



PAMOZA



Malawi

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Pamoza News

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Anticipated Food Shortage Leads to More Dimba Farming



A farmer grows vegetables on his dimba farm—vegetables won't replace corn, his staple crop, but they will supplement his family's diet and might also be a source of income if he sells them during the hungry period.

After months of hard work training and supporting farmers in rural Malawi, we were prepared for a great harvest. By April, the maize crops should have been full and healthy, soaking up the last of the rainy season. But that is not what happened. Instead, a dry spell hit most of the country, causing crops to stagnate.

According to the [Famine Early Warning Systems Network](#), Malawi will produce 32% less corn than the five-year average. This will lead to significant price increases for corn, making it difficult for already struggling households to find food during the hungry or lean period (typically November—March). This is bad news and occurs way too often in Malawi.

But there is some hope.

What Pamoza is Doing About It

As an organization, Pamoza's primary goal is to support sustainable efforts that improve the quality of life for the people we serve. Over the next three months, we will be assessing the impact of food shortages: estimating how much food will be harvested, how long it will last, and how we can help people make up the gap in production.

In the meantime, we have started promoting dimba farming, which is farming by the riverbeds or water sources during the dry season (usually May—October). This strategy allows farmers to take advantage of moisture-rich soil and nearby water streams to grow crops during the off-peak farming season. Some

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An Interview with DUMC Sunday School Class

Downingtown United Methodist Church (DUMC) was one of our first church partners and has continued to be involved since Pamoza started. It's not just the adults who have found a way to support; it's been young people too, young people like those who attend the Sunday School. The class of K-5 students has been sponsoring a family in Malawi since 2012. We spoke to one of the teachers, Amy Auker, to learn what has kept them involved.

Why did you decide to get the kids involved?

We were familiar with Pamoza's work because of DUMC's support of school breakfast. We thought this would be a good opportunity to have the kids learn about the needs of other children and specifically learn about how other families live in Malawi.

Exactly how have the kids been helping?

An offering is collected during Sunday School each week; all the money has been donated to Pamoza—nearly \$900 since 2012! We've also had Pamoza come and teach the kids about life in Malawi. The children are always very interested and have lots of questions. The children also made bookmarks which were sold to the congregation for donations to Pamoza.

What do you think the children get as a result of their involvement?

One of their projects during Sunday School was to draw pictures or write messages to the family we sponsor in Malawi. Pamoza then delivered the pictures to the family during a trip to Malawi. Our Sunday School kids then saw the photos of the family holding

the pictures we had drawn, and the family sent back pictures and messages for the Sunday School kids. *I think that was one of the most powerful moments for the kids here*, to have that connection with a family so far away.



The Bota family holds up drawings from DUMC Sunday School

Why do you personally support Pamoza?

Initially it was because of the school breakfast program. I loved the idea of Pamoza helping to start a program in a very hands-on way, and then teaching the community members how to sustain it. And then I saw how the kids responded to a Pamoza presentation and I thought it would be something they would continue to be interested in.

(Anticipated Food Shortages...Continued from page 1)

farmers are already doing it; many are not. That's because the dry season is typically a time of rest as farmers wait to harvest their main crops. However, given the effects of the climate this year, it is certain that the harvest will be bleak. That's why Pamoza has provided dimba farmers with resources like seeds, farming tools, and training. Our staff have also created their own farms in the community as models for others.

Dimba farming is not easy. First, farmers must clear out tall grass and reeds before they can plant anything. This is labor-intensive work and done by hand with simple tools. Second, dimba farming requires a cultural and mental shift. Most farming in Malawi occurs during the rainy season (Nov.—April). That's the time people

are engaged in planting, weeding, and fertilizing. Now, they want to rest and just wait for the harvest. But sitting and doing nothing is not a great option.

Dimba farming not only provides more food for a family, it can also be a source of income especially as people start entering the hungry season.

Thus far, we've noticed more dimba farms. Will it be enough to prevent severe food shortages? Probably not, but it will be enough to reduce the level of hunger in the community, and that's a good start. As we continue to monitor the food shortage situation, please pray for Malawi and for households which may be hit hard with hunger. Pray that Pamoza will be a continued source of help and support during this time.

Program Updates

Christian Outreach

We continue to facilitate Bible studies, prayer meetings, church services, fellowship meetings, and one-to-one witnessing in the four communities we serve. On average, we reach 300 people each month with the Gospel. In March, one of our Christian Outreach Facilitators, Lymon Chitete, resigned to pursue a career in teaching, but his work is being carried on by the committed Bible study leaders we've trained.

Medical Services

Each Thursday, Pamoza brings in medical staff to treat patients, and the clinic is always packed. During this rainy season, illnesses dramatically increased, especially malaria cases. In April alone, we treated more than 900 people. To respond to the demand, we trained volunteers from the community to serve as Health Educators and assist medical staff on clinic days. These Health Educators will also be involved in promoting preventive care and educating their peers.



People sometimes wait all day to be seen at the clinic

Entrepreneurship

The four community businesses we helped start have been generating revenue for the community to use for their own development needs. Two of these businesses have been consistently profitable (the Zowe shop and grinding mill) and we can now facilitate conversations with the community regarding how they would like to use their own profit; it's an exciting opportunity. The other two businesses have struggled due to community issues, but our hope is that they will overcome those.

