rest of the teachers.

Fourth, we carry out monitoring and supervision activities on the teachers who did not come to the ToT sessions to prove that the material was passed on effectively.

Our Scale Plan



Our Scale in Practice

We have been intentional about growing the teacher training program because it fits a scale profile. First, the problem is big, potentially reaching over 80,000 teachers. Second, our solution is cheap enough – we are able to serve a student for as low as US\$2.8 a year!

Fourth, our solution is simple enough – we deploy content, and schools cascade the knowledge to the rest of the teachers in various schools using their own resources. Fifth, our model works. Two districts have improved their performance – Zomba Rural moved from position 10 to 2; Blantyre Rural moved from the last position 34 to position 27 this year!



222

Schools Reached...

The teacher skill-strengthening initiative continues to grow. We are now training 4153 teachers across six districts – Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural, Ntchisi, Mchinji, Thyolo, and Blantyre Urban. In total, through the teacher training program, we are serving 242,000 students in 222 primary schools. **The cost of our beneficiary per year has dropped to US\$2.8, from US\$3!**

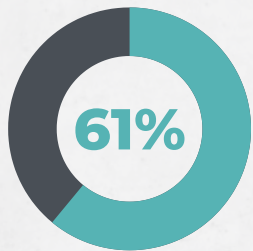
The demand is still huge. Oftentimes, we get requests from schools around our implementation locations to expand the initiative. We only hope that after we prove our concept the government can absorb it in its routine exercise. Our goal is to get out of work.

Academic Innovation

Tutoring and Feeding

The context

Ideally, we started off to speak to the gaps that existed in the education system, especially in primary school. As a reminder, in 1994 when the free primary school policy was introduced, there were no sufficient additional resources to match the enrollment surge. This resulted in a high teacher-student ratio as high as 1:120 a class. Unsurprisingly, there was a high repetition rate, drop-out rate, absenteeism, and learning was not taking place.



*of students do not get to
the final grade*

Fast forward to date, these problems still exist. The survival rate, which is the ability of a student to stay in school to the last grade, is still low, especially in the upper classes in primary school. According to the latest publication from the Ministry of Education, survival rate from standard 5 to 8 is at 39%. This means that **at least 61% of students do not get to the final grade**. Sadly, this has also affected the number of students who make a jump into secondary school.

The transition rate for students into secondary school is now at 42%, which is an improvement from the last two years ago, when it stood at 38%. The country's repetition rate is at 25%, which is worrying to say the least.

Education is a right, and as a country, we claim that we are providing this right – however, we argue that poor education cannot qualify as the provision of this right. On average, classroom to student ratio is at 1:98, but in districts such as Thyolo it stands at 1:110, and Zomba at 1:124!

The situation continues to be the rationale of our programs, especially for the poor since poverty and education strikes a strong correlation.

Academic Innovation

Tutoring and Feeding

Our Model in Practice

Our tutoring initiative, otherwise known as afterschool, is designed to provide an opportunity to children from humble backgrounds to get the best out of the same system. We deliver our program in this way.

First, we partner with schools and communities to identify and enroll students in our program that are struggling in their academics.

Second, they come to our centers, receive a meal and participate in our faith-integrated education activities to enhance the lessons they got from their schools.

Third, we provide personalized tutoring to individual students including group teaching led by our trained Godly tutors. These are secondary school graduates who are waiting to go to college, and they spend their break year with us.

Fourth, all the students in our program, who pass the national standardized exams at national level get scholarships. Some of the students go to our academy for their secondary education.



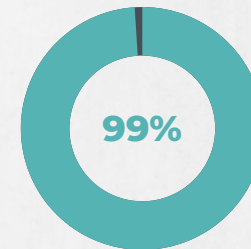
Academic Innovation

Tutoring and Feeding

Our Success

Thanks to our team running the tutoring program for the past quarter. It was a win. We continue to surpass our own targets. For starters, we have maintained our numbers, yet having the same quality as shown by the standardized national tests results! We serve 1,041 students in our program from Monday to Thursday, the team is our hero! One of the reasons students come to our program is that they get attention. Now, to give attention to a thousand student every day requires diligence, commitment, and passion – this is what our team gives daily for 10 weeks in a single term.

