



MONTHLY REPORT

DECEMBER 2020

COMPILED BY

GABRIEL KAPANDA
(COUNTRY DIRECTOR)

HEALTHCARE PROGRAM

Introduction

Kasese healthcare program is at the core amongst the four programs of Orant Charities Africa (OCA). The programme strives to provide comprehensive primary health care which commensurate with the health needs of the population of approximately 36,381 in its catchment areas. The program in this respect provides highest quality healthcare and



accessible services within its limited resources through curative services at Kasese static Clinic, community mobile outreach clinics (Bowe & Kasese) and many public health programs.

The health center provides in details the following services: Outpatient's clinic (OPD), 24hrs children's observation ward, Maternal healthcare services like obstetrics (Antenatal care, deliveries, provision of family planning methods, cervical cancer screening e.t.c). In addition, the health Centre provides preventive services through public health like (nutrition supplements, growth monitoring and immunizations).

The healthcare program in its provision of services work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health through Dowa district health offices(DHO), other stakeholders like Kasese health Centre advisory committee (HAC), St Andrews hospital, Reach Trust, Girls empowerment network (GENET) and Riders for health.

Population and Distance to the nearest hospitals.

Kasese catchment area has a population of approximately 36,381. The distance to the nearest government hospital is 78km (Dowa district hospital) and to Madisi hospital which is under Christian health association of Malawi (CHAM) is 5km.

Monthly Summary Attendance Reports

Table below shows total monthly patient attendance from different clinics under the healthcare program.

Months(2020)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
OPD Kasese Clinic	3105	2765	4062	3562	2976	2616	1714	1609	1859	1926	2 0 2 4	1850
Bowe Outreach	2450	3143	4578	473	0	0	0	0	1927	3, 1 5 3	2 6 5 5	1806
Kasese Outreach	469	714	1041	1010	0	0	0	0	480	182	140	82
Children Ward	128	98	152	105	28	39	18	17	37	44	21	43
K a s e s e - W K / Nights/Holidays	88	69	122	100	97	23	36	23	46	44	41	54
Totals	6,240	6,789	9,955	5,250	3,101	2,678	1,768	1,649	4,349	5,349	4 8 8 1	3,835

Its rainy season once again and during this time of the year, mosquito's spreads Malaria parasites faster than usual due to its favorable breeding environment. In addition, Malawi has been hit hard by the second wave of Covid-19, which is spreading very fast and taking a lot of lives. In order to prevent it, Kasese health centre through the Covid-19 task force has properly implemented and reinforced the already existing IPC measures to ensure there is no further transmissions to healthcare workers and patients.

Below is the breakdown of patient's attendance per static and Outreach Clinics, total excludes maternity and antenatal as they are counted separately as of December 2020:

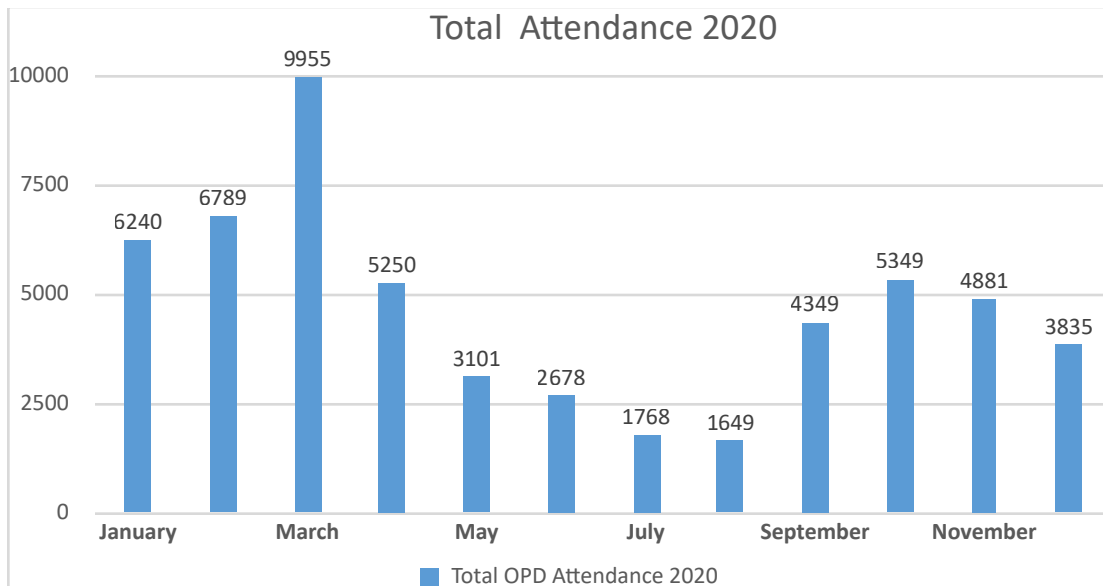
- ❖ Total Number of patients treated in Bowe outreach Clinic-**1,806**
- ❖ Total Number of patients treated at Kasese outreach Clinic **82**
- ❖ Total number of patients treated at Bowe and Kasese outreach Clinics **1,888**
- ❖ Total number of patients treated at KHC OPD and kasese Outreach Clinic **2,029**
- ❖ Total number of patients treated by KHC and MOC **-3835**

- ❖ Total number of admissions at KHC Children ward - **43**

For Women’s health.

- ❖ Total number of deliveries at KHC maternity ward-**26**
- ❖ Total number of new Antenatal mothers(ANC) **55**

Below graph Shows Monthly total number of Patients attended at Both Kasese Health Centre and MOC.



Health Centre Coronavirus (COVID -19) situation

The second wave of Covid 19 has hit Malawi hard and it's deadly. Many health centres within Dowa district have registered many patients. In order to adhere to Infection prevention control, the health centre has stepped up, and is strictly adhering to standard and transmission –based precautions such as hand hygiene before entry in the campus and in between patient’s consultation, respiratory hygiene- compulsory use of facemask, social distancing and Limiting of unnecessary visits on campus



Kasese health centre staff having Wednesday prayers while observing Covid-19 preventive measures.

