



ALTON CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Registered charity no. 1189431



Gumbi Alton Permaculture Project (GAPP), Malawi

A climate justice project

FOOD EVERY DAY!

Together we can

(Patrick Kamzitu)

Overview - Jenny Griffiths

Alton Climate Action Network and climate justice

Alton Climate Action Network (ACAN) brings people together to take positive community action to tackle the climate and environmental crises, in and around the market town of Alton, in the county of Hampshire in southern England.

We believe that climate action groups should directly support climate justice to contribute to fairness and equality. The climate crisis impacts most on those with the lowest emissions, e.g. in Africa. The rapidly changing climate is causing record-breaking temperatures, floods and droughts, severely hampering food production.

ACAN formed a partnership with the Gumbi Education Fund in 2020.



Alton & Villages Local Action for Nature



John Vidal – founder of the Gumbi Education Fund

- John Vidal was the Environment Editor of The Guardian newspaper for 30 years. He was a global pioneer of environmental journalism, covering major environmental issues in 100 countries.
- He set up the Gumbi Education Fund (GEF) after visiting Malawi during the Great Famine in 2001/2002 when many people died.
- Sadly, John died last year. The Fund is now led by his widow, Jen Vidal. She and I visited Gumbi in May 2024.
- The GEF pays secondary school fees, and university fees and upkeep costs, for children and young people in the Gumbi villages in central Malawi.
- The Gumbi Alton Permaculture Project (GAPP) in partnership with ACAN was a new initiative in 2020 responding to the deepening climate crisis.



Malawi and Gumbi



- The Gumbi villages are in rural central Malawi.
- Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 174 of 189 countries on the UN Human Development Index. Over half the population lives in poverty, and one-fifth in extreme poverty.
- About the size of England. Population 20 million.
- 80% subsistence farming – monoculture maize
- Responsible for only 0.01% of global GHGs
- Badly affected by extreme weather.
- Declared a drought disaster in March this year.

Living conditions in the Gumbi villages

- The maize and tobacco cash crops have failed again in 2024 due to lack of rain
- There is water from a single pump - but no irrigation through the village
- No electricity apart from solar charging for phones and lights
- *People are so friendly*



Permaculture is the solution to hunger

- Permaculture crops are vastly more resilient to the impact of climate change and disease than monoculture crops such as maize.
- Permaculture = huge diversity of crops grown in layers – trees, shrubs, ground cover crops
- Organic, circular system using locally-produced compost (no expensive, environmentally-damaging chemical fertiliser) and animal manure
- The Permaculture Paradise Institute (23 acres, set up in 2018) demonstrates its effectiveness
- We will now show a video made in November 2022 by ACAN with a script by John Vidal
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GL0717Jp_gRE&t=2s



Introducing Patrick Kamzitu



Patrick is on the left, with Luwayo Biswick, the director of the Permaculture Paradise Institute where the Gumbi young farmers were trained.

Patrick Kamzitu is our (unpaid, except for a small honorarium) community organiser in the Gumbi villages in Malawi. He is a Community Health Worker with the Ministry of Health

He worked with John Vidal for 20 years.

The GEF and ACAN have no paid administrative support, so all donations go directly to supporting the Gumbi community

Introducing Martin Pute – works on the demonstration farm and his own homestead farm



Gumbi Alton Paradise
Project GAPP Facebook
page



MARTIN PUTE

One of the permaculture young farmers in Malawi

PROGRESS IN 2023/24 at the Gumbi Alton Permaculture Farm



Crops include yams, sweet potatoes (3 months to harvest), “English potatoes”,
cassava (9 months to harvest), sorghum, rice, seeds – sesame, sunflower,
fruits (e.g. mangos, citrus),
salads, greens, tomatoes,
vines (e.g. passionfruit) – “Plant a tree, plant a vine” (to prevent trees
being cut down for firewood).

A few photos of crops – August 2024



1. Building a classroom and meeting place



Constructed by the young farmers. Roof now completed.

2. Provision of water storage and basic irrigation



Water Storage Pond -
capacity 50,000 litres

Solar pump,
water storage
tank
and hose



3. More animals for manure – and for food Developing the composting system



4. Homestead permaculture farming on householders' own land – we have funded wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes



5. Developing GAPP as a training centre – accommodation



4 x ensuite rondavels for use during training courses

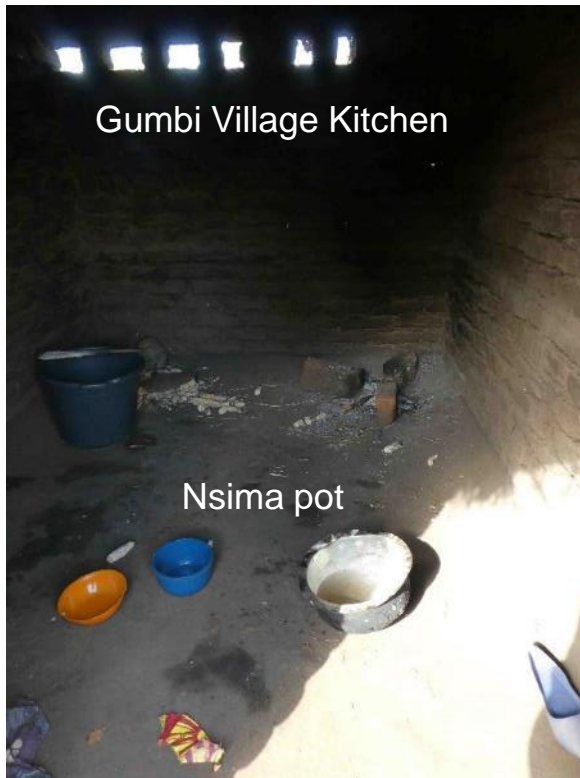
5. contd. Two more composting toilets (with bananas!)



6. A priority: demonstrating cooking with solar power – not firewood

“Birds of Malawi” 1st sentence: *The Sands of Time are running out for Malawi’s wildlife*

Deforestation for firewood and charcoal is a major cause of habitat loss for wildlife and contributes to climate change



Our current focus - building a training kitchen with solar-powered cookers and food storage

Our immediate fund-raising priority

Cookery classes for local people on a solar-powered **electric induction hob** in permaculture training courses at the farm

Prize-winning MakSol cooker – Paul Soddo, Uganda.



The training kitchen will also have

- Solar drying for food storage
- Fridge/freezer
- Chest freezer

The Gumbi farm will lead the way in central Malawi in demonstrating cooking with solar power



Priorities for the Gumbi Alton Permaculture Project

- **Our mission is – thanks to Patrick**
 - *Food every day*
 - *Together we can*
- **Dissemination and scaling up**
 - Developing the GAPP farm as a training centre for villagers from local communities, part of a grass roots permaculture movement in Malawi
 - Training syllabus currently being developed by our farmers
 - A bore hole for improved irrigation
- **Expansion** - buying/renting more land – the 3-acre farm is too small
- **Developing irrigation for homestead plots**
 - 3 more solar pumps and hosepipes



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT

If you would like to donate



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ACTION NETWORK

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HELP ACAN BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

All ACAN's work is done by volunteers. We rely heavily on donations to cover our costs.

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[Donate to GUMBI](#)

If you would like to donate by cash or cheque, [please email us](#) and we will get in touch with you.

Thank you for your support!

Donating on the ACAN website

<https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/donate/>

Summary

<https://altonclimatenetwork.org.uk/our-groups/gumbi-alton-permaculture-paradise-project/>

