

Celebrating the 20 Year Malawian Legacy of
Rev. Jack and Dr. Dorothea Bowers

The Dorothea Bowers Kindergarten
Domasi Mission CCAP
Malawi
1993-2013





Dorothea Bowers
Kindergarten
Domasi, Malawi

20 years ago a kindergarten was started at Domasi, Malawi, Africa. Most Malawian children start school in 1st grade in a classroom with little furniture. There might be 60 students with limited books. Sometimes the only teaching resource is a blackboard and a piece of chalk.

Rev. Jack Bowers with Rev. William Paul spearheaded

the partnership between Pittsburgh Presbytery and Blantyre Synod in Malawi.

Dr. Dorothea Bowers was a college professor specializing in early childhood education. Once she got to Malawi she knew what her ministry would be at Domasi.

The children of the Dorothea Bowers Kindergarten become emergent readers, have an opportunity to play and sing. Hundreds of children have received a jump-start to their education here. While Dorothea was beginning the Kindergarten Jack was leading the team who were restoring the 100-year-old Presbyterian Church at Domasi Mission.



Rev. Dr. Silas Ncozana

“Domasi had never had such a learning space before Dorothea Bowers came up with the idea. Being a teacher herself, she felt moved to have an early childhood education for village children around Domasi. She felt that Domasi's lifeline depended on children being included in what was being developed at that time. She used her resources to build the center and paid salaries for 2 Malawian teachers.

I remember Dorothea insisting that early education for Malawian children was not for privileged of town children only, but for village children too. Further it seemed that having the right teachers would be difficult, but Dorothea was careful in selecting the two women and training them.”

Dody Crowell

“I was not at Domasi when Dorothea first started the kindergarten but was somewhat involved from 1995 on. My first introduction was very shortly after my arrival on the mission, I was walking down a dusty dirt road when I heard in the distance "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" being sung by young children. As I came closer to the voices, I found a group of about ten pre-school Malawi girls sitting on the ground. They were wearing dresses but no shoes and obviously playing school. There I was half way round the world in a very different land, and I recognized a child's song being sung in English. It made me realize what a small world it really is.”



In Malawi 1st Grade (Standard 1) is filled with rote learning and limited supplies. Most students need to begin to learn English because in their villages they start with their native language, Chichewa in the southern part of the country.



The children at the Dorothea Bowers Kindergarten have the opportunity to play, learn the nuts and bolts of emergent literacy, they begin the process of transferring from their traditional language to English, sing and they get a warm meal of fortified porridge.



The kindergarten costs about \$4000.00 a year to fund the students and teachers and on top of that after 20 years there are improvements that could be made on the building. Most immediately they would like a fence, which would be another \$4000 for 2013.

The children in these pictures are matching shapes, hearing stories and learning words, playing with a parachute and identifying their names.



Lucy Botonami was the first kindergarten teacher. Her husband, Rev. Justice Botomami was the pastor and head of station at Domasi Mission. Lucy was a former primary school teacher. The last time we saw Lucy was in 2007, she has since entered her eternity. Justice is retired outside Blantyre and continues to work on his farm.



The current teachers Jessie and Lillian, were both trained by Dorothea. Today they continue teaching the activities she taught them such as the calendar, letters & numbers, stories (Mrs. Wishy Washy and 10 Little Monkeys), singing songs and playing games.





Dorothea carried the learning activities for the kindergarten to Malawi in suitcases. Hand made and laminated pattern cards and games; Culturally appropriate books carefully taken apart, laminated and rebound.



During Dorothea next to last and Jack's last trip to Malawi in 1998 Dorothea led a workshop with Charlotte Day of SAFE Africa (Sub-Saharan African Family Enrichment) to open a new early childhood center at Chancellor College in Zomba. The Domasi Kindergarten and Dorothea's work was the initial inspiration for SAFE Africa to begin Gogo Grandmothers and village Community Based Childcare Centers.



In 2000 Dorothea took 5 of her students from Grove City College in Pennsylvania to Malawi for a Student Teaching experience. Joining her was 13-year-old granddaughter Anna Kippley and daughter Deborah Kippley. This was Dorothea's last trip to Malawi.



Jack and Dorothea entered their eternity in May of 2006. In June of 2007 six members of Faith Presbyterian Church in La Vista, NE traveled to Malawi to begin the next chapter of Partnership.



At this time the Dorothea Bowers Kindergarten was brought into the Mission of the Papillion La Vista Arts Network (PLAN). Today the family and friends of Dorothea and Jack continue to support the teachers and students of the Domasi Kindergarten through PLAN.

We, united with teachers and friend to celebrated Dorothea and Jack's life and work in Malawi.

The 2013 PLAN Winter Play, Tales of Malawi will benefit the Dorothea Bowers Kindergarten.



Continuing the legacy, in 2007 we painted the front room of the kindergarten and in 2010 the back room, tables and chairs.



Lillian painted some of the benches.





These students have a head start to their learning.

The Kindergarten is supported through the Papillion La Vista Arts Network, which is a 501 c 3 organization. Supporting education in Malawi is in our mission statement.

You can be a one-time supporter or a continuing support to keep Rev. Jack and Dr. Dorothea Bowers' legacy alive in Malawi.

Donations are tax deductible and can be sent to...

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Our last visit to Malawi was the summer of 2010 and we hope to return in 2013.