Reproductive and Family Planning Health

Maternal and New-borns health care

The Health Centre continues to provide excellent maternal and neonatal health care. All women access high quality care during pregnancy, delivery and postnatal. All received quality medicine and are attended by skilled healthcare workers. Those in need of referrals to hospital are timely taken care of which is evidenced by good maternal and newborn outcomes, as the Health Centre has never experienced maternal related mortality for the past five years.

As for the month of December 2020 maternity had **31** attendees, **27** spontaneous vertex deliveries(SVD). No neonate was born on transit to the clinic (BBA), **5** mothers were referred to Madisi hospital for caesarean section (C/S). The health centre had 0 neonatal deaths, 0 birth Asphyxia.

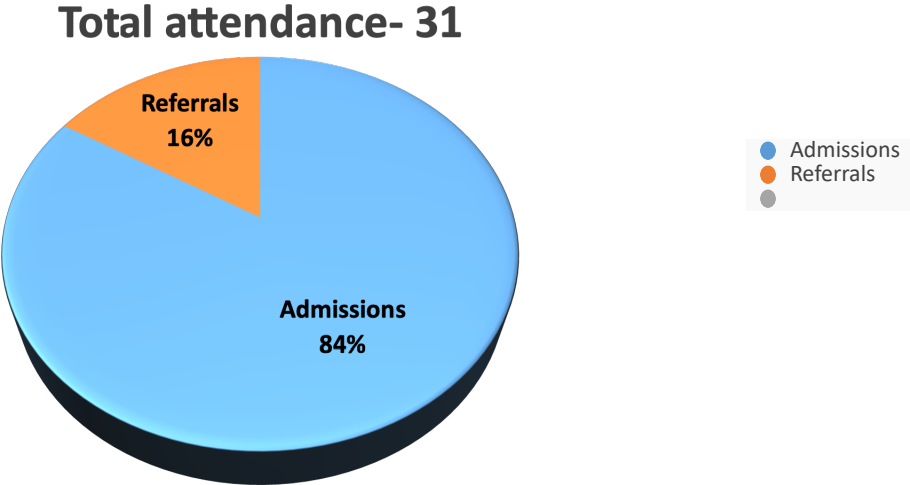
Table below shows the total number of newborns and their outcomes.

MONTH (2020)	T o t a l N e w B o r n B a b i e s	Weight <2500grams	Prematurity	Asphyxia	Sepsis	Stillbirth Fresh	Stillbirth Macerated	Neona t a l Death
January	32	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Februar	53	7	1	0	0	0	0	0
March	44	3	0	3	0	0	0	0
April	39	3	3	3	0	0	1	1

May	41	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
June	38	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
July	30	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
August	33	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Septem	37	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
October	34	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Novemb	35	2	1	2	0	0	0	1
Decemb	27	2	3	1	0	0	0	0

Figure below shows Maternity attendance for the month of December 2020

Total maternity attendance December 2020



Cervical Cancer Control Clinic Report.

Cancer of the cervix remains a public health problem in Malawi and amongst the top leading cause of cancer death (MOH, National cervical cancer strategy 2016-2020). In addressing this problem, Kasese health Centre conducts routine visual screening of cervix using acetic acid

(VIA) to women of childbearing age between 25 to 49 years, and as for the Month of December 2020, 8 Women were screened and one had VIA Positive.

Below is a table showing Monthly total cases screened for CA cervix and the positive results.

Table: shows Monthly number of clients screened for cervical cancer and their outcomes

Month	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
TOTAL	36	48	80	31	28	31	30	18	13	32	16	8
positive	0	1	5	4	2	2	1	2	2	4	0	1

Family Planning Service

The Health Centre conducts family planning clinics once a week on Wednesdays. In accordance to the ministry of health (MOH) policies and in coordination with BLM, Orant Charities Africa (OCA) understand that Family planning increases maternal and child survival through timing spacing of pregnancies and by helping couples plan pregnancies during the healthiest time within a woman reproductive cycle. Furthermore, Orant understands that preventing unintended pregnancies, especially among the high risk group and vulnerable in society is key to improving Maternal and new-born child outcomes.

As such, there is a good linkage with government health systems, non-governmental organisations like (BLM) in family planning provision, whereby the government provides supplies and training to healthcare workers and the health centre provides the technical services and conducive environment for the clinics.

The methods offered include oral pills, injectable and Implanons to women of reproductive age as per their choices and medical indications. As seen from the graph below many clients opt for injectable Depo- Provera family planning method because it is easy to administer and with less side effects.

In the month of December, 2020 a total of **190** patients received Depo Provera injection. While **4** clients opted for Norplant's method, as it's the second most liked method. None received Permanent family planning methods e.g. bilateral tubal ligations (BTL)

Figure below shows Family Planning Clinic Attendance and methods provided.

