



MARCH, 2023

ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY REPORT



COMPILED BY:
GABRIEL KAPANDA
Country Director
Orant Charities Africa,
P/bag 365, Lilongwe

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Executive Summary

Kasese Health Center is in Traditional Authority Chakhaza, Dowa District along M1 road (Kasungu – Lilongwe) in Malawi, Africa. The Health Center is operated by Orant Charities Africa in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MOH). Orant Charities Africa healthcare program assists patients through Kasese Health Center (static clinic) and Mobile Outreach Clinics (MOC) which reaches parts of Kasungu District. The Healthcare program provides curative and preventive health care services to impoverish rural communities. The Healthcare program provides curative and preventive health care services to impoverish rural communities. Kasese Health Center operate a busy Outpatients Department (OPD), **10** bed capacity **24** hours children observation ward, and a **7** bed capacity maternity ward, twice a week Antenatal Program, weekly Cervical Cancer Screening and monthly Eye Clinic, Under-Five Clinics (immunization and child growth monitoring) e.t.c. MOC takes the services to hard to reach areas thereby making healthcare accessible. Tropical infectious diseases are common health problems which includes: malaria, respiratory disease like pneumonia and bronchitis. However, non-communicable diseases are at the rise for example diabetes and hypertension.

For March 2023, Kasese Health Center (KHC) saw **2385** clients at (OPD). Only **40** patients were seen during weekends and nights. The total number of patients seen in March is **2425** (KHC OPD). MOC in Kasese catchments areas saw **803**. Kasungu (Bowe) Outreach clinic saw **3005** clients. MOC's total number of patients seen is **3808**. The total number of patients seen in March 2023 is **6233** (KHC: **2425 (39%)** & MOC **3808 (61%)**).

The Laboratory department tested **1243** for Malaria, out of which **181** were positive, representing a **15%** positivity rate.

The Maternity department admitted **36** mothers and referred **14**. A total of **32** babies were born at the facility and **4** were born in transit (BBAs). Out of **36** babies, **9** had complications (Prematurity: **1**, Weight <2500 grams: **7**, and Still Birth Macerated: **1**). The total Maternity attendance was **50** (**36** admissions and **14** referrals).

The Public Health Department with the help of Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) administered **563** doses of Pfizer. Cumulatively, the Health Centre administered **1574** doses of COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer: **563(36%)** and J & J: **1011 (64%)**)

The HTS department tested **215** clients, of which **2** were positive, representing **1%**. The total number of patients seen at the eye clinic by an outsourced clinician is **56** and **7** patients were booked for surgery. **Forty-four** women were screened for Cervical Cancer and **No** Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) was positive.

Monthly Patients Attendance

Table 1 below shows monthly patients seen in both KHC and MOC.

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
OPD Static	1755	1680	2385	5820
Bowe MOC	2481	3188	3005	8674
Kasese MOC	667	489	803	1959
Nights/Holidays	44	46	40	130
Total	4947	5403	6233	16583

Table 1: Total monthly patients seen at KHC and MOC (2023).

Figure 1 below shows the total OCA patient attendance in 2023

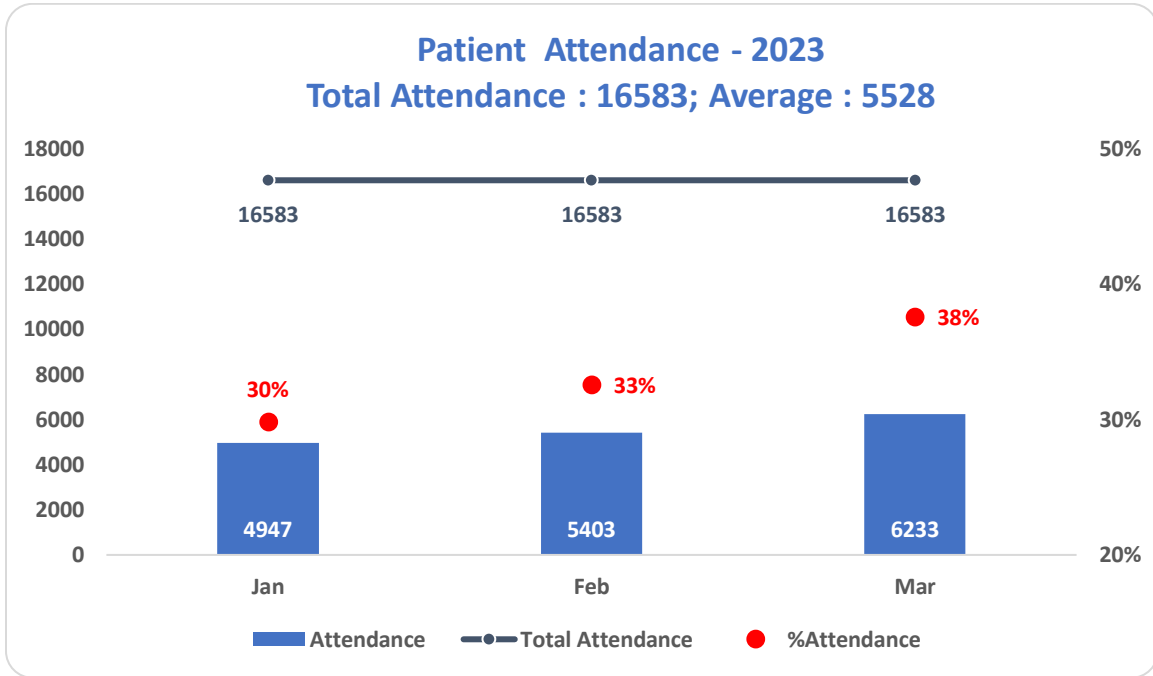


Figure 1: OCA Patient Attendance – 2023.

Figure 2 below shows the cumulative patient attendance for both KHC OPD vs MOC in 2023

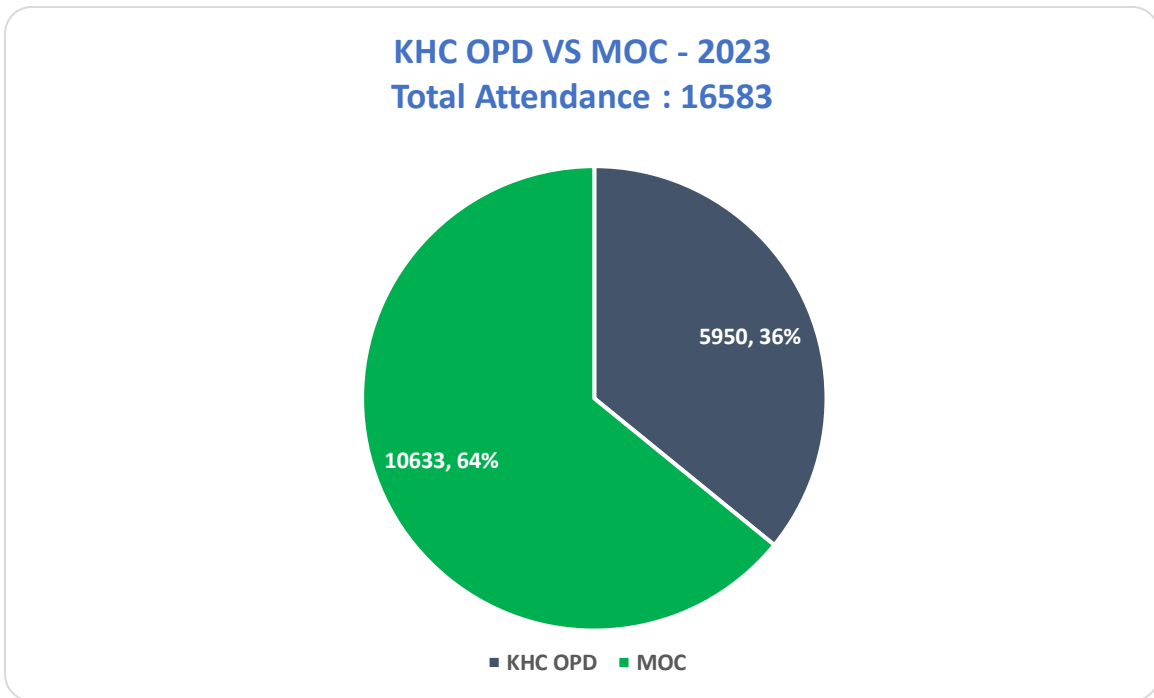


Figure 2: KHC OPD vs MOC (2023).

