



When communities come together

Temwa Community Literacy Midterm Report – July 2021

This report shares the achievements of Temwa's three-year Community Literacy project implemented in Nkhata Bay North, Malawi, between January–June 2021. As schools in Nkhata Bay North have very large class sizes and often intermittent attendance, the Community Literacy project aims to improve education levels of children, youth and adults through access to schooling, educational materials, improved facilities, and community-based support structures. Despite Covid-19 causing severe disruptions to educational provision in Malawi, this project was successfully launched last year and has continued to adapt to the evolving community needs for educational support during this challenging time. The project has strengthened the community structures around educational provision, and Temwa is ready to continue and expand the planned activities throughout 2021.

Covid-19 Situation in Nkhata Bay North

The Covid-19 situation in Malawi rapidly deteriorated in early 2021, as Malawi too faced the second, and worse, wave of the virus. Due to this, schools were briefly closed in early 2021, although they had only just reopened in September after a 6-month closure. While this only caused minor disruptions to project implementation, the prolonged school closures due to Covid-19 have led to an alarming increase in sexual relationships, substance misuse, teenage pregnancies, child marriages and school dropout rates among children and youth. Your support to Temwa's education programme has been very timely, as it improves community literacy, reduces barriers to education and supports inclusive and equal education – all of which are particularly important now to help encourage children and young people to continue with their education.

Community Education Achievements

We are proud to report that, despite Covid-19, the project has made excellent progress and helped strengthen community literacy through the following achievements:

- ★ **20 weekly Reading Camps reopened in May** after being closed for over a year due to Covid-19 restrictions and have been attended by 1,266 learners per week (52% girls) – far exceeding the project target of up to 800. As a testament to the effectiveness of our approach: **Usisya was recognised as one of the best performing education zones nationally**, and the top one in the district, regarding literacy skills.
- ★ **38 voluntary Reading Camp mentors** (42% women) **have been trained** in line with the National Reading Programme standard and in making reading materials using locally available resources. These **books reflect local stories and culture** which can help engage learners as they can easily relate to the familiar content. 324 books and 530 journal articles were also donated by the Teacher Development Centre, adding to the stock of educational resources available for Reading Camps.
- ★ **1,751 visitors (28% women) were recorded at the Usisya Community Library**. The Usisya Community Library has established itself as a **popular place of learning for school-going children** who are attracted by the available curriculum books and conducive learning environment.

- ★ **10 school libraries and the Usisya Community Library were furnished** with 12 new double-sided shelving units, which has **improved the library facilities and increased access to resources**. Additionally, **30 teachers (33% women) and 35 representatives** of School Management Committees, Parent Teacher Associations and Mother Groups (46% women) from these 10 primary schools were **trained in delivering library services**. Through the training, attendees formulated action plans for establishing well-managed school libraries that can also provide extended access to services to their local communities.
- ★ **Local education bylaws were created** and have contributed to **the wider community valuing and being involved in their children's education**. These bylaws are enforced by local governance structures and state, for example, that no child is supposed to be found along the lakeshore fishing, selling, or buying fish during school hours. The bylaws were created as a result of community engagement meetings supported by Temwa and are reportedly leading to an **increased enrolment of children at school**.

“This is a future investment for my community”

James Desire Chirwa is a mentor for 149 learners at the Nkhutu Reading Camp in Usisya and was proud to see the success of the Usisya education zone being recognised for literacy achievements across Malawi. He has noticed how the attendance at Reading Camps is growing, which he says signifies how the communities are valuing and increasing their support for education and literacy skills. “If these children advance their reading and writing skills



their performance will definitely improve and increase their chances of being educated, a key to unlocking the development of this community”.

James' role as a mentor involves providing interactive support for learners through reading, writing and educational games. He says his greatest achievement as a mentor is seeing how the children not only develop their reading skills, but can comprehend the content of stories as well.

Reading Camps were able to reopen around May 2021, and James has been excited about welcoming his learners back and helping them to develop their literacy skills and confidence.

By supporting the Temwa Community Literacy project, you are helping to train mentors like James. They facilitate fun and engaging learning experiences that help advance the education and future opportunities of young learners in Nkhata Bay North.

Thank You

Temwa is incredibly grateful for the generous support of our donors towards the Community Literacy project during this unprecedented time. Going forward, we will keep working around the changing situation with Covid-19, while continuing to empower the communities to take a leading role in managing education activities locally – and ultimately creating more educated, equal and resilient communities that are able to transform their own futures.

On behalf of the Temwa UK and Malawi teams, thank you again for your very kind support!