



INSIDE VSA | OBJECTIVES | PROGRAMS
SUCCESS STORIES | POETRY CORNER

A portrait of Daniel Mhone, a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, a patterned shirt, and a dark tie. He is sitting at a desk with papers and a pen. The background is a light grey wall.

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As the Malawi Provisional Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, our holistic approach to doing ministry is demonstrated by our engagement of our Youth and young adults across the country who for one reason or the other could not make progress in academic circles but their hidden God given skills and talents only needed to be developed hence the vision and mission to establish a Vocational Skills Department in our Provisional Annual Conference with the help of our Partner, The Church of Resurrection of the United Methodist Church in Kansas USA. We are encouraged that already out of the 4 Cohorts we have recruited and trained, the program has been a life changer to many and already our trained Youths are contributing positively to various sectors of our communities as they apply their skills in providing different services. A good example, most of our Tailors have been involved in "Mask Making" due to covid 19 pandemic.

Our Youth therefore, through their provision of services according to their skills, are participating in a very positive way to the advancement and development of our communities thereby reducing idle minds by our Youth which are dangerous to society and in most cases end up in evil acts such as involvement in drugs or prostitution which are some of the evils that are very common in our communities perpetuated by the Youth. Praise be to God that the support from our Partner Church of Resurrection, has been timely and our Youth are living with hope now that they have acquired vocational skills which was not the case before this program was introduced.

Thanks to Funny Nkhoma for her visionary and well guided leadership in shaping the life changing program in our Provisional Annual Conference.

May God lead us to our destiny in developing our Youth.

D. Mhone
Daniel Mhone
Conference Supretendent

INSIDE contents

About VSO **04**

Alumni Spotlight **05**

Poetry Corner **06**

Pictorial Focus **09**

Contact:

United Methodist Church
P.O Box 150
Blantyre.

ngwirahugo30@gmail.com
+265 992 301 277

VSO



Funny Nkhoma – Program Supervisor

The other issue that this project will address is behavioural change among young people. The effect of unemployment has been huge on the society, and the youth/young people are the most affected. This has been evident in the church, where there is high rate of early marriages, drug and substance abuse, gender violence, early pregnancies etc.

In as much as the main goal of the program is to ensure that young people acquire vocational skills, the program also addresses social issues that are affecting the young people as mentioned above through counselling and mentorship program.

When did it start?

The first cohort in 2019 started with 16 students, six were doing tailoring, one plumbing, four hairdressing and two electrical repairing and three driving. In 2020, we had more applications but managed to select 48 students and for 2021, we have 36 students. The program has grown from how it started.

We are in partnership with Samaritan Trust, Kapondo Vocational school, Patience Vocational school and a few other institutions. We send the students in these schools but we also send some students in workshops especially if the students are coming from locations with no vocational schools.

Criteria

- Any person aged 15 to 32 years of age.
- Be a United Methodist church member
- Young people been deprived of economic and education opportunities.

About Vocational Skills & Apprenticeship Program.

The ministry of the UMC in Malawi is highly concentrated in rural areas where unemployment is high and more than 80% of people live under the poverty line, according to the world bank report 2018. In other words, most of the church members in rural areas live under the poverty line, and young people cannot afford or access any kind of education due to poverty.

The Vocational program and apprenticeship program was initiated in 2019 in order to empower the youth with skills that will make them competitive in the labour market. This will enable our young people to be established so that they can support themselves and their families, community, church and country.

The main challenge that this project will address is the issue of unemployment for young people both at church, community and nation level. Underprivileged young people or young people living in the rural areas are the most affected because they are deprived of access to labour market due to lack of education or skills or poverty.



Project Goals

The goal of the project is to help underprivileged youth acquire vocational skills for the labour market. Completion of a six months course and internship placement will be used as a benchmark for the attainment of the goal

To reduce the problem of unemployment by 5% among young people in the UMC church

Addressing social issues affecting the young people by providing counselling and spiritual guidance to young people

To reduce vulnerability and dependency among the young people by 10% in rural community of our project catchments.

Providing Mentorship and Career guidance for young people

Seeking and providing employment and internship opportunities for young people upon completion.



Some of the beneficiaries of the program

The VSA program has assisted over 100 students

Vocational Skills & Apprenticeship Program. ALUMNI- SPOTLIGHT.



Harrison Malunga – *First cohort beneficiary*



Some of Harrison's Work



a tailoring graduate from Samaritan trust. He graduated in 2019 and has been doing really well ever since. Harrison is a first born in a family of 4, He was born in June, 2000. He lost his father when he was 7 years old and has been raised by his mother who struggled to make ends meet. He finished his high school but could not go to college because of fees. The mother could not afford to pay for fees. Harrison then saw this vocational opportunity that he decided to apply and he got selected to pursue a tailoring course at Samaritan trust. He loves good clothes and always wanted to be someone who makes them so people can say Harrison made this. Harrison is now a well-known tailor in his community.