We do not just celebrate quantity; quality matters to us. Out of 136 students in grade 8 who took the national exams, 134 passed, and 53 students are selected to various public secondary schools across the country. Based on these numbers, **we have achieved 99% pass rate, higher than our target of 95% pass rate.**



*Pass rate
at grade 8*

To achieve these results, we kept our commitment of providing educational support to our students through tutoring. We continue to improve our program and we added other activities that are not traditional to the tutoring initiative. First, we carried out a summer science camp where over 700 students showed up for scientific experiments and projects. Second, we introduced and supported spelling bee competitions in our locations in Blantyre district.

Academic Inclusion

Scholarships and Coaching/Mentorship

The context

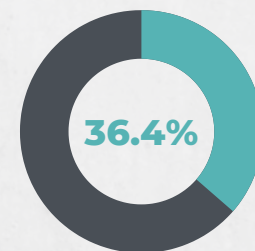
Malawi uses an 8-4-4 education system, where a student spends eight years in primary school, four years in secondary school, and ideally 4 years in university. It is hoped that after 16 years of education, an individual can significantly contribute to the economy of the nation. However, various factors impede the dream including insufficient resources for students in all the school levels such as inadequate teachers, unqualified teachers, inadequate materials for teaching and learning. The secondary school level is not spared in this.

The secondary education system has limited resources to accommodate the number equivalent to those who graduate from primary school. Currently, the total number of students in secondary schools in Malawi is at 441,102. You may want to know that those who passed in grade 8 in 2022, ready to get into secondary school are 216,664, yet the current enrolment in grade 9, is at 121,231 only. This means that at least 50% of those who deserve to access secondary education will not have that opportunity. The Ministry of Education acknowledges that a big reason for this is that prospective students for secondary school do not have financial resources to access the education. This is very sad.

Making a jump into secondary school is one thing, learning is another. The quality of education in secondary schools leaves a lot to be desired and leads to school dropout. For starters, the Ministry of Education reports that it has 16,757 teachers, but 35% of these are untrained!

In the 2021 academic year, a whopping 23,063 dropped out of school. Further, **it is revealed that 36.4 percent of those dropped out because they did not have financial resources to pay school fees**; 5.8 percent of girl-children got pregnant, and about 0.5 percent dropped out because of violence.

This rationalizes the need for the academic inclusion program, which provides scholarships and coaching.



