

LITERACY LEADERS PROJECT MID-YEAR REPORT FOR 2022

BACKGROUND

Literacy Leaders is a Starfish-funded literacy development project implemented within Ngolowindo Zone of the Salima district. The project seeks to enhance teachers' skills in vocabulary, grammar, phonics, pedagogy, and classroom management to improve their service delivery. 5 primary schools are the targets within the zone namely, Lifuwu, Mikute, Ngolowindo, Demera, and Maganga. Ultimately, learners' performances at both national and school exams are expected to improve. LL's focus had been initially targeting 15 teachers, (3 from each school who are now acting as lead teachers of the project) who met in a central venue at Ngolowindo Teacher's Development Centre (TDC). Now, in order to equip more teachers, the delivery mode has moved to being school-based and we are engaging approximately 40 teachers in local schools every 2 weeks.

PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT

Presently, teachers from Demera and Mikute have been the most actively involved. These meet at fortnightly sessions both within schools and also inter-schools. Thus, Demera and Mikute LLs proposed an arrangement for exchange visits where at times sessions should be done at one school jointly. Demera teachers have so far visited Mikute twice and vice versa. The leaders, prepare plans for sessions in liaison with Jean Chisamba, of Starfish. Jean provides overall guidance and coordination for the delivery of sessions. The activities within schools have increased the reach and participation of teachers. Demera has a maximum of 12 teachers who attend the sessions while Mikute has 10. Lifuwu now has 10 while Maganga has 8. The increase can be attributed to the localisation of the sessions. However, Ngolowindo has not had sessions as only 2 LLs have availed themselves.



Literacy Leader, Innocent Legani teaching a class at the Mikute Primary School

RESOURCE PROVISION

Starfish has been providing resources for the implementation of the project. These range from writing pads and pens, flip charts, markers, masking tapes, plain papers for printing, ink cartridges, chalk, and more. Additional resources provided are funds for transport for both Jean and inter-school visits, airtime for session planning and communication, and refreshments for all LLs attending the sessions.

CHALLENGES

As a result of Covid 19, the school calendar was adjusted in Malawi to mitigate the impact that the pandemic had on education and effects that came about due to school closures. School terms were made for 8 weeks which have made teachers busier in catching up and meeting the demands. As a result, sessions were limited to periods when there was the availability of teachers to attend. Sadly, despite some teachers at Ngolowindo effecting enormous improvement in exam grades during previous engagement with the project, it has not been possible to engage the wider staff without financial incentives, which we have declined to provide because we do not believe it fosters genuine collaboration and commitment. We have made the difficult decision to focus our limited resources on those schools where we can make a wider impact across the classes but would like to thank Gift, Khadijah and Christone from Ngolowindo for all their contributions to the project and will of course be at the end of the phone if they want support, guidance or simply to stay in touch



Innocent Lefani, a Literacy Leader

The project has benefitted Innocent a great deal through the improvement of his skills in vocabulary, grammar, and classroom management. Through the new methods, he is able to simplify the English language for learners to help them understand. Also, his engagement with learners has improved and they now feel comfortable to ask questions and seek support. Also, the inclusion of games and activities has meant that the students enjoy the lesson, practice language use and also aids in re-calling facts for exams.