



YAMBA  MALAWI

ANNUAL

REPORT

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DEAR FRIENDS,

Between COVID-19 and the fight for racial justice, 2020 was a year that challenged us all. But it was also a year that reminded us of the importance of resiliency, community, and shared humanity. And as we reflect on our work in the past year, we are humbled by the support of our partners, supporters, and community members that worked together in an incredibly difficult environment to ensure Malawi's most vulnerable children received the care they deserve. Inward looking, we also recognize the commitment and dedication of the Yamba Malawi team which played an amazing game under difficult rules and conditions dictated by COVID-19.

Thank you for being part of this community, and thank you for helping ensure our critical work could continue over these months.

As the global pandemic spread, Yamba Malawi quickly shifted how we worked. Our teams went remote, we canceled our annual Gala, and we began the difficult task of adjusting our programs to meet ever-changing, often uncertain, needs. But through all this time, our commitment to Malawi's children never faltered. We immediately reached out to the Ministry of Health to spearhead COVID-19 prevention campaigns in some

of Malawi's most rural communities, we distributed emergency supplies like soap, handwashing stations, and masks, reached thousands of caregivers with critical messaging about available services, and trained over 500 community advocates in COVID prevention. Helping to address the mental health issues brought by COVID-19, we also shared messages of hope through dialogue with community members and staff.

During this time, our child-focused poverty graduation program continued to **change the lives of 39,000 children living in multidimensional poverty**. We redesigned program activities to correspond with global safety guidance, distributed mobile phones to provide remote support, and began cash transfers to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

In short, 2020 highlighted there is a need for our work now, more than ever.

In the midst of all of this, our team increased our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and created an organization-wide working group tasked at further decolonizing our work across all levels. Through these efforts, we examined our leadership structure, working relationships across offices, our fundraising, and our partnerships with communities, which has since



ushered in dramatic changes in 2021, such as our registration as a local NGO in Malawi and the formal adoption of a co-leadership structure. We are incredibly proud of the courage, vulnerability, and openness we have witnessed from our team and partners during this process, and are committed to furthering these efforts in everything we do.

Of course, we understand the pandemic will continue to challenge the communities where we work, that the focus on racial justice and decolonizing development must continue, and that our fight to end childhood poverty is just beginning. **But the next big change is possible. With your help, we aim to reach an additional 100,000 children over the next three years.** We'll continue to build a model that has the power to transform the lives of children living in poverty.

From all of us at Yamba Malawi, thank you for all of your support to make this possible.

Zikomo kwambiri - a warm Malawian thank you,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'G' and 'K' intertwined.

Gertrude Kabwazi
Co-Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Twyman'.

Peter Twyman
Co-Executive Director

A group of children of various ages are smiling and looking towards the camera. They are in an outdoor, rural setting with a dirt ground and a building in the background. The building has some text on it, including 'JETAAN MYKANGONG' and 'DINA ZA'. The children are wearing simple, colorful clothing. The overall mood is positive and hopeful.

OUR MISSION + VISION

Yamba Malawi's mission is to uplift vulnerable children by empowering their communities to break the cycle of poverty. Our vision is a world where strong, resilient communities build brighter futures for children.

A YEAR UNLIKE OTHERS

For the first time since 1998, global poverty is on the rise. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed an estimated 150 million people into poverty, over a third of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Children are particularly at risk, and recent spikes in vulnerability mean a staggering 1.2 billion children are currently living in multidimensional poverty, including over 7 million children in Malawi.

These setbacks are serious and urgent. But there is hope.

Yamba Malawi's 15 years of experience makes us uniquely qualified to meet the challenges facing vulnerable children in this unprecedented global environment. Our proven, innovative model not only has the potential to combat childhood poverty in Malawi, but to serve as a model for community-driven, sustainable change that has the potential to impact the lives of children across the world.

We have the opportunity to end childhood poverty in our lifetime. But only if we take action today.





HOW IT WORKS

Our three-year, child-focused poverty graduation program provides caregivers unconditional cash transfers that stabilize basic incomes and needs, gives caregivers the resources and training needed to launch a sustainable business, and uses coaching and links to services to ensure new incomes have a direct, positive impact on children's lives. The result is a program that empowers the most vulnerable to lift themselves out of poverty and improve their children's nutrition and food security, education, health, water, sanitation, housing, and protection against child labor, child marriage, and gender issues.

THE PROGRAM WORKS IN THREE PHASES

PHASE ONE: MONTHS 0 - 6 // ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Families receive unconditional cash transfers to meet children's basic needs, are referred to existing social services for children, and begin coaching on all program pillars. They begin saving money, setting goals, and start their journey on a pathway out of poverty.