School Dropout rate related to fees

Academic Inclusion

Scholarships and Coaching/Mentorship



Academic Inclusion

Scholarships and Coaching/Mentorship

Our Model in Practice

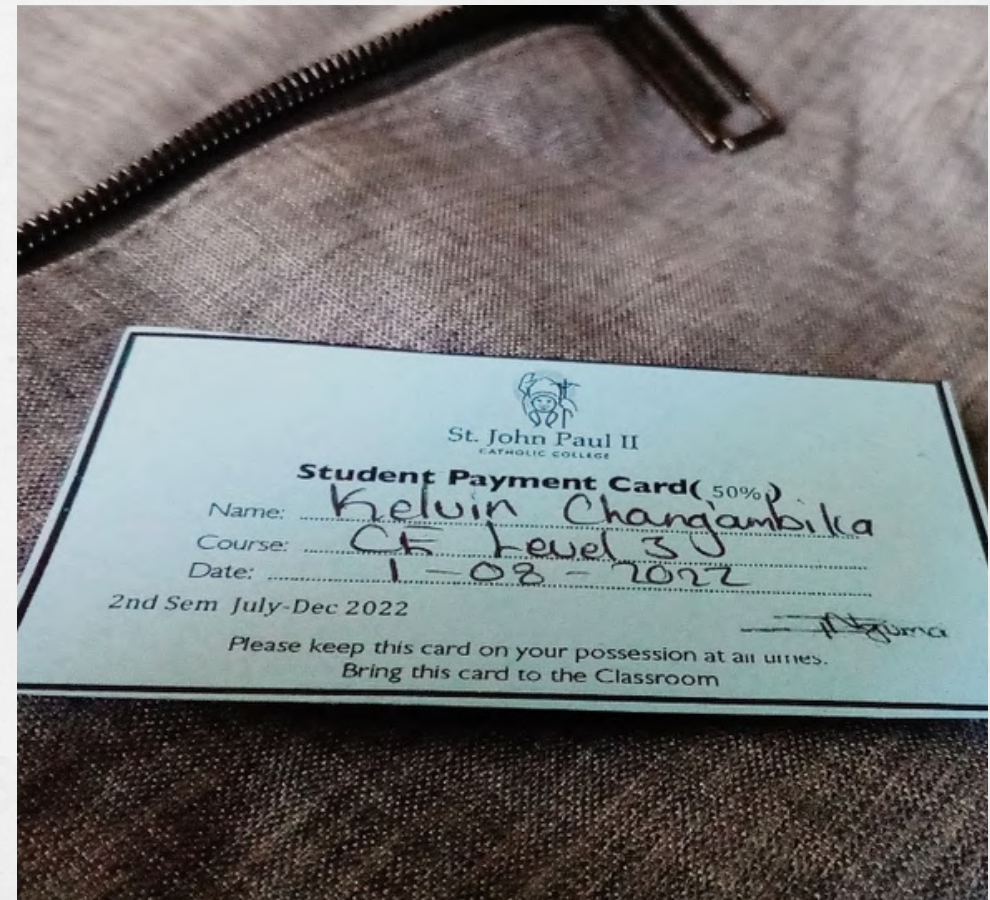
The challenges in secondary school education in Malawi as highlighted above created the rationale for this program. We intend to remove the barriers to access education that are financial and non-financial through the provision of scholarships and coaching or mentorship in the following way.

First, we recruit students from humble backgrounds who have exceptional grades into our scholarship program. We give top priority to those who are in our tutoring program.

Second, we provide them with finances to pay their school fees. They take care of other needs such as uniforms and incidentals.

Third, they become part of our coaching and mentorship initiative. This is where our mentors spend time with them and navigate daily challenges in their academics using the biblical counselling model.

We do this because we know that barriers to access education are beyond money as seen above.



Academic Inclusion

Scholarships and Coaching/Mentorship



Our Success

The past quarter has been a success for our academic inclusion program on both quantity and quality of the program.

First, we have expanded our program in terms of reach. We provided scholarships to 261 students who had no hope to be in secondary school because of the money.

Second, all the students on our scholarship program, who were in tenth grade, and took the national standardized tests, passed. We scored 100 percent on that front.

Third, we introduced study circles as a way to help the students improve in their academics. Students create groups and study together. They use such groups as a resource for their academics. We are so happy it paid off.

Fourth, our faith-integrated coaching and mentorship program has proven to be a successful one. We have not seen dropout cases caused by early pregnancies or violence and we believe it is because we provide spaces for the youth talk to someone. Our mentors become handy for that.

Economic Integration

Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership

The context

This program recognizes that in Malawi we have high unemployment rate, particularly for youth. Practically, there is no employment. The problem emanates from our education system where we have not successfully equipped the students to build and sustain our economy, among the many factors.

The 2013 Malawi Labor Force Survey found that the country's unemployment rate was at 21% going by the ILO's definition. The youth's unemployment was at 23%. The report, however, found that the majority of the employed (89%) are in the informal category. In 2018, the draft report of the survey commissioned by the Reserve Bank of Malawi found that 11% of the population were in formal employment. In short, largely the country's population has employment in the informal sector known for underemployment and exploitation.

The situation does disservice to the youth. This is scary considering that 46% of the population is below the age 15, and those aged 15 – 29 make 25% of the population. **One article in 2012 observed that 130,000 youth enter the job market every year, but the job market cannot absorb them.** In 2015, the ILO reported that in many low-income countries such as Malawi, three in four youth workers are in irregular employment, and 90% of the youth remain in informal employment.

