

Recent Ongoing and Future Projects:

URAC implements projects in different formats. Some projects are research consultancies undertaken in collaboration with leading research organisations and universities. Some projects are directly funded well wishers and sponsors. Other projects evolve out of our action research and are aimed at influencing changes in policy as well planning approaches and practices.

Mzuzu City:

URAC established a network of informal farmers called **Mzuzu Urban Framers Network (MUFNet)** to support food security and job creation in Mzuzu City. The armers from each administrative ward of Mzuzu are organised into groups of 10-15 members to pool resources in the format of savings and loans groups that can also access government subsidy initiatives. Until now urban farmers are discriminated against in all government projects despite urban farming being a visible urban land use activity that citizens of all income groups engage in at their backyards, in the dambolands and on the city periphery.

Geisha Primary School

We constructed a 2 classroom block at Geisha Primary School with funding from **Schools and Health Foundation (SHF)** of Ireland <https://www.schoolsandhealthfoundation.com/>. Geisha is an informal settlement where inhabitants taxed each other to build the school and pay their teachers amidst government hostility and threats and demolition campaigns. The government has now sent teachers and learning materials to Geisha Primary School.



Urban Agriculture and Food Systems

As a contribution to capacity building for informal food producers of Mzuzu City and souring districts, URAC set Mzuzu Urban Farmers Network (MUFNet). We observed that most of the food in Mzuzu is grown within the city and peri-urban areas, but there is no value addition, there is land tenure security for the farmers and the government excludes these farmers from the K60billion annual farm subsidy programme. We therefore

established 15 farmer groups of 20 members in 15 wards. We have 300 members who meet regularly in their wards and monthly at URAC offices. Until now we still require funding to support these farmers in various ways. As part of the urban agriculture inititaive we are now working a US based company to package naturally grown broccoli and radish: Indoor Organic Gardens of Poughkeepsie (IOGP) Model is spearheaded by New York based Brud Hodgkins <https://indoororganicgardensofpoughkeepsie.com/>.



Austin Sakala's maize garden in Mzuzu



Chilumba, Karonga:

Since 2016 URAC has implemented several projects in Chilumba Small Town.

with the funding from Malawi Friends Rottenburg (MFRo e.V) www.malawi-freunde-rottenburg.de

Access to Safe Water: Seven (7) bore holes have been drilled to enable the community from seven village access safe water. Each borehole has a committee that is responsible for ensuring hygiene around the water point and in collecting money for the Borehole Maintenance Fund. We

reconnected water to communal Water Pump that had been disconnected for years. We put in place a water management committee to ensure each family contributes money for paying the bills to the water board.

Health Services Delivery: Chilumba village clinic has been constructed and now only awaits supply of medical equipment and drugs before official opening. The clinic will host a health surveillance assistant (HSA) and medical assistant. Village clinics are the lowest level of health governance in Malawi. However, the village clinics are never built by the government. The Health Surveillance Assistants who are expected to operate from these clinics instead operate from their houses, from churches or classrooms and in some cases under trees sheds. The clinic will be managed in collaboration with Karonga District Health Office.

Chilumba village clinic in TA Wasambo, Karonga



Safe Sanitation: Many lakeshore areas have sandy soils. When families-built pit toilets they easily collapse. Out of frustration, they stop constructing toilets and instead defecate openly in lake waters, on beach sand and in nearby bushes. A rolling project to build initially 25 eco-san toilets was initiated with 50% of the cost as grant and 50% as loan. 8 of the 25 toilets have been built. However, loan default has

affected continuity of the project. The initial beneficiary families claimed the funds were mere donations and needed not be refunded. Consequently, the rest of the targeted families could not benefit from the project.

Women's Livelihoods: To promote income generating activities and good nutrition in the family, the project targets 30 families who are provided with Mikolongwe chickens for egg production (for sale and food) and fruit tree seedlings. A Savings and Loans Group (SLG) was established with seed capital as little as K200,000. Women borrow cash for small scale businesses. Within 10 months the fund has grown to K400,000. The VSL group has become the envy of other people to the extent that each Water Management Committee has also become SLG.



Covid-19 Support: The Covid-19 Project implemented jointly with Phunzirani Development Organisation (PDO). Face masks, hand wash soap and buckets, and sanitizers have been distributed several families related to all activities supported by www.malawi-freunde-rottenburg.de in Chilumba. These include Women's project, Tawuka Schools, Sewing Cooperative and Chiefs. The next phase will target families of students who study at Tawuka School.

Chintheche, Nkhata Bay

The Clean Beaches Project: The project was informed by a baseline research conducted in 2017 and aims promote safe sanitation along the lakeshore so that tourism and fishing industries are sustainable. The project targets Beach Villages. At these villages migrants from across Malawi have settled permanently as part of fishing industry but have no access to land for toilets and consequently use the lake waters, sand beaches and nearby bushes for defecation thereby creating a serious public health problem. The project includes beach clean up to remove plastic wastes and other rubbish left behind by traders who throng the beaches to sell or batter doughnuts, flied groundnuts, banana, sugar canes etc to the fishermen. The project was supported by Kolping International who sent in volunteers since 2018. <https://www.weltwaerts.de/en/hosting-partner-organisations-details/id/32.html>.

Water Sanitation Hygiene and Environment (WASHEN) project: The project started in 2020 targeting primary school pupils. The project trains the pupils so that they can demand safe sanitation at school and home and for them to promote environmental stewardship through tree planting and protection. School clubs were established at six primary schools located close to lakeshore beaches: New Mdyaka, Msomba, Lisambi, Chintheche, Chihame and Bandawe. Over 2,000 trees were planted in 2020 tree planting season. Each pupil owns the tree at his or her school for life. The tree is tagged with the pupil's name. A beach soccer tournament will be organised every term by working with Chigumbuli Beach Soccer Club and Malawi Football Association (FAM) beach soccer committee in Chintheche.

Demonstration Toilet: we built a demonstration eco-San toilet in 2018 at Chintheche. At the site we train school children and nearby villagers about safe faecal disposal and how an eco-san toilet operates as well as the benefits and risks associated with the use of manure produced from the toilet.

Health Services Delivery: beach health Committees were established at 10 beaches so the beach villages and visitors can access health services. We are **seeking funding to build a village clinic at Msambandopa-Msuli Village.** The Village is 13 km to Chintheche Hospital and 8km to Maula Health Centre. In this area open defecation is widespread and people feel reluctant to travel the long distance and be informed the health facility has no medicine. Many villagers rely on traditional herb to treat various illnesses which

affects their life expectancy. Literacy level is very low. The majority of elderly women in the area are widows. The area has one bore hole provide safe water for a community.

Ngala, Nkhota Kota

Ngala projects are a collaboration with Malawi Hilfe Schwindegg e.V <https://malawi-hilfe-schwindegg.de/>
We have operated in Ngala since 2019.

Access to Safe Water: Five boreholes have been drilled in the area at Ngala primary School and Kamtekete, Bobu, Phakati and Gangala Villages. The management of each borehole is similar to those in Chilumba. Bobu Villagers tasted safe water for the first time ever since the existence of the village!



Msambandopa Beach-sand beaches, nearby bushes and rocks like these are used as defecation hideouts.

School Sanitation: Two blocks of toilets are underway to improve access to safe sanitation by pupils at the school. Poor sanitation is a major factor for school dropout especially among girls who have started menstruation.



Kamtekete Village Borehole

Internship Opportunities

We have internship opportunities at Chintheche, Mzuzu and Chilumba for local and international volunteers as well as for both undergraduate and postgraduate students who want to conduct their research related to the work that we do