

# Masankho Banda

## Teacher Resource Guide

### Lotus Blossoms 2023



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## About Masankho Banda

Masankho is a multi-disciplinary performing artist, educator, spiritual healer and peace builder. He learned the fine arts of storytelling and dance from his Malawian elders. Using performing arts, Masankho (which means “to choose”) motivates and inspires people of all ages to work together to bring about peace, social justice, and cultural understanding.

Masankho has personal experience of living under a totalitarian government where his father was imprisoned in 1980 for his efforts to maintain democracy and economic stability in Malawi. In the seventh year of his father’s twelve-year detention, 25-year old Masankho was forced to leave Malawi. “I was a refugee — scared, angry, and unsure of my future.” He arrived in the United States in 1987, and earned a degree in Theater and Dance Arts from the College of Wooster in Ohio.

In 1997, he started *Ucandanc’ African Healing Arts* to bring his passion for dance and storytelling to communities around the world. In 2001, Masankho was awarded the Unsung Hero of Compassion by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Currently, Masankho is a Consultant with Creative Events Consulting & Investments and is on the Board of Directors of Pathways to Peace, an International Peace Building organization. He is also a member of the National Association of Black Storytellers and a member of the National Storytelling Network. Masankho is an International Certified Interplay Leader. He has performed his stories and led workshops in the US (in all 50 States), Australia, Mexico, Malawi, Italy, Croatia, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Germany, and Brazil just to name a few.



## Masankho's Music, Storytelling, Dance, and InterPlay

Masankho uses traditional African storytelling, drumming, and dance to achieve his mission of “Using education, workshops, performing arts and storytelling to motivate and inspire diverse people of all ages to work together to bring about peace, social justice and cultural/spiritual healing & understanding.”

### Storytelling

Masankho's purpose as a storyteller is to awaken audiences of the world to the ancient art of storytelling.



Check out an example on YouTube: [Masankho's Storytelling at TED x Lilongwe](#)

### Dance and Drumming

Masankho is an accomplished dancer, drummer, and choreographer. He brings his knowledge of dance and drumming from his upbringing in Malawi and from all the teachers he has learned from here in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ucandanc.org/masankho\\_biography](http://ucandanc.org/masankho_biography)

## Interplay

Masankho is a certified International InterPlay Leader and Ambassador.<sup>2</sup> InterPlay is an active, creative way to unlock the wisdom of the body. InterPlay is easy, fun, and life changing. It is based in a series of incremental “forms” that lead participants to movement and stories, silence and song, ease and amusement. In the process, we discover the wisdom in ourselves and our communities.<sup>3</sup> You can read more about InterPlay at [InterPlay.org](http://InterPlay.org).

More details about Masankho’s work can be found at: [ucandanc.org](http://ucandanc.org)

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ucandanc.org/see\\_what\\_masankho\\_offers](http://ucandanc.org/see_what_masankho_offers)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.interplay.org/index.cfm/go/about:home/>

## Malawi

- President: Lazarus Chakwera
- Capital: Lilongwe
- Currency: Malawian kwacha (MK)
- Population: 19.89 million (2021)

## Malawian People

Ten major ethnic groups are historically associated with modern Malawi:

- Chewa
- Nyanja
- Lomwe
- Yao
- Tumbuka
- Sena
- Tonga
- Ngoni
- Ngonde
- Lambya/Nyiha



Malawi does not have an official language or religion, but most Malawian people speak Chewa and English, and practice various forms of Christianity, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

**For more information about Malawi, visit:**

- [Malawian Geography](#)
- [Malawian Cultural Life](#)
- [Malawian History](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Malawi>

## Helpful Links & References

- [ucandanc.org](http://ucandanc.org)
- [Encyclopedia Britannica - Malawi](#)
- [Masankho Banda on YouTube](#)
- [Masankho Banda on Facebook](#)

Materials prepared by **Lotus Education and Arts Foundation**, 2023  
Written & Compiled by Maia Payne

For more information regarding **Lotus Blossoms**, please contact:

[lotusblossoms@lotusfest.org](mailto:lotusblossoms@lotusfest.org)  
P.O. Box 1667, Bloomington, IN 47402  
[lotusfest.org](http://lotusfest.org)



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