Figure 3 below shows the total number of patients seen at KHC OPD and MOC in 2023.

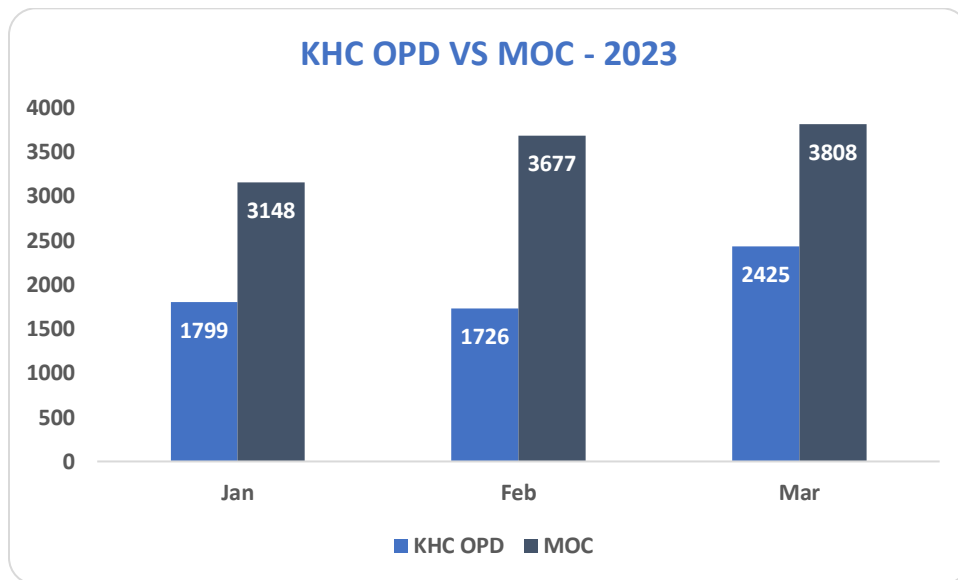


Figure 3: Total patients seen at KHC OPD and MOC– 2023.

COVID -19 Situation Updates.

The COVID-19 situation in the country remains low and in March 2023, 5 tests were conducted. The Health Center continues to provide vaccines at the facility.

Cumulative COVID-19 Data – KHC Static.

Table 2 below shows Cumulative COVID-19 Data.

	Staff(OCA/HSA)	Others	Total
March Tests	1	4	5
March Positives	0	0	0

Table 2: COVID-19 Cumulative Data.

COVID 19 Vaccine (Pfizer) – KHC Static.

Table 3 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

Dose	Male	Female	Total
1st Dose	107	83	190
2nd Dose	138	131	269
Booster	50	54	104
Total	295	268	563

Table 3: Pfizer Administered at KHC Static (2023)

COVID 19 Vaccine (Johnson & Johnson – J&J) – KHC Static

Table 4 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

Vaccine Type	Male	Female	Total
Johnson & Johnson (J & J)	0	0	0
B/F	392	619	1011
Booster	0	0	0
Total	392	619	1011

Table 4: J & J Administered at KHC Static (2023)

COVID-19 Vaccine (Astra-Zeneca) – KHC Static.

Table 5 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

Dose	Male	Female	Total
1st Dose	0	0	0
2nd Dose	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

Table 5: J & J Administered at KHC Static (2023)

COVID 19 Vaccine Status – KHC Static.

Table 6 below shows Vaccine Status in March 2023

Vaccine Type	Beginning Balance	End Balance
Pfizer	660	294

Table 6: Astra-Zeneca Status at KHC Static (March 2023)

Reproductive and Family Planning Health

Maternal and New-born Health Care

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Admissions	38	44	36	118
Referrals	13	8	14	35
New Babies	38	44	36	118
Alive Babies	38	44	35	117
Facility Deliveries	33	36	32	101

Table 7: Maternity Data - 2023

Table 8 below shows the Maternity Data of new babies with complications.

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Weight <2500g	2	1	7	10
Prematurity	4	7	1	12
Asphyxia	1	1	0	2
Sepsis	0	0	0	0
Still Birth Fresh	0	0	0	0
Still Birth Macerated	0	0	1	1
Neonatal Death	0	0	0	0
Total	7	9	9	25

Table 8: Newborns with complications – 2023

Figure 4 below shows the total newborns complications for March 2023.

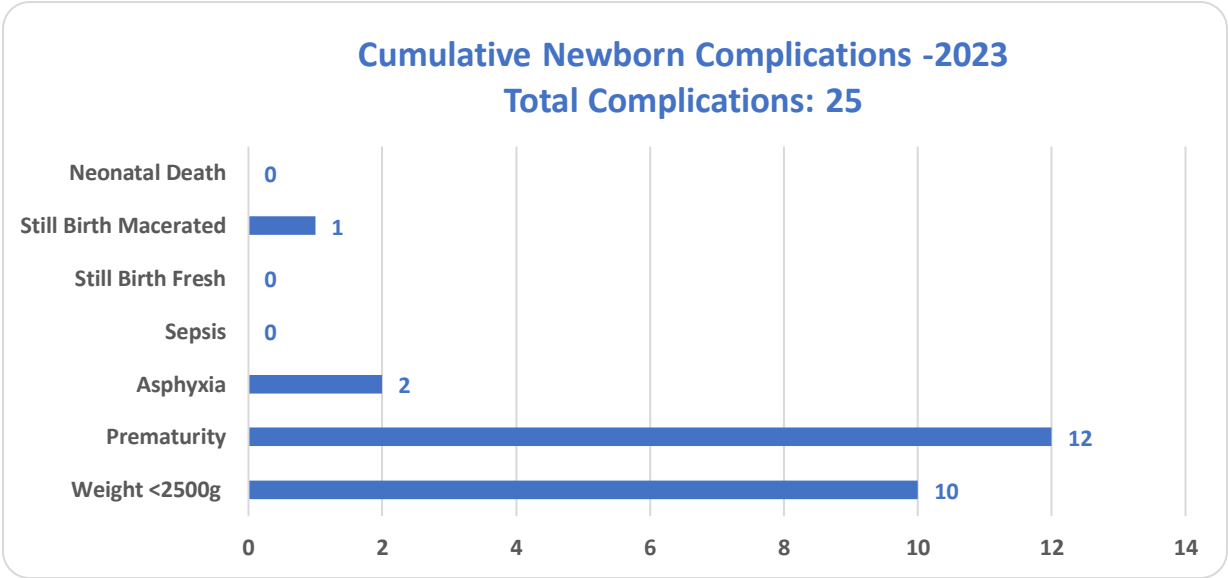


Figure 4: Newborns Complications – 2023

Figure 5 below shows the total monthly Maternity attendance.

