



Center for Civic Education CIVITAS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

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Civitas Success Story: Malawi

While Civitas Malawi had been successful, over the years working with secondary school in the English based, Project Citizen Curriculum – it was not to be assumed that similar success would become automatic with the Chichewa based [Foundations of Democracy] program. However, based on results from the ten piloting schools, we have proven that the Centre for Civic Education curricular materials – can actually be successfully used in Malawi’s own vernacular language. This in itself is a key lesson to us, and may be colleagues in the region, as it shows that it is possible to teach young people about critical Foundations of Democracy, in their own mother languages. This would go a long way in ensuring that such lessons are in-depth, are understood from an early stage and most important, are not considered alien to the people. The sad experience (to me as African first, and an educator second) has been to see most of our leaders talk about democracy, mostly as a textbook experience that they read and see on paper. Most of our leaders have or do not fully internalize what it truly means to be democratic. Therefore, starting to work with young people, to build these concepts at a very tender stage, in the language that they can follow and understand – is to me the most solid and sure way, towards a real internal transformation of the individual towards meaningful embrace of democratic values and principles. Our initial FOD pilot program has revealed that it is possible to contribute to such a future – through such programs.”

I, as a Civic Educator, working with a Teacher Training College in Malawi: it has been my unique privilege and that of my colleagues in Civitas Malawi in that we have borrowed a lot from CCE curricular materials, and have included the principles of Civic Education in a number of Social Studies Courses in the formal training programs of Secondary School Teachers in the college. This way, the materials will for many years to come find their way in many classrooms of this country – through the teachers that are trained in them. This, I am sure, is the longest legacy that will outlive, perhaps, the activities and story of Civitas Malawi and all of us that were involved in it. It perhaps is the longest gift CCE has made to the teacher training process in this country, in as far as adding value to their knowledge of civic education is concerned.

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