All these studies and the corresponding data reveal one thing – many young people are unemployed, under-employed, and underpaid. Efforts to push for the formal route do not seem to repay. In 2019, for example, 57,293 students passed grade 12 exams, representing 41.42%. From these, 24,745 students qualified and applied for public university education. Sadly, universities only admitted 3327 students of those who qualified; 6% of those who passed 12th grade exams; and just 2% of the entire 12th grade cohort.

Clearly, formal education is not the only way to success – **"youth need to explore entrepreneurship"**.



130K
youth enter the job market every year, but the job market cannot absorb them...

Economic Integration

Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership



Our Model in Practice

This is one of our newest programs added to our portfolio the past few years. In principle, it is designed to offer economic independence prospects to youth that are sideline in the current economic system. Below are the key steps we take in implementing the program.

First, we recruit secondary school graduates, train them in tutoring students and enroll them into soft skills courses such as leadership, communication, basic computer skills, and entrepreneurship.

Second, we mix them with a larger youth group and train them in entrepreneurship, others are enrolled in vocational schools, they create youth savings groups, and there is an option to get a loan for a real business.

Third, we provide support to those in vocational schools; mentor the tutors, willing to offer capital to real businesses, and support those in savings groups.

Lastly, we run the program through cohorts. Youth stay with us for a year to give the same opportunity to other youths.

Economic Integration

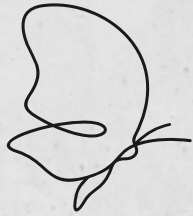
Youth Entrepreneurship and Leadership

Our Success

As mentioned earlier on, the initiative is one of the newer additions to our programs. Regardless, it has registered some wins worthy celebrating!

- All the 9 young ladies who took the training have graduated. 2 girls have secured jobs with other hair dressing; three are in manicure and pedicure services – [See the successful story of Chikondi \[23\]](#).
- Ten small businesses went through our training on record keeping, savings and cash flow development. We are glad that they now have proper cash flow statements. The remaining youth acquired skills in business start-up and development.
- The youth village savings groups managed to save \$3,846 and used some of that for their education.
- Five youth used their savings and enrolled themselves in tailoring, and computer technology with funds from their savings!
- We have earmarked \$10,000 to be disbursed in soft loans to youth.





Impact

Story





Chikondi Banda

Frustration can lead to aggression or resentment. Chikondi chose the former.

Chikondi, a young lady, aged 29, finished secondary school in 2018, but was not competitive to study in public universities. She enrolled with a private university to study business management. That never worked out. She only completed one level due to financial constraints and only acquired a certificate.

She cringed! The school journey ended there. Very frustrating!

She decided to look for a job so that she can support herself and the family. Sadly, her qualifications were too basic to compete with thousands of graduates deployed from universities and Colleges every year. Rejection followed every job interview. For three consecutive years, she remained unemployed, unproductive, and frustrated.

Following a tip from a friend, Chikondi met the team from Rays of Hope that run our Economic Integration program. They were recruiting youth for our vocational sponsorship initiative and Chikondi showed interest. She signed up for hairdressing and beauty vocational training.

She reminisced, "...for once, I felt that I have some purpose."

Chikondi and other eight young ladies enrolled with Victory Beauty and Hair Dressing School. All paid for! After three months of training, she was awarded with a certificate as a professional beauty and hairdressing artist.

Here is the fun part, right after graduation, the instructor recommended her for a job at a well-known salon in Dedza district where she is working as a Salon Supervisor. We are so delighted.

Lao Tzu got it right, "Give a guy a fish, and he will be fed for a day. "Teach him to fish, and you will feed him for a lifetime,"



Quarter

Highlights





Teacher Training Boot Camp - Lunzu

The humility of teachers in strengthening their skills through the teacher-skill strengthening initiative is so humbling. We did not expect a well dressed teacher to kneel on a seemingly dirty floor.

Spelling Bee Competition - Blantyre

In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Rays of Hope organized a spelling bee competition in Blantyre. The finalists were awarded with learning materials such as note books, Mathematical box etc. It was an exciting exercise, and some of our kids were finalists.