PHASE TWO: MONTHS 7 - 24 // EMPOWER CAREGIVERS

One-on-one mentorship, group sessions, and community-wide awareness events build caregiver knowledge and link vulnerable children to safety nets, while seed funding and training empowers caregivers to launch their own business. Newly diversified incomes are used for children's needs, childhood outcomes improve, and communities begin the transition from addressing their children's immediate needs to building for the future.

PHASE THREE: MONTHS 25 - 36 // BREAK THE CYCLE

Children benefit from significant improvements in childhood development outcomes, as their families grow their incomes and their savings. Coaching and training continue, and entrepreneurs receive ongoing support to ensure business sustainability, growth, and impact. Children receive the nurturing, protective care they need, and their communities continue on the path to long-lasting development.

WATCH A SHORT ANIMATION ABOUT OUR WORK ON
YAMBAMALAWI.ORG



AT A GLANCE

2020 IMPACT DATA

IN OUR LAST 2020 IMPACT SURVEY, YAMBA MALAWI FOUND
OUR CHILD-FOCUSED POVERTY GRADUATION PROGRAM

TRANSFORMED CHILDREN'S LIVES



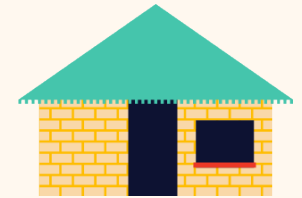
Food Security

Over 5x of children are eating three meals a day



Education

Nearly doubled regular school attendance



Safe Housing

4x the number of children living in safe housing

BY EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY



Income

\$289 average income, a more than 4x increase from start of the program



Spending on Children's Needs

85% of new income is invested in children's needs



Savings

10x households have savings, even during the lean season

CHILD-FOCUSED POVERTY GRADUATION

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Expanded our program to T/A Khongoni, reaching another 3,000 children
- 7 Community Based Organizations strengthened with resources and capacity building i.e. training in good governance, project management and business development
- 60 Community Based Childcare Centers strengthened to provide higher quality Early Childhood Development Services and critical nutrition programming to more children
- Over 270 in-person coaching sessions as well as 2,500 remote sessions provided during COVID-19 lockdown
- 42 Community Health Action Group Members trained to ensure children receive critical health support
- 37 Child Protection Committee Members trained to provide services that protect children from gender-based issues, early childhood marriage, abuse, child labor, and more
- 64 School Management Committee Members trained in sustainable business practices, so they can further educate the community on livelihood practices that are empowering and sustainable
- 92 Village Savings and Loans Groups with 515 Members from T/A Chiseka, T/A Kalolo, and CBOs launched and maintained
- With a refined focus on children under five years of age, we developed an Indigenous Knowledge-based early childhood framework that was formally celebrated and endorsed by the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare, who commended Yamba Malawi for being the “only organization that incorporates indigenous knowledge and skills in its approach.”



PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

In Malawi, the pandemic not only exacerbated challenges with health, but also impacted livelihoods, threatened food security, hindered education, and caused widespread disruptions in critical social and protective services. For children already living in multidimensional poverty, the impacts threaten to last a lifetime.

We are proud to say Yamba Malawi's team rose to the challenge.

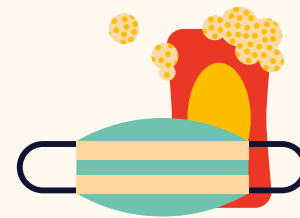
In the early months of the pandemic, our team collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Lilongwe District Executive Council on an emergency response campaign that educated and prepared 20,000+ vulnerable households in our partner communities for the potential impact of the pandemic.

OUR EMERGENCY COVID-19 RESPONSE INCLUDED



An Informed Community

Reached 20,000+ households with COVID-19 preventative information



Emergency Support

Distributed 13,000 bars of soap, 600 locally made masks, and established 130 handwashing stations



Training

Trained over 515 community members on COVID-19 safety and advocacy

ADJUSTING OUR
**HOLISTIC
PROGRAMMING**
FOR COVID-19

At Yamba Malawi, we believe a time-bound intervention that strengthens community safety nets, increases the knowledge and capabilities of caregivers, and builds more resilient economic environments has the power to move children out of extreme poverty and improve childhood outcomes across nutrition and food security, education, health, water, sanitation, housing, and protection.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw how such a holistic and responsive approach enables communities to respond to unexpected challenges and the unique needs of their children.

