

Dear Kudimba friends,

Spring brings a new Kudimba update and once again, water levels are a topic in the newsletter. While our Kudimba site has not flooded, high groundwater is affecting sanitation and the lake is still rising.

Since February, our daycare activities have temporarily moved to our new site: Sandulika. What was recently a project under construction is now already making a difference.

While construction there is still ongoing, the education centre, with its storerooms and kitchen corner, is ready, as is the communal bathroom with showers and toilets for both boys and girls. We also have a laundry area, a well-functioning borehole with a solar-powered submersible pump, a septic tank and a double water tank system. With essential facilities in place, we can continue providing care, nutrition, education and physiotherapy without interruption. We are so proud to have this alternative ready.

We are nearing completion of a new accommodation building at Sandulika, designed with six independent living units for young adults with special needs who can live with minimal support. A caretaker and his family will also live on-site, offering daily support and helping ensure everything runs smoothly. Works for the roof have commenced and the building will soon be ready.

For now, it will temporarily house co-workers of the project until the dedicated staff accommodation is completed in the next phase.

Peter, his mother and his siblings now live in the emergency shelter on the Sandulika site. Their situation has improved drastically, though life continues to be challenging. Nutrition remains an important focus, especially as Peter needs both regular meals and vital medication.

Food in general is a crucial part of the services provided by the project. For many of our participants and even some staff members daily meals are a vital support that we can offer.

As a step toward more independence, we have provided goats to Peter's family, which could offer a small, sustainable source of income in the future.

Finding the right balance in how to support the family while avoiding dependence is something we are carefully considering.

Kudimba's team is strong and dedicated and their work has an impact on the wider community. Currently 69 participants with special needs are registered in the project. Our team consists of 26 staff members, of which 17 are full-time and 9 part-time. Of these staff members, 11 have special needs themselves. Together with outreach workers, a physiotherapist and a nurse, they provide essential care, guidance and support to the children and young adults of Kudimba.

We are also creating opportunities for our participants: six of our young people are now contributing through part time roles: in maintenance, in the kitchen and in the bicycle transport of our youngest and least mobile participants.

We are proud to have Flackson as a co-worker. He is a local tailor and father of one of our participants. He now has a role as a part time sewing teacher for our young adults with special needs.

This is exactly what our new Sandulika Project is all about: creating opportunities for young adults with special needs to gain skills, build confidence and move toward more independence. Our plan is to build dedicated workshops at the Sandulika site for tailoring and other vocational training activities. We are hopeful that this tailoring initiative will continue to grow into a sustainable and long-lasting success story.

This July, we are excited to welcome a team of four volunteers from vzw Humasol, who will bring solar power to our Sandulika site. We have worked with vzw Humasol in the past and had an excellent experience. These engineering students will stay with us for two months and they will also explore new possibilities within our workshops.

At the same time, our Kuwala Circus Project will take place in July, with nine participants.

It will be an exciting and lively period for our project.

With the support of a generous donor, we've installed a new, larger water tank at Kudimba. This simple upgrade brings better water access, stronger pressure and more comfort for the residential staff of Kudimba.

Through improvements in everyday conditions, we are not only supporting the children, but also strengthening the environment for our dedicated team, who work tirelessly during these challenging times in Malawi.

Inflation in Malawi is making daily life harder for many families. Prices for basic needs like food, fuel and transport keep increasing, while wages often stay the same. This means people can afford less than before. For families already living on very little, even small price increases can have a big impact. Higher fuel costs have made things worse. Transport is more expensive, which also raises the price of goods. Overall, many families are under pressure and must make difficult choices to get by. Whenever possible, we support our full-time staff with a small mid-month bonus to help them manage these rising costs.

Whilst writing this newsletter, extreme weather conditions are currently affecting Malawi. The situation is looking bleak. Although our project site remains safe for now and everyone is well, many surrounding areas have been severely impacted. Buildings have been damaged, homes and properties flooded and schools have become unusable due to flooding. We are grateful that, so far, our project site has been spared and that everyone within Kudimba and Sandulika is safe, but we remain cautious and vigilant.

Meanwhile, we will continue to support our participants and staff as best we can.

As always, a heartfelt thank you to all our friends and supporters.
It is through your support that we are able to make all of this possible.

Warm greetings from the Kudimba Team.