



APRIL, 2023

# ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY REPORT



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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 impoverished 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 April 2023, Kasese Health Center (KHC) saw **1978** clients at (OPD). Only **56** patients were seen during weekends and nights. The total number of patients seen in April is **2034** (KHC OPD). MOC in Kasese catchments areas saw **876**. Kasungu (Bowe) Outreach clinic saw **3523** clients. MOC's total number of patients seen is **4399**. The total number of patients seen in April 2023 is **6433** (Dowa: **2910 (45%)** & Kasungu **3523 (55%)**).

The Laboratory department tested **2740** for Malaria, out of which **996** were positive, representing a **36%** positivity rate. In Dowa, **1154** patients were tested and **216(19%)** were positive cases whilst in Kasungu, **1586** patients were tested and **780(49%)** were positive cases.

The Maternity department admitted **30** mothers and referred **15**. A total of **30** babies were born at the facility and **one** was born in transit (BBAs). Out of **30** babies, **6** had complications (Prematurity: **1**, Weight <2500 grams: **3**, Asphyxia: **1** and Still Birth Macerated: **1**). The total Maternity attendance was **45 (30 admissions and 15 referrals)**.

The Public Health Department with the help of Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) administered **599** doses of COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer: **550** and J & J: **49**). Cumulatively, the Health Centre administered **2173** doses of COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer: **1113(51%)** and J & J: **1060 (49%)**)

The HTS department tested **169** clients, of which **three** were positive, representing **2%**.

The total number of patients seen at the eye clinic by an outsourced clinician is **41** and **six** patients were booked for surgery.

The cervical cancer department screened **14** women and **no** VIA was positive.

The MOC team managed to conduct all **17** scheduled visits in the month representing **100%**

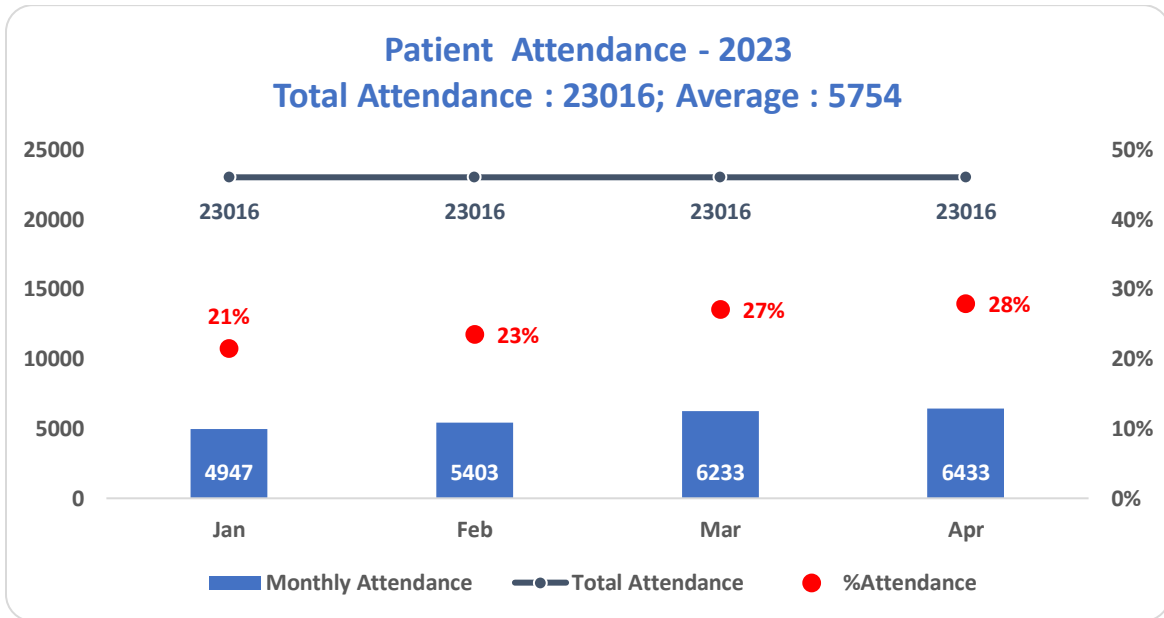
## Monthly Patients Attendance

Table 1 below shows monthly patients seen in both Dowa and Kasungu.

