



# MAJAWA PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

October 2023



## From the Desk of the Executive Director

I am delighted to introduce the first issue of our Majawa Project Bulletin. As we start this enlightening endeavor, we genuinely hope that this medium offers a glimpse into the inspiring endeavors and tales from Majawa, Mangochi District.

In our premiere article, we highlight the remarkable accomplishments of Mangochi District's children, youth, and women. Their relentless pursuit in areas like education, agricultural independence, and communal unity mirrors the principles of the Majawa Project. Narratives such as the founding of a new elementary school in a region where young ones had to cover vast lands underline the positive impact we hope to make.

This debut issue underscores our commitment to nurturing the early years and uplifting young minds. By equipping them with hands-on learning and capacity-building, we're laying the foundation for a promising future.

I would also like to express our profound gratitude to Malawi Community Hubs. Their generous support has been instrumental in bringing our vision to life in Majawa. Their contribution has not only been financial but also in trust and faith in our cause.

To all our collaborators, benefactors, local leaders, and anyone resonating with the Majawa Project's purpose, our heartfelt gratitude. Your unwavering trust and dedication fuel our endeavors. As we share this bulletin and future ones, let's appreciate every stride we make collectively in creating a stronger, self-sustaining, and prosperous community.

Your unwavering backing and trust illuminate the way for an even brighter future.



With profound gratitude,

**McBlessing Buda**

**Executive Director**

**Youth for Development and Productivity**





Children at an ECD Center during lessons

## ELEVATING EDUCATION: INITIATIVES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

### Frackson Makwangwala

At the core of the Majawa Project is YODEP's steadfast dedication to Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Education. Leading this mission, YODEP is diligently striving to transform the educational framework for our community's youngest members.

YODEP is committed to ensuring young scholars flourish in favorable settings. Currently, eight ECD centers are under development, each designed with the highest attention to detail to provide a secure and encouraging educational setting. Notably, the rejuvenation of the 'Yankho' ECD center in Village Head (VH) Majawa and the 'Chigwirizano' ECD center in Group

both nearing their final stages.

*"The significance of a well-suited environment for early learning is paramount," conveys Sara Sanyiwa, an ECD Caretaker at the Sunshine Mg'ara nursery school. With YODEP's involvement, we are observing a favorable change, and it is uplifting to watch children prosper in these environments."*

Echoing these sentiments, Christina Everson, a Care giver at Yankho ECD center, remarked, *"The Majawa Project's dedication to developing and enhancing these centers represents a ray of hope for many. We are keenly anticipating the moment all eight centers are filled with enthusiastic young students."*



**Current Sunshine Mg'ara Nursery School**



**Under Construction Chigwirizano ECD Center**



**Completed Yankho ECD Center**



Students during lessons at Namabvi Primary School

## BREATHING LIFE INTO PRIMARY EDUCATION

Frackson Makwangwala

In a region where young ones once journeyed over seven kilometers in search of knowledge, YODEP has established the Namabvi Primary School, closing this formidable distance. This invaluable project has already led to better attendance rates, with the number of enrollments growing consistently. Furthermore, with top-tier infrastructure and cozy accommodation for teachers, the school exemplifies the success of initiatives led by the community.

Chief Majawa, a respected leader in the vicinity, conveyed his sincere appreciation and pride. *"The foundation of the primary school by the Majawa Project marks a significant chapter for our community. We have embraced this project with open arms, donating land and contributing local materials. It signifies our*

*dedication to a more promising tomorrow. We have experienced the challenges posed by illiteracy; this school stands as our guiding light."*

Mr. Amos Alison Kalonga, the honored headteacher of the school, further stated, *"YODEP's initiatives have not only made education more accessible but have also sparked a rejuvenated zeal for learning among the young ones. Each day carries more potential."*



A cross section view of the constructed Namabvi Primary School in Mangochi



A constructed Head teachers house at Majawa FP School



A front view of the constructed teacher house with solar panels at the school



A member of the 'Majawa Youth Club' actively listening to an instructor at a workshop

## BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP THROUGH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR THE YOUTH

Chifuniro Minthanje

Within the core of our community, a transformative tide is steadily gaining momentum. This shift is powered by young people who are now armed with abilities paving the way for a brighter future. This transformation is driven by the novel initiative focused on empowering the youth by imparting practical skills. The initiative masterfully combines the age-old practice of mentorship with modern skill-development strategies.

