



**ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY REPORT**

**WATER, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, AND BUSINESS  
PROGRAMS**

**MARCH 2022**

**COMPILED BY**

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# 1. WATER AND SANITATION PROGRAM



## INTRODUCTION

In the month of March, the water program set several objectives in line with the program goal of supporting rural communities in the promotion of access to Water and Sanitation. The water program completed training water point committees that were not trained in 2021. Apart from training water point committees, the water program conducted other activities as well and the following overall milestones have been achieved in March 2022;

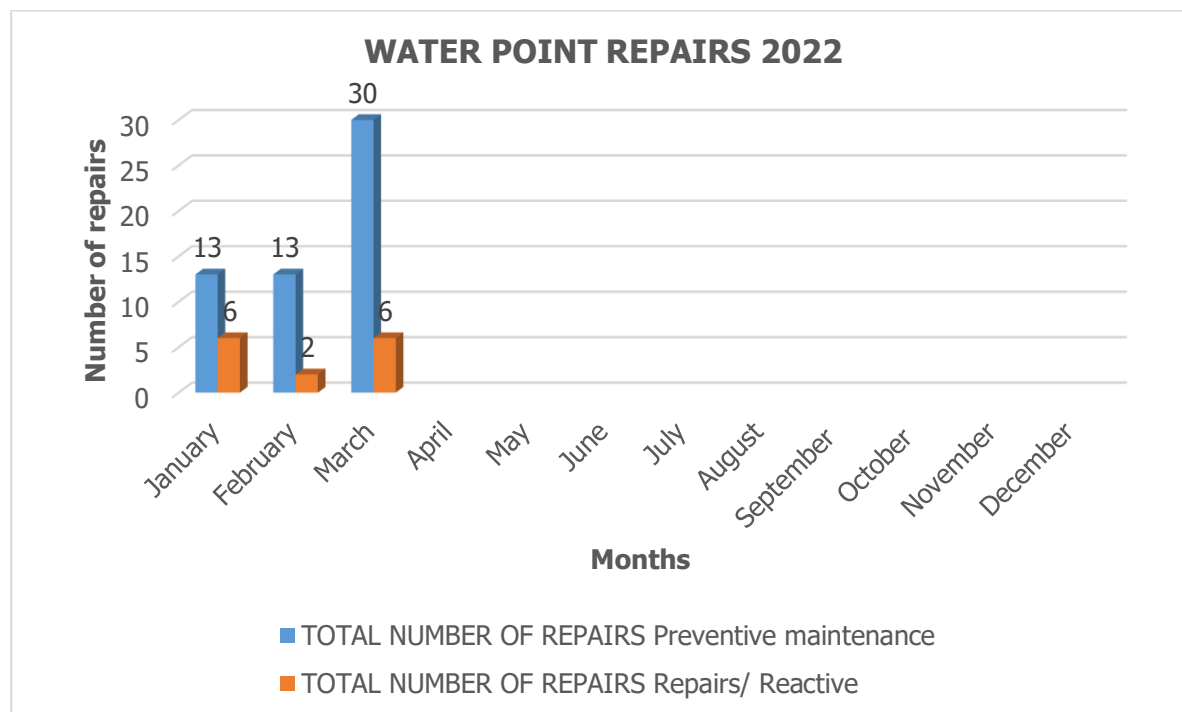
- 36 Water-point repairs and services
- 3 water point committees were trained
- Area Development Committee (ADC) Meeting for TA Chakhadza
- District WASH planning workshop
- Assessment of borehole drilling sites

## DETAILED NARRATION OF MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

### 2. Waterpoint repairs and rehabilitations

To ensure sustainable functionality of water points and access to safe water within the OCA catchment. The water and sanitation program supports repairs, services, and rehabilitation of broken Afridev pumps with spares and technical expertise in collaboration with Afridev pump Area Mechanics. Despite OCA supporting repairs, water point committees are being encouraged to have a water point fund to support themselves in minor repairs to promote a sense of ownership which is tantamount to the sustainability of their water point. The water program repaired and serviced **36** boreholes. Out of the 36 boreholes, **6** were repairs and **30** were preventive maintenance/services. Preventive maintenance is conducted every 3 months on boreholes under a service agreement with Afridev pump Area Mechanics despite the borehole being functional. In recent months more preventive maintenances are being

conducted than repairs which are done when a pump is broken to ensure sustainable access to safe water among communities as well as reduce major maintenance costs for OCA.