Harrison works part time with a designer named Emma Gondwe who owns a tailoring shop called EMD. Emma has been helping Harrison master his tailoring skills by giving him work and help him earn money. Harrison is also doing personal business which helps him make more money to help his family.

Harrison also works with the united Methodist church by making nursery school uniforms and also masks. He makes more money from that too. He is able to help his family as of now and something more interesting just happened as he has managed to buy land at 350 000 malawi kwacha and would love to build a house when he saves for it. He is excited as this was something he never thought would happen to him. Harrison wants to further his education as he knows he can do even better.





Mathews Mapanga - Current student

Vocational Skills & Apprenticeship Program.

Mathews Mapanga is a first born child in a family of five. He was born on 28th November, 1996 in a family of Mr. & Mrs. Mapanga of Matepwe Village, Traditional Authority Kaduya in Phalombe district, southern part of Malawi.

Mathews Mapanga joined United Methodist Church at Migowi local Church in Mulanje Circuit in 2013. Due to poverty at his home, Mathews failed to attend school as required. As a result, he did not get required credits at his secondary school level for him to be admitted to the one of the Universities and colleges in Malawi.

When Youth apprenticeship program was initiated in the Malawi provisional Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, it was the only hope for Mathews because his parents could not afford to pay for him for such vocational schools in Malawi. Today Mathews Mapanga is doing certificate in plumbing at Kubwalo Initiative Vocational Skills Centre (KIVSC) in Zomba district. The Principal of Kubwalo Initiative Vocational Skills Centre (KIVSC) Mrs. Banda spoke highly of Mathew Mapanga both on his performance and behaviour. She said that, "Mathews is a good student in terms of his behaviour and performance in class." For this reason Mathews was selected to be a chairperson of Sanitation at the school.

In addition, Mr. Liponjera one of the tutors at Kubwalo Initiative Vocational Skills Centre (KIVSC), said that he is very impressive with Mathews' performance both on the theories and practicals. He wished if the school could have more students of the caliber of Mathews. Mathews says that he is pursuing vocational skills so that he should be able to support himself as well as his parents who are also struggling for daily living.

INSIDE VSA

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

This has become a big part of the Vocational Skills and apprenticeship. The mentorship involves entrepreneurship and mental health session. We also take the opportunity to tackle issues about self-esteem, Mind-set change and life in general. We involve people who are well equipped in the focused area to be the mentors. We try to find entrepreneurs who are doing well in life but they are coming from a poor start and mental health is offered by people who are counsellors.



Dear African Child

Dear African child,
Open up your mind to belief,
That life is what you make it,
You dream it,
You live it and you own it,
Life is a parable but you have to unwrap it,
Open it up and let new ideas sink,
Love it, because you will never really have it.
Again.

Now, look into your eyes,
African child,
See the fire burning,
Feel that little tingling feeling inside you and look around you,
You are walking your greatest moment,
But so is everybody,
Your body is a vessel that houses your eternal soul,
Created in the image of your father,
Our father in heaven.

So, this is your heaven.
Look upon your stars and align them in your favor, Always remember, that that fire you
see,
Is to ignite your journey to your purpose,
Its purpose is to send out the energy you need to outlive your struggle.
The guidance to loving your existence,
The light that shall shine until forever,
Cause gratitude is your being.

Dear African child,
Your life is this poem,
Crafted from words and you were born,
Inspired by other poems,
You are meant to write your own.
Outlive your mistakes because you are not cut from wrong,
I am your father, let not ye trouble your mind,
I gave you this story so people could learn,
That your voice is mine,
And mine is everybody.

Tell your story young King,
Cause your blessings are around the corner,
You just need to be aware.
Ababa held my hand while he gave me these words,
To remind me every time I relate my poverty as a struggle, That my story is wealth
being told,
So I began this trek,
To speak to my generation
And my generation to the next generation
And we create heritage
Because that's what Ababa would want.

I am African child,
You are African child,
And I know your story is from struggle,
But struggle not in your mind
Because this poem is there to remind you,
That you are African child,
Born from poverty but you are going to rise.
So, arise to the spot light
And walk in your light
Because I your father, is your voice,
I created you from my words
And I gave you a purpose.
Be the VOICE.

**Vocational Skills
& Apprenticeship
Student.**
LYSON WILLARD.





Hugo Ngwira – COR Program Coordinator



Some of the VSA Graduates



Harrison Malunga showcasing his skills



Program team with some of the students



Enaya Essau – Bricklaying Alumni



Students undergoing Mentorship Program



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