Education

There is much happening in the area of education. Our newest school partner, Mseza Primary School, has almost finished constructing a kitchen for their school breakfast program. Zowe Primary School was highlighted in their district and hosted other educators for a site visit. We paid school fees and provided learning materials for 37 high schoolers and two college students. The scholarships target poor and/or vulnerable youth like Hlupekire (pronounced Shupekire).



She has a disability and was at Hlupekire Gondwe, 9th Grade risk of being kicked out of school for not paying school fees. Pamoza's scholarship helped her stay in school.

Agriculture & Food Security

Food security is always an issue in Malawi, which is primarily depended on agriculture. To facilitate livestock production, we vaccinated 456 chickens. During our livestock vaccination campaign, we met Lusungu, a young man who started raising his own chickens without any external support. It was amazing to see Lusungu's ingenuity and hard work. We look forward to supporting his goal of creating a poultry business.



Lusungu's brother feeds the broiler chickens

Oh What a Night!

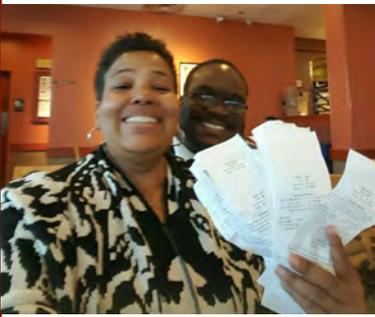


Thanks to everyone who came out to our Panera Night event on April 28th. We collected over 900 receipts across 8 Paneras!

Panera will be contributing 20% of the proceeds from the receipts to Pamoza. This represents \$3,000—**that's enough for us to buy a year's worth of medicine for our clinic.** Thanks Panera!



Janet Daly shows her receipts



We would like to say a BIG thank you to all the cafes that participated and to our wonderful volunteers that staffed the event. Congratulations to Janet Daly (pictured on the right) for collecting the most receipts at the Newtown Square Panera.



Additional thanks to our church partners at Downingtown and Thorndale United Methodist, Grace Chapel (MOMS' Bible study group), Manoa Presbyterian, Springton Lake Presbyterian, and Valley View Community Church for encouraging your members to attend.

Are You Hungry 4 Change?

Each Spring, we engage youth from different churches in Hungry4Change, an event which challenges youth to give up food for 30 hours while learning about the needs of children in another country and raising money to support them. Youth also engage in a service project during their time of fasting.

This year, we held our Hungry4Change event on April 1 and 2. Approximately 30 youth participated from Downingtown and Thorndale United Methodist churches. The youth engaged in interactive games that helped them learn about life in Malawi and then served their local community by cleaning the inside and outside of their church AND

shopping for food for families in need while they, themselves, had been 14 hours without food!

If you would like to engage your youth group in this meaningful experience, we would love to work with you. All you need is to identify the youth and a space for them to stay overnight, we will provide the activities. Contact 215-796-3223 or twright@pamoza.org for more info.



Prayer Corner

We welcome your prayers for the people of Malawi and for Pamoza's programs and services. We specifically ask that you pray for:

- The people we serve. Pray that their hearts will be transformed.
- That the impact of the food shortages will not be severe and that God will give us wisdom on how to help.
- Please pray for love, forgiveness, and cooperation within the Kachelele community, which has been facing some challenges.
- Our partnerships both within and outside of Malawi.
- Our Board, our staff, our volunteers, and the many people who sacrifice their time, money, and energy for Pamoza.
- The students we support with school fees. Pray for their academic success.

We are forming a Pamoza **Prayer Partners** group! As a Prayer Partner, you will receive monthly prayer requests and will be invited to participate in prayer calls. Interested? E-mail twright@pamoza.org.



“When my parents bore me, they were very happy so they named me Happy. I was the first and last baby boy.” Happy Nyirenda

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*Together transforming the
lives of children and
families in Malawi.*

Meet Happy

A Talented Boy with Big Dreams

Every name has a story. In Malawi, a child’s name is a metaphor or symbol of a particular circumstance parents or preceding children went through. So when we met Happy Nyirenda, an 8th grader at Zowe Primary School, we were curious about the story behind his name. He told us, “My parents gave birth to five girls and were not happy because they did not have a boy. When they bore me, they were very happy so they named me Happy. I was the first and last baby boy.”

Well for us, it doesn’t matter whether Happy would have been born a girl or a boy because what we love the most is how his name actually captures who he is as a person. Happy is exactly that, happy. He has an amazing smile and a kind spirit. He is quiet but focused. He is also extremely talented.

We were first introduced to Happy in 2014 when he drew a picture for one of our volunteers. It was an amazing picture, especially for someone who has never had art classes. Happy told us he learned to draw from his cousin, Gift. He would watch his cousin draw and slowly began drawing on his own. His talent has come in handy for teachers who often have to create their own illustrations and signs for school. When Zowe School hosted other educators from their District for a Literacy Fair, they asked Happy to make a sign.

When we inquired about Happy’s future aspirations and what he wants to be when he grows up, Happy’s response was a common one: a teacher. It’s one of the only paid professions children see in the community. But we are working to expand that. Our hope is to start providing an outlet for other talents, like art, so children like Happy can see a future where they use their gifts and talents in multiple ways. For now, Happy is focused on one thing: passing his 8th grade exams. All other dreams will have to wait.



A sign Happy created for his school’s event