

## **Project Number #MW 96658**

### **Project Name Youth Ministry Capacity Building**

#### **Vision of the project**

The Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) in partnership with SIM desires to serve youth groups and youth leaders by providing effective training and mentoring. We are very committed to growing a youth ministry based on Jesus as the foundation of any good church ministry. Our vision is to see youth in Malawi come to know and worship Jesus Christ as Lord through His Gospel; and to become passionate growing disciples of Jesus, reaching out to the lost, bringing hope and transformation to a broken world.

#### **Project background**

This project seeks to continue to assist the Africa Evangelical Church (AEC) - SIM's partner church in Malawi - to build its capacity for effective youth ministries across all its local congregations. Currently, approximately 75% of Malawi's population is under the age of 30, making it one of the nations with the highest proportion of youth in the world. More specifically, youths (persons aged 10-29 years) comprise more than 1/3 of the country's population (38.7 %).

There are approximately 140 local churches in the AEC, grouped in 12 area councils (9 in the southern region, 2 in the central region and 1 in the northern region of Malawi). Not all of the local church develops, functioning youth groups, and often there is no distinction between children and youth ministries.

The AEC is struggling to develop effective youth ministries that address the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional needs of youth within the church, as well as reaching the youth outside the church.

The project envisages that the church's capacity to undertake effective youth ministry will be developed in the following key focus areas:

- (1) Mentoring, training, equipping and development of youth & youth leaders in leadership, evangelism & discipleship;
- (2) Development of sustainable & relational 'programs' and 'platforms' for youth ministry
- (3) Provide access to Bible-based resources for spiritual growth

#### **Progress**

The AEC youth ministry continues to grow and bear fruit by God's grace and enabling. Our confidence comes from the fact that God continues to bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of the youth in Malawi.

From October 2019 to March 2020 two main activities were undertaken: 1. Mentoring visits to key areas such as Lilongwe, Lakeshore and Mzuzu. Macdonald, the AEC National Youth Coordinator travelled with Pastor Sumbulero, the AEC National Discipleship Coordinator to hold discipleship meetings with the youth in the areas they visited. They encouraged the youth leaders to be doing one-to-one discipleship with members of their youth groups; (2) Girls camp in Blantyre was held on the December 19-21, where 28 girls turned up. Besides teaching the girls from God's Word, the girls were encouraged to complete their schooling and even pursue higher education, as well as learning some life skills to help themselves.

The Mtengo Youth Vocational Discipleship group before COVID-19 had continued to meet every Wednesday mornings, using the Spiritual Transformation Bible studies. The new cohort have started well although a few youth had dropped out for various reasons which affected their ability to commit to the 9 month program. The first cohort of leaders have been doing well in leading the second cohort and have been developing their leadership skills in the process.



Mentoring visit to some youth leaders

We had wanted to hold the Prayer and Planning Retreat at Chikwawa AEC for the Area Council Youth Coordinators in that Cluster but due to COVID19 pandemic, it was postponed until further notice.

## Stories of Impact

Wonderson (in the blue t-shirt) is one of the members of the first cohort in the Mtengo Youth Vocational Discipleship group. Having completed the 9-month program, he along with the others in the group are now helping with leading the second cohort of unemployed youth from the AEC churches in Blantyre. Having been through the discipleship program, Wonderson has grown in his confidence as a person as well as in his ability to help others to understand God's Word better. He has grown in his confidence to lead a Bible study and teach other young people skills that he has learnt such as making eco-bricks, making glass tumblers and roasting coffee. Continue to be in prayer for him and others in the first cohort as they continue to grow in their leadership skills.



## Outlook:

These are some of the upcoming key events or developments coming up in the youth ministry:

- Ministry meetings have been put on hold due to COVID-19 but will resume once things settle.
- Transition of role and responsibilities of the current National Youth Coordinator to the new.
- Ongoing use of the "Spiritual Transformation" discipleship Bible study material provided by the African Strategic Discipleship Movement (a ministry of SIM International) for youth ministry especially as we use it with the new cohort of Mtengo youth.
- Facilitate ongoing effective discipleship in the established youth group clusters and ensuring the Area Council Youth Coordinators in each of the areas have a key part to play in this.
- Ongoing development of the SIM-AEC Youth Ministry Partnership by facilitating regularly meetings to ensure input from the AEC in the youth ministry and achieve greater collaboration.
- Undertake evaluation of the project with the view to write up a new project for the next 5 years.

## Prayer requests:

- Give thanks for Pastor MacDonald Chiutale, the AEC National Youth Coordinator as he transitions out the role, and hands over to the next National Youth Coordinator. Pray for a good transition.
- Pray for the COVID-19 situation in Malawi that God will guide and protect the youth during these challenging times.
- Pray for intentional discipleship of youth in the local churches, and that the pastors and church leaders will take an active interest in them.
- Pray for God's provision of funds for the youth ministry to keep going in 2020
- Pray for the ongoing growth of the Mtengo Youth Vocational Discipleship ministry
- Pray for God's leading on where and how to reach youth in communities where Jesus is least known.
- Pray for good evaluation of the ministry and project over the past 5 years and to seek God's leading about the next 5.