<b>Months (2023)</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>Total</b>
OPD Static	1755	1680	2385	1978	<b>7798</b>
Bowe MOC	2481	3188	3005	3523	<b>12197</b>
Kasese MOC	667	489	803	876	<b>2835</b>
Nights/Holidays	44	46	40	56	<b>186</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4947</b>	<b>5403</b>	<b>6233</b>	<b>6433</b>	<b>23016</b>

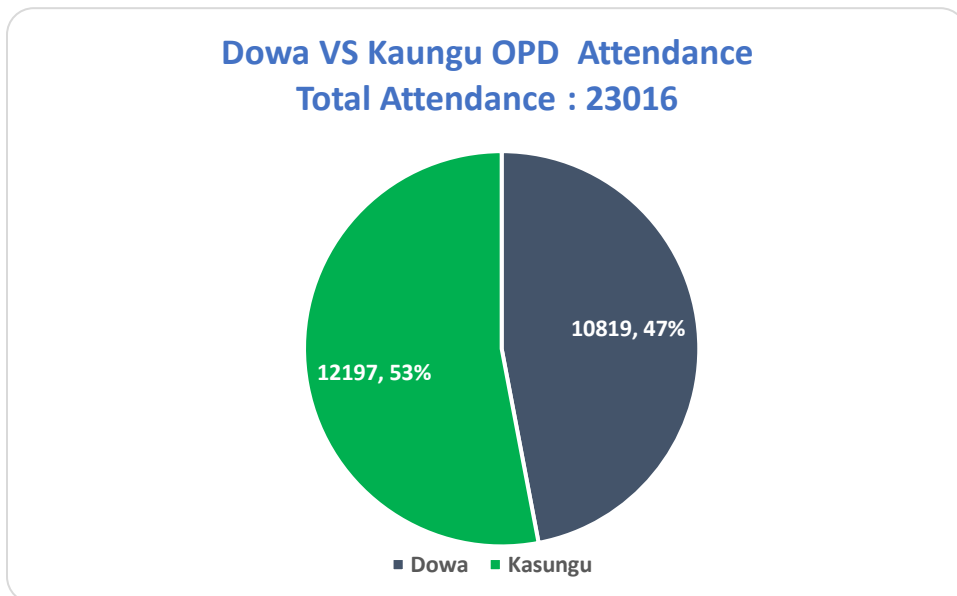
***Table 1: Total monthly patients seen at Dowa and Kasungu (2023).***

Figure 1 below shows the total OCA patient attendance in 2023



**Figure 1: OCA Patient Attendance – 2023.**

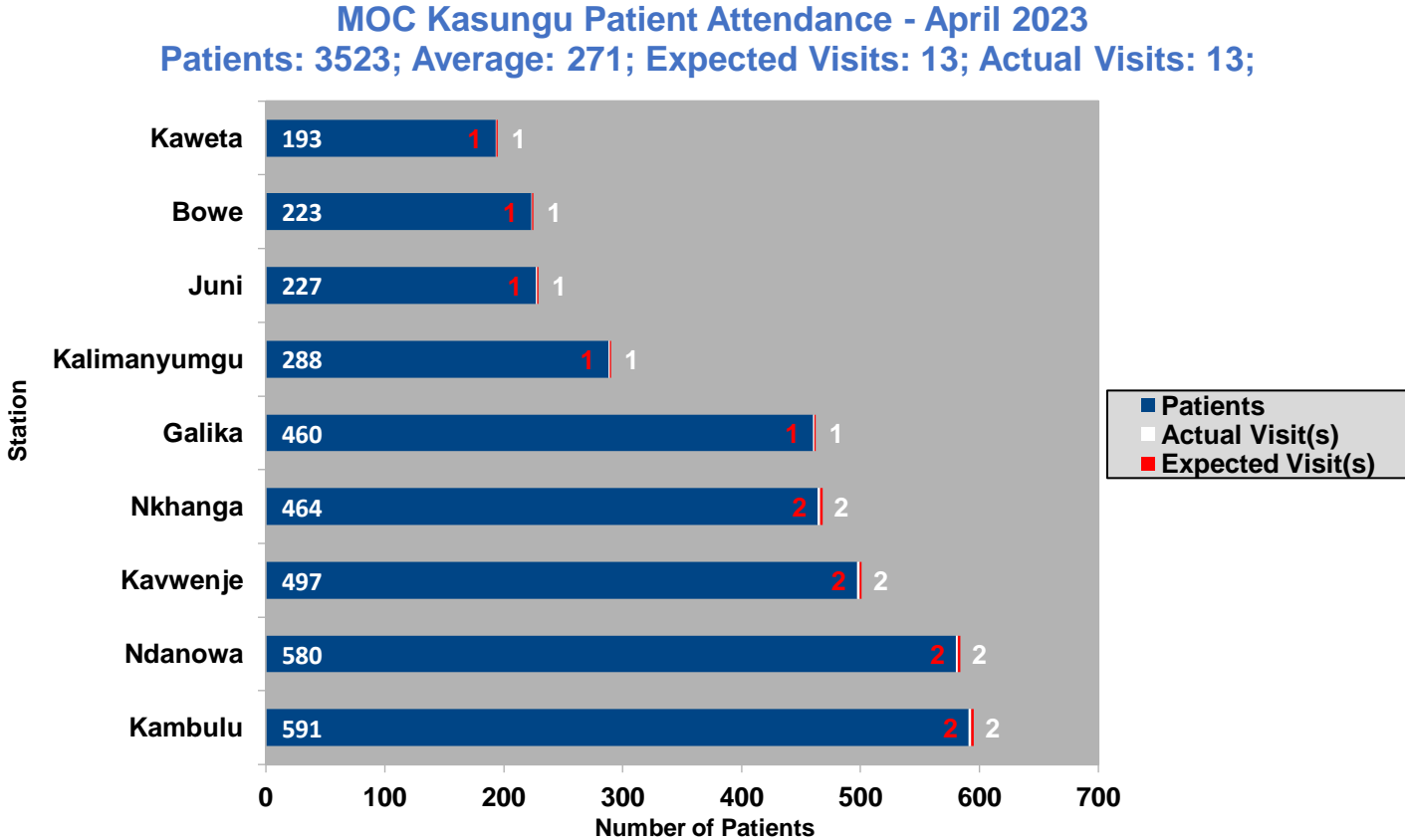
Figure 2 below shows the cumulative patient attendance for OCA healthcare program in 2023