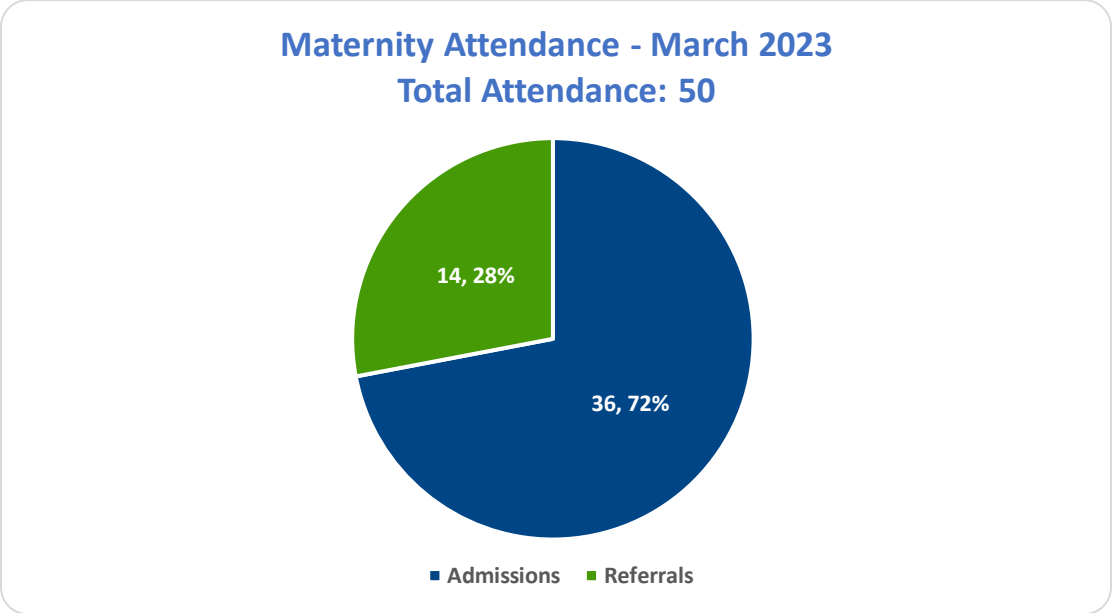


Figure 5: Admissions and Referrals (March 2023)

Table 9 below shows the reason for the referrals

Referral Reason	Referred
Foetal Distress	4
CPD	3
OPL	2
Young Prim	2
PIH	1
Low HB	1
Pre-eclampsia	1

Table 9: Referral Reasons - March 2023

Table 10 below shows ANC attendance.

Month	Total Attendance	New ANC Visit	First Trimester
January	222	69	22
February	212	53	9
March	208	50	7

Table 10: ANC Attendance – 2023

Figure 6 below shows 2023 Monthly ANC Visits.

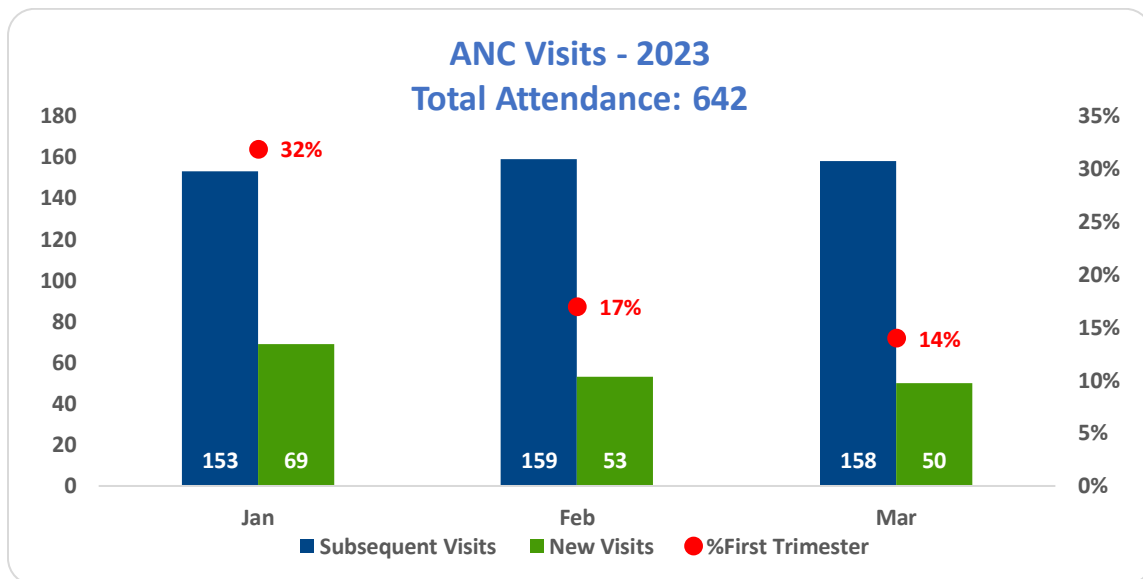


Figure 6: Monthly ANC Visits - 2023.

Cervical Cancer Control Clinic Report

Table 11 below shows the 2023 Monthly Cervical Cancer Screening.

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total	21	30	44
VIA Positive	1	3	0

Table 11: Monthly Cervical Cancer Screening 2023 Table.

The monthly Cervical Cancer screening remains to be low, there is a need for more community sensitization.

Figure 7 below shows 2023 Cervical Cancer Screenings.

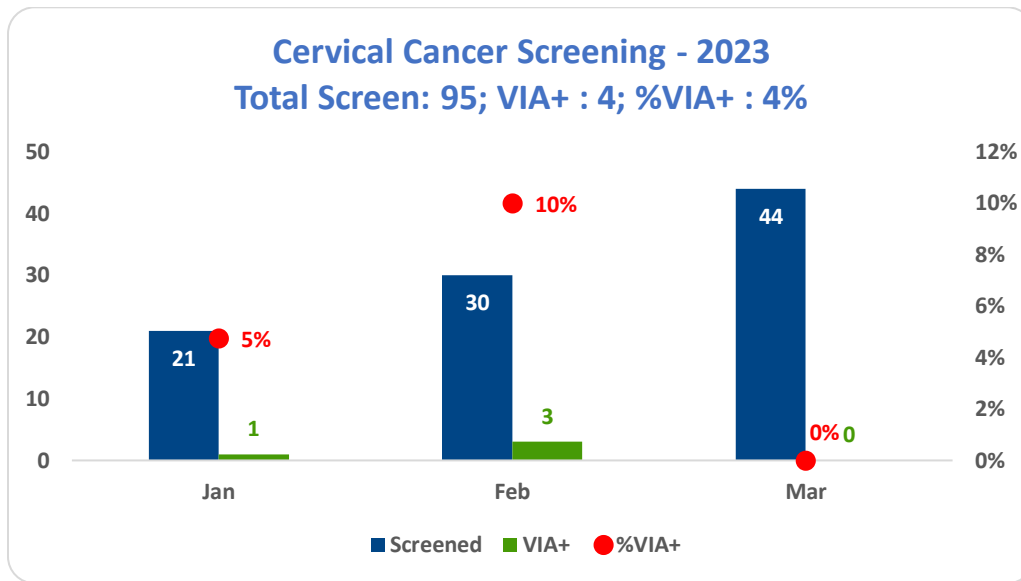


Figure 7: Cervical Cancer Screening - 2023.

Eye Clinic

The outsourced eye specialist continues to provide service in Kasese Health Center and operation is done at Kasungu District Hospital.

Table 12 below shows the total number of clients treated for eye infections and those booked for surgery.

Month (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar
Eye Infections (Treated)	27	40	49
Eye Surgery (Booked)	2	1	7
Total Seen	29	41	56

Table 12: Monthly Eye Clinic Table - 2023.