While formal education remains pivotal in today's world, the significance of hands-on training in specific trades is undeniable. With this understanding, the initiative introduced the "Mentorship Model/Skills Transfer Model." This effortless approach ensures that

seasoned artisans pass down their crucial expertise to the next generation of eager learners. The model's distinguishing feature is its emphasis on real-world practice, where the young individuals not only study the basics but actively engage in woodworking and construction tasks.

The initiative's distinct method closes the divide between classroom learning and practical know-how. Moving beyond conventional educational environments, this approach lets young people learn directly from accomplished craftsmen. Such close collaboration offers instant feedback, practical knowledge, and direct experience, shaping these young learners into adept craftsmen in their own standing.



Members of the 'Mpama Youth Club' actively engaged in tending to their tomato garden as part of the agricultural productivity initiative.

## AGRICULTURE INNOVATIONS, A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY

Sara Kaombe

Nestled within our community's heartland is the burgeoning green. This initiative has set forth on a mission to blend traditional farming with innovative, environmentally friendly techniques, focusing primarily on empowering local youth. A combination of sustainable farming practices and livestock incorporation promises not just food

security, but also a bright economic future for our young farmers.

The Majawa project, has been instrumental in training the beneficiaries in the art and science of agriculture. From understanding the intricacies of compost manure making to mastering the nuances of crop management, these young agricultural enthusiasts have been guided to cultivate a diverse range of

crops, such as vegetables, tomatoes, Maize, and sweet potatoes. But the true innovation lies in Majawa project's strategy to interlink crop farming with livestock rearing. Recognizing the myriad benefits of livestock farming, YODEP decided to infuse the project with an additional layer of resourcefulness - the introduction of goats to local



Jeremial Samson a Youth Club member watering a youth club vegetable garden



youth. These resilient creatures offer a multifaceted boon to the agricultural paradigm.

Goats are not just sources of milk and meat. They are pillars of sustainability in the world of agriculture. They offer an economic avenue through the sale of surplus produce. Their adaptability to various terrains makes them an impeccable choice for local farming. But one of their most invaluable contributions is the nutrient-rich manure they produce. This manure not only enriches the soil but ensures a bountiful harvest, playing a pivotal role in the region's food security.

However, the brilliance of the project's design shines through its "pass on" model. It's a model rooted in community, growth, and shared prosperity. Once a goat reproduces, the offspring are handed over to another member, ensuring the benefits circulate within the community, promoting a spirit of unity and collective advancement.

Through these strategic moves, the Majawa project has not merely introduced farming techniques; it has sowed the seeds of communal growth, economic empowerment, and sustainable living, ensuring that the community reaps the benefits for generations to come.



Local Participants proudly presents the goats provided under the "Pass-On Initiative" in the Majawa Project.





Members of the 'M'gala' Village Savings and Loan (VSL) group gathered at Group Village Head (GVH) Nkata.

## VSL's A GATE WAY TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM

### Frackson Makwangwala

Situated amidst the scenic charm of 'M'gala' Village, a transformative wave in community-driven economics is emerging. Locally recognized as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), these village banks are blossoming throughout the region, enhancing its members' livelihoods and heralding a renewed phase of communal financial collaboration and upliftment.

*"The essence of VSLAs goes beyond mere savings and loans. It encompasses empowerment, opportunities, and collective development,"* expresses Fatima, an enthusiastic 'M'gala' VSLA participant. Her journey with the village bank epitomizes this transformation. Equipped with a VSLA loan, Fatima made a decisive move, procuring a

sewing machine and started a tailoring business. This seemingly humble step catalyzed positive shifts in her life that she had not anticipated.

Fatima's tale is but a chapter in a grander saga. Women, who often serve as the pillars of these village banks, have discovered a platform that not only grants them financial autonomy but also fuels their entrepreneurial aspirations. *"Through the sewing machine, I have not only tailored garments but also woven aspirations. Today, I mentor other community women, sharing both the craft and the vision,"* Fatima shares, her eyes sparkling with pride.

