



Malawi Early Literacy News

M.E.L.T. - A Literacy Project of Northern New York

Summer 2019

Volume 2

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development."

~Kofi Annan

New Board Member's Perspective

As a recap of my time in Malawi, Africa the word most prevalent is humbling. Malawi changed my outlook on not only the world but my life. Upon embarking on this journey, I had no preconception, no idea of what to expect other than what you see in movies or out of a textbook. But as I sit here today trying to explain my experience, I'm at a loss for words. You must see it first hand to fully understand. So I will try to show you through the many photos I took. Malawi is an admirable place with beautiful landscape and even more beautiful people. Those that I met will forever be in my heart and have changed my life for the better. Malawi is a very poor, third world country but those people were some of the happiest I have ever met. Their needs are survival based, they are not superficial, they are not attached to a cell phone and they do not have the petty stress that we have. However, their stressors are real life, survival based. Will they have food today? Will they have a roof over their head or will they get sick? Will they be able to afford school fees for their children to better their lives? The hardships they face are nothing in comparison to our daily lives. Reflecting on our trip, I know that M.E.L.T. is making a difference. Each time bringing more materials and taking on more schools and teachers; this is a step in the right direction for Malawi. I cannot tell you how many times I cried both happy tears and tears of joy at the grateful teachers and children I had the pleasure



of meeting. They were so thankful just to have books, pencils, and sticky notes to use. Things that we do not even think twice about. This is what relays through my mind day after day upon being home. I look forward to and can only hope I will have the opportunity to return some day in the near future.

Peyton Hnyla, team member

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say it's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem. Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."

~Fred Rogers



The Malawi Early Literacy Team (M.E.L.T.) board members, teachers and students would like to thank Rotary International for their support of our literacy goals and the financial support for the printing of the 2019 M.E.L.T. books.

We would like to acknowledge donations from the following Rotary International Clubs: Watertown Sunrise (Sponsor), Watertown Noon, Watertown Evening, and Clayton (all from New York State, USA, Rotary District 7040); as well as the Host Club and District: Mzuzu Noon Rotary Club (Malawi, Africa, Rotary District 9210).

Their funds were matched by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, after approval by the Grants Committee of Rotary District 7040.

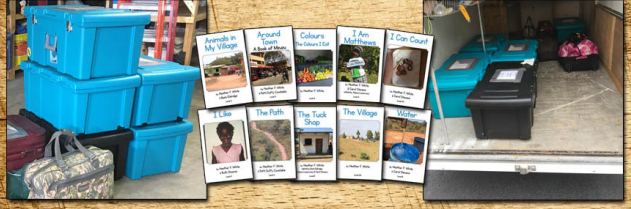
Our 2019 Rotary International sponsored titles:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>The Path</u> | <u>Water</u> |
| <u>I Can Count</u> | <u>The Colours I Eat</u> |
| <u>Around Town</u> | <u>I Like Me</u> |
| <u>I Am Matthews</u> | <u>The Village</u> |
| <u>Animals in My Village</u> | <u>The Tuck Shop</u> |

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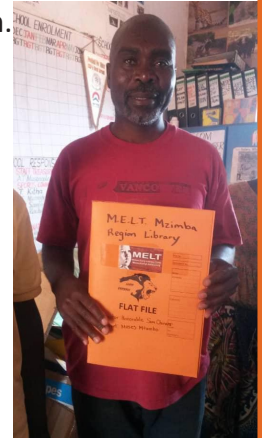
Thank You!!

We asked and you came through! Our Buck a Book Campaign brought in over \$6000. Allowing all the books sponsored by Rotary to arrive in Malawi. Sincere thanks from the MELT Board and the teachers/students in Malawi!



Satellite Library Opens

A satellite library was prepared at Kavinkhama Primary School with the Head Teacher Osward Kachilika overseeing the library book kit sign outs. This serves five schools in the Mzimba Region.



Books are presented at a Mzimba Community meeting for all to see before going into the satellite library.

2019 Teacher Training Trip Summary

Each trip to Malawi brings its own set of challenges, celebrations, and surprises. Once in Malawi emotions run deep from joy, to laughter, with plenty of tears. This trip was seen through the eyes of a first-time traveler, Peyton Hnyla, who has been attending First Presbyterian Church for over a year. See her report on page one...

Important Highlights:

All trunks and luggage arrived on time and intact!

1. Moving into the newly renovated library space was exciting! The library is nearing 8,000 readers thanks to recent assistance from multiple local Rotary Clubs! We have also added a professional seating area where teachers can meet and discuss our resource collection.

Pictured at right.



2. Five new schools have been added in the Mzimba region where Sam Chirwa, Director of MELT was raised. We made plans for the satellite library to be housed there for these schools. Photo 1.

Kavinkhama • Kazimasika • Mchirawenga
Mallingowe • Tangatanga

3. We held our annual meeting with MELT resource teachers Annie Ghambi & Cleverson Jere. They are the important link between our teachers and the administration. Photo 2.