Computer Engineer in the making

Kevin used some of his savings from the Youth Village Savings Group (YVSG) as a supplement to the partial scholarship from Rays of Hope to study computer engineering at a private college in Blantyre. He is also one of our diligent tutors.

Beatrice working on her passion to be a fashion designer

Beatrice used some of her savings from the Youth Village Savings Group (YVSG) as a supplement to the partial scholarship from Rays of Hope to study fashion design at a private college in Blantyre. She is also one of our trusted tutors.





Community

Advocacy & Partnerships





Official Meeting with the Kenyan Representative

We continue to advocate for more resources toward learners with special needs through the Pamodzi for Inclusive Education project. Here is our team with our Kenyan partner, Kesho-Kenya engaging with the government official, the Kilifi Deputy Governor, H.E. Flora Mbetsa Chibule on inclusive education in her office.



Giving power to the community

Pamodzi for Inclusive education consortium is making progress in advocating for inclusive education in all the three countries (Malawi, Tanzania, and Kenya). In the 3rd quarter our teams identified 210 community champions that include chiefs, parents of learners with special needs, headteachers, and other community gatekeepers to advocate for more resources to inclusive education.

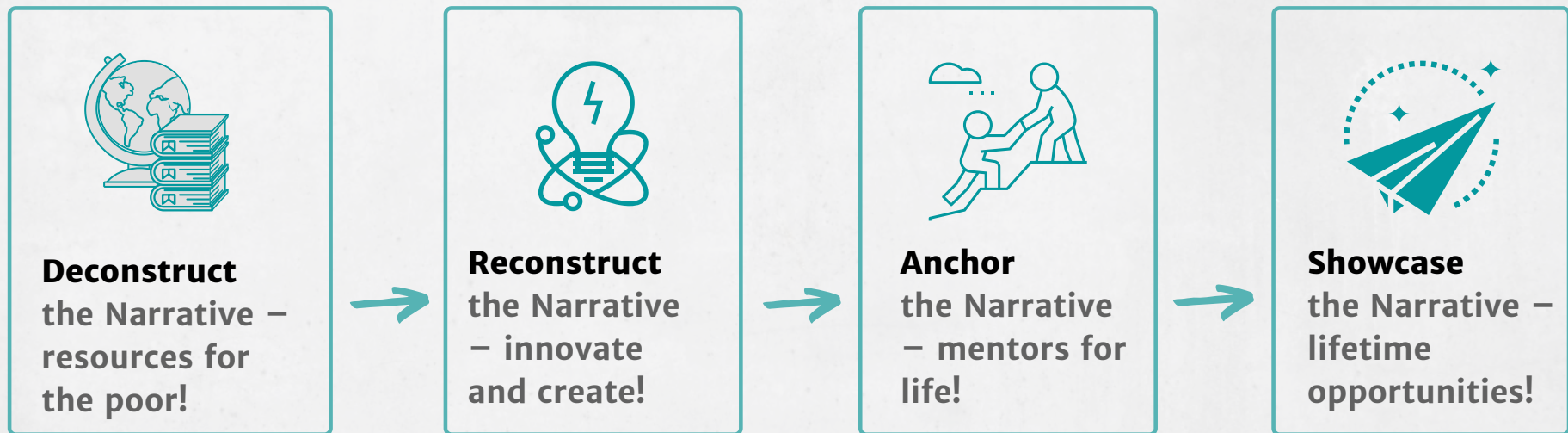


RAYS OF HOPE
— ACADEMY —

Bright Minds Bright Future



Our Model



- Our Model is Holistic -

Quarterly Goals



Get Grade 12 Examination Center status with the Malawi National Examinations Board.



Enroll 20 new students in grade 9 to have a complete high school for the first time!



Support 10th Grade student towards their National Standardised Tests.



Employ and groom new teachers, adding forces towards the next academic year.



The Academy's Excellence

The Rays of Hope Academy continues to grow with excellence! A few years ago, this was just a dream – but now it has become a reality. We are an institution of excellence and have started to attract some attention.

In our previous report, we shared that the second cohort of students in grade 10 are ready to take the national standardized exams. Rays of Hope Academy school has done it again. All 27 students passed; we have maintained a 100% pass rate at the Junior Certificate of Examination Education (JCE). We are so proud of the teachers and students for setting up a consistent standard for the school.