Yet, the ethos of the VSLAs is not limited to individual accomplishments. It spills over into joint endeavors, such as the collaborative rice

cultivation project embraced by its members. This unified endeavor captures the spirit of shared aid and communal thriving.

*"When we unite, our individual capabilities merge, leading us to surmount what once appeared insurmountable,"* observes Ethel Piyasi, the VSL chair.

However, understanding the mounting necessity for solid financial understanding, the project aims to deliver broader education for its members. *"It is imperative to ensure our members have the skills to adeptly oversee these banks. This knowledge enhancement marks our next stride in the empowerment journey,"* notes Sara Kaombe, the Field Facilitator for the Majawa Project

Ultimately, these village banks represent more than just financial transactions. They

symbolize aspirations, tenacity, community ties, and a unified hope for a flourishing future. Amidst the ups and downs of economic tides, the village banks remain a beacon, assuring optimism and a luminous horizon for everyone.





YODEP Staff lead by the Board Chair during food distribution to Cyclone Freddy Victims

## Together Through the Tempest – Majawa's Resilience Amidst Cyclone Freddy

**Frackson Makwangwala**

When Cyclone Freddy hit Malawi, it left a trail of devastation in its wake. Many were left without homes, food, or basic necessities. As communities reeled from the impact, YODEP sprung into action to extend support and aid to the affected members of the Majawa community.

The rapid response initiative encompassed a multifaceted approach. At the heart of this mission was the distribution of essential relief items that the community urgently required. *"The aftermath of Cyclone Freddy was deeply distressing. But witnessing our community come together, with organizations like YODEP extending immediate help, was truly heartwarming,"* remarks a grateful beneficiary, Mrs. Chikondi Malunga.

Recognizing the longer-term impact on food security, YODEP facilitated the distribution of potato tubers. This strategic decision was aimed at ensuring that families could eventually return to some semblance of normalcy by replanting and regaining their lost livelihoods.

Additionally, immediate relief came in the form of maize flour distributions, ensuring that families had food on their tables. Alongside, the distribution of essential household items like buckets, plastic sheets, cups, and plates ensured that families could start rebuilding their lives one step at a time.

*"The cyclone's impact was unforeseen and overwhelming,"* ruminates Kayondo Silumbu,

*Project Coordinator of YODEP. "But it's in challenging times that the resilience and spirit of our community shine brightest. We are immensely thankful for the rapid support of our donors and partners. Their backing allowed us to promptly respond and assist our community members in their hour of need."*

As the Majawa community continues its journey of recovery, YODEP remains steadfast in its commitment, providing resources, support, and a shoulder to lean on. The unwavering dedication to rebuilding and rejuvenating the community is a testament to YODEP's mission and the unity of Majawa.



**A Cyclone Freddy victim receiving food and essential supplies.**



**Beneficiaries receiving potato tubers during relief distribution.**

# Pictorial Highlights



“A glimpse into the heart of data driven progress. Every number we analyze today shapes a brighter tomorrow for our community”

**Frackson Makwangwala, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officer.**



MEAL Officer having an interactive discussion with youth participants who are learning building skills.



“From the heart of our community to the very soil we tread on, every step in the field brings change closer to home.”

**Sara Kaombe, Majawa Project Field Facilitator**



“Through the lens of tradition and the spirit of progress, together we weave the fabric of Majawa’s bright future.”

**GVH Majawa, Reflecting on the Projects Impact.**



“Through art and passion, our youth narrate the tales of today, setting the stage for tomorrow’s transformation.”

**Scenes from YODEP Youth Network Open Day.**



“In the Face of adversity, unity emerges. Hand in hand, we rebuild, one meal and one shelter at a time.”

**Relief Distribution for Cyclone Ana Victims in Mangochi**



**Feedback Contact**  
**The Executive Director**  
**Youth for Development and Productivity**  
**P.O. Box 516, Zomba, Malawi**

[www.yodep.org](http://www.yodep.org)

[info@yodep.org](mailto:info@yodep.org)