During COVID-19, our team worked hard to safely continue our child-focused poverty graduation programs by adjusting our program to address immediate needs through emergency support, but also continue working towards long-term goals by conducting virtual coaching, goal setting, and monitoring and only the most essential in-person activities. This included distributing cell phones to households, establishing Mobile Money for immediate cash transfers, reinforcing key areas of programming and coaching relevant to urgent and specific COVID-19 challenges, and establishing new community-run Village Savings and Loans, so households can not only meet their urgent needs during COVID-19, but also begin saving for better days ahead.





CASH TRANSFERS

EASING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Globally, the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 disproportionately affected communities living in extreme poverty. Faced with health threats, disrupted services, limited access to markets, and education shutdowns, many of Yamba Malawi's partner communities struggled to respond to the ever-changing challenges facing their children. In response, Yamba Malawi initiated emergency cash transfers designed to empower families to meet their basic needs during this crisis that coincided with the arrival of Malawi's lean season in late 2020. This immediate, unrestricted relief is proving to be transformational for households struggling with extreme poverty, and children's wellbeing has immediately improved. With just \$20 a month, caregivers have bought food, paid medical bills, and bought clothing and shoes for their children. Some families have even used portions of the support to establish small income-generating activities that are bolstering household income even further, providing additional security as the pandemic continues to unfold. For these families cash transfers are an important safety net during the crisis.

"I always wanted to run a small business, but couldn't for lack of startup funds. I lived hand to mouth. But now, Yamba Malawi has revived my dream. When I received support, I used part of it to start a mandasi (doughnut) business. I am hopeful the business will allow me to meet my family's needs, and will positively impact the wellbeing of my child." **SOFELETI NTAYA**

"After receiving the monthly cash transfers, we noticed positive changes in our lives. After 3 months of consumption support, we acquired a bag of fertilizer, a bag of maize and other food, and new clothes for our children. We also bought a solar charger at K5,000 (around \$7) to cut costs of getting the phone charged elsewhere. We are also generating a little money from surrounding households who come to charge their phones at a fee. Moving forward, as a family, the plan is to start a dry fish trading business to generate more revenue and provide for our children."

SAMSON LEVISON BANDA

"Before the project life was hopeless. Our children had countless challenges. I had unstable small potato fritters business, which didn't earn enough to cover our household needs and provide enough food for the children. The children were often hungry, and the businesses collapsed. But when we enrolled in this program, I felt hope restored. When I started receiving cash transfer support, I bought maize and other food. Then, I used it to start a small grocery stall. My vision is to grow the business and be financially independent." **ESIMY HARDWICK**

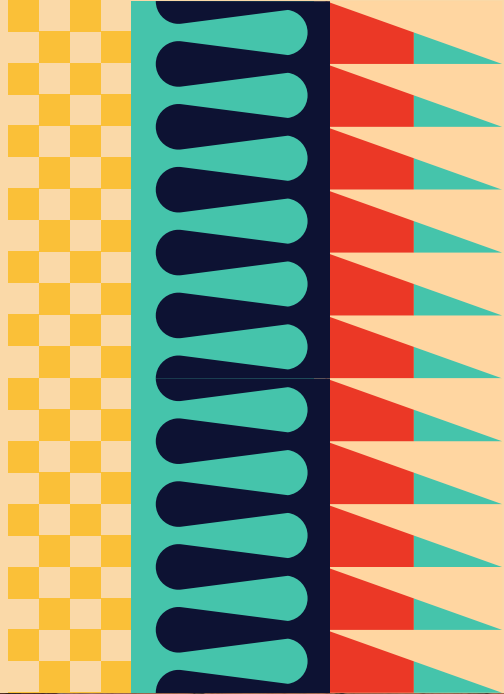
MEET THE SITIMAS

A STORY OF GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Before enrolling in Yamba Malawi's program, the Sitimas were subsistence farmers living in a rural village in central Malawi. They worked hard to grow maize and tobacco, but limited markets left the family struggling to provide for their children. Lazaro describes, "When our kids were little, we had few resources. It was hard growing up. They were sick often, because they had poor nutrition. We had problems paying school fees. The children had a hard time with school, hunger, and they struggled when they got sick. We couldn't afford to go to the hospital. We had no soap to clean or wash our clothes."