**Figure 2: Dowa vs Kasungu (2023).**

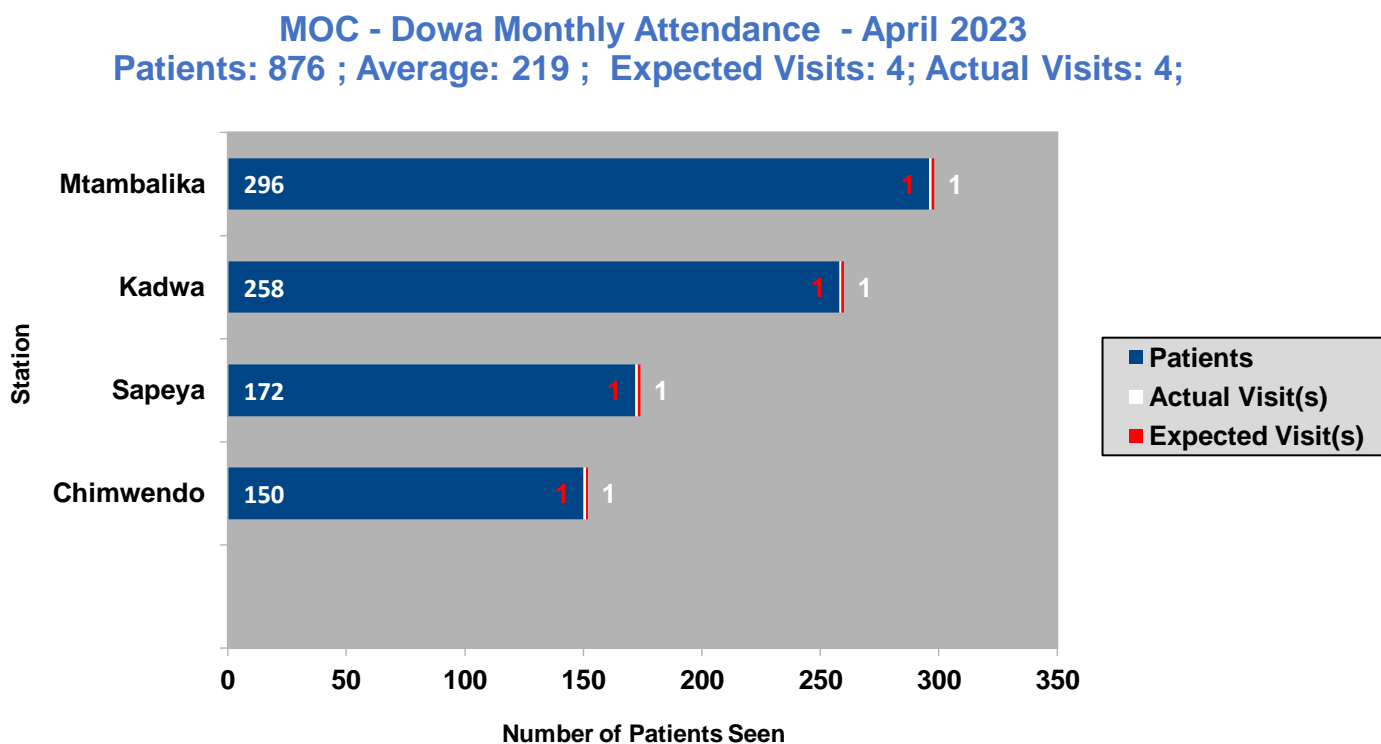
# OCA MOC Updates

Figure 3 below shows the Kasungu patient attendance for April 2023



**Figure 3: Kasungu Patient Attendance – April 2023.**

Figure 4 below shows the Dowa patient attendance for April 2023



**Figure 4: Dowa Patient Attendance – April 2023.**

### COVID -19 Situation Updates

The COVID-19 situation in the country remains low and in April 2023, **No** test was conducted. The Health Center continues to provide vaccines at the facility.