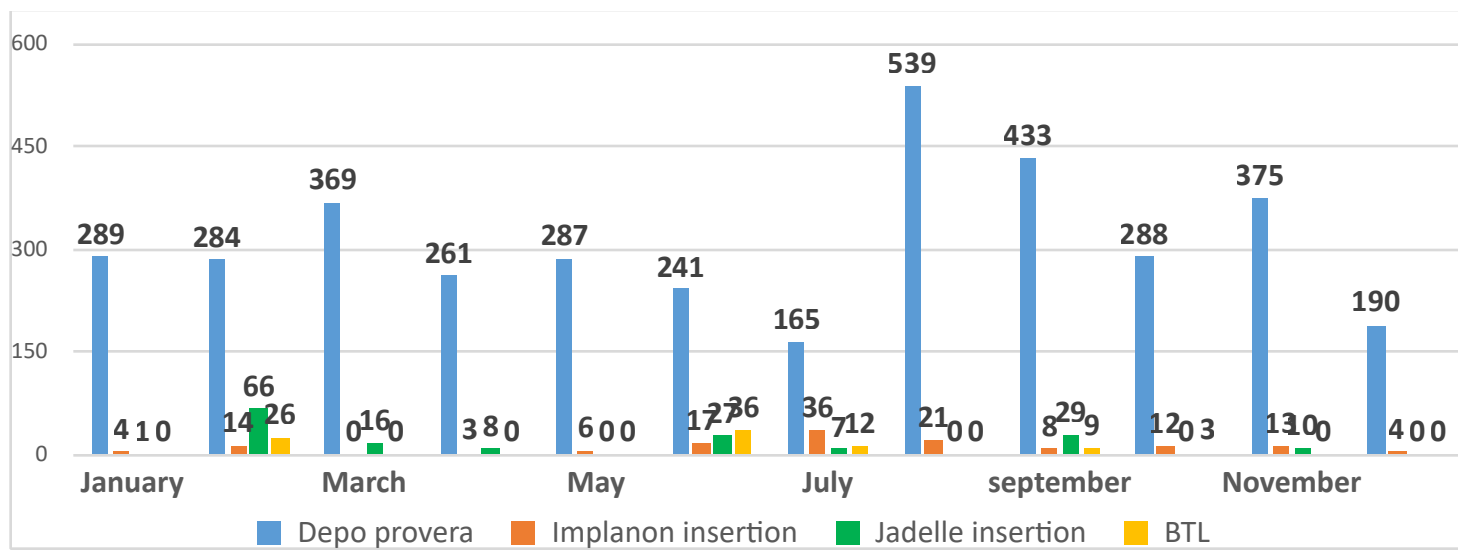
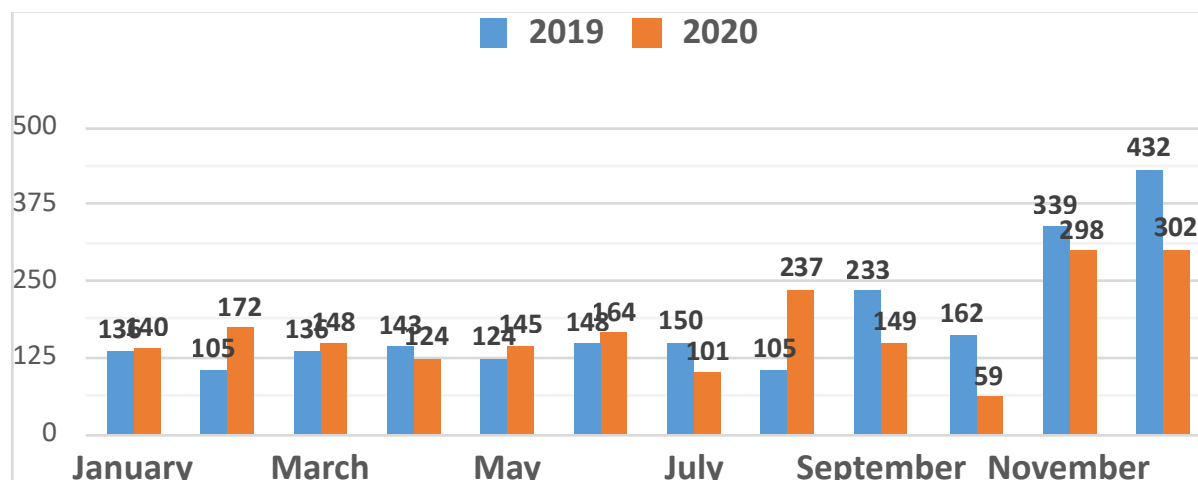


Figure below shows Number of Adolescents (12-24year) accessing Family Planning Methods for the year 2019 and 2020.

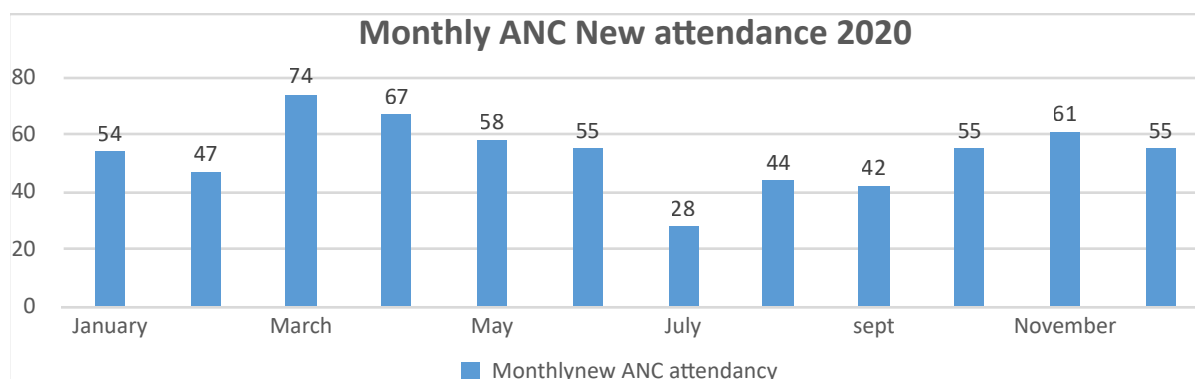


Antenatal Care (prenatal care)

The Health Centre conducts prenatal (antenatal) clinics twice a week, on Tuesdays for those enrolling for the first time and Thursdays for subsequent visits. The recommended ANC visit by the World Health Organization (WHO) is more than 8 which should start as early as possible.

However, according to the data many women do not comply due to several reasons, like cultural, knowledge of pregnancies and others it could be lack of access to healthcare due to factors like distance. However, for those who start on time, during the Antenatal clinics, they receive; two doses of Tetanus toxoid vaccines(TTV),3 doses of SP tablets, FEFOL tablets, albendazole, Insecticides Treated Nets(ITNS) and all get tested for syphilis with their partners.

Figure below shows Monthly antenatal attendance(ANC)



HIV/AIDS Clinic

The Health Centre HIV/AIDS Clinic continues to provide excellent ART/ TB care as depicted by quarterly awards of certificate of excellence by the Malawi Ministry of Health through HIV/AIDS unit.

The Clinic so far has a cohort of **281** patients alive on anti-retroviral (ART) medicine. As of the month of December, 2020, **180** clients were tested for HIV and only 3 were positive. For those on the program, a good percentage of them continue to get their viral results which are routinely done at every visit according to their milestone. Furthermore, the clinic nurses continue to switch patient's treatment from 5A to 13A which is DTG based regimens. (DTG/3TC/TDF) as per ministry of health guidelines. On adherence, 280 are well adhered to HIV medicine and one defaulted treatment, he is yet to be traced in order to bring him back to care. The clinic has got 3 children under 24 months exposed to HIV and on monthly follow up. One defaulted.