Figure 8 below shows the 2023 Monthly Eye Clinics.

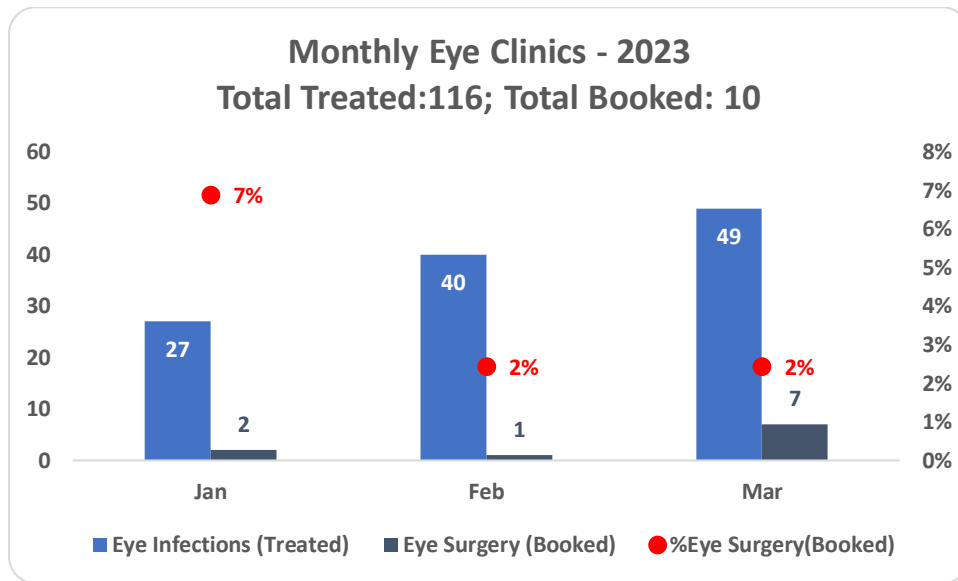


Figure 8 Monthly Eye Clinics - 2023.

Malaria Report

Table 13 below shows Malaria tests for March 2023

	Total Tested	Positives	Negatives	Positivity Rate
Under 5	536	56	480	10%
5 Years and Over	707	125	582	18%
Total	1243	181	1062	15%

Table 13: Total Malaria Tests (March 2023).

Table 14 below shows total Malaria Cases (MRDT's Positive), LA Issued and Dispensed (Kasese Outreach Included)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar
Suspected Malaria Cases	1026	854	1243
Suspected Cases Tested MRDT	1026	854	1243
Confirmed Malaria Cases	238	119	181
New Malaria Cases Registered	238	126	197
LA Dispensed	233	126	197
LA Issued	0	420	550

Table 14: Total Malaria Cases, LA Issued and Dispensed Table.

The Health Center continues to observe a drastic decline in malaria cases this year following timely interventions, including the distribution of insect-treated nets and their usage education in the community.

Figure 9 shows the total KHC (Static and Kasese Outreach) Malaria tests (March 2023)

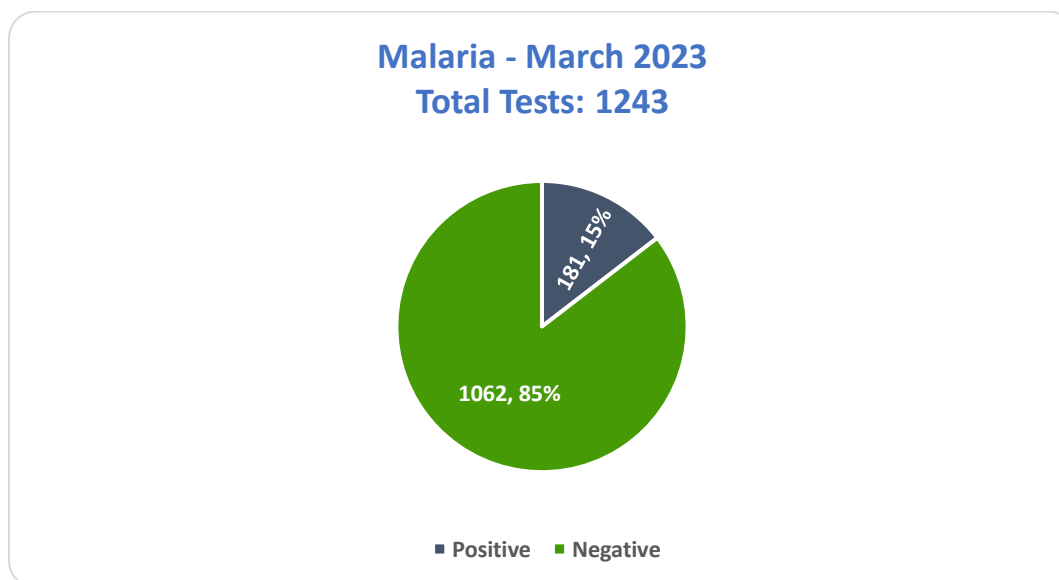


Figure 9: Total KHC (Static and Kasese Outreach) Malaria tests (March 2023).

Figure 10 shows the total KHC (Static and Kasese Outreach) Under 5 Years of Malaria tests

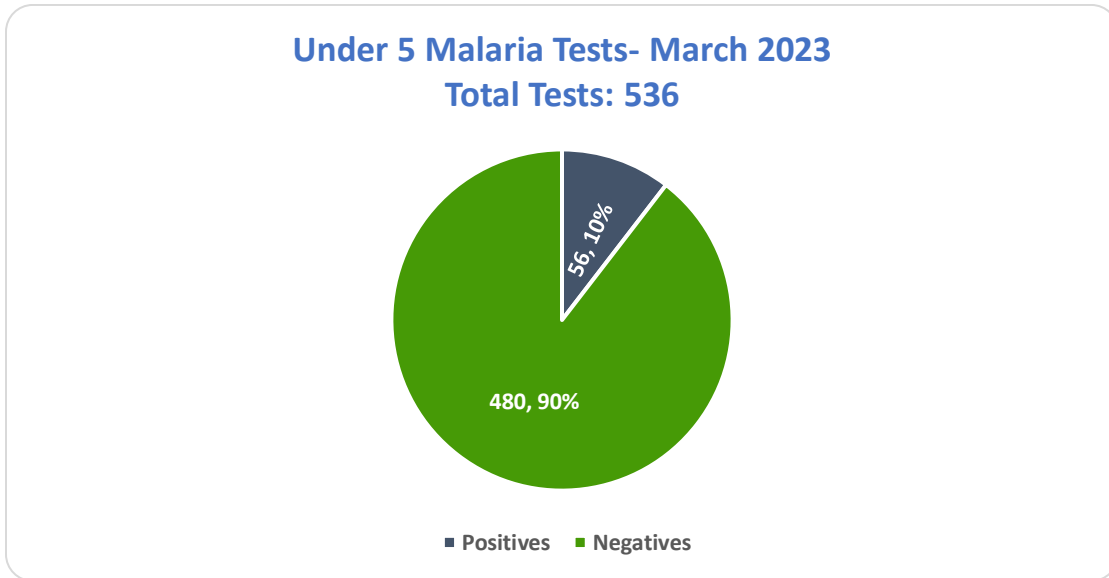


Figure 10: Static and Kasese Outreach, Under 5 Years Malaria tests (March 2023).

