

Spring 2024

What we do

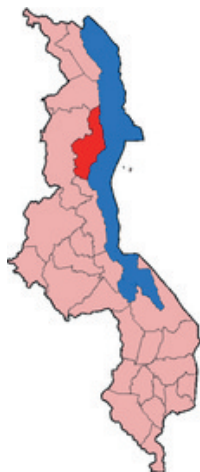
Overriding objective is to overcome poverty in an area of 40 villages. Here's how:

- Prioritise help to 1,000 families who rely on subsistence farming.
- Provide start-up and growth loans to people who want to run their own business.
- Run adult literacy classes for people who didn't finish school:
 - improving capacity to consult and co-operate
 - enabling literate adults to help their children
 - literacy qualifies people to take our business training
- Create capacity among youth as the future core of the community.

Capacity's Social Action Fund enables the community to finance local projects:

- the community generates the money
- the community decides on the projects

Uniquely, the SAF avoids waiting for external aid and creates local control.



UPDATES FROM MALENGA MZOMA

CAPACITY WORKS IN MALENGA MZOMA,
IN NKHATA BAY DISTRICT (SHOWN RED)

PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH LAUNCHED



A Youth Executive Committee monitors the Youth Clubs. Vincent Mphande (left) is Capacity's Youth Programme Co-ordinator.

An aspiration dating back to Capacity's inception in 2017 has been fulfilled in the past six months – the launch of a Youth Programme in Malenga Mzoma.

The Foundation has 'adopted' eight youth clubs that had lost their original sponsors, and has added two more with an eleventh to follow soon.

The youth clubs run a mixture of drama, sport, health and sex education sessions, and community service projects such as cleaning a local hospital regularly.

Putting down roots

Some of the members want to access Capacity's microloans programme to form co-operatives around livestock or jointly purchase a sewing machine to start a tailoring business – making them much more likely to stay and build their lives locally rather than gravitating to the cities.



Children's voices

Capacity has also taken under its wing clubs set up by Children's Corner, a charity that is now unable to support them. The CC clubs cater for youngsters up to the

age of 15 and include a children's parliament, replete with a Speaker (above left), which discusses topics raised by the CC children. The parliament consists of representatives of single villages, groups of villages, and some schools.

44% CURRENCY DEVALUATION A MASSIVE BLOW

The devaluation of the kwacha against the dollar, by a massive 44%, in November came after a 25% devaluation only 18 months earlier. These financial blows, plus Cyclone Freddy in February 2023 and localised floods in Malenga Mzoma only two months later, mean real hardship.

Financial dilemma

The Malawi Government hasn't devalued lightly. Devaluation gives the Government more foreign currency through its exports to pay for its public services.

The flip side, though, is that imported goods become more expensive with devaluation: you need more kwacha per dollar to buy Malawi's priorities – medicines, vaccines and related products, broadcasting equipment, wheat, and cars.

'WALKING THE LAKE' SPONSORED FUNDRAISER

On Saturday 13th April four friends have committed to walking 50 kilometres (32 miles) between Flint and Colwyn Bay in north Wales. The distance is equivalent to striding across Lake Malawi at one of its narrowest points.

The walk will take 12 hours to complete. Please show your support, and encourage your family, friends and acquaintances who might share your interest in Capacity by visiting: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/walking-the-lake>. **Thank you!**



LARGEST EVER GRADUATION

148 people graduated from the Capacity Academy's adult literacy classes on 26th January 2024, the largest group since it started. The ceremony was Capacity's fifth graduation.

About 20% of the graduates were male. This is significant because there is stigma attached to men who can't read: the Academy teachers, and local leaders, have done well by beginning to overcome that challenge.



More men are coming to class.



Some of the graduates, proudly displaying their pass certificates.

The ceremony included a funny skit showing how the ability to read means mobile phone messages don't get missed or misconstrued.

A couple of graduates demonstrated their new skills (*one is far left*). The paramount chief for Malenga Mzoma, Charles Nkhata, presided (*left*).

Cost of teaching

It costs Capacity about £50 (\$63) to teach literacy and numeracy to someone. Depending on how far they progressed at school, a typical student takes between 6 and nine months to be ready to take their examinations.



WHY BOKASHI IS CRUCIAL

Bokashi is a vital component of the Farming Improvement Programme.

As an organic fertiliser, it is made mainly with ingredients that are sourced locally and it's far cheaper than the chemical commercial alternative. The biggest advantage of bokashi, though, is that it effectively makes soil out of dirt whereas commercial fertiliser will degrade soil over time.

How much do you need?

The amount of bokashi required for a piece of land depends on the fertility of the soil and the crops to be grown. One experiment on a 10-metre square plot that normally produces just short of 20 kgs of maize – but with bokashi applied produced 30 kgs.



A demonstration of bokashi-making at Dumuwa, near Chintheche, 2023.

How much does it cost?

A typical batch of bokashi is 300 kgs and costs about £16 (\$21) to make – that's about £3.16 (\$4) for a 50 kg bag compared to £40 (\$50) for a bag of the chemical commercial alternative.

New skills will deepen the FIP's effectiveness

Capacity's Kennas Jim (*left*) is currently distance-studying for an advanced diploma in nutrition and food security with Domasi Development College, with the support of Capacity's Trustees. His qualification will enable the Farming Improvement Programme to help more people appreciate the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. Many families rely on a basic diet of cassava, which has limited nutritional value, being mainly starch.



The Academy's exams are approved by the District Council education department.

The 2024 pass rate was 93%, a record. Classes sizes are usually 20-25.

Sometimes Academy classes are relocated, following demand.

The Academy has eight teachers including its supervisor, Davie Banda.

There are ten classes with a current roll of 150 adult students.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The next newsletter will report on progress of the microloans programme, its move into co-operatives among loan-takers, and the entrepreneurial enthusiasm of local youth.

capacityfoundation.org

The Malawi Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security tested Capacity's bokashi and verified the active ingredients producing the results.

Bokashi ingredients are molasses/brown sugar, yeast, maize bran, rice bran, charcoal, ashes, cow/chicken/goat dung, top soil, ashes, and water.

Bokashi has been shown to improve crop yield by 50%.