



ELA's Cultural and Educational Centre
with a program for children with special needs
and community building programs
Mazembe Village, Nkhata Bay District, Malawi, Central Africa

Decision:

With more than a decade of living and working in East African countries, we have found that our experience, education and skills are much more useful in this part of the world where quality education is still a problem.

Most African countries have already introduced mandatory primary education, which makes primary education accessible to all. In practice, however, this means overcrowded classrooms, which are becoming even fuller due to the reduction in the number of teachers. Currently, the average workload of rural schools in this part of the world is more than 200 students per 1 teacher. Pupils are included in the lessons, but the education they acquire is weak. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to enroll in better high schools and later to compete on the labor market.

Another group in need of help is youth. After finishing primary school, the vast majority do not go to secondary school due to lack of money for tuition fees, so they indulge in idleness, which leads them to despair of alcohol and drug use, leading them to premature marriages and pregnancy.

The third often overlooked group is rural women. These are, in fact, the ones that often enable the survival of ten or more member families but are at the same time pushed into the background of social life due to lack of information and education.

ELA's projects:

In 2012, we built the ELA cultural and educational centre in the Mazembe village (donor: Slovenian Ecologists without Borders). This has become the centre of events in which we run programs for children, youth and women.

The main goal of our project for children with special needs is to establish a system of additional professional assistance in the form of learning assistance for children who are hindered in their work by learning difficulties or special needs. The daily program is carried out with a team of 2 Malawian teachers and occasional international volunteers who have pedagogical and psychological knowledge (special pedagogues, psychologists, primary school teachers, etc.) which is implemented in ELA's programs.

Every morning at ELA's centre, we run 3-hour workshops for children with learning difficulties who attend the Mazembe Primary School (1st and 2nd graders). We feed them with a balanced lunch every day.

Every afternoon at 2 pm to 5 pm, we run general workshops for about 200 primary (and kindergarten) school children at the ELA's Centre, where we teach mathematics, English, reading, writing, sports and art classes.

In 2014, we founded 2 youth clubs, with hundreds of members. We enable them to develop talents in theater, dance, singing group in three sports (football, volleyball, handball). Through performances in villages and towns, we collect voluntary contributions from visitors, which are used to pay tuition fees for members to return to high schools and successfully complete their education.

For 50 women from our village, we have set up ELA's Women's Club. There we teach them the basics of writing, run financial literacy workshops, and help them set up and run small businesses.

ELA'S CULTURAL&EDUCATIONAL CENTRE
Location: Mazembe Village (3-acres of land), Nkhata Bay District

ELA's centre is intended for the residents of the district as:

-Educational dayily centre for school and preschool children

-for the implementation of additional lessons, learning aid especially for children with special needs (learning difficulties, problems with fine motor skills, problems with concentration, dyslexia, hyperactivity)

-Youth Education Centre

-establishment of a youth club for more than 100 young people, the idea is to encourage talent and perform in Malawi schools and collect donations to pay tuition for high school students. ELA has drama, singing, dancing, football and volleyball teams.

-Adult education centre

- education of rural women (literacy, financial literacy, assistance in setting up and running small businesses)

-Cultural centre

-activities for the promotion of local culture - music evenings, music and dance workshops or space and infrastructural possibilities for the development of local artists, exhibition space.

What is the point of running a project in this form?

In our experience with development work, smaller, local projects make much more sense and are larger effect.

Why?

- Smaller projects are more manageable
- fewer employees are needed to be provided,
- long-term existence of the project,
- the transparency of activities is much greater,
- the finances for the implementation of projects are small,
- the possibility of evaluating activities is greater and the possibility of making changes to reach the desired, effective goals.
- Smaller projects are usually registered as NGOs / CBOs that spends less money on overheads (transport, accommodation, bureaucracy,...) because it works in a smaller area for the benefit of local communities.

ELA has been registered in Malawi since June 2012 as a non-governmental, independent and local organisation, which means that it also has the possibility of employing foreign professionals with work permits, thus avoiding bureaucracy with visas.

- employs local people, thus also contributing to the employment market
- At the same time, CBO organisations also have a committee in which representatives of local communities. They co-decide on the course of projects, needs, etc. We lead the project (because we live in the middle of the Malawian village of Mazembe) with respect for culture, understanding of the life and needs of Africans and with the help of the local community we plan development guidelines based on the needs and ideas of the local community.

Built infrastructure

ELA's centre is built of natural materials with local construction (fired local bricks from clay, cement, sand, wood) of 140m².

Half of the centre is used as a work space where we run educational workshops for children, youth and women. In the same room there is a dining room, separate from it a small kitchen and toilets (shower), a toilet is built outside the centre.

This is followed by 4 rooms, each 20m², intended as sleeping quarters for volunteers (2 bunk beds per room).

ELA's staff

- Project leader / president of the ELA organisation in Malawi, in Slovenia and in Kenya-Jana Dular Wang'ombe (graduated lawyer)
- administration in Slovenia / vice-president of the association Barbara Marič and Renata Flander
- 2 Malawian teachers
- 1 cook and assistant at afternoon workshops (for the needs of children and the centre)
- 1 night guard
- Occasional volunteers

Long-term sources of financing the operation of ELA's projects

- Jana Dular Wang'ombe runs lectures in Slovenia / EU on project success, aid effectiveness
- donations
- sponsorship system - sponsors from Slovenia and abroad sponsor children who are involved in the educational activities at ELA's centre
- application for tenders (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, EU tenders)
- cultural tourism - tourism activities that promote local culture
- volunteering

Information on voluntary contributions

Account name: DRUSTVO ELA

Address: JURKA VAS 33

Town: 8351 STRAŽA

Country SLOVENIA / EU

IBAN/Acc.nb SI56 0203 8009 0249 043

BIC code: LJBAS12XXXX

Bank's address: NLB d.d., TRG REPUBLIKE 2, 1000 LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA/EU

Official website of the ELA: www.ela-africa-org and www.elamalawi.org (previous page)

Contacts:

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