



# WOMEN TOGETHER

## Update April 2018: Creating our first *Women Together* Community Learning Exchange

The Women Together team just returned from 3 weeks in Malawi and Mozambique where we planned our ***first ever Women Together Community Learning Exchange***.

From March 28 through April 10, we visited 11 women's grassroots groups in 2 countries, building partnerships and laying the groundwork for our first learning exchange. And, thanks to the generous support of our *Women Together* community, we were able to share the [short video](#) that you all helped to create. In public meetings, planning discussions, and film screenings in their communities, women started clapping as soon as they heard the words "*Women Together*".

These incredible women have so many skills to share and so much they want to learn. During our planning meetings, they pledged to share their skills in soap-making, sewing, food preservation, organic permaculture gardening, and production of essential oils and medicines from local plants, to name a few.



Above: Screening the WT video with women leaders in Romoliwa, Phalombe,

Several women's groups also shared how they want to learn to make improved cook-stoves, to use solar energy, to repair sewing machines, to build seedling nurseries to reforest their community, to bake on a commercial scale, and to run a business. And importantly, they want to meet other women, experience new places, build their capacity to generate income, and create wider communities of support. It was inspiring to hear them reflect everything that *Women Together* stands for.



Above: sharing the video with our partner, Ruth, in Phalombe, Malawi.

So, in May we go back to host the first *Women Together* Community Learning Exchange. We will be bringing together 3 women's groups from southern Malawi - they will be together for 7 days and will teach each other their skills in permaculture gardening and food preservation. In addition, they will learn how to make improved cook-stoves. These stoves are made out of local materials, and replace the open fires which are usually used for cooking. This innovative technology requires less fuel and burns cleaner than open cooking fires. For families, this means less consumption of firewood, less expense to their family, less girl's time spent in collecting fuel, less deforestation of their environment, less harmful inhalation of smoke, and ***increased family income***. Needless to say, we're all pretty excited!

We've also heard from women's groups in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique that would like to participate in Women Together learning exchanges, and so in June we will visit more groups, and run our second learning exchange. The possibilities are endless!

The idea is not new - bringing together groups of people to share knowledge and skills - but it is transformative to bring together the people who are traditionally excluded from learning venues – from schools, conferences, organizational trainings, and so on. Too often, the women who generate the knowledge are not at the table when the knowledge is being transferred. The more folk we talk to, the more I realize that Women Together is unique - an organization that is solely committed to having grassroots women travel and directly transfer knowledge and skills to each other. It's about equity, respect, justice, breaking down structures of privilege and exploitation, and creating solidarity between women. It's about time!



Above: Screening the WT film in Lilongwe, Malawi

THANK YOU to everyone who is creating this change through your volunteering, your financial support, and your belief in the power of bringing ***Women Together!***

If you would like to ***invest, donate, or participate*** in our upcoming inaugural learning exchange, contact us at [anushri@tekaranga.com](mailto:anushri@tekaranga.com).