*A graph showing the number of repairs conducted between January to March 2022*

### 3. Water Point Committees (WPCs) Training

To ensure community participation in the management of their water points, OCA trains water point committees in Community Based Management (CBM) of water points. Thus, training water point committees to conduct minor repairs and sanitation activities of their water points to ensure sustainable access to safe water. During the month the water and sanitation program trained **3** water point committees from **Kameza, Chikapa, and Chimpanda**. All three boreholes were drilled in 2021. In each village, a total of 10 water point committee members were trained. In each village, training sessions were also attended by a Chief who is a custodian of by-laws which are important in borehole management. In total, the water program trained a total of **33** people in CBM. The training sessions were facilitated by OCA staff in collaboration with government extension workers and Afridev pump Area Mechanics.



*Left: A classroom session during water point committee training for Chikapa and Kameza boreholes, Right: A practical session during water point committee training for Chikapa and Kameza boreholes*

#### **4. Area Development Committee (ADC) Meeting**

To promote collaboration with its stakeholders, the water program attended the ADC meeting for Traditional Authority (TA) Chakhadza. ADC stands for Area Development Committee and is responsible for coordinating development activities at the community level. During the ADC meeting, the water program was privileged to present a progress report for 2021 activities and plans for 2022. On the other hand, ADC members who are representatives from Village Development Committees (VDCs) submitted a list of proposed villages for borehole drilling in 2022 to the OCA water program. During the meeting, the ADC expressed their gratitude for the progress the OCA water program made in 2021 and also asked OCA to consider extending their catchment to other areas within the Chakhadza ADC catchment which are not serviced by the OCA water program. The ADC meeting was attended by **60** members, some of which included Village Development Committee (VDC) members, Chiefs, Ward councilors, and a member of parliament for the Dowa-Ngala constituency.



*Left: Water program Manager making a presentation during ADC, Right - Cross-section of participants' ADC meeting for TA Chakhadza*

#### **5. Assessment of latrine construction sites**

Earlier during the year, OCA made plans to construct latrines in schools to promote sanitation. During the month, the water program started assessing potential schools for latrine construction in 2022. Two schools were visited during the month, and these include Nambola Junior Primary school and Mambala Full Primary school. Out of the two schools, Nambola school was identified as having a great need for improved latrines. The schools have latrines that are in poor condition, thus with poor roofing and floors which are on the verge of collapsing posing a danger to learners. Assessment of potential schools for latrine construction continues since OCA is targeting to support two schools for 2022.



*Left - Nambola primary school classrooms, Right - Current status of pit latrines at Nambola primary school*

## **6. District WASH planning workshop**

In March, the water program was invited to attend the District WASH planning workshop organized by the Dowa district council with support from United purpose. The meeting was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 2021. In attendance during the meeting were WASH NGOs representatives and relevant Government Departments at the district level. The meeting aimed at strategizing the development of a 5-year District Sector Implementation Plan (DSIP). DSIPs act as a guide for all development partners (Government departments, NGOs, politicians, and the private sector) on the district's priorities and needs. The current DSIP for Dowa was developed in 2017 and expires in 2022.



*WASH stakeholders during a District WASH Planning Meeting*

## **7. Program Data Management**

During the month the water program updated the Monitoring & Evaluation Indicators with the data officer. Furthermore, the water program also updated an online borehole repair database.

## **CONCLUSION**

The just-ended month of March was very productive for the water program, especially in the training of water point committees and pump repairs. The water program is very optimistic for the new month of April as we draw plans for borehole drilling and latrine construction.

## AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



*Groundnuts in OCA farm*

### **Introduction**

For the month of March 2022, the agriculture program performed several activities in supporting smallholder farmers in the communities of Kasese. The activities were aimed at empowering the local farmers to live independent lives by having enough food and improved economic levels in their homes through irrigation and rainfed farming. Below are activities which were carried out during the reporting period.

### **Purchase of farm inputs**

Things are changing day and night in the country, especially prices of food items, farm inputs and other products. Prices of farm inputs such as fertilizers have doubled compared to the buying price of last month. Despite prices going higher at an increasing rate, farm inputs especially fertilizers are becoming scarce in both wholesale and retail shops. Looking at both the local and global trends of fertilizers, OCA proactively started buying more fertilizer for the coming crop production seasons for both irrigation and rainfed farming. Currently a total of 900 bags of three different kinds of fertilizers which include NPK (450), Urea (350) and D-Compound (100). Due to the small storage facility at Kasese Compass, the fertilizers have been stored in BOMFA warehouses where there is good infrastructure and security. The purchase of the fertilizer is still in progress until we reach our target of 1000 bags whereby 450 bags will be of Urea, 450 bags NPK and 100 bags of D-compound. There is a high probability that the prices of commodities like fertilizer might go higher anytime soon. Purchasing fertilizer this time is of more importance as it will reduce the cost of production than purchasing in future when the prices will be too high.



*Offloading of fertilizer in progress at BOMFA warehouse*

### **Sowing in Irrigation Clubs**

Tomato farming mostly starts with nursery and smallholder farmers are always reminded that good quality is important for profitability. Nursery sowing of tomato seeds is regarded as the most important stage which has to be done with great care because poor seedlings result in poor performance on the main field hence causing losses in farming. Sowing of Tomatoes was conducted at Mantchedza and Madzimayela irrigation clubs. Madzimayela is cultivating on 2 acres land and Matchedza is cultivating 1.5 acres land. Smallholder farmers were advised to apply manure before sowing to improve soil fertility. The most preferred method of sowing was the line method (seeds were sown in lines drawn on the bed spaced at 10cm apart). Sowing in line is advantageous as it reduces problems of high density of seeds which results in accumulation of fungi disease hence production of poor seedlings.



*Sowing of tomato seeds in progress*

### **Mulching**

Sown nursery has to be mulched to prevent the sown seeds from direct sunlight and direct rain/water drops. Matchedza irrigation club was encouraged to conduct mulching on tomato nursery using locally available materials. The materials mostly being used for mulching is grass which is found locally. Mulching is more important to the sown nursery as it helps to return moisture in the soil since the nursery has to remain wet for good seed germination and has to be kept away from sun and dry winds.

### **Land preparation and Bed making**

Beds have to be well leveled for sowing purpose and large clods being broken into small soil particles. Matchedza, Chigona and Madzimayela irrigation clubs were involved in bed making activity where proper beds were made for sowing tomato seeds and transplanting seedlings. The most suitable beds during the rainy season are raised beds which drain water easily when

the area has encountered heavy rains. Beds sizes of 1m by 3m were considered as ideal for sowing tomato seeds as leveling of the particular beds is done more easily than beds longer than 3m. The beds which are not leveled correctly can result in holding a lot of water within one place which results in build up of green mold which is hazardous to the seedlings. Big clods of soils were also broken into fine tilth to increase aeration since nurseries grow well in well aerated places.



*Club members relaxing/dancing after doing land preparation, ready for planting*

### **Manure application**

Application of manure on nursery was encouraged to be done immediately after land preparation to improve nutrient content in the soil as tomato crop is a heavy feeder plant which requires more nutrients for bumper harvest. Application of manure is mostly encouraged to be done before sowing and transplanting whereby it can be mixed with the soil for faster use by plants. Despite manure improving soil fertility, it also improves soil structure which in turn improves water holding capacity and reduces erosion.

