



Newsletter April, 2016

In March 2016 we travelled to Malawi to make an inspection of Mwanani school. At 1200 metres, the school (seen here) lies on a plateau projecting out from the Nyika mountains which rise to an altitude of 2600 meters.

The pupils attending the school come from six villages in the surrounding hills.



When we arrived at the school, the children were having their recess and were scattered around the buildings and trees in small groups. We had sent jump ropes earlier and several of these were in use.



The headman planted a number of trees around the school – some of which can be seen in the picture above. A gardner has offered to give the school seedlings free of charge to continue with this endeavor.

# Brick by Brick Malawi



The headman of the village introduced us to each of the 5 teachers. They in turn showed us to the classrooms which were now filling up with children.



Some of the students are older because they have not been going to school previously and are catching up. One girl we met was 14 years old and still in grade 3. This disparity in ages will probably even out in time. The present enrollment of 185 will then gradually sink to the intended capacity of 144 pupils. The number of pupils does not seem to be an issue as the children are quite happy to squeeze three together at desks intended for two.



The students are all neatly dressed, healthy and energetic. When we entered a room we would be greeted by a loud 'Good morning!'. From the very first class the children are taught to speak English although their mother tongue is Tumbuka. Music is incorporated into the lessons – we watched the youngest children singing 'Head and shoulders, knees and toes' accompanied by actions.



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In class three a math lesson was in progress – the pupils were being taught subtraction and learning to ‘carry’ numbers.

The Tumbuka numeric system is based on 5 and sometimes involves fist waving. Given this, mathematics is taught in English.

In all of the classes the pupils seemed engaged and happy. The teachers were lively and when asked a question, all hands would be raised (even though the answer wasn’t always forthcoming when called upon).



We inspected the buildings themselves – the construction is well done and they are structurally sound. We did notice a number of cracked panes of glass which we later replaced. Also, we ordered additional cleaning supplies as there was a shortage of these.

This picture is taken from the side of the teacher’s quarters and looking toward the 3 school blocks in the distance.

Perhaps the most pleasing discovery was the engagement of the local community. A School Committee consisting of 10 individuals with a chairman (woman) and treasurer has been established. The community also pays salaries for two of the teachers which were not funded by the government. A small office building (16 m<sup>2</sup>) is being constructed where school supplies can be stored and meetings held.



The school has put the small village of Mwanani on the map. We met many people from neighbouring areas who all had good things to say about the school. One of the teachers was so impressed he requested a transfer from another school.

We visited the nearby hospital in Livingstonia and they have added Mwanani to their list of villages which will receive primary health care services. The school administration building, when completed, can then be used as an examination room. The local church uses the school temporarily on Sundays while waiting for their new church to be completed. One has the feeling that this project has had a positive effect on the community quite outside of its original objective.

The community continues to have ideas for expansion, maintenance, and school supplies and we shall continue to assist financially when we can.



We would like to thank all of you for your generous contributions to this project which we must regard as a complete success. We will keep you updated on the continued operation of the school.

For Brick by Brick Malawi

Bruce, Karin and Bob