Figure 11 shows total KHC (Static and Kasese Outreach) 5 Years and Over Malaria tests

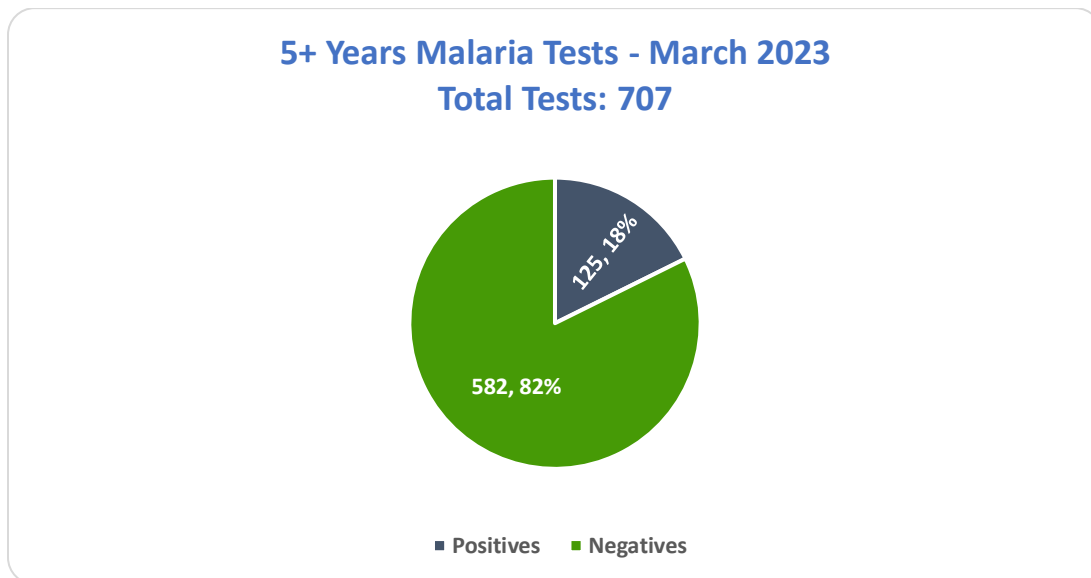


Figure 11: Static and Kasese Outreach, 5+ Malaria tests (March 2023).

HIV Testing Services (HTS)

Months	Total Tested	Positives	Positivity Rate
January	193	2	1%
February	154	2	1%
March	215	2	1%

Table 15: HTC Monthly Data 2023

Kasese catchment area positivity rate remains to be low, this could indicate that people adhere to HIV/AIDS preventive measures.

Figure 12 below shows HTS's Monthly Attendance

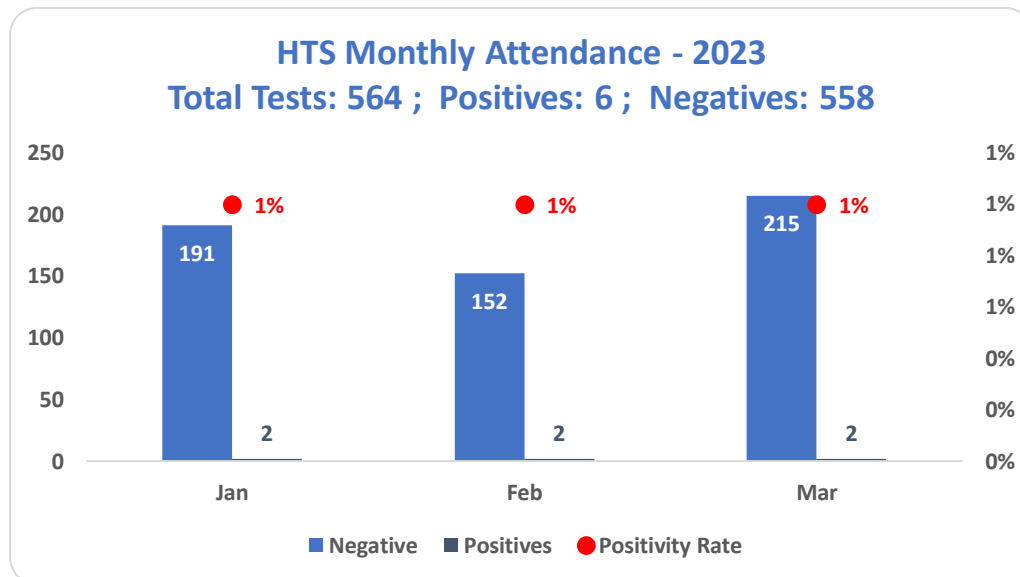


Figure 12: HTS Monthly Tests - 2023

Laboratory Services

Table 16 below shows qualitative Laboratory tests conducted in 2023 (KHC Static and Kasese Outreach).

	H. Pyloris		Salmonella		Hep B		HCG		COVID 19	
	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos
Jan	52	3	9	0	3	1	38	14	0	0
Feb	54	12	15	2	1	0	21	5	0	0
Mar	58	4	26	2	8	2	40	11	5	0
Total	164	19	50	4	12	3	99	30	5	0

Table 16: Qualitative Lab Tests Data Table for KHC Static - 2023.

Figure 13 below shows qualitative lab tests – 2023

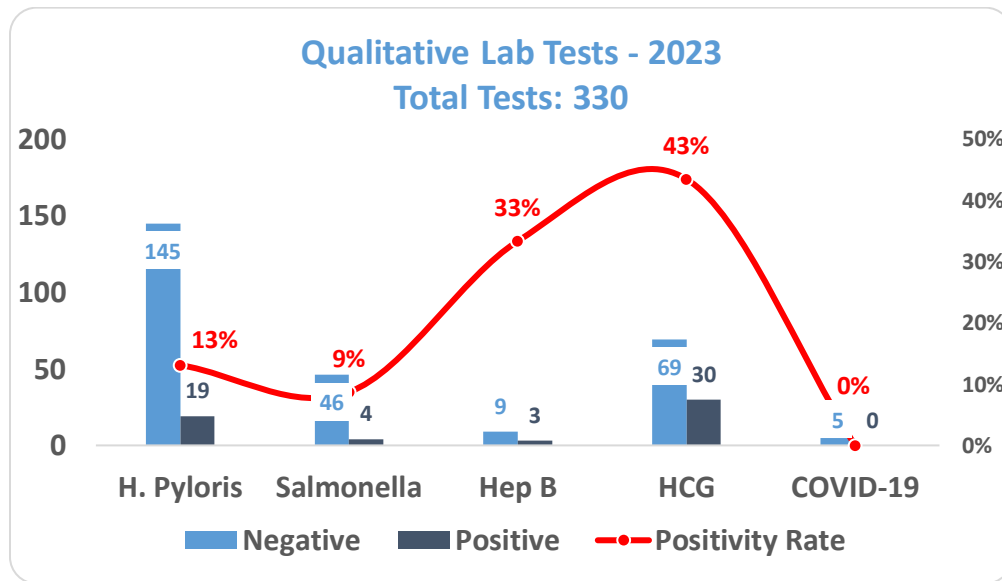


Figure 13: Qualitative Lab Tests – 2023.

Table 17 below shows quantitative Laboratory tests conducted in 2023 (KHC Static and Kasese Outreach).

	Glucose	HB	Urinalysis	FBC
Jan	124	137	16	95
Feb	36	80	17	133
Mar	64	60	13	191
Total	224	277	46	419

Table 17: Quantitative Lab Tests Data Table for KHC Static.

