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In 1992, Venerable Huili embarked on a journey to Africa. He established the first "Amitofo Care Center" (ACC) in Malawi during 2004, dedicated to caring for African vulnerable children and where more than 85% of world's HIV-positive children live. Today, many years later, the founder continues with his compassionate practice of Buddhism in Africa traveling to all corners of Africa, and helping countless precious young lives. Nowadays, he is known as the "African monk" or "Monk dad" in the eyes of thousands of children.

New life under the pandemic ACC Yuantong primary school

Contributor: ACC Malawi

At the end of 2019, it was as if Pandora's Box was suddenly opened. The world has gone through a whole year of COVID-19 in 2020, and a series of domino effects have been produced one after another. The world is turbulent, as disease spreads, the economy declines, and hidden dangers of society as well as governance turmoil strengthens. The natural environment and human consciousness are all at the critical turning point of rapid change. In the panic of global shifts and changes, after more than a year of physical and mental anxiety, we have safely arrived to 2021. Although the global corona virus is spreading, the children in the African campus have not been in Taiwan for two consecutive years, the "Wish Africa-A Journey of Gratitude" activity of travel has not ran. But ACC did not stop because of this, in order to prevent everyone from forgetting this group of lovely African children, there were campus life lectures across Taiwan, as well as various traveling exhibitions and activities, we hope that through the descriptions and explanations of the volunteers in various shelter schools in Africa, can let everyone know more about the growth and changes of the children during this period of time.

The fluctuation of prices because of the pandemic

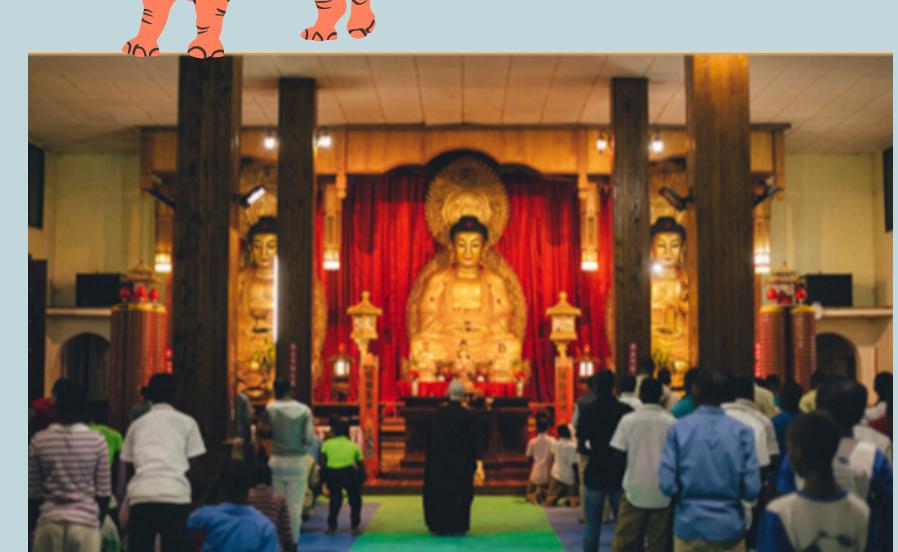
The first ascendant was the Malawi ACC campus, which was just established during the pandemic. As early as April 2020, the government of Malawi announced a compulsory blockade, implemented social distancing measures and closed the border; the local people's livelihood supplies faced some difficulties after they were used up. The scale of many domestic enterprises has also begun to shrink significantly. Therefore, most people now work from home, schools are closed and classes have been suspended for a few months. Families can perform daily housework with the support of relatives and children, so the demand for domestic helpers is also reduced.

Under the pandemic situation, the prices of various domestic commodities in Malawi continued to rise. For example, in mid-December 2020, the price of gasoline rose to 834.60 Kwacha (1 Taiwan dollar is approximately equal to 27.6 Kwacha), an increase of 20.87.%; The price of diesel rose to 826.40, an increase of 24.31%. With the increase in fuel prices, other daily necessities and expenses have also increased, including edible oil, sugar, salt, toothpaste, soap, building materials, utilities, transportation, and so on, especially the price of cement has increased even more.

Recently, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Malawi has continued to decrease. In the last two weeks of March 2021, 919 cases were detected, which is 84% less than the 5,682 cases in the previous two weeks. However, the positive rate is still high at 6.4%, while the mortality rate remains at 3.3%. As of March 15th, 2021, the Malawi government has vaccinated 890 health workers and other front-line workers who are from Mzuzu and Lilongwe ACC located in the Sumba area with the COVID-19 vaccine. So far, there have been no reports of adverse reactions after vaccination; although the number of new cases in Malawi has decreased in the past few weeks.

Newly-established Malawi Campus

On January 17, 2021, the Yuantong Primary School in Lilongwe was opened for only one week. The Malawi government announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all schools should be closed immediately for three weeks, and boarding school students should be on campus. Until the government sent some doctors to conduct COVID-19 assessments and tests to prevent further spread of the disease. During the three weeks that the school was closed, Yuantong Primary School arranged supplementary lessons in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Education so that the children could continue to study during the suspension period. The school has an evening school and a self-study class, supervised by two teachers. Three weeks later, the government announced again that all schools would be closed for another two weeks, and that students in boarding schools should be sent back to their families, and their studies would be interrupted until the school reopened on February 22nd. Lilongwe ACC took a lot of effort to send the children home safely and then to the campus before the beginning of school, so the children's learning progress was affected to a certain extent. In order to help the children catch up with their studies, Yuantong Primary School has two teachers on standby who will continue to teach students during the school holidays in the future; for example, some students have great difficulties in learning certain subjects, our teachers can arrange group teaching. In the future, as long as the COVID-19 pandemic can slowly ease down, the Malawi government does not need to close schools frequently. According to the make-up classes and special clocks arranged by the Lilongwe ACC, we believe the children in the campus will keep up with the expected learning progress in about two months.



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