A Complete School!

For the first time since the opening of our school – Rays of Hope Academy, we now have a complete school. Initially, we planned to enroll 20 new students to commence their studies at our school. However, we failed to reach our target but managed to register 18 students into grade nine. We have also added three more students to other classes.

We conducted the entrance examinations for students to get into our school. We received at least 35 applications, but according to the standard and the resources at our disposal, we only admitted 18 students. We are glad to have a complete secondary school!

Updates

Two Academy Students Represent Malawi in Geneva - Switzerland

Rays of Hope Academy is built to foster creativity and innovation in its students. We bring scientific and technological concepts to students to encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation.

We offer mandatory electives in computer science, graphic designing and entrepreneurship.

In July when we took grade 11 students to 3 days robotics boot camp organized by Robotics Foundation Limited Malawi in Blantyre. Students learned how to build basic robots from scratch. Our students, Jedediah and Etta were spotted for their tech acumen, and joined the Malawi team.

A team of four went to Switzerland and attended the robotics competition. Team Malawi finished on position 52 out of 163 countries in the global challenge, and Jedediah came back home with a safety award. We thank God for opening doors for our students.





Welcome Mr. Nkhata

Rays of Hope academy has recruited a new teacher as an addition workforce considering the growth of the school. Mr. Mac Molland Nkhata is a Biomedical Engineer, he obtained his degree from Malawi University of Science and technology.

He has currently taken a special interest in teaching Physics and is not new to the teaching profession. He has been teaching physics since 2015 to date.

Mr. Nkhata aspires to become a leading physicist in Malawi, to use mathematical concepts to analyze and predict the behavior of the physical world. Further, his passion is to simplify complex concepts of physics to secondary school students in a language they can understand.

The academy employs teachers with degrees from reputable institutions as a minimum qualification. Our aim is to keep the education standards high and provide the students with role models who can inspire them to chase their dreams.

We are happy to have teachers who are well aware about the vision of the academy and are willing to work together in naturing future leaders.



Financial

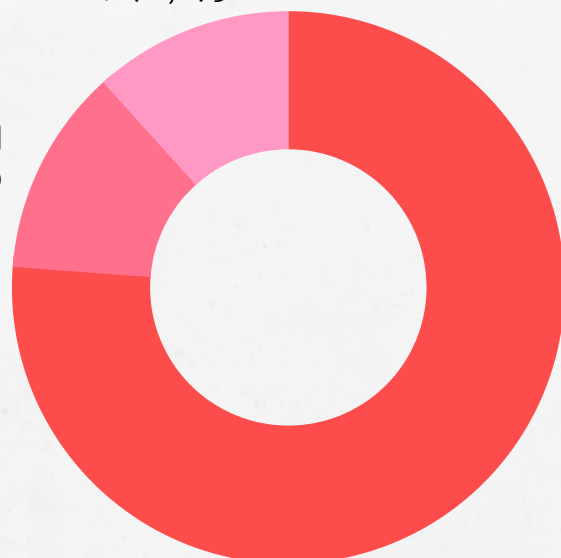
S u m m a r y



Updates

For the year 2022, our budget was capped at US\$1,508,652. We are looking good so far, at the moment we have a funding gap of 11.7%.

Funding Gap
\$176,275



Funds Raised To Date
\$1,149,420.53

INCOME

MWK

USD

☉ From Foundations and Individuals

1,183,903,142.64

999,091.42

☉

1,183,903,142.64

1,149,420

EXPENSES

☉ Program

620,542,029.70

602,467.99

☉ Administrative and Personnel

133,927,546

130,026.74

☉

754,469,575.70

732,494.73

ASSETS

☉ Furniture

2,177,150.00

2,113.74

☉ Equipment

4,435,000.00

4,305.00

☉ Motorcycle & Vehicles

2,950,000.00

3,687.50

☉ Land & Building (after valuation)

208,000,000.00

260,000.00

☉

217,562,150.00

270,106.24



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