



HAPPY CLASSROOMS

project description

Overall project aim:

To improve the learning and teaching environments in government primary schools through painting the classroom walls with syllabus-related decorations.

Background of the project:

Primary schools are overcrowded and there are sometimes more than 150 students taught by one teacher in classrooms that are bare and dark, with no teaching aids available. Teaching is often limited to oral learning and repetition. This makes it difficult for children to concentrate, some of them are left behind, losing interest, unable to follow what the teacher is explaining. Syllabus-related decorations on the walls are an easy, effective and long-lasting way of addressing the current lack of visual teaching aids in the classrooms.

Objectives of the project:

- to provide the students with a child-friendly environment that helps them to concentrate better and learn faster
- to provide the teachers with lasting teaching aids so that their lessons can be more understandable and livelier

Current state of the project:

The project started in June 2011 and till December 2014 over 1 000 Happy Classrooms (Std. 1-4) were painted especially in Blantyre urban, Blantyre rural, Nsanje, Lilongwe and other parts of Malawi with support of various companies, organizations and individuals. Evaluating the project shows its vital contribution towards quality education and therefore funding partners are sought in order to reach more areas across Malawi.

Phases of the project:

- identification of the benefiting primary schools and contact with the local Primary Education Advisor
- initial meeting with head-teachers of the zone, introducing the project, deciding time of realization and further details
- walls preparation - cleaning, hole filling and undercoat painting (done in cooperation with the school)
- boNGO painters decorating the classrooms (each takes approximately 7 days)
- a monitoring visit on how teachers use the paintings in class and a brief workshop on further ways of utilizing the decorations during lessons

Cost:

160 000 - 300 000 MK (\$ 400 - 750) for each Happy Classroom depending on how remote the school is and how much maintenance its walls need before painting. The price covers:

- Introduction of the project to teachers, headmasters and local Ministry of Education
- Maintenance of the old walls
- Painting materials
- Art work
- Administration

Beneficiaries:

- pupils - out of each Happy Classroom approximately 1 500 children will benefit in the next 10 years
- teachers - with the decorations teaching is easier, allowing a broader variety of teaching methods
- primary schools - don't have to spend money on stationery in order to produce other teaching materials

About boNGO:

boNGO is a Malawian NGO established in 2007 to raise standards of education in the country. Its main working areas are (1) early education, (2) rehabilitation of primary school classrooms and (3) production of awareness-raising films. boNGO is registered with CONGOMA, NGO Board and MRA.

Photo-gallery



The usual classrooms in Malawian primary schools are dark and bare, and don't offer the children a stimulating environment.



Some teachers produce teaching charts and stick them on the walls. But these last only shortly and end up being quite costly.



The **Happy Classrooms** offer a long lasting solution - decorations on the walls linked to the syllabus.



Transformation of an ordinary classroom into a **Happy Classrooms** takes around 7 days.



The types of decorations are carefully chosen by boNGO in cooperation with teachers and Primary School Advisors. So far decorations for Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 were developed.



Those supporting **Happy Classrooms** have their logo painted on the wall.



What matters most - **Happy Classrooms** make children enjoy learning and come to school. Each **Happy Classroom** lasts at least 10 years and benefits over 1 500 children.