### **Pests and disease control**

Nursery is mostly affected by pests such as ants and grasshoppers which easily disturb the quality of the nursery. Despite being affected by pests, it is also affected by diseases which reduces quality and quantity of produce on the crops hence prevention or control is extremely important. Madzimayela is cultivating tomato and some leafy vegetables where work is on nursery stage and there is need of more care and observation so that pests and disease should be controlled immediately after being observed. The Irrigation club was supported with synthetic chemicals and some expertise on proper dosage rate, right time of application and right way of spraying the chemicals. The best time for the control of pest and disease is during early in the morning or evening hours as stomata are open for chemical penetration.



*Nursery well treated from Pest and disease attack*



### **Irrigation Club identification**

Several villages have shown interest in working on irrigation farming with OCA after seeing how other clubs are prospering through irrigation farming. Through OCA's demand driven approach in selection of irrigation clubs to work with, villages of Ng'ombe, Singo and Josen have shown interest in working in irrigation farming by writing a letter of interest in working on irrigation farming. These villages were visited by OCA and it was observed that they are prepared to start working as a club. In the process of interaction with the mentioned sites, the villages of Ng'ombe and Singo have begun the work by choosing their club leaders, and starting the cultivation activities. The names for the clubs have been already identified which are Kambalame and Madula irrigation clubs. For the time being, OCA will start working with these two clubs where cultivation of Maize will be done. Ng'ombe is a club of 15 farmers while Singo has 23 farmers.

### **Oca farm**

As OCA farm was divided into two separate portions where it was cultivated by OCA and Mwayiwanthu club. The club members are doing well in managing crops as it is showing good returns as rains are still coming in Kasese catchment which gives hope that the crop will reach maturity stage with a good crop stand. The weeding has been well done in crops to reduce competition between weeds and the main crop in the field for nutrients and water use. Farmers are looking forward to the harvesting time as rains are coming to an end.

The other sites of the field where Maize was planted, the area has been affected with witchweed which has brought in reduction of crop quality hence poor harvest is expected. The area will require heavy application of manure and crop rotation to overcome the problem in the next growing season.



*Crops with good crop stand, good expectations for the yield*



*Witchweed attack in Maize field*

## FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT MICROLOANS (FEM)

### Introduction

FEM program continues to support businesses owned by women so that they are economically empowered and be able to support their families. In the month of March there were a number of activities which were carried out in order to achieve the goal as follows;

### 1. Business/Entrepreneurship Training

The month opened with training for the Tikondane FEM group. The training began on 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2022 and was concluded on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The training topics were: Risk management, Marketing and Profit calculations. The training was aimed at capacitating the women entrepreneurs with new skills so that their businesses may withstand the tests of time especially now that businesses are sailing in troubled waters with the current economic crises. OCA was privileged to have additional co facilitators; Lauryn Dzombe from ZOE empowers and Edward Changala from Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI).



*The first day of training with Mr. Changala and Miss Dzombe*



*An interactive session with Tikondane FEM Members*

### 2. Monitoring visits

Monitoring visits to businesses for the women entrepreneurs were carried out to assess how businesses are faring considering the times we are in. the following were the findings of issues affecting the businesses which were raised by the women entrepreneurs;

### i) Inflation Rates

The economic crisis in Malawi continues to affect most business operations as inflation continues to go up. In the month of March, the inflation rate recorded was 13% as compared to the projected 12.4% rate. The prices of commodities such as cooking oil, keep going up causing the costs of production to go up and vice versa. During the visits, it was observed that the increase in production and price for their commodities, has highly affected the women entrepreneurs' consumer purchase patterns resulting in reduced sales. Those in baking businesses like scones, flitters and doughnuts have indicated that a 50-kilogram (Kg) bag of flour which was being sold at MWK 47,000 has now gone up to MWK 57,000 representing 47 percent price increase. Maintaining the price for the commodities just to return customers, has caused such businesses to reduce profits by at least by 47%.

