

## LITERACY LEADERS PROJECT REPORT JULY 2020

The Literacy Leaders Project, supported by Starfish Malawi, has been running for three and a half years. The project targets five schools of the Ngolowindo zone, namely Mikute Primary, Demera Primary, Lifuwu Primary, Manganga Primary and Ngolowindo Model School. Each school contributes three teachers (from infant, junior and senior school departments) who through the project have become literacy leaders. They meet together regularly, receive training and work collaboratively to enhance their



*Above: Nursery teachers' training in progress*

own capacity as teachers and equip themselves to disseminate good practice and mentor their colleagues. Some of them also provide support to nursery schools in their local communities. They visit the nursery schools to teach staff skills in phonics and pedagogy to improve learning at this stage and enable learners to have a smoother transition from the nursery to standard one at primary school.

So far, through capacity building of all these educators, the project has benefitted around 17,000 pupils who have received lessons which are engaging, well-informed and more effectively delivered than previously. In turn learners' reading skills, vocabulary, use of English grammar and access to other curriculum areas have improved. The success has been palpable as pupils have then secured prized places in both national and conventional secondary schools.

### **UPDATE ON PROGRESS**

Literacy leaders conducted inter-school visits at the beginning of the second term (January-February). The purpose of these visits was to monitor progress of their colleagues in the skills targeted by the project. Learner assessments were also conducted to ascertain how literacy leaders relate with the students they teach and the impact this has on learners. This revealed the great impact that the project

has made regarding new skills learners gained from their teachers and the teaching methodologies that the teachers employ - quite different from many other teachers in the region. Learners can now read and write using good English in their assignments and class work. They can also understand more fully the lessons since the teachers simplify the language for them and are widening their vocabulary. Literacy leaders are also taking care to welcome learners when approached for assistance.



*Right: Jean Chinsamba, Project Co-ordinator at a literacy leaders lesson observation session at Mikute Primary School*

### **WHAT DIFFERENCE ARE WE MAKING?**

The Literacy Leaders Project has contributed to great change in the way the target schools are performing both at zonal level examinations and national examinations. Ngolowindo School scored first position at the zone level standard 8 examinations, and 15 of their learners were selected to conventional secondary schools. Lifuwu, Mikute, Maganga and Demera schools also sent learners to conventional schools. In addition, Literacy Leaders who attended wider capacity building workshops by the Ministry of Education gave outstanding performances. This prompted other schools which are not part of the project to apply, in the hope that the project might extend to their schools. The nursery school teachers were also able to gain skills in phonics and pedagogy, thanks to this project.

**The project activities of literacy leaders have been put on hold since March due to the impact of COVID 19 pandemic. This follows the closure of schools by the government as a mitigating factor in order to contain the spread of the virus. There has been a call from stakeholders to have the schools re-opened by 13th July, 2020 in Malawi, but not yet confirmed. In the meantime, the Project Co-ordinator has been undertaking further professional development to support her role.**

**Compiled by Jean Chinsamba, Literacy Leaders Co-ordinator, July 2020.**

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