To reduce clinic congestion in the Covid-19 pandemic, the health Centre continues to provide 6 month bottles supply of ARV to all clients who are stable on treatment (ART).

The health centre received certificate of excellence from the ministry of health- HIV unit during routine quarterly supervision (October- December 2020), in the report there few areas which needs to be improved and that includes having Adverse drugs reaction forms(ADR) for reporting ART drugs side effects, to intensify STI referrals to HTC, and to intensify TB screening among the outpatients.

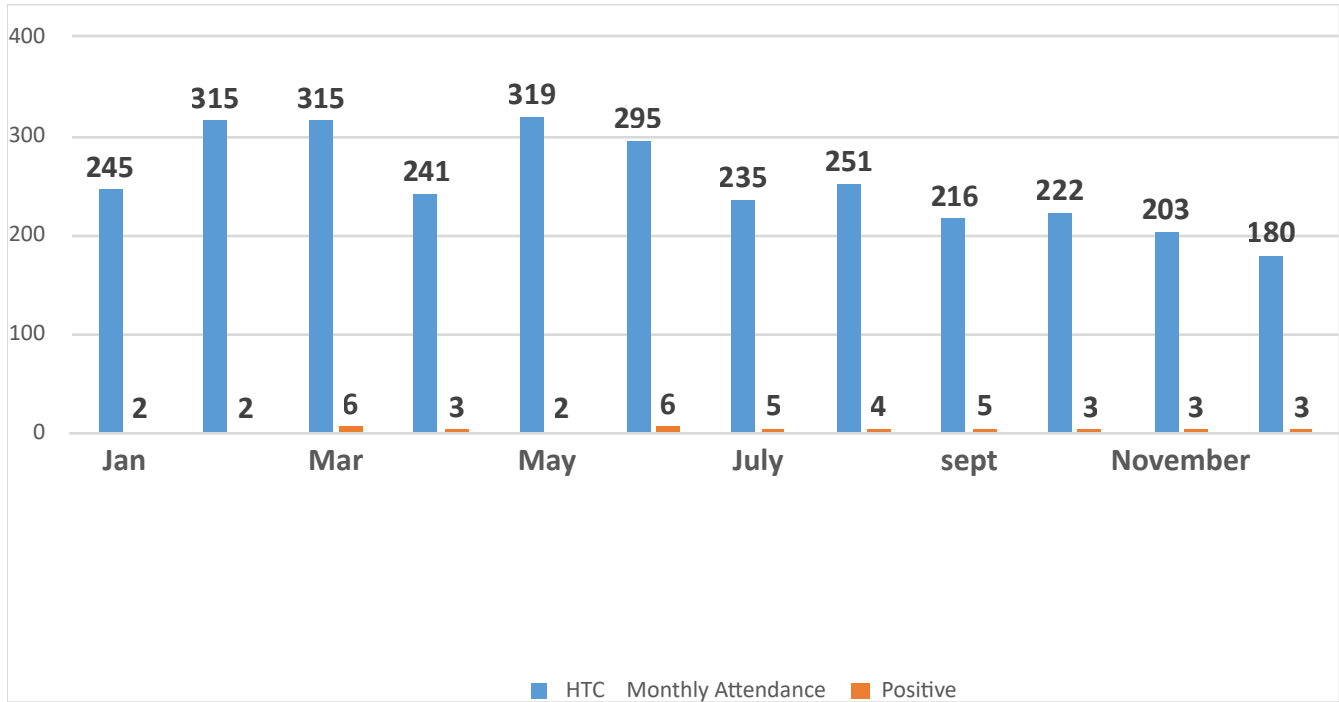
Care and Support group

The health centre has got a support group of 42 members of people living with HIV/AIDS(PLWHIV/AIDS), the group is composed of men and women who are open to the public on their HIV status. The main objective of the group is to support each other in terms of psychologically, socially and enhancement of their livelihood. They meet monthly to discuss many achievements and challenges faced by people living with HIV/AIDS. In December, the group did not meet due to COVID 19 preventive measures. However, their group leaders have been urged to write an official letter to OCA with details of their 2021 plans.

HIV Testing and Counselling

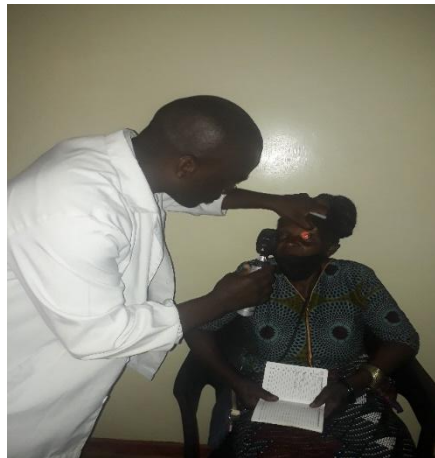
The health centre conducts optional HIV counselling and testing to general public and antenatal mothers as prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT). The HIV prevalence rate is at 1.2% against the national prevalence rate of 8.2%. In December **180** clients were tested and **3** tested positive for HIV.

Graph below shows monthly HIV testing and counselling (HTC) attendances and number of HIV Positives cases.



Eye Clinic

The health centre conducts eye clinics once a month. The outsourced eye Clinician from St Andrews hospital managed to attend to **25** patients and **2** were booked for the free eye surgery which takes place at St. Andrews hospital. According to the data, many patients had eye refractive errors and they were provided with eye reading glasses.



Eye clinic in progress

Table below shows the total number of patients treated for eye infections and those booked for surgery.

Month	August	October	Nov	Dec				
Total	41	28	25	22				

Booked for eye surgery.	6	4	2	3						
-------------------------	---	---	---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Youth friendly health services (YFHS)

The health centre has got a vibrant youth from the community who access healthcare services tailored towards their needs. The youth friendly health service (YFHS) are a key component of Malawi's National sexual reproductive health program. A group of 90 registered youth's male and female aged between 10 to 24 years meet every weekly for various activities and they also get information and counselling on: sexual transmitted infections which include HIV/AIDS, family planning, peer education, drugs and substance abuse and sexual abuse. They are also encouraged to utilise reproductive health care services without being shy. Due to new waves of Covid-19 in Malawi, all the youth's activities have been put on hold until the new Covid-19 surge is over.