Figure 14 shows quantitative lab tests for the year 2023

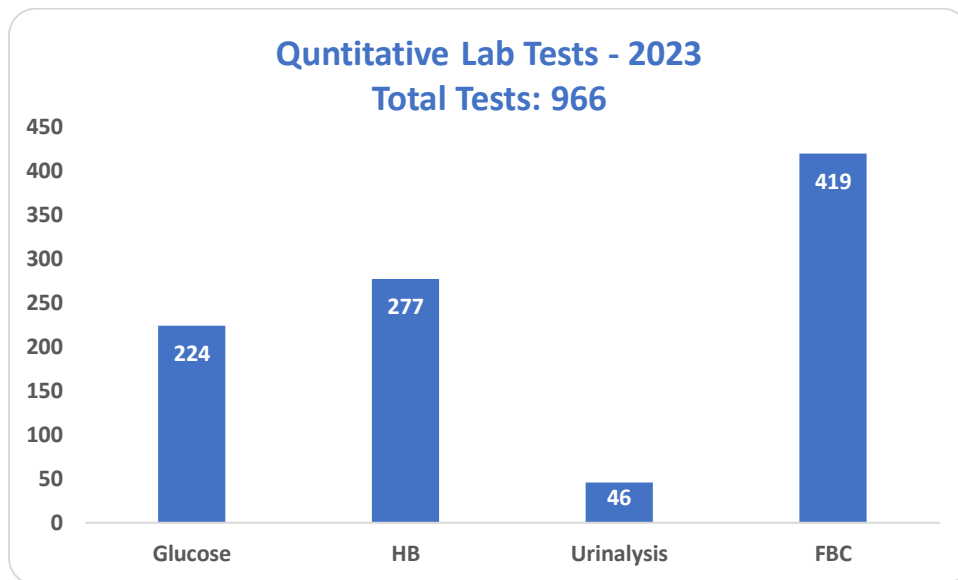


Figure 14: Quantitative Lab Tests – 2023.

Disease Group Trends

Figure 15 below shows disease occurrences for March 2023

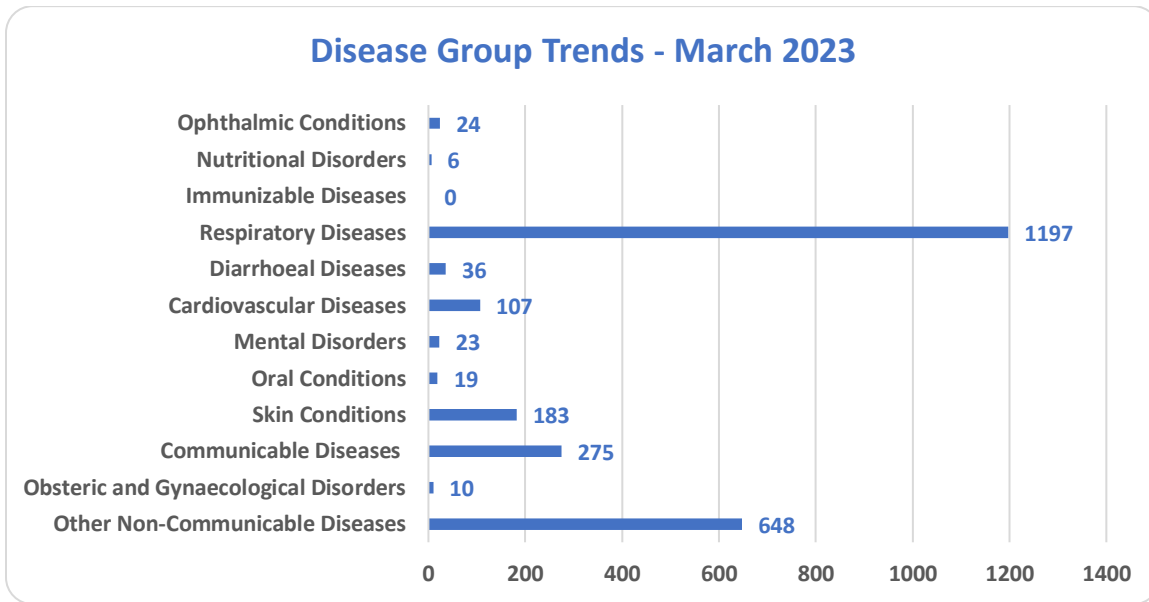


Figure 15: Disease Occurrences (March 2023).

Healthcare Finance and Administration

Table 18 shows the clinic finance table for 2023.

2023	Collection	Referrals	Referral Cost	Average
January	MK 2,625,400	MK 276,575	MK 13,828.75	
February	MK 2,757,500	MK 307,220	MK 17,067.78	
March	MK 3,257,750	MK 343,040	MK 13,721.60	

Table 18: Clinic Finances – 2023.

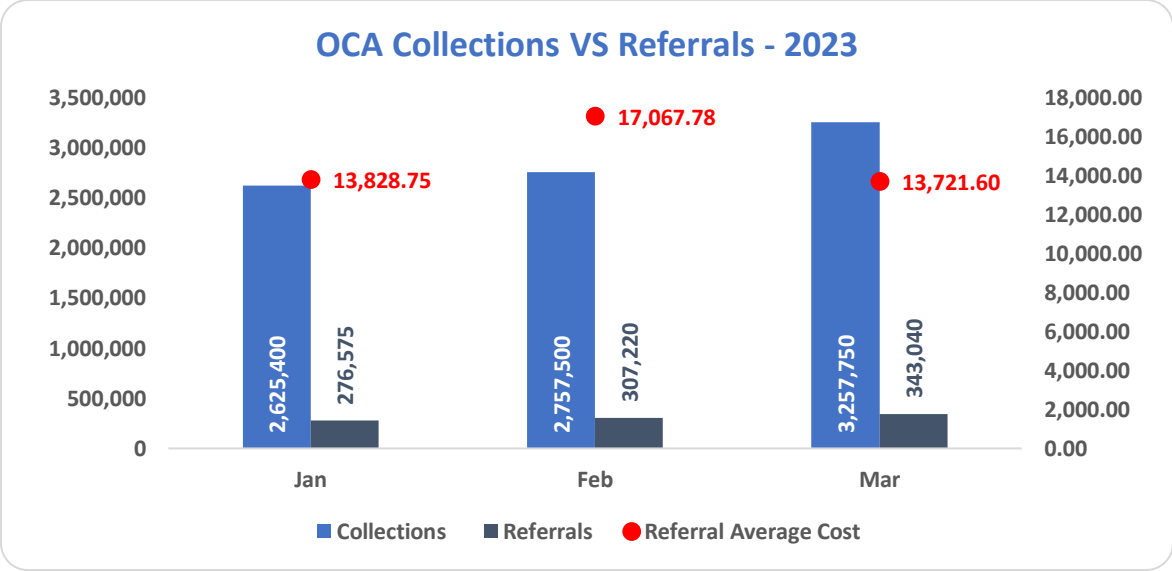


Figure 16: OCA Collections VS Referrals - 2023.

Achievements and Challenges

1. Success Highlights

- The Health Centre and medical staff (nurses, lab technicians, Clinicians, and Pharmacy assistants) got their 2023 licenses renewed with their respective regulatory bodies: medical council, medicine and poison authorities, and nurse’s council.
- The Health Centre received a certificate of excellence from the MOH following the supportive supervision by staff from HIV, STI, and viral hepatitis departments.
- The healthcare program has procured a new land cruiser ambulance meant for the second mobile outreach service.
- The Health Centre continues to conduct monthly general cleanliness as a way of controlling the nosocomial infection.
- The Health Centre in addition to monthly purchases continues to order medicine and medical supplies from Dowa District Hospital (DHO).
- The Health Centre continues to provide COVID-19 vaccines at the facility and in the community.
- Cervical cancer screening uptake continues to improve.
- The Health Centre has established an ombudsman office, which will receive feedback from patients and the community on Health Centre services.

