bonGO in Autumn 2010
UMODZI-MBAME MODEL CHILDCARE CENTER

The Model Childcare Center Umodzi-Mbame in Juma village established by boNGO in 2005 enrolled 74 children for the school year 2010/2011. Like usual the kids are divided according to age into two groups of 3-4 and 5-6 years olds. The eight teachers working at Umodzi-Mbame make sure that children are learning through a variety of activities including writing, reading, counting, dancing, singing, drawing, moulding, games, story-telling and more. Having such a colorful syllabus and working with a 1:10 teacher:student ratio is what makes the Umodzi-Mbame Childcare Center a Model and Training Facility. Four of the eight teachers are once a week training and supporting teachers from two other centers.

drawing with chalk on the floor is one of the favorite activities ...
MANGO - A SECOND MODEL CHILDCARE CENTER UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the Mango Model Childcare Center started in October 2010 and is based on a long-term cooperation between boNGO and the local group of volunteers. Funds for the school block were donated by the The Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Lusaka and a big part was also contributed by the community itself - including land, sand, stones, bricks and labour.

Mango Childcare Center was initiated in 2002 by a group of active local volunteers. For eight years it has been operating under a Mango tree.

When it was decided that Mango will become a new Model Childcare Center, a borehole was drilled on the site, funded by boNGO Switzerland (9 000 USD).

45 000 bricks had to be moulded and burnt.

The two-classroom school block will be finished by the end of 2010.
WHAT IS A “MODEL CHILDCARE CENTER”?

There are over 6,000 childcare centers in Malawi, most of them offering very low quality services, unable to provide sufficient stimulation which is much needed for full development of every child. boNGO challenges the situation by transforming chosen centers into Model Centers which, apart from providing high quality pre-school education, also increase the standards of surrounding centers, mainly through teacher training and supervisory services. Model centers have:

- suitable building and playground
- sufficient number of well trained teachers (the teacher:child ratio should be 1:10)
- various teaching and playing materials made from locally available resources
- daily nutritious meal prepared by parents
- teacher training support program for surrounding centers
- additional activities (youth club, library service, adult education, community events ...)

![suitable building](image1)
![learning in small groups](image2)
![lunch prepared by parents](image3)
![afternoon activities for youths](image4)

![training teachers from other childcare centers](image5)
![hand-made teaching and playing materials from local resources](image6)
HOW TO DEVELOP A MODEL CHILDCARE CENTER?

Over the following two years boNGO will intensely work with the Mango Center to develop it into a Model Childcare Center. This pilot project is based on boNGO’s experience and co-operation with the Umodzi-Mbame Childcare Center. Training and support for Mango’s teacher will be delivered by the Umodzi-Mbame teachers. An important output of the project will be a guide on *How to develop a Model Childcare Center* adaptable to any childcare center in Malawi.

Like all boNGO programs, the project is based on the regular and personal exchange between boNGO’s staff, the groups at the grassroots and relevant external partners. Justin Namizinga, as boNGO’s Program Director, has the challenging task of facilitating meetings and trainings that encourage communication, understanding and a sense of ownership between the different partners involved.

Justin facilitating a meeting between boNGO, the village headman and the community to share responsibilities for the development of the emerging Mango Model Center.
TEACHER TRAINING

Since May 2010 boNGO has been training four teachers from two childcare centers in Ndirande, Blantyre’s township. At first the teachers spent two weeks at boNGO’s Model Childcare Center Umodzi-Mbame where they underwent an intensive theory training and taught together with Umodzi’s experienced teachers. In July and August they were teaching in their own centers under supervision from Umodzi teachers. The training will continue for another year with weekly supervision visits and monthly workshops introducing different topics of boNGO’s Teacher Manual (f.e. how to teach numbers, how to teach letters, how to produce and use teaching materials ... etc.) Since May the teachers have made a major progress and report that now they are able to keep the children’s attention and find teaching more enjoyable. Also parents observe the differences, saying that the children can now tell what they have learnt at school. The whole teaching structure has changed .... where there used to be only repetition is now space for learning through play.
The new boNGO’s project Happy Classrooms was piloted in the beginning of this year. It brings colorful decorations on the walls of the government primary schools. So far four classrooms were painted, with over 500 children benefiting. boNGO is now in the process of assessing the impact, developing a special training for teachers to use the paintings, and finding a way how to implement the project at a larger scale, throughout the country. The feedback from teachers and parents has been very positive. Teachers report that students learn faster and teaching becomes easier, as it is the only teaching aid in many classrooms.

Standard two at Nankumba primary school. Alphabet line and other decorations on the walls help all the children but especially those who need visual stimulation for learning.
EXCHANGE PROGRAM - A VOLUNTEER IS COMING FROM OVERSEAS

In the end of October boNGO has received the first volunteer in its history! Josefin L. from Germany will stay until the end of January 2011. At the moment she is getting an insight into the different boNGO projects in order to find where and how can she use her skills.

The library at Nankumba primary school (one of the primary schools that enrolls children from the Umodzi-Mbame Center) was developed with boNGO’s support in September 2010. The walls were decorated by the local sign-writer Mathyas F., the same craftsman who decorates classrooms in the Happy Classrooms program.
As part of the boNGO Forum activities, the Education Director, Simone Fuchs, held a presentation at the Skyway College (college for Malawi’s social and development workers) called “WHAT IS POVERTY?” In the two-hour workshop stereotypes about poverty and wealth in Western countries and Africa were discussed as well as the power of medias in manipulating public opinion. The unusual presentation raised a lot of attention among the students and will be followed by other events of similar nature.
FINDING NEW WAYS OF FUNDRAISING

Both coincidence and dedication made boNGO to come up with an innovative way of raising funds. When in 2009 boNGO’s Managing Director Tereza Mirovičová featured in a music video of a famous Malawian singer Lucious Banda little she knew that one day the same videoclip will help to raise funds and awareness about boNGO. The clip caught attention of a major Czech bank, which made a short movie out of it and placed it online: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7xubKjfW8M. Depending on popularity of the video, the bank will contribute money to boNGO’s Happy Classroom Project.
EMBASSY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC VISITING boNGO

In the middle of October boNGO received an important visitor - the deputy head of the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Zimbabwe, Zuzana Beranová, and her colleagues. They visited the Umodzi-Mbame Childcare Center and congratulated boNGO on establishing this Model which proves that even in a rural setting and with minimal running costs ($400 monthly) a high quality pre-school education can be provided.
The movie is finally finished! A 30 minute story about a 17-year old village girl, Zione, who doesn’t see any other solution to her life challenges than becoming a prostitute, is the first, and hopefully not last, film by boNGO’s Managing Director Tereza Mirovičová. Shot at Chazunda, close to the Umodzi-Mbame center, the movie was made within 5 days with local youths as actors. It is in local language Chichewa with english subtitles. Music for the film was done by a talented Malawian musician Agoroso. The story is a powerful educational tool putting the HIV/AIDS in the light that everybody can see how and why can it be spread so easily... The film will be soon shown at the Malawi Film Festival in Blantyre. We’re looking for a partner who could fund spreading the movie into rural areas of Malawi as well as neighboring countries where they speak Chichewa too.
HOW CAN YOU HELP?

boNGO is raising money for the new Model Center MANGO. While funds for the school structure were already secured, more is needed for establishing a proper playground, building a kitchen and latrines, and equipping the center with chairs, tables, kitchen utensils, stoves etc. Details on how to make a contribution can be found on our website www.bongoworldwide.org (you may donate via Paypal, or straight to the boNGO’s account in Malawi, Switzerland or the Czech Republic, where boNGO is a registered organization).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST!