

THE URAC UPDATE MONTHLY

A newsletter of the Urban Research and Advocacy Centre (URAC), Mzuzu, Malawi

Volume 1 Number 1

January 2018

Clean Beaches Project German interns settling down



Pix: Joshua Veenstra

Two German volunteers currently serving with the Clean Beaches Project, Joshua Veenstra and Maximilian Ziech, say now that they have virtually settled down, and look forward to achieving great things in Malawi.

They have personal visions, too. The two young men are in Malawi through a Kolping International Volunteer Service which is sponsored by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ (BMZ) through its Weltwärts Volunteer programme, explained why they chose to work as volunteers in Malawi.

In interviews with *URAC Update Monthly*, Joshua, aged 18 years says that soon after he finished school, he decided to do a volunteer service in Malawi because he wanted to help the local environment and its people. He was most excited about the Clean Beaches Project approach, because he is part of the planning and

implementation process and is happy getting into contact with many local people.

Similarly, Maxi, 19, says that after finishing his school, Kolping organisation introduced him to the Clean Beaches Project in Malawi. He chose to do his volunteering work in Malawi because, 'It is a very beautiful country with a landscape not comparable to that in Germany'. He also points out that he has a huge interest in Lake Malawi and the thousands of different fish species living in it. He further looks forward to experiencing a different culture and way of living.

'...for every problem there is a simple and clever solution...' Maxi

Maxi says he specifically chose to work in the Clean Beaches Project in Malawi because for him, it is an interesting new project and he believes this is going to improve living conditions of many people and environment.

Three months after joining the project, Maxi also proudly reckons that the project is teaching him that for every problem there is a simple and clever solution. *(Continued page 2)*

Foundation Donates Laptops to Nkhata Bay Schools



The Banda Bola Sports Foundation, headed by Kalekeni Mutalika Banda donated laptops, soccer boots, uniforms and sanitary pads worth millions of Malawi Kwacha to Bandawe Secondary and various Primary schools in Nkhata Bay South Constituency. Banda who also heads the Chituka Village Project was supported by a team of US citizens from Indiana who also conducted soccer clinics and plan to construct a soccer field in Chituka Village. Banda's foundation targets primary schools to achieve gender equality from early ages through respect and self-confidence as they play soccer together. In the picture Mutalika Banda (in purple shirt) hands over laptop computers to Bandawe Secondary School staff and students.

This newsletter provides insights on urban and rural development issues in Malawi. It also highlights what URAC does and plans to do to contribute to realization of sustainable development goals through action research, advocacy, collaboration, and community capacity building in these thematic areas: water and sanitation, health, environment, housing, urban food security, disaster risk management, cross border interaction, livelihoods, local governance, land and resources tenure security, watershed and wetlands management. In doing this, URAC creates a platform for voices of communities, researchers, students and practitioners to provoke action by policy and decision makers on development challenges of Malawi specifically and the global south generally

Joshua, Maxi explain importance of Clean Beaches Project Concept

(from page 1)

According to Joshua, the main task of the German volunteers in the organisation is to help Beach Village Communities to understand the importance of safe sanitation. He noted that many fisher communities along the beaches do not have proper toilets and as such they help themselves in the bushes.

Joshua added that besides improving the lives of the fishermen, the construction of these toilets will help local beach communities to harvest manure to grow different plants.

Asked on the success of the project considering the fact that this would involve the participation of the fishermen, Maxi and Joshua said in the early month of November 2017, they had a workshop with some fishermen from Kande and Chintheche, who were enthusiastic about having clean beaches and welcomed the project.

They also pointed out that by the end of May 2018, they will have constructed a demonstration toilet.



Pix: Maxi (left) with Agnes Phiri and Joshua at Kande.
Curtsey: URAC

As to what their main challenge is, Joshua, said they find language as a barrier to effective engagement with the fishermen and therefore thought they needed somebody fluent in Chi-Tonga to work as an interpreter. (See Page 4 for a profile of the Clean Beaches Project)

BEACH VILLAGE COMMUNITY ASKS FOR SUPPORT TO CONSTRUCT SAFE TOILETS



People of Sanga, a beach village community in Group Headman Kakhongwe of Traditional Authority Mankhambira, Nkhata Bay, have expressed their willingness to construct safe toilets but pleaded for support for the construction of durable toilets.

Speaking during a cholera awareness campaign on December, GVH Kakhongwe complained of sandy soils in the area, which makes it difficult to construct toilets. In his plea, he asked for support in the form of cement and bricks in order to meet the people's disposition.

In Nkhata Bay, like other lakeshore areas in Malawi, open defecation in the lake, sandy beaches and bushes is common. The situation poses serious threat of outbreak of diseases such as cholera. By Christmas 2017, WASH Cluster Secretariat had confirmed 5 cholera cases in Nkhata Bay and 98 in Karonga Districts. The Clean Beaches Project strives towards making Lake Malawi beaches open defecation free.

Meanwhile, *Malawi News* reported recently from Island District of Likoma indicate that the local communities had embraced the concept of clean beaches by asking for the construction of pit latrines and Eco-San toilets for beachside communities and fishers. Traditional Authority Mkumpha of the district is quoted as welcoming the sensitization and awareness conducted by the NICE Trust in the district.

The Clean Beaches Project goes beyond creation of awareness about health hazards associated with open defecation on the beaches. **Pix:** Lakeshore rocks often used as defecation areas. Curtsey: Maximilian Ziech.