Challenge Highlights

- The Health Centre registered an increase in Outpatients attendance and a subsequent increase in malaria cases especially in the mobile outreach Clinic in Kasungu district.
- The Health Centre stopped admitting children for observation in 24 hours children's observation ward.
- The Health Centre towards month end of March run short of essential analgesic drugs like paracetamol, this was due to a sharp increase in the patient within the month.
- There is an increase in maternity attendance and subsequent increase in referrals, with fetal distress taking the lead.
- There is a sharp increase in the preterm infant, 7 in March 2023.

Water and Sanitation Program

Introduction

Introduction

The month of March was a productive month in program implementation for the WASH program. During the month the WASH program continued with stakeholder coordination meetings and capacity building. In March the following milestones were achieved in line with the program goal of improving access to access to WASH services in the Kasese catchment;



- Supported 25 water point repairs (Service/preventive: 18; repairs: 6; Rehabilitated: 1)
- Conducted refresher water point committee training for Kamongo School WPC
- Conducted review Meeting with HSAs
- Attended ADC meeting for Chakhadza B
- Distributed school sanitation materials in 3 schools
- Assessment of potential borehole drilling sites for 2023
- Attended DCT Meeting in Dowa

DETAILED NARRATION OF MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

The WASH program carried out the following key activities in March 2023.

Water point repairs and rehabilitations

To ensure sustainable access to safe water within the Kasese catchment, water point repair is among the key intervention for the OCA WASH program. In February, the WASH program repaired a total of **25** water points (Service/preventive: **18**; Repairs: **6**;

Rehabilitations: **1**). So far in 2023 the WASH program has conducted **16** major repairs. Similarly, **80** preventive maintenances out of the annual targeted 300 have been



conducted. In 2023 the WASH program aims to conduct more preventive maintenance subsequently hence reducing the number of major repairs which are relatively costly.

Pump repair session in Chiwoza village in the month

Refresher Water Point Committee (WPC) training

Capacity building of stakeholders is one of the key strategies for the sustainability of the WASH program. WPCs training is one of the key activities in building the capacity of communities served by OCA. In March the WASH program conducted a refresher training for Kamongo School WPC. Some of the key lessons delivered were borehole operation and



maintenance fundraising, good hygiene and sanitation practices as well as minor borehole repairs. So far in 2023, the WASH program has trained 4 WPCs (3 WPCs from 2022 and 1 refresher training).

Classroom session demonstrations during refresher training for Kamongo WPC

Review Meeting with HSAs



A group photo of participants during the review meeting HSAs

Health surveillance Assistance (HSAs) are among the key stakeholders for the WASH program, especially in the promotion of community sanitation, behavior change communication and data collection. In March, the WASH program organized a review meeting with HSAs working in the Kasese catchment. The meeting was organized with aim of reviewing progress for water point repairs for 2022 as well as formulating strategies for 2023 water point repairs. Also on the agenda during the meeting was planning for the impending sanitation entrepreneur's training. The sanitation entrepreneurs are expected to support the WASH program through the provision of latrines slabs and corbelled latrines construction services.

Attendance of ADC Meeting



A section of participants during the ADC meeting for TA Chakhadza B

During the month the WASH program was invited to attend Area Development Committee (ADC) meeting organized by pump aid. Pump Aid is a partner organization to the OCA WASH program in the promotion of borehole operation and maintenance in TA Chakhadza. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss the harmonization of borehole operation and maintenance services between the two organizations for the smooth implementation of programs. In attendance during the meeting were Chiefs, Village Development Committees (VDCs) representatives and government extension workers.

Distribution of sanitation materials

To promote sanitation in schools during the month the WASH program started the distribution of sanitation materials. During the month the three schools and Teacher Development Centre (TDC) for the Katalima education zone were assisted with sanitation materials and these schools include; Katalima, Chiwira, and Chinguwi. Each school was provided with three 50L buckets with taps, three 20L buckets, 6 mops, 6 squeezers and 6 brushes. The WASH program plans to extend this initiative to all 15 schools around Kasese. Apart distribution of sanitation materials, the WASH program also plans to construct latrines in 2 schools as well as revamp 12 school sanitation clubs before the end of the year.



Students and teachers from Katalima primary school receiving sanitation materials from the OCA

Assessment of potential borehole drilling sites for 2023

In preparation for the borehole drilling season which starts in May the WASH program embarked on the assessment exercise for villages that are expected to benefit from the

borehole drilling exercise. During the month the WASH program visited 5 villages in this exercise. These villages were proposed by stakeholders of the WASH program in a series of the meeting conducted early this year. The following are the key assessment criteria for villages in this exercise; the number of people, proximity to the nearest borehole and existence of alternative sources of water in the villages. In 2023 the WASH plans to support at least 16 villages with boreholes.

Attended DCT Meeting in Dowa

In March the WASH program was invited to attend a District Coordination Team (DCT) meeting supported by the Red Cross Society (RCS) of Malawi in Dowa. The agenda for the DCT meeting was to assess a proposed WASH project by RCS in the Dowa district. During the meeting it was revealed that the project is expected to be implemented in three TAs namely; Mkukula, Nsakambewa, and Chiwere. The project is expected to run for 2 years



and some of the major initiatives include; the construction of latrines, borehole drilling and sanitation promotion.

Participants during the DCT meeting in Dowa

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reporting

Since 2022 the WASH program started collecting data on KPIs to assist in decision-making and measuring program implementation progress. The month of March was the second KPI reporting period for 2023. The KPI report shows that OCA is on the right track towards achieving key implementation targets for the year.

Agriculture and Business

Agriculture

Introduction

Farming is one of the important activities which builds the economy of Malawi. Smallholder farmers depend on farming to improve their economic status and feed their families. OCA supports smallholder farmers by equipping them with knowledge of farming as a business. The activities are done in both irrigation and rainfed farming through the provision of farm inputs as micro-loans and agriculture expertise. The activities conducted during the reporting month have been explained below;

Agriculture Field Day

To promote good farming practices in the Kasese catchment area, OCA conducts demonstration plots that act as learning sites for the farmers. These learning sites are established on the OCA farm through support from OCA partners such as Bayer, Seed-co, Famers World, and Global Seed company. During the month of March, Field day was organized to help in disseminating Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) demonstrated on the OCA farm to a large group of farmers at once. The field day was successful and about 428 farmers participated in this big event. The field day attendees encompasses government officials, chiefs, Stakeholders, councilors, and farmers from all sections of the Kasese catchment area which are Mphamba, Kachala, and Katalima. The farmers were exposed to good crop varieties which they can grow in their localities for bumper harvests with an aim of reducing hunger and economic empowerment. They were also exposed to early maturity, disease-resistant, and drought-tolerant varieties. With the high costs of fertilizers in the country, farmers were encouraged to grow more cash crops such as Soya and groundnuts which do not require fertilizers to produce.



Farmers listening to agricultural techniques with much interest during field

Meetings in the Agriculture Program

The meeting was conducted with the lead farmers (LF) to brief them about the field day, remind them of post-harvest losses, and encouraged them to tell other farmers in the communities to practice irrigation farming. LF is the main extension agent in the community therefore it is more important to equip them with enough information about farming so that they can be able to share it with other farmers in the community. A brief meeting on field day was done with the aim of making it possible for the LF to practice in their communities so that farmers can be able to view the results within their communities which can give farmers more energy to change their previous system of farming to the modern systems. Smallholder farmers are more affected by post-harvest losses. These losses are mostly experienced due to poor handling of harvested crops, especially during harvesting time, transportation, and bagging of commodities for storage. Due to the heavy rains that the area experienced this year, there will be a lot of post-harvest losses in harvesting hence LFs were taught on best ways of handling such challenges to minimize losses.