4. The 3 day teacher workshop had an effective pattern of our team teaching each morning with the teachers practicing lessons with their peers each afternoon. 27 teachers were in attendance this year! Photo 3.

5. Our visit to the school farthest out in the bush, two hours off road, was a difficult day. Classes here have no chairs, desks, teacher materials. The floors and windows are in disrepair one large class meets under a tree. Photo 4.

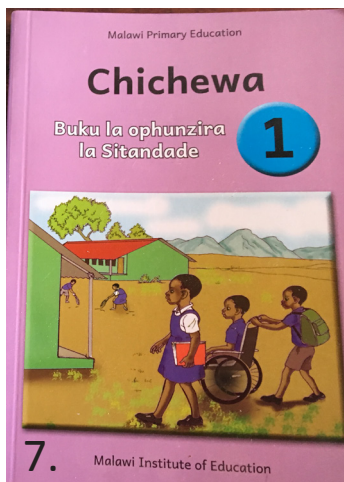
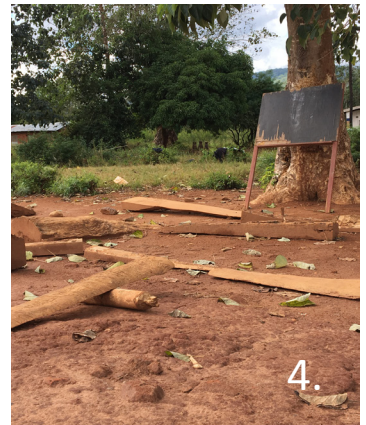
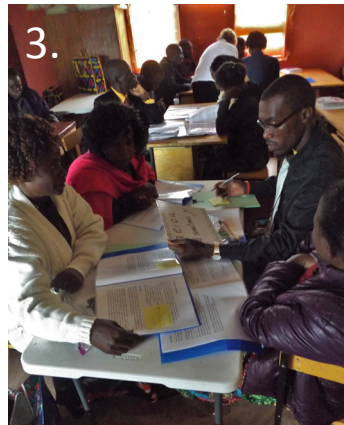
6. A visit to Chivumu Primary was one of deep joy and deep concern. We were excited to see teacher Mirriam using the “clothesline technique” to expand print around her room recently featured at our workshop. We were brought to tears when learning that our beloved teacher, Rhoda, and her 18 month old son are hospitalized with malaria. With no substitute teachers we stepped in and taught her class. Photo 5.

7. Visited the lakeshore Tuck Shop featured in our new book *The Tuck Shop*. The shop owner was thrilled to see us again and excited that we were donating 50 books to their local school. Photo 6.

8. Reviewed the 2019 teacher survey forms and began design plans for the “Simple Words” manipulative kit. This was an idea from a Chivumu teacher and is aligned with the National Reading Program. Photo 7.

9. MELT team member, Patti Constable, spent a day with Lovemore, on a new book, *Lovemore’s Day*, prompted by his visit to the MELT library knocking on our door saying, “May I read?” Photo 8.

10. We visited many schools seeing classes in action and listening to individual teachers about what MELT means to them, their classes, as well as their hopes for the future! Photo 9.

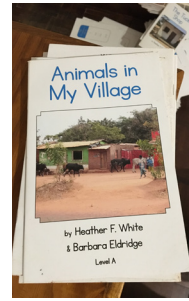
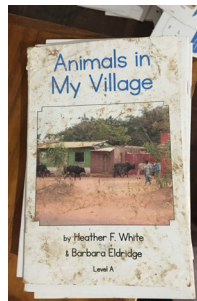
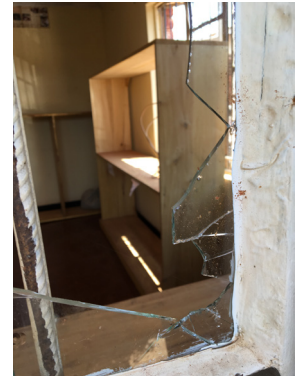
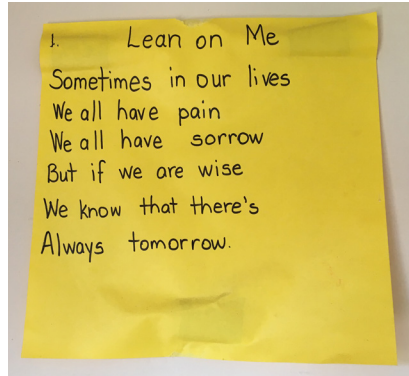


A Set Back...

On July 4th, protests (up until that day, organized and peaceful) over the recent Malawian general election turned violent. In the path of destruction stood the MELT Early Literacy Library, freshly stocked with 5000 readers sponsored by Watertown, NY area Rotary Clubs just two weeks previously.

All that remained of the M.E.L.T. Central library were a few empty shelves and shards of glass. The song, Lean on Me, sung at teacher workshops remained intact on the library wall reminding us there will be a tomorrow.