Destined for the people of Malawi: Meet Dr Holger Keppel



Since 2012, Dr Holger Keppel has been in Malawi six times as a Senior Expert deployed by the Senior Experten Service (SES) based in Bonn, Germany to assist with different community development projects.

His placement in Malawi has been to support management structures and urban planning. He is the founder of the Malawi Freunde Rottenburg e.V, which currently has 85 members in Germany.

The Malawi Freunde Rottenburg e.V has been very active in the Chilumba area of Karonga district where it has supported Tawuka Secondary school with school materials (such as computers and

microscopes) and the construction of toilets, solar powered water supply and classrooms. The organisation also gave scholarships to 50 students at the school.

In May 2017, Malawi Freunde Rottenburg e.V worked with URAC in Malawi to deliver a workshop on climate change adaptation in the Chilumba area. This collaboration led to further support to projects such as the Solar Energy Project, the Ecosan Toilet Project and the Safe Water Project.

Approximately 50,000 EUROS (approximately MK42 million) has been invested in the people of Chilumba by Malawi Freunde Rottenburg e.V. URAC partners the Malawi Freunde Rottenburg e.V on the Ecosan Toilet and Safe Water projects. Dr Keppel's love for Malawi has resulted in his writing a book about Malawi: *Ob Malawi! Impressions of the Warm Heart of Africa*.

Dr Keppel is an engineer-planner with expertise in town planning, civil engineering, waste water management, environmental impact assessment, project management and municipal administration, among others. He received his doctorate degree in engineering from the University of Dortmund in 1980.

He also has a degree in town, regional and landscape planning from the University of Stuttgart obtained in 1976. He graduated from the University of Karlsruhe in 1973 with an intermediate diploma in architectural studies.

Dr Keppel has worked for the LAG Baden-Württemberg Academy for Spatial Research and Planning (2002), for the Nurtigen-Geislingen University for Business and Environmental Studies as a lecturer in town planning (project development management) since 1980 and for Rottenburg am Neckar Major District Town from 1991 to 2012 as mayor (technical councillor).

Prior to that he was a manager at the Planning and Surveying office of Rottenburg am Neckar, (1978-1991) and as chartered engineer at Klipper and Partners planning office (1977-1978), Stuttgart, and Schmucker's office in Mannheim (1976-1977). He was born in 1951. **Pix:** *Dr Keppel experiences the drudgery of carrying water on the head*

URAC PROJECT UPDATES

Clean Beaches Project

The Clean Beaches Project (CBP) aims to improve water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices among migrant and local beach villages.

In these areas the soils are sandy and villagers get frustrated with collapsing of toilets and resort to open defecation on beach sand or in the lake. Migrant fisherfolks face additional problems of land access. Cholera and other WASH related diseases are reported annually in districts and towns located along Lake Malawi. Open defecation threatens both public health and the tourism industry the only other source of income after fishing in these areas.

The project will promote the use of Eco-San toilets which don't collapse on sandy soils and are environmentally sustainable. The toilets also produce manure which can be used for agriculture production.

The project seeks to construct 20 Eco-san toilets at 20 beaches and one demonstration Eco-san toilet at Chintheche. The project will also capacitate 20 Beach Village WASH Committees, develop Beach Village WASH bylaws, and train local beach volunteers (rolling project).

SRHR IOM Research Project

The study, *'sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) HIV knows no borders: improving SRHR-HIV outcomes for migrants, adolescents and young people and sex workers in migration affected communities in Southern Africa 2016-2020'*, is a collaboration with a consortium of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and University of Witwatersrand School of Public Health (WSPH).

The research aims to collect baseline data to support a project to improve sexual and reproductive health and HIV (SRH-HIV) related outcomes amongst migrants and non-migrant adolescents, young people, sex workers and others living in migration-affected communities in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. In Malawi the study takes place in Mwanza and Mchinji (project underway).

APHRC Research Project

The SRH research, sponsored by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was a collaboration with African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC). The study was an in-depth analysis of existing policies, needs, barriers and rights to services and products among local people and migrants and mobile populations aged 15-

49 years in South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi. In Malawi the study was conducted in Karonga and Mchinji (project completed).

Chilumba Safe Water Project

The project is supported by Malawi Freunde Rotterburg e.V. URAC will drill seven boreholes in in Wasambo, Chilumba, Karonga District. The boreholes will have washing basins and pail stands.

In November 2017 Water Management Committees were established in each village. After a training conducted by URAC, the Committees will maintain and repair the boreholes.

The committees agreed to collect Mk200 (€0.20) from each family for maintenance and repairing of boreholes. They will keep such money is a maintenance fund for each village.

Chilumba Eco-San Toilets Project

The project is supported by *Malawi Freunde Rotterburg e.V.* URAC will construct 25 Eco-san toilets through a revolving loan scheme in Chilumba in Wasambo, Karonga District. The project also includes capacity building for local artisans, community training in water point management and saving schemes

Mzuzu Urban Food Security Project

This project promotes sustainable urban farming in the city. Farmers groups have been established in each of the 15 political wards.

The project aims to improve food security through improved farming methods, increase income of urban subsistence farmers and create job opportunities. By using clean manure and value addition while following prescriptions the urban poor can be assured sustainable livelihoods. This project is still looking for funding (rolling project).

Tilitonse Project

The project, 'Strengthening Urban Governance Management in Malawi,' was collaboration with the Centre for Community Organisation and Development (CCODE) and was funded by Tilitonse Fund. The project targeted ward development committees in Lilongwe and Blantyre. Tilitonse has since phased out.