

Our targets are the under-privileged youth and school drop outs

by Watipaso Mzungu Jrn

# Don Bosco: Hope for Youths

**D**riving through the muddy road of Area 23, one wonders about the future of the numerous young people standing idle by the roadside. I believe this area is the most populated location of Lilongwe; neighboring areas 22 and 24 are no less populated. I took a turn at the Tsbango road and found a magnificent building surrounded by pine and palm trees on green grass beds, the kind of place that is a delight to human soul.

Teachers and students busy in classrooms, others in workshops; the sound of machines could not disturb them. The siren rang and throng of young people walked out of the gate like termites from their hole. They said it was break time,

obviously in a very joyful mood. I was surprised they communicated to each other in English!

The establishment of Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute in Lilongwe opened a new chapter to many young people of Malawi. Starting on a humble note, the technical college has proved that it is here to contribute to the country's socio-economic development. Opening its doors in 2000 with five courses, the Institute has grown from strength to strength. It is offering over ten courses to 420 students: Accountancy, Automobile Mechanics, Bricklaying, Carpentry and Joinery, Catering and Hotel Management, Electrical Engineering, IT Technician,

Professional Computing, Tailoring and Designing, Secretarial Practices and Business Skills.

Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute is registered with Technical Entrepreneurship Vocational Educational Training Authority (TEVETA); it is also an approved centre for City and Guilds, ABMA, ICM, MANEB and National Trade Test.

Kennie Mlima, the vice principal, and a past student of the college, cannot hide his happiness, saying his hopes were rekindled and made real at the Institute. "As a past pupil, I am very happy to reach this far. I have almost attained part of my goals. But there is still a way to go."





Chrissie Chindole joined Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute in 2000 soon after graduating with a Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). She finished with a Diploma in the field in 2003. "I am working right here as a lecturer. Because of my job, I am able to pay school fees for my brothers and help my parents at home," she said.

Naomi B. Nuka, is studying Automobile Mechanics. The 23-year-old girl says she wants to start her own business. "This college has enough equipment in all the courses," Naomi adds.

"Our goal is to reduce poverty among young people by empowering them with quality education and training to make them employable or to be self-employed. Our targets are the under-privileged youth and school drop outs," says the Principal, Bro. Walter Thyrniang.

"The founder of our Society, Don Bosco, had a vision to empower youths with skills that which would make them self-reliant. We are carrying on that vision. The

uniqueness of this college is that it takes special care to provide holistic education for full human development of every student," he adds.

Recently, the Ministry of Youth Development, Sports and Culture partnered with Don Bosco College to train 50 young people in five districts of Lilongwe, Kasungu, Nkhota Kota, Dowa and Mchinji in the National Youth Development Service Programme. In order to address the situation of scavengers in the cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre, The National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM) and Don Bosco Youth Technical Institute are working together to train 40 scavenging youths in different technical skills.

Since its establishment, hundreds of young people graduated from the college and today are working in the public and private sectors. Emmanuel Chiputula was a student of the Institute. Today he owns Wills Construction Company employing over 25 workers.

Sources say about 38, 000 young people finish secondary

school every year. Around 7,000 students enter the university while another 3, 000 attend public training centres. This means that every year about 28, 000 young people are left without formal tertiary education.

Many young people are moving to the cities from the villages in search of employment. Often this search ends in slums, alcohol or drug addiction. Some even join criminal gangs in order to survive. The importance of vocational and technical education and training cannot be overemphasized. Vocational and technical skills are very crucial in shaping the under-privileged youths in rural and suburban areas for socio-economic development of the country.

We salute the founders of this institution. We commend the Management and staff for their contribution. May the young people from this institution become productive citizens. Malawi needs more Colleges. We hope Don Bosco will multiply such institution to cater to all the young people in the country.