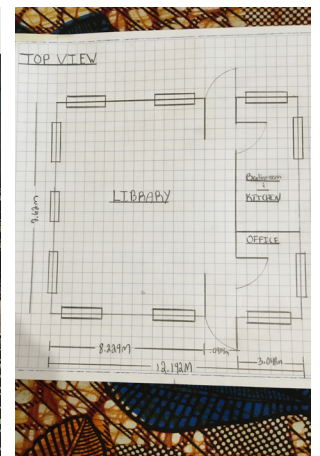
The destruction was aimed at the library's landlord, a government official, not at M.E.L.T. Support for M.E.L.T. in the community was immediate and strong from officials, police, and residents.



...is met...

Mzuzu police recovered over 2,000 stolen books all badly soiled. We created a book laundry and were able to save most of those books. A team of seven local men spent a long day assessing, washing and drying the recovered books.

There will be no gap in educational support. We moved into a temporary location allowing the MELT1 Book Mobile service to begin when school opens. Our total inventory at the new central library is 5650 readers this includes reprints already completed due to the generosity of donors and the books recovered by the police. Our net loss in the vandalism exceeds 2300 readers. Looking ahead, we gathered important information about our next publication product for MELT at a meeting with teacher representatives. Because like the Malawian teachers, we know there is always tomorrow.



To become apolitical, M.E.L.T. is making plans to build our own central library. Jason Stowell, M.E.L.T. volunteer, measured, gathered information, and planned for a permanent library. Watch for further details on this exciting venture!

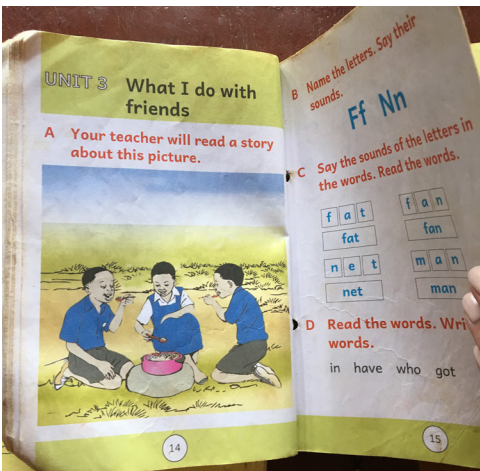
Announcing M.E.L.T.'s 2020 Project!!

Simple Words Kit

(an extension to the ABC Kits)



big pig wig dig



For our 2020 project, our teachers have requested simple word kits: a natural expansion to the national curriculum and extension of our ABC Kits (2018 Project). Each kit will have nearly 100 photos illustrating phonetically simple 3-4 letter words and a set of four lower case alphabet cards. This will allow students to manipulate letters and spell words, increasing their gateways to learning beyond sight and sound to include tactile. With the schools added this year, we will need to create 40 kits. In addition, our 10 new classrooms need basic ABC Kits, books destroyed in the protests need replacing, and a capital project for a permanent library is in the wings. Please consider donating today. **\$100 will sponsor a kit that serves 100 students!**

Zikomo

(Chichewa Language)

Thank You For Your Help!



Membership - M.E.L.T.

MalawiEarlyLiteracy.org

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Membership Level:

- \$50+ **ABC Level** - One book and annual newsletter
- \$150+ **Book Level** - One book, annual newsletter and bag
- \$500+ **Library Level** - One book, annual newsletter, bag and mug
- I would like my entire donation to go directly to the literacy work in Malawi - no gifts please.
- Knowing every donation is welcome, no matter its size, please accept my donation of _____.
- Please contact me for volunteer opportunities!
- Payment Method Cash Check Please Bill Me

Do the Math

The MELT1 Book Mobile service reaches 40 teachers a year with an average class size of 75. That equals 3,000 children a year – in five years we will have reached well over 15,000 children! Our annual book circulation surpasses 80,000 books!

It is expensive getting to and from Malawi – it is expensive getting our new materials into the hands of the teachers in the Northern Region. An annual trip costs about \$14,000 but divide that by 3000 children and we are reaching these children for \$4.70 a child!

Become a Member

**Do you recall a favorite book from childhood?
Help us get books in the hands of children who have none.**

Having a strong membership allows us to plan ahead. We can print materials and purchase supplies when there are sales - making your donation go further. Please consider becoming an individual or group member today! Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and write "MELT" on the memo line and then mail to:
First Presbyterian Church
403 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601



Visit us at m-e-l-t.org !

You Can Help

We are looking for gently used Big Book easy readers. Contact us and we will evaluate for cultural appropriateness.

Check our website as we occasionally ask for specific materials.

Donate or become a member today

Sponsor a book or literacy kit in honor/memory of a loved one and have that noted on the dedication page.

M.E.L.T.'s Mission is to:

- Design, publish, and supply the Northern Region of Malawi with culturally appropriate early literacy materials.
- Provide professional development in the uses of these materials to our teachers in Malawi.
- Reach remote, rural villages with the MELT1 Book Mobile service.

M.E.L.T.'s Vision:

- Strong, literate communities in the Northern Region of Malawi.