Laboratory Services

The health Centre Laboratory department continues to conduct and provide reliable tests befitting primary health care level, the most common tests are; rapid test trips, basic microscopic tests for example Tb, Malaria tests (MRDTS) and HIV tests. The tests conducted are reported below;

Malaria Report

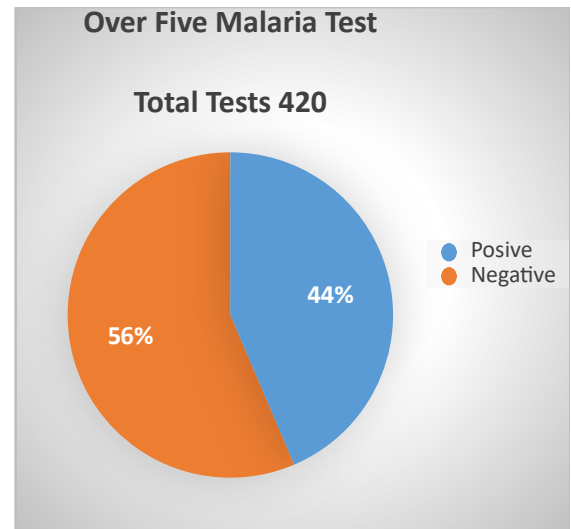
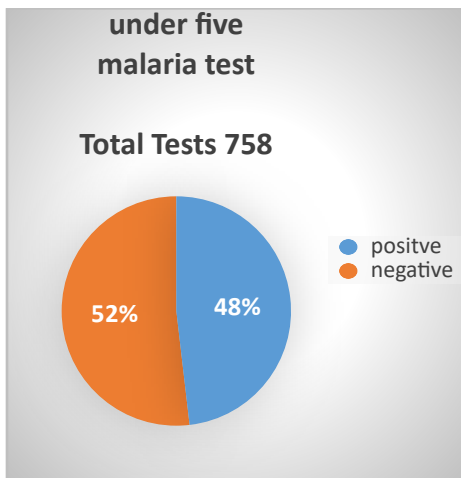
The Malaria test is conducted both rapid test (MRDTS) and microscopy blood smear slides. The Malaria burden is still low at this time around as seen from the laboratory positivity rates which is below 50%. A total of **1178** Malaria tests were done, and those positive were **548**, representing 47% positivity rate. For children under five years, total tests done were **758** and those positive were **393**, representing 52%. For over five years' persons, total tests done were **420** and those positive were **183 (44%)** while those negative were **237 (56%)**.

The table below shows the total malaria suspected cases, and the actual confirmed (MRDTS positive) verse LA tablets dispense to treat it (year 2020).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Suspected Malaria Cases	2734	2482	3861	3761	2253	1538	875	694	1039	1193	1361	1178
Suspected cases Tested	2734	2482	3825	3761	2253	1538	871	694	1039	1193	1358	1178

Confirmed Malaria Cases	1854	1697	2694	3044	1758	952	408	205	282	432	579	548
New Malaria Cases Registered	1854	1697	2730	3044	1758	952	412	205	282	432	582	548
L.A. Dispensed	1816	1758	2730	3027	1713	840	412	205	230	427	582	541
L.A. Issued	1860	2910	2280	3300	2790	2040	1140	1050	1110	990	1620	1290

Figure below Shows under five years, and over five years' percentage of Malaria tests for the month of December 2020.



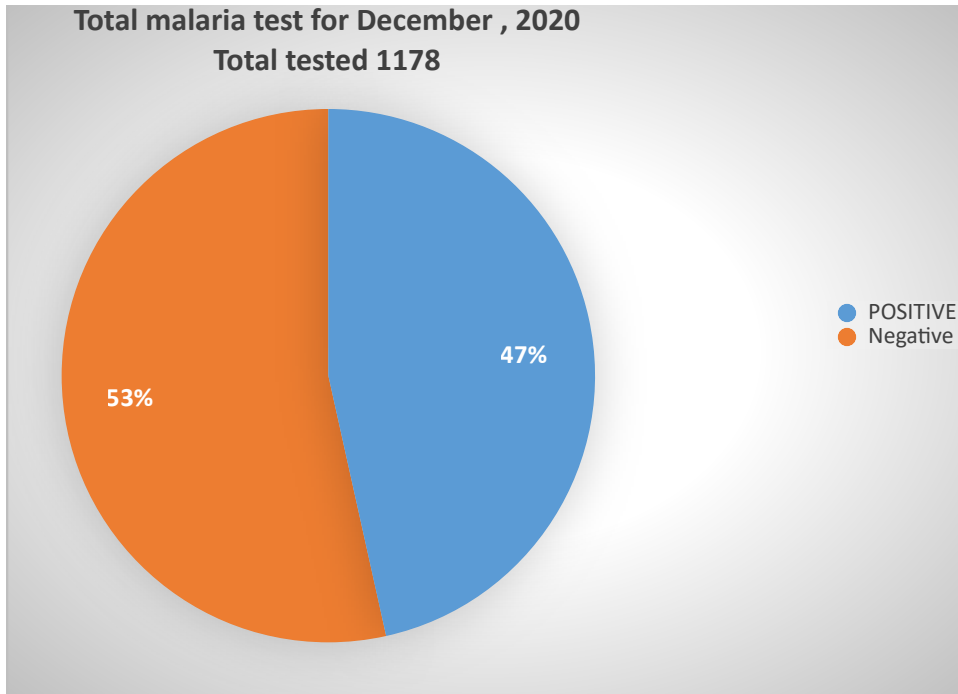


Table Below shows other Laboratory tests conducted

Tests	Total tests	Result(positive)
H. PYLORIS	38	8
Salmonella	16	2
Hep B	3	0
VDRL	0	0
HCG	54	21
TB MICROSCOPY	6	1
GLUCOSE	37	-
Haemoglobin	127	-
urinalysis	16	-
FBC	33	-
Covid 19 test	0	0

NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

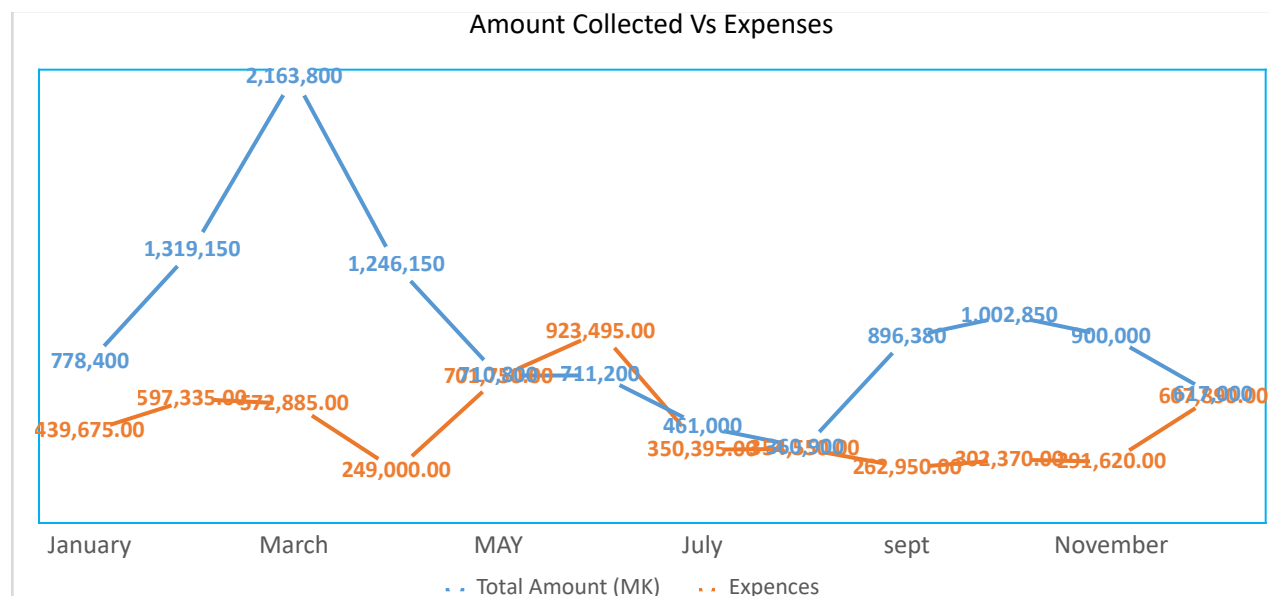
Through the ministry of health- Dowa district health office (DHO), Kasese Health Centre conducted mass distribution of drugs administrations of prazequatel tablets and albendazole as prophylaxis against water borne diseases- Schistosomiasis(Bilharzia) and worm infestations. The target group were children aged 5-14 years. While the disease was among the tropical neglected once, it's still there and among the public health significant diseases. Its national prevalence is at 1.3% - 25.4%. As usual, the drugs were administered by health surveillance assistance (HSAs) with assistance by health volunteers and teachers from different schools within the catchment area. Due to Covid-19 and subsequent closure of schools, children had a lot of time to play in swampy areas, dumps and rivers. The government understands the risks and complications associated with it which includes infections like schistosomiasis hence the campaign.

Healthcare Finance.

The Health Centre's major funding is from donors (Orant Charities USA). In addition, the health Centre charges a small user fee from patients. User fee collection is the little money the patients pay at the Clinic entry point (cashier desk). The fee is within the means and resources of our average community member. However, those who cannot afford are not barred from accessing the services, while others are exempted in accordance to the user fee policy like those with chronic illness Epilepsy, Asthma, Hypertension.

In December the funds collected amounted to **MK 617,000** (\$822), at the same time the health Centre assisted a good number of destitute patients with bus fare and payment of hospital bills at Madisi and other hospitals amounting to **MK 607, 890** (\$810).

Figure below shows monthly user fee collected versus direct expenses to patients bills and transport.



Major healthcare Success in the year 2020.

- ❖ The healthcare program managed to treat a total of **55,844** in the year 2020. This includes Kasese health centre and community Mobile outreach clinic).
- ❖ Maternity department delivered **443** babies with only 2 neonatal deaths.
- ❖ The antenatal Clinic saw a total of **640** clients.
- ❖ The health centre managed to screen **317** for cervical cancer and **24** had VIA positive.
- ❖ The eye clinic saw **116 patients**.
- ❖ The health centre admitted a total of **730** children in the 24 hrs admission ward.
- ❖ The health centre conducted **3,037** HIV test and a total of **44** were positive representing 1.4%
- ❖ The health centre managed to conduct most of the planned activities for the year 2020, thanks to our Donors for the constant support in terms of money and moral support.
- ❖ The health centre did not experience shortage of essential medicine and medical supplies during the year.
- ❖ The health centre received enough support from Dowa district health office (DHO) in terms of medicine and medical supplies not forgetting regular supportive supervision , monthly specialised Clinics like dental, mental health, orthopaedics and numerous in service training for the staff.
- ❖ The health centre received good support in terms of trainings and other logistics from other NGOS and partners for example Rider for health, Canadian physicians for aid relief(CPAR)
- ❖ The health centre was well prepared and managed well Covid-19, for example; necessary training was conducted and medicine & medical supplies were bought on time which include PPEs.
- ❖ The health centre received supportive supervision from the ministry of health through Dowa DHO in the following areas; infection prevention, Tuberculosis program, malaria program and maternal and neonatal care e.t.c.
- ❖ The health centre managed to construct a sputum collection booth near the OPD area as per the ministry of health Tb control program recommendations.
- ❖ The health centre had only 2 confirmed Covid-19 cases the year 2020 and no deaths, thanks to God Almighty, good preparedness and precautionary measures.
- ❖ The health centre laboratory department received a donation of a full blood count machine (FBC).
- ❖ OCA procured a generator for electricity backup at the clinic and offices.