#### 4.1 Cumulative COVID-19 Data – KHC Static.

Table 2 below shows Cumulative COVID-19 Data.

	Staff(OCA/HSA)	Others	Total
<b>April Tests</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>April Positives</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>

**Table 2: COVID-19 Cumulative Data.**



#### 4.2 COVID 19 Vaccine (Pfizer) – KHC Static.

Table 3 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

<b>Dose</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Dose</b>	51	55	<b>106</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Dose</b>	129	185	<b>314</b>
<b>Booster</b>	64	66	<b>130</b>
<b>B/F</b>	295	268	<b>563</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>1113</b>

*Table 3: Pfizer Administered at KHC Static (2023)*

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

Table 4 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

<b>Vaccine Type</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson (J &amp; J)</b>	22	27	<b>49</b>
<b>B/F</b>	392	619	<b>1011</b>
<b>Booster</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>1060</b>

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

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

Table 5 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

<b>Dose</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Dose</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Dose</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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

#### 4.5 COVID 19 Vaccine Status – KHC Static.

Table 6 below shows Vaccine Status in April 2023

Vaccine Type	Beginning Balance	End Balance
Pfizer	300	0
J & J	445	0

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

### Reproductive and Family Planning Health

#### 5.1 Maternal and New-born Health Care

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Admissions	38	44	36	30	148
Referrals	13	8	14	15	50
New Babies	38	44	36	30	148
Alive Babies	38	44	35	29	146
Facility Deliveries	33	36	32	29	130

**Table 7: Maternity Data - 2023**

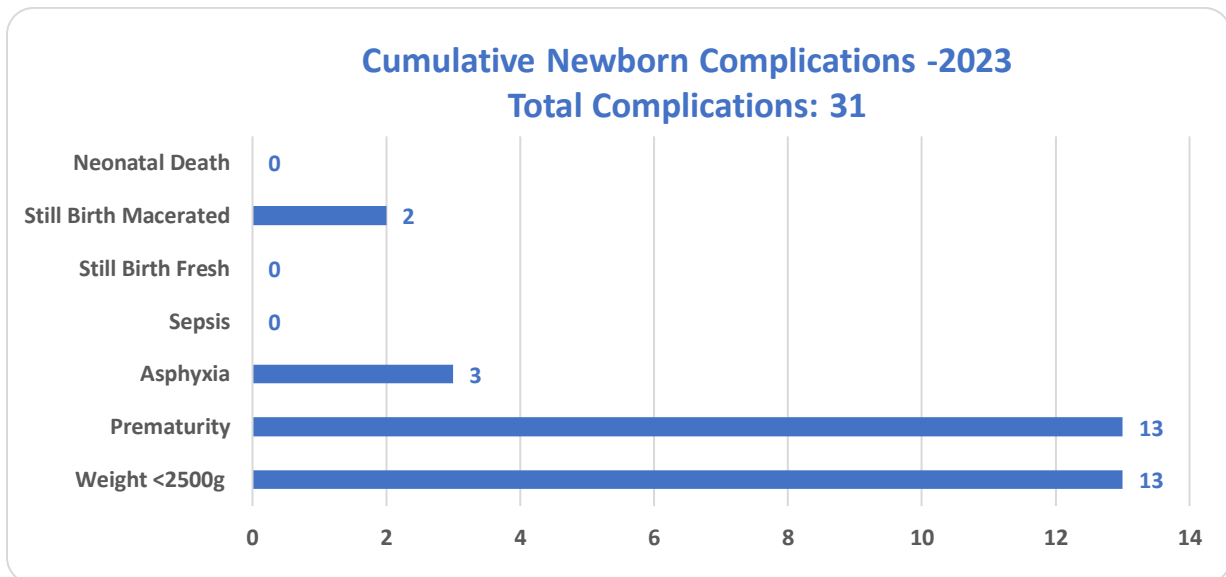
Table 9 below shows the Maternity Data of new babies with complications.

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total
Weight <2500g	2	1	7	3	13
Prematurity	4	7	1	1	13
Asphyxia	1	1	0	1	3
Sepsis	0	0	0	0	0
Still Birth Fresh	0	0	0	0	0

<b>Still Birth Macerated</b>	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Neonatal Death</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>31</b>

