



Discipleship Training Institute

by Eric Gephart

This story of Friday afternoon games and fun among our seventeen DTI class perfectly encapsulates the fresh feeling of energy that has swept the Namikango campus, felt by students and staff alike, as they live in community.

Friday afternoon had an autumn-warm feel to it; hot and bright in the sun, with a cool breeze that hinted strongly at the changing seasons. The sun was beginning to dip behind the Namikango forest as the shadows lengthened across the mission's green lawn. It was 4:00 p.m. after a long and tiring first week of school. Typically at this time, Namikango shuts down for the weekend, the staff all head to their homes, and a peaceful calm descends across campus. However, this Friday was very different.

Shouts, screams, laughter and delight punctuated the air as several intense games were actively in progress. Namikango staff had challenged the DTI students to a friendly soccer game after their orientation classes were finished. As the two teams began their game, watched by other staff, guards, and Namikango casual laborers who had remained after their shift for the festivities, another intense game started on the mission lawn. A netball court had been set up, and the DTI ladies and Namikango staff were locked in a heated game. There was raucous laughter, cheers and shouts from different teams and spectators, the air alive with the excitement of having students on campus.

Our DTI class is made up of seventeen students (six couples and five singles) with the average age of 28 years old. This sudden influx of young people on campus has added life and laughter to the administration building.

Likewise, our staff has felt the excitement of the new students' presence on campus. They try to rearrange their work so they can sit in on classes and have struck up friendships with the students.

In the classroom, the DTI students have exhibited their hunger for growth. Even after a week of orientation classes, preparing them for the life and work at Namikango Mission, their desire to learn and their unending questions has left the teachers excited and frantically amending the course work to better suit such eager learners.

Since classes started at the beginning of May, students have settled into the rhythm and flow of campus and their workload. Initial maintenance issues that arose as students began using new parts of campus have been solved. Namikango staff have settled into the new normal; integrating DTI work and learning into their daily jobs. And the excitement has not diminished. To say that having these students join us at Namikango has been a good thing is an understatement. Their excitement for learning is palpable in every corner of campus, and their presence has given Namikango new life!



Discipleship Training Institute

What is the Discipleship Training Institute?

This is a program where students, along with their spouses and children, live on our campus as a cohort, taking classes together, studying together, eating together, and working for Namikango for income. Students and their spouses will take thirty-two courses that focus on four themes: spiritual leadership, biblical theology, community development, and personal identity. These classes will help students learn good biblical theology as well as develop their leadership skills in the church. Additionally,

students will learn how to understand their relationship with God and with neighbors, as well as gain skills in Namikango's community development programs.

DTI is more than a school program for leaders, however. It is intensive training in becoming disciples of Jesus. Students will learn in the classroom and then immediately apply their new knowledge in a local church and community. Students will also learn how to care for themselves, their families, their communities, and the earth.

The Discipleship Training Institute (DTI) is a three-year program at Namikango's campus in Thondwe, Malawi.

Meet Some of Our Students



Chisomo & Linda Banda

Suganani & Mwaona Chunkia



Chisomo grew up in a non-Christian family but attended the Anglican church while in school. A man from the Church of Christ invited him to have conversations about God which led Chisomo to get baptized. He and his wife, **Linda**, volunteered in local community development programs. They are excited to join DTI to learn how Christianity and community development intersect.

Suganani was raised in the Church of Christ and baptized at an early age. Since he has always had an intense desire to learn the Bible and studies on his own, he looks forward to being formally trained in the biblical theology classes. Suganani hopes to be a teacher in the church to help others better understand and follow the word of God. He and his wife, **Mwaona**, have a daughter, Hannah.



Innocent & Elizabeth Jack

Raphael Masula



Innocent, born and raised in the Church of Christ, has always had a desire to learn more about the Bible and to train at Namikango Mission. Innocent is most looking forward to the church leadership classes, while his wife, **Elizabeth**, is excited by the opportunity to take biblical theology classes. Both desire to grow deeper in their faith through this program.

Raphael, born and raised in the Church of Christ, has always been passionate about evangelism and spreading the word of God. His desire is to learn more about biblical leadership and how to help the church overcome its spirit of division. He believes that a unified church will be more effective in reaching the surrounding communities for Christ, which is his greatest desire.

Sponsorship Program Launched

Be a Difference Maker! Sponsor one of the students today!

What is the Sponsor a Student Program?

You have a chance to make DTI training possible!

Individual Students = \$100 per month commitment
Student Couple/Family = \$200 per month commitment
Commitment length = 3 years (program length)

Questions? Ready to make a commitment?

Contact Cameron (cameron @namikango or 765-461-1585).

1. Choose a student or couple
2. Complete the form at namikango.org/dti-sponsorship/
3. Select "Recurring Donation"
4. Include the student's name under Additional Information
5. Receive email packet with additional student biography
6. Start sending & receiving notes from your student
7. Celebrate their graduation from DTI in 3 years!



John & Ligitina Etifala



Brighton & Lucy Gama

In high school, **John** was baptized in the Church of Christ and has held various church leadership positions. He and his wife, **Ligitina**, have three children who help him with his main business, farming. Since many do not understand how to apply biblical teaching to their lives and therefore lack many fruits of the spirit, John wants to learn how to help people become more faithful followers of Christ.

Brighton has been a member of the Church of Christ from a young age and has worked with Namikango Mission for years. He and his wife, **Lucy**, are recognized leaders in the Northern communities and both have a strong desire to broaden their Bible knowledge. His desire in joining the DTI is to learn how to work with churches and communities in a way that reflects the ministry of Jesus.



McCarthy & Mphatso Msowoya



Zakeyu Robert

McCarthy was born into a polygamous family. When an evangelism campaign came to preach at school, he quickly believed and was baptized. He and his wife, **Mphatso**, are both very interested in community development initiatives. He hopes to learn how to help churches strengthen members by teaching them how to provide for their own needs.

Zakeyu recently graduated from high school at the top of his class. Zakeyu is passionate about understanding the Bible and teaching church leaders how to appropriately use their knowledge to build up the Church of Christ. He also believes church leaders should be trained in counseling to better help members, and he is particularly excited for those classes in the DTI program.



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UNDER THE MANGO TREE

RECENT NEWS FROM THE MISSION FIELD



Lead Farmer Training Completed

We are celebrating as the Namikango Community Development Team wrapped up a 5-year Lead Farmers Program in March! They had the final training of the successful 45 lead farmers and a ceremonious send-off as they are now fully trained in all aspects of the program!



Mozambique Ministry Impact Report

In spite of COVID restrictions in Mozambique, the leaders have been traveling periodically to encourage congregations. We don't yet have statistics for March, but so far this year, we celebrate the impact of these ministries:

- **Gurue District** — 10 church visits, 12 camp meetings, and 40 baptisms
- **Milange District** — 4 church visits, 9 camp meetings, and 31 baptisms



Malawi Church Impact

Ten church visits were made in the first quarter, with 25 congregations present and about 1100 people. Preparations are already being made for this year's Leadership Seminar which will take place just North of Lilongwe, in Kasungu. We have held a meeting in the central region the last two years and have continued to receive requests. Pray with us for the impact this seminar will have for the Gospel!