### ii) Government price controls

Those in the Agro-dealing business have complained about the prices of Maize as mostly these are controlled by the government. Most entrepreneurs had kept their maize with hope that the prices may increase but to no avail. In the year 2021, same period as this, they were ordering maize at MWK 160 per Kg, and since that time the prices have been the same up to March. With inflation, the value for money cannot be the same. For instance, MWK 160 last year is as good as MWK 141 as of to date taking into account the inflation rate of 13%. This means that for them to break even, they were supposed to be selling at not less than MWK178 per Kg.

### iii) Frequent power outage

In the month of March, we have had frequent power cuts causing businesses that mainly rely on electricity not to function properly. Stella who runs a salon is an example of such women entrepreneurs. She had reported that being farming season, she expects to receive more customers between 10 o'clock in the morning and 3 o'clock in the afternoon as people are busy with farm work during the early morning hours. So it happens that in the most productive hours of her work, that is when there are consistent power cuts hence cannot operate. She further explained that these power failures have damaged her equipment such as the hair dryer and straightener.



*Picture 3 Stella working on customer's hair*

## 3. Loan Repayment

4. Loan number	NAME	Loan Amount	2nd Instalment to be paid	Actual amount paid	Trans ID
P-02	ALINET MACHISAWO	250,000.00	62,500.00	12,500.00	C1220214.0705.D78112
P-03	RABECCA YOHANE	250,000.00	62,500.00	62,000.00	C1220214.1439.D79300

P-04	MARY MNDOLO	150,000.00	37,500.00	30,000.00	C1220214.0904.G02991
P-17	MALIGELITA JOSOFATI	170,000.00	42,500.00	42,500.00	C1220214.1704.I91939
P-19	PATRICIA SIMBI	250,000.00	62,500.00	62,500.00	C1220214.0945.I50720
P-09	EDILINA JONATHAN	250,000.00	62,500.00	62,500.00	C1220214.1013.I53606
P-15	GLORIA CHIDZANJA	250,000.00	62,500.00	62,500.00	C1220214.1018.D15416
P-07	DOROTHY JELAO	200,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	C1220214.0957.D52239
P-28	LIZINETI THOKOZANI	100,000.00	25,000.00	12,500.00	C1220214.1146.H62939
P-08	DEBORAH MAUAGULE	100,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	C1220214.1706.D92441
P-01	OLIPA MALIZANI	50,000.00	12,500.00	12,500.00	C1220214.0938.D50260
P-14	MARY LEVISON	250,000.00	62,500.00	49,800.00	C1220214.1439.G77676
P-18	RACHEAL PHIRI	100,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	C1220214.1706.D58204
P-16	MIGUEL BRIGHT	300,000.00	75,000.00	75,000.00	C1220214.1358.I73734
P-06	LONILY LAMECK	80,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	C1220214.0939.I50145
		<b>2,750,000.00</b>	<b>687,500.00</b>	<b>604,300.00</b>	

Table 1 Tikondane Loan repayment Schedule

Loan number	NAME	Loan Amount	2nd Instalment to be paid	Actual Amount Paid	Trans ID
P-05	TAMALE KACHINGWE	150,000.00	37,500.00	37,500.00	CI220213.1522.D08716
P-10	MALITA BANDA	250,000.00	62,500.00	31,000.00	CI220213.1440.H05610
P-11	PATRICIA BANDA	125,000.00	31,250.00	31,500.00	CI220213.1653.D16063
P-12	IREEN HENDELESONI	100,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	CI220213.1335.G01589
P-13	STELLA KALIMBAKATHA	100,000.00	25,000.00	20,000.00	CI220213.1810.D23487
P-16	NDAZIONA TESHAR MCHONJO	250,000.00	62,500.00	52,500.00	CI220213.1655.H16198
P-22	EDITTA MTSITSA	150,000.00	37,500.00	37,250.00	CI220213.1742.I20557
P-23	MANESS NKHOMA	100,000.00	25,000.00	21,000.00	CI220213.1655.H16248
P-24	GLADYS CHIODZALO	70,000.00	17,500.00	15,000.00	CI220213.1525.H08804
P-25	SOFETI MANJAWIRA	100,000.00	25,000.00	20,000.00	CI220213.1802.I22652
P-26	DOROTHY MAKUTA	100,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	CI220213.1643.G5110