- ❖ The health centre assisted quite a good number of destitute patients in terms of bills payments and bus fare, which includes those going for cervical cancer screening.
- ❖ The healthcare program introduced a youth friendly health services program.
- ❖ OCA recruited one nurse, John Nyirenda.

Challenges

- ❖ The health centre had two neonatal deaths due to asphyxia.
- ❖ Covid 19 pandemic impact on healthcare, economy and social life.
- ❖ Some programs like youth friendly health services, palliative care (HIV/AIDS support group) and cervical cancer screening need to be incorporated in 2021 financial budget so that they run smoothly.

WATER PROGRAM



An improved pit latrine at Chilinkholi primary school

Introduction

OCA Water program aims at reducing morbidity and mortality of people of Kasese through improved access to water supply, sanitation facilities and good hygiene practices. In line with this program goal as well as in an effort towards further contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially through ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all. During the month December OCA water program achieved the following milestones;

- Drilled 1 borehole

- Supported 12 repairs for Afridev pumps
- Trained 2 WPCs in Community Based Management of Afridev pumps
- Constructed a 4-door Improved Pit latrine at Chilinkholi Primary School
- Water Points Mapping

DETAILED NARRATION OF MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

1. Borehole/ Well drilling

OCA continues to support rural communities through drilling of new water wells in areas with limited access to potable drinking water. In 2020 OCA water program had a target of 14 new boreholes to drill. In December, 2020 OCA drilled one well at Kantubede/ Chimwendo Village. This takes the total number of drilled wells in 2020 to 14 thus completing the target for the year. At Kantubede an Afridev pump was installed the community started using the borehole. Furthermore, the community has constructed fences to protect their well from animals which can make the well surrounding unhygienic. The newly drilled well serves an estimated population of 550.



Newly drilled borehole at Katubede village, GVH Chimwendo

2. Afridev Pump repairs



Afridev pump repairs at Kamongokadwa school and Kam'mata village respectively

In order to ensure sustainable functionality of water points within OCA catchment. OCA water program continues to support repair of broken Afridev pumps. OCA managed to repair a total of 12 Afridev pumps from villages across the catchment. The table presents details of the pumps repaired in the month;

No.	VILLAGE	GVH	PROBLEM	MATERIALS	REMARKS
1	Makombwa 1	Makombwa	B r o k e n handle	Handle, 4 Bush bearing, 1 bolt and nut	Successfull y done
2	Kachala	Kachala	B r o k e n handle	4 bush bearings, handle	Successfull y done
3	K a m o n g o kadwa school BH 1	Makombwa	B r o k e n Handle	4 Bush bearing, handle, cup seal, 6 rod centralizers, 1 rubber flapper, 4 bolt and nut, hanger pin, fulcrum pin,	Successfull y done
4	Kamongokadwa school BH 2	Makombwa	W o r n o u t hanger pin and fulcrum	Hanger pin, fulcrum pin, 4 Bush bearings, 10 rod centralizers	Successfull y done
5	C h i n g u w i school	Chikamphula	Loosening pipe joints	1 PVC pipe, 8 rod centralizers, 4 double end socket, 2 bobbins, solvent cement, 1 hacksaw blade	Successfull y done
6	M a k o n o l a borehole	Chimamba		1 Cup seal, 4 bush bearings, 6 rod centralizers	Successfull y done
7	Lungu	Katundu	Pump stuck in the borehole	7 PVC pipes, 11 double end sockets, 1 solvent cement 500ml, 1 cup seal, 4 pipe	Successfull y done

8	Kam'mata		Broken rod	4 Bush bearings, 8 rod centralizers, 8 Double end socket, 1 bobbin, 1 cup seal, 1 hanger pin, 1 fulcrum pin, 4 bolts and nuts, 1 solvent cement 500ml, 1 pipe centralizers	Successfully done
9	Mphamba	Kalonga	Worn out centralizers	11 rod centralizers	Successfully done
10	Zindo	Makombwa	Worn out rod centralizers	1 cup seal, 4 rod centralizers, 4 bush bearings, 1 O-ring, 1 bobbin	Successfully done
11	Inje 1	Inje	Broken pedestal	2 bags of cement	Successfully done
12	Kasese 2	Kalungulu	Worn out centralizers and bush bearing	2 bush bearings	Successfully done

3. Construction of Improved Pit Latrine Chilinkholi Primary School



Left – Old Pit latrine at Chilinkholi, Right - Newly constructed pit latrine at Chilinkholi

Apart from promoting access to safe water, OCA water program continues to promote sanitation and hygiene in schools and communities. In the month of November, 2020 OCA water program began construction of an improved pit latrine at Chilinkholi Primary School. Chilinkholi Primary School had dilapidated and unimproved pit latrines for both learners and teachers. Latrine construction was completed late December, 2020. The latrine block constructed has four doors and three of which are expected to support girls and one to support teachers at the school. OCA

water program has plans to construct 1 more latrine block (4 doors) to support boys and male teachers at the school. Chilinkholi primary school has an enrolment of 297 learners (Boys: 147, Girls: 150) and 3 teachers. The school covers standard 1 to 4.

4. CBM Training for Water Point Committees (WPCs)



Left -Classwork during WPC training for Zindo and Mphamba WPC, Right – A group photo during WPC training for Zindo and Mphamba

To ensure sustainable management of Afridev pumps by communities OCA continues to train WPC in Community Based Management (CBM). OCA organized a combined CBM training for Zindo and Mphamba WPCs. The training was held at a CCAP Church in Mphamba village. Among the facilitators of the training were OCA Water program staff, Water Monitoring Assistant from Water department –Dowa, Afridev Pump Area Mechanic and Health Surveillance Assistant from Kasese Health Centre/Dowa District Health Office. The training was attended by 24 WPC members (10 males and 13 females) from the two water points. Also in attendance during the meeting were the 2 Village headmen for Zindo and Mphamba village. The following were some of the key lessons during the training;

- Afridev Pump functionality and repair
- Area Mechanic service contract
- Water Handling, Hygiene, sanitation and Covid-19
- Borehole hygiene and water related diseases prevention
- Water Point fundraising, management and record keeping
- Roles of Water Point committees and other relevant stakeholders
- Development of action plans for water management

5. Water Point Mapping

Since November 2020 OCA water program has been collecting coordinates for all boreholes drilled by OCA since the onset of the water program in 2017. By the end of December 2020, the water program has managed to collect coordinates for all 33 boreholes drilled by OCA so far. The coordinates obtained will be integrated into the OCA map for program monitoring.

RECOMMENDATION/CONCLUSION

As of end December, 2020 OCA water program has managed to drill 14 out 14 targeted boreholes, trained 14 Water Point Committees, supported 92 pump repairs, completed construction of a 4-door improved pit latrine for girls and female teachers at Chilinkholi Primary School as well as distributed 50 hand washing stations in markets and churches as part of a Covid-19 response.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



Introduction

The following activities were done in December, 2020;

Harvesting at Chigona Irrigation club

Chigona irrigation club is located under Buza village and is one of the clubs which are being supported by OCA under the microloan program. Chigona irrigation club cultivated maize and harvesting activity took place. The maize was harvested while fresh and was sold to be eaten as fresh maize. Selling of fresh maize was seen as more profitable than selling dried maize. With the current demand of fresh maize, there is high expectation of members paying back the loan without problems.



Happy farmer on matured maize farm ready for harvesting

Fertilizer application

Tomato crop is a heavy feeder and it requires top dressing fertilizer application for better yield. Ndalusa club was involved in top dressing fertilizer application (second fertilizer application) and D-compound fertilizer was applied. These fertilizers are essential in Tomato crops since they are carriers of Nitrogen which facilitate vegetative growth and fruiting. Ndalusa has cultivated 2 acres and the club currently has 20 members. The club expects to start harvesting between the end January and February. Farmers were also trained on the proper rate of fertilizer per station, other recommended fertilizers for tomato crop and the best time to apply top dressing fertilizer. Top dressing fertilizer has to be applied 3 weeks from the day of basal dressing application.



Application of fertilizer in Tomatoes

Marketing

Timvane irrigation club is located under Mantchondo village and is practicing maize production. The club in coordination with the OCA Agriculture extension officer started marketing the produce. Harvesting process of Maize will take place until the end of the month of January 2020. Timvane irrigation club is under a microloan program. Through the markets linked into selling their produce, they will be able to pay back the loan with less challenges. The loan payment with timvane irrigation club will be done through mobile phone payment and Airtel-money phone number of OCA will be used to receive the funds. Loan payment with club members will start in February.

Pests and diseases control

Fall armyworm is one of the pests which cause a lot of damage in maize crops and it mostly attacks the growing point of maize crop and the cob. The pest reduces the quality and quantity of the produce which can bring losses to the farmer. Madzimayela club is cultivating maize and the Control measures of pests and disease in maize was done to improve the quality and quantity of the maize to be harvested. High quality maize gives good prices hence club members being able to find profits and fewer challenges during loan payment period.



Maize crop being destroyed by fall-armyworms

Irrigation loan payment

Chigona club has been in process of selling fresh maize produce and payment of loan was in progress during reporting month. Much of the loan with Chigona club has been paid through Airtel-money hence promoting mobile or online payment of loans. The use of mobile payments is good especially in these Covid-19 times as physical contact is reduced.

Demonstration Plots

Demonstrations have been established with support from seed companies such as Bayer and Peacock seed. Some demonstration plots have been supported from other agriculture related offices such as Farmers World. Seed companies are showing different types of maize varieties to smallholder farmers so that they can be able to choose the best variety through what they have seen at the demonstration plots. Farmers world is promoting Good agricultural practices (GAP) for bumper harvest. GAP reduces problems of hunger since farmers will be able to produce bumper harvest through the choice of varieties being seen at the demonstration plot and following what has been advised during field days.

The demonstration plots have been expanded up to the Mphamba and Katalima section with support from Farmers World. Establishing some demonstration plots close to smallholder farmers is important as it reduces distance to access the information. In Katalima section, the demonstration farm is located in Chapuwala village and in Mphamba section is located in Nankhumba village. The crops cultivated includes; Maize, Groundnuts, sweet potatoes and Soya beans where new production processes are being practiced.



Crops on demonstration farm

OCA Farm

OCA farm in which Maize was planted monitored during reporting month where activities of pesticides application and second weeding was done. Weeding was done to prevent the weeds from competing with main crops for food and also it keeps pests and disease.

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM



Discussion with students and their guardians

Executive Summary

OCA Education support program works with local leaders, head teachers & guardians to raise awareness on education and child protection, identify and verify needy students. The Education Support program envisions a community in which girls are empowered and protected. It focuses on preventing and mitigating under-age marriages by encouraging girls to go back to school. OCA believes that girls can rise out of poverty through proper education

Activities

The month of December was the closing month of the 2019-2020 academic year. Students were busy writing their final exams and then went for a two weeks break. During this period, OCA education program visited students in some schools to monitor the progress but had no chance to meet with the students since they were writing end of year exams.

In addition to that, four students were back to school to write their National exams which were cancelled early November due to leakage. OCA has 3 students writing these exams and the exams are still in progress. OCA believes that all these students will pass the exams despite the challenges they faced i.e. lockdown of schools due to Covid-19 and cancellation of exams.

Lastly, OCA education program received a request from students at Tchale Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) about the challenges they are facing at their school and their intention to go to another school. The challenges they raised include;

- Not enough teachers. The school has only 4 teachers from the 8 teachers they had previously
- Not learning some of the subjects due to lack of teachers
- Lazy teachers
- Transfer of learners to other schools in search of good education. Currently there are less than 30 students at the school

There are five students at Tchale CDSS and in the academic year 2021 they will be in form 4. These students want to do better in their National exams but with the situation at the school they feel that they cannot pass so they want to go to another school with good education and they believe that by working very hard they will pass with flying colors. OCA understands the situation of both the students and the school and is working to ensure that the students get better education. OCA will support the students in their plans to transfer to boarding schools.

Conclusion

The year 2020 has been a tough year for the education system in Malawi. Schools were closed and students stayed home for six months. Hundreds of girls across the country have fallen pregnant and others are getting married since the schools closed. However, girls sponsored by OCA are eager to learn and graduate when the time is right.

