

Dear Kudimba friends

These are difficult times for Malawi and for Kudimba.

The effects of last year's devastating and deadly cyclone are still being felt and new developments caused by climate change are already taking place. Most of the country is facing drought, which is severely affecting much-needed harvests, while other parts of the country are suffering from flooding. In particular, the areas around the lake are having a harder time than ever before; the lake has not been as high as it is now for many decades. Many places on the lake shores are drowning in water. The level of the lake, the rainwater and the oversaturated ground result in unprecedented flooding.

All the staff and children at Kudimba enjoyed a two week break over Easter. Of course, it was a great disappointment for everyone that we had to make the decision to keep the doors of our daycare centre closed after the holidays due to the partial flooding of our project site. The staff accommodation, the new kitchen building, the storeroom, the garage and the communal house are all dry, but the education centre itself is in the water for the first time. Without the facilities of the education centre, we are unable to provide our services on-site, with sanitation being the biggest challenge.

At the moment there is no significant damage, just a lot of water that will hopefully recede quietly and without much trace at some point in the near future. Should the water continue to rise, we are likely to suffer significant structural problems. The worst aspect of this situation of course, is the continuation of care for the children of Kudimba. We are not able to provide them with the regular care and meals they so desperately need. In an attempt to do something for the time being, the Kudimba staff are making outreach visits to the children and their families at home, for some educational and therapeutic activities. At the same time they are keeping an eye on their health and general condition so that they can report and refer if necessary.

Our participants who are in boarding schools have left and are carrying on with their lives as normal. For those who remain in Lifuwu, it's a different story.

Although the rainy season is nearly coming to an end, it's unlikely that the water will recede soon. Water from the rivers and from northern Malawi will continue to fill the lake for some time after the rains have stopped.

We look forward to the moment when the disconcerting rise of the water ends, we are ready for the land to dry up and for life to return to normal.

What we have learnt in Kudimba over the past few years is not to lose heart. We come up with creative solutions to the inevitable challenges we continue to meet. We were already preparing to expand Kudimba on the new land we have bought, which is close to our current location but at a higher level. We are now planning to build a versatile covered area on this terrain for times like these when Kudimba cannot operate due to flooding. It will be good to have an alternative location for the day care activities for such exceptional circumstances.

Besides the news about the excessive water levels of the lake, we have more to share about life in Lifuwu.

The Kudimba family has grown once again. We are delighted to announce the safe arrival of little Benjamin on 23 March 2024. He is the baby boy of our lovely staff member Leke, her fourth child. Leke is now enjoying her well-deserved maternity leave.

We have another special announcement: Talandira was born on the 3rd of March, a beautiful and healthy baby girl. This little girl from Lifuwu was less fortunate. Her mother passed away during childbirth. With no pre-existing complications, her death was completely unexpected. Talandira doesn't meet the criteria for Kudimba as she doesn't have a disability. We have to be very strict with these criteria; in order to make our operations possible we need to keep our target group well defined as this provides a realistic and achievable framework for our work.

However, we have offered to help Talandira on a temporary basis and we are looking for a personal sponsor to provide support for her formula feeds. As the child is unable to breastfeed and it is financially impossible for the grandparents to buy formula milk, the biggest challenge, apart from the loss of their beautiful daughter, is to provide Talandira with adequate nutrition.

The cost of formula milk per month for a baby is higher than the average monthly salary in Malawi.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in sponsoring Talandira on a short or long term basis. Your contribution will make a huge difference.

In other news, we are very proud of our recent achievements at Kudimba. Our new kitchen building is finally finished and the result is wonderful. It will be a great new improvement for our project, once we start our usual activities again.

We celebrated the completion of the new kitchen block on the last day before the Easter break: a little party on the spacious veranda of the new facility, with all the staff and participants. Everyone enjoyed the face painting, soap bubbles, music, dancing, snacks and drinks. In July, we will be holding an official opening ceremony for the new building.

Our next step will be the start of the development of Sandulika, an ambitious plan. As we mentioned before, we have managed to buy a beautiful site, ideal for our plans and close to Kudimba. Sandulika will be a place for social employment and sheltered living for young adults with special needs. We hope to start with the very first steps of this project in July.

A new adventure begins.

Warm wishes,

The Kudimba team

you will still be able to follow our updates on our website: <https://kudimba-foundation.org/> or on our Facebook page : <https://facebook.com/Kudimba/>