



NAMIKANGO  
MISSION

APRIL  
2022

# Village Bible Schools



Empowering African communities  
through Christ-centered transformation



Papers and pens sat ready on the desks, as 18 former Village Bible School (VBS) leaders in Malawi gathered together for the first time in three years, ready to hear the vision and take the next steps as the program relaunched this March.

Started in the 1980s, the Village Bible School program focused on taking Bible lessons out to the villages. For over 40 years the lessons have reached villages across the nation, empowering many with knowledge of the Bible. As the missionaries experienced the challenges that face communities today, and older leaders passed on their legacies to a new generation, it was clear that it was time for the next step to prepare the church to face new challenges with the power of the gospel.

Modeled after the “journey” groups that the missionaries and the Bible Department have led for the last several years on the main mission campus, **the new VBS groups focus on the heart of discipleship**, with every session focused on reading scripture and digging into the text as a group to talk about and process the practical applications together.

“The biggest benefit of the “Journey Groups” has been creating a space where we can discuss and learn together,” Ben Hayes says. “We can ask difficult questions that cannot always be asked and discussed in other places. On the journey together, the group members find community with one another as they return to their homes.”

While community is an inherent part of Malawian culture, creating an open and inviting spiritual community that centers on the identity that we have in Christ is special and unique. There can be a big gap between passing on information and seeing heart transformation. But once heart transformation begins, there is no going back. Seeing the power that Christ has to realign our hearts puts all other issues into a perspective that allows us to focus back on Jesus.

Many issues of practice rather than doctrine tend to cause division, and Namikango continually strives to have all of its programs return the conversation to Christ and to see his power and presence lived out in every community in which we have the opportunity to work.

Five schools have been launched as a pilot phase to see what will need to be adjusted for the future of village discipleship through Namikango and the Church of Christ in Malawi, with great potential for rapid multiplication.

Namikango also has a large presence of Village Bible Schools in nearby Mozambique, which has continued on throughout the last three years even as the Malawi schools paused. They have remained faithful and steadfast despite the challenge that distance and locality presents. The pilot phase of the program in Malawi will provide good information and experience to see how the model can be replicated to reach other areas with the transformative power of the gospel.



**Chitsulo** (pictured above, front row in the gold jacket) counts it as a key part of his discipleship journey: “God molded me through the group. It has sustained my life. I can talk about it for days and days. (I learned that) the gospel that is in each one of us is bigger than ourselves.”

**Kapeni** (pictured above, front row next to Chitsulo) is one of the Bible Teachers who participated in one of the earliest “Journey Groups” which began a few years ago. With a heart for discipleship, he has been a great encouragement both to the Namikango staff and the community.



## Receive a unique Mother’s Day or Father’s Day gift this year!

Not sure what to tell your kids to get you this year?  
Share this idea with them!

Each person who gives a \$50 gift to Namikango and marks it “Mother’s or Father’s Day” in honor of a loved one will receive a special 5”x7” canvas print of this lotus flower painting by Sidney Vaughn.

*The lotus flower is the national flower of Malawi.*



NAMIKANGO MISSION  
PO Box 16528  
Lubbock, TX 79490

NONPROFIT ORG US  
POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 764  
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79424

## connect with us

**BEN HAYES – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
[ben@namikango.org](mailto:ben@namikango.org)

**CAMERON MAYHILL – US DIRECTOR**  
[cameron@namikango.org](mailto:cameron@namikango.org) // 765-461-1585

 [namikango.org](http://namikango.org)

 [facebook.com/NamikangoMission/](https://facebook.com/NamikangoMission/)

 [linkedin.com/company/namikango](https://linkedin.com/company/namikango)

 [namikango\\_mission](https://instagram.com/namikango_mission)

# UNDER THE MANGO TREE

## HAYES FAMILY UPDATE

In May, Ryan and Justine Hayes along with their wonderful girls will be starting a new journey as a family as they transition back to the United States. The transition is part of the natural process of handing over more of the work to local leadership. It has been in the works for several years, but for many different reasons the decision came pretty quickly over the last nine months.

The Development Team of Tinkhani, Zione, Styford, and Faith are ready and able to keep the good work that God has started through the Hayes family moving forward!

On behalf of the missionaries, staff, and board of directors, we want to thank Ryan and Justine for their amazing work and sacrifice over the last eight years!