P-27	EMILY DAMBULENI	300,000.00	75,000.00	0.00	
		<b>1,795,000.00</b>	<b>448,750.00</b>	<b>315,750.00</b>	

*Table 2 Tiyanjane Loan repayment Schedule*

From the repayment schedules above for Tikondane and Tiyanjane FEM groups, it shows that in Tikondane FEM group, ten women entrepreneurs which is 66.7 % of the total managed to pay their full installment and the remaining 33.3% failed to do so hence paid part of the amount. In Tiyanjane FEM group, four women entrepreneurs (representing 33.3%) managed to settle the full monthly installment and seven women paid part payment (representing 58.3%) and the remaining one (8.4%) completely failed to pay the installment. The repayment patterns can be justified by the tough economic hardships the country is undergoing hence business cash flow has also been hit badly.

### **5. Week Village Saving & Loans Meetings**

The meetings are still continuing on a weekly basis and members are always encouraged to come together even though some individuals fail to bank savings. Banking is not mandatory as it is not always guaranteed that the women may have something to deposit. The women entrepreneurs are at times allowed to withdraw what they have saved to date during emergencies to help cushion the situation. These forums are also one way of bonding and sharing business experiences and tips for success.



*FEM members enjoying Edilina's scones during one of the meetings*

# EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

## Introduction

Orant Charities Africa (OCA) operates an education sponsorship program that pays the school fees for students attending primary and secondary schools and universities in Malawi. Since 2017 OCA has had an education program that has paid fees for students. OCA also has two major sponsors called Orant sponsorship and Geoshack sponsorship. The students currently being sponsored by Orant on a continuing basis are **133**. Out of the 133 students, six students are in the Orant Ulemu Scholarship. The students also receive additional support for books, uniforms, and supplies.

## School Visits

The OCA Education program had a great month. In this month, students in different schools were visited for the provision of school supplies. Few schools were visited since the students were writing exams and they were not to be disturbed. The schools which were visited in this month include; Dowa secondary school, Natola Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) and Ngala CDDS. During the visit, OCA provided students with Hardcover, Pens, Rulers, Scientific Calculators, Mathematical instruments, among others. This is important because it helps the students to excel in class because the government of Malawi does not provide such materials for the students. Since these students come from very poor families which cannot afford to provide for them all the necessary materials, OCA thought it wise to provide support of school materials to them in order to keep them in school and also that they are able to do better in class because their basic needs are met. Below are the pictures of the students during OCA visit;



Students from Lilongwe girls Sec school (left) and Dowa Sec school (right)



Students from Ngala (left) and Natola (right) CDSS

## Mentorship

In the same reporting period, OCA received visitors from Orant Charities US who accompanied the education program in the school visits. Nkhamenya girls secondary school was the school which was visited for encouragement, support and progress. The visitors were warmly welcomed by the students and they had a wonderful interaction. It was an inspirational visit and the students were greatly inspired from what was shared with them.

Mentorship helps to shape a student's behavior and also instill enough discipline in them. Proper guidance helps them achieve their goals and how to do things in the best possible way.



The pictures above show Nkhamenya students with OCA USA Board members

A quality basic education is something which every child should get regardless of their family background and community to which they belong. We strive to get educated in order to experience a good livelihood. Education being an integral part of our lives, spreading awareness about education will support development in the education system and more opportunities for children to study. Orant Charities US raises funds to support the education of students in Malawi to improve their lives and boost their careers.

## **Conclusion**

At OCA, we believe in the singular power of education to break the cycle of extreme poverty. In support of this mission, we provide direct tuition support in addition to a range of comprehensive support programs so students can excel throughout their secondary school and college educations.