The rainy season of 2022-2023 had a lot of rains which will negatively affect crop yields due to water lodging in most of the farms within our catchment area. During production season there were other challenges of high-price fertilizers among smallholder farmers which will affect harvest percentages in the communities. Because of these challenges more smallholder farmers are showing interests to embark on irrigation farming to

overcome the challenges of hunger and finances. We are likely to have more irrigation clubs this year compared to the last year.



Lead famers appreciating some good agricultural practices on OCA Farm

Irrigation Club Activities

As the rains are going to an end, OCA irrigation clubs have already started working on their irrigation sites. Irrigation clubs of Ndalusa, Madzimayala, Kasangadzi, and Mantchedza have already started their work in their respective sites. These clubs have started their work with land clearing, ploughing, and sowing tomato seeds. The crops which have been planned to be cultivated in this year's irrigation season are Maize, Irish potatoes, beans, onions and tomatoes. There is hope that the number of members and land for cultivation will increase due to the poor harvest which most farmers are experiencing this year's rainy season.

Harvesting

OCA cultivated crops such as Maize, soya, and groundnuts. Among other crops which OCA cultivated, some have already dried and require harvesting despite the continuation of rains. The rains are giving more pressure on harvesting since rains are destroying already matured crops. This will cause some post-harvest losses since some crops are damaged by the rains. Maize crops after maturity require more sun to completely dry, with this condition of continuous rains, it will cause some maize cobs to get rotten. More work is happening to keep all produced crops from damage so that postharvest losses can be minimized.



Harvested groundnuts and soya ready for threshing

Theft of Produce

Some members of the community are taking advantage of OCA farms to reduce their problems of hunger and finances in their homes through theft. Several Maize plots have been vandalized by the community which brought the situation to a worrisome condition as it can contribute to losses in production. Currently some cobs of Maize have been recovered which were stolen from OCA farm. This condition has forced OCA to employ some temporary laborers to help in providing security to the field until harvesting.



Some recovered stolen maize cobs from OCA Farm

Business and Financial Empowerment Microloans

Introduction

In a quest of contributing towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 8, OCA through the FEM continues to provide interest free microloans and strengthening the capacity of women entrepreneurs around Kasese catchment area. In the month of March, the FEM program had initiated a number of activities that contributed towards improving the livelihoods of people. The activities conducted are as narrated in the report below;

Activities Planned and achieved

Monitoring visits

Monitoring has grown to be an essential aspect for evaluating progress of businesses for women entrepreneurs as well as the program as a whole. In the reporting month, monitoring visits were conducted to monitor revenues, profits and how the businesses are faring in general. Through the monitoring visits, we established that businesses are faring quite well. However, there are some especially those in agro businesses that are still lagging behind as they wait for harvests so that they can start purchasing the proceeds from farmers.





Picture 1,2 & 3 Patricia, Maligelita and Maness on their business posts

Even more so, businesses continue to suffer the after effects of the ever-rising inflation. In the month of March, 2023 inflation was recorded at 27% as compared to 13% recorded in the same period in 2022. This has really stretched a lot of business owners financially and they are struggling to keep their businesses afloat.

Scarcity of other items such as tomatoes and other vegetables on market has also affected some of our women entrepreneurs who are into that business. The scarcity is due to the rainy season. For example, a bucket of tomatoes which used to be sold at MWK 8,000 is now being sold at MWK 35,000. This has put tomato farmers at an advantage but on the other hand has highly affected our women entrepreneurs who buys from farmers as they cannot afford the order prices.

Loan Repayment

In the month of march, we had encountered many challenges in the repayment of microloans. Apparently, many did not settle their monthly instalment. A total of MWK 707,000 was recovered for all the FEM groups as compared to the actual amount of MWK 2,682, 000 which was supposed to be collected. However, there is hope that the women will be able settle their loan balances because we are approaching the harvest season and some have already started harvesting their produce. Soon they will start selling their produce hence a good time for business growth and settle the loans by the agreed due date for the loan period.

Review meetings

A number of review meetings were conducted in the reporting month to; evaluate program progress through key performance indicators (KPIs), analyse progress of the Umodzi business manual and review loan repayment progress with the women entrepreneurs. These meetings have been key in shaping the way forward for the program as we have wrapped up the first quarter of the year. Through these meetings, we were able to recognise the successes, opportunities and challenges we encountered along the way and come up with solutions for future success of the FEM program.

Weekly Village savings and Loan meetings

The women entrepreneurs continue to meet for the weekly VSL meetings to make their savings and bond with fellow members of their group. Tikondane and Takondwa members usually meet on Thursdays where as Tiyanjane members meet on Fridays. The savings and loans made through the VS&Ls in the first quarter have been beneficial to the women in sustaining their households and businesses as they were sailing through tough times. Usually the first quarter of the year is a bit difficult as people do not have food as well as income to spend on necessities since it is a lean period.



Picture 2 Takondwa (L) and Tikondane (R) during their VS&L session

Education Support Program

Introduction

The OCAs education goes beyond getting students into school. It is also about ensuring that students learn and feel safe while in school; have the opportunity to complete all levels of education, acquiring the knowledge and skills to compete in the labour market; get social- emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world; make decisions about their own lives; and contribute to their communities and the world.

The following were the activities which were conducted by OCA education program in the month of March, 2023;

Meeting with Parents

The education program attended a meeting with parents who live within the Kasese catchment area. The aim of the meeting was to discuss on how we can help our children (students) excel in life. From last year's MSCE exams, it was noted that students from within our catchment area are not performing well. This is due to several factors some of which are; poor background, lack of exposure or enough role models in their communities, lack of full parental involvement e.t.c.

During the meeting it was discussed that our students can be exposed by bringing in role models in their schools to inspire them. we also highlighted one another on the importance of parents getting involved in their children's education and also the responsibilities of parents toward their children's education. It was a very fruitful meeting because a lot of parents learnt a lot since most of them were not getting involved in their



children's education. Some of the issues raised were that parents need to;

- provide a supportive environment in the house

- connect with their children’s school teachers/authorities
- ensure that their children are not over-scheduled
- encourage their children to work hard in school and also to have good behaviour
- Monitor their children’s performance



[OCA education program conducting a meeting with parents within the Kasese catchment area](#)

In addition to that, the parents were also reminded of the things that OCA education program does to help students excel. Thus; providing school fees, material support, mentorship, monitoring, e.t.c. The parents were also informed of the University Program called “**Orant Ulemu Scholarship**” which is there to assist students when they have been selected to University/college. The initial plan of the scholarship is to assist students who were previously assisted by Orant in Secondary school. OCA noted a gap in students’ academic life that after graduating secondary school they were failing to progress in the university due to lack of tuition and support. OCA education program encouraged the parents to keep on working together with Orant and also to continue encouraging their children so that they perform with good grades and have the chance to be given a scholarship under Ulemu scholarship.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that meetings with parents will be conducted every term (quarterly) so that we should help one another on how best our students can excel in their academics.

School Visits

In the same reporting period, the education program visited Ngala Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) and Dowa secondary schools for monitoring progress, mentoring and provision of supplies. Progress reports of the students were checked and the results showed that most of the students are performing well in their studies even though there is need for improvement in some students. The students were encouraged to work extra hard in order to excel and achieve their goals. Sanitary pads, hardcovers, washing and bathing soap were also given to the students.

In addition to that, the students also received counselling on behaviour. The students were told to have good behavior because it is extremely important in school life as it sets foundations for their success later in life. It is a transferrable skill in life and it can bring on many virtues, such as professional success through being focused and staying health. Good behaviour is what helps students to achieve good performance in school.



Students from Dowa secondary school



Students from Ngala CDSS with OCA education personnel