Now, Lazaro and his wife Juliana have launched their own soybean and groundnut business. They are getting training in three program pillars, and are not only breaking the cycle of poverty, but directly improving their children's lives. Lazaro explains, "I never had lessons on how to be a dad. In Yamba Malawi's program, I learned





about childhood development and now I'm doing so much better." He continues, "This program is helping us grow soy and groundnuts, and to run it like a business. The Village Saving and Loan is teaching us how to grow our money, piece by piece, so we can pay for our children's needs in the future."



WE PLAY BALL TOGETHER, AND BAO. BUT WHEN WE'RE REALLY HAPPY, WE SING.

COSMAS, AGE 6

Incredibly, the family's progress is growing year after year, even with the impacts of COVID-19. The family is now looking to the future. "Through my income, I can add more land, buy goats, and expand my

business, so my children can graduate from school. We have been able to buy mosquito nets to protect against malaria, and have also bought 3 heads of cattle, 3 more pigs, 2 goats, 3 chickens, 15 corrugated iron sheets, and farm inputs for this year." Lazaro continues, "I am now more capable of dealing with challenges

compared to the past. My businesses are growing, which is making us resilient to shocks."

Now, his children and his broader community are benefiting. "I am teaching other households how to take good care of their children, how to do businesses, and the advantages of being members of village savings and loans," he describes, "Now, parents in our community are better able to care for their children.

OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDHOODS WILL BE DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF THIS PROGRAM. I FEEL NOW THEY ARE GROWING. THEY ARE BETTER. THEY HAVE FOOD AND NUTRITION, AND I AM MORE PREPARED TO HELP THEM GROW UP HAPPY.

LAZARO, FATHER OF FOUR



ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- We are incredibly grateful for a number of new partners this year, including the Coca-Cola Foundation and the David Weekley Family Foundation, who joined the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, The Adventure Project, and others whose generous support has enabled our team as we respond to the changing needs of our partners during COVID-19.
- As an organization, we took significant strides in anti-colonial development practices, including laying the foundation for local registration and co-leadership structures, which were formally adopted in early 2021.
- We launched an ambitious three-year plan to raise \$10M to reach an additional 100,000 children.
- We welcomed 11 new members of our team in Malawi.
- We were honored to be featured in PBS Newshour and BBC NewsDay to expand our reach and inform more people about the importance of child-focused poverty graduation as well as the impacts COVID-19 are having on communities in rural Malawi.





LEADERSHIP

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FOUNDER

Melissa Kushner

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Gertrude Kabwazi • Peter Twyman

We're immensely proud to have a diverse team of passionate, talented professionals leading and implementing our child-focused programs. This includes highly experienced teams of 25 program staff in Malawi and 6 staff in the United States, and we're excited to share eighty percent of the organization's leadership roles are held by women.



ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI

We are incredibly grateful for the entire Yamba Malawi community and the various ways you all have supported our work, especially during this challenging year. It is through your efforts that we are responding to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and empowering communities to build brighter futures for children in Malawi. We couldn't do it without you—thank you.



"We're so grateful to be able to partner with Yamba Malawi to further improve the lives of children through investments in community and the livelihoods of caregivers. Yamba Malawi has a unique and needed place in the sector, and we're excited to see their work grow and expand."

KATIE MACC

DAVID WEEKLEY FAMILY FOUNDATION

"We are pleased to partner with Yamba Malawi to make a difference in the lives of children and their families. The program will play a vital role in helping children reach their fullest potential."

HELEN SMITH PRICE

COCA-COLA FOUNDATION





“Malawi being my ancestral home, I was naturally drawn to the work that Yamba Malawi was doing there. My wife Jerryanne Heath Chiume was already well plugged in. One year she asked me to join her on a trip back home to visit one of the rural communities so that I can witness firsthand how children’s lives were being transformed. The success stories I heard from the community made me want to deepen my personal involvement.”

NATHAN CHIUME
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

“With COVID-19, this past year was a hard year for many around the world. I was inspired by Yamba Malawi’s efforts to quickly meet the changing needs of their partner community during the pandemic by providing education and financial support. It is important that they did this while not deviating from long-term sustainability through their child-focused poverty graduation model that empowers families to break the cycle of poverty.”

JACK PARKER
YAMBA MALAWI SUPPORTER





To learn more, visit yambamalawi.org,
or email us at info@yambamalawi.org

MALAWI

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Thanks to our photographers, Billy Farrell of BFA, Cameron Mulleaneaux, and Jonathan Wallen. Thanks to our filmmakers, Ashley Gutierrez, Jacob Watson, and Kody Zenger at Cliff Co. and Cameron Mulleaneaux. Sincere thanks to our graphic designers Erin Rommel and Sabrina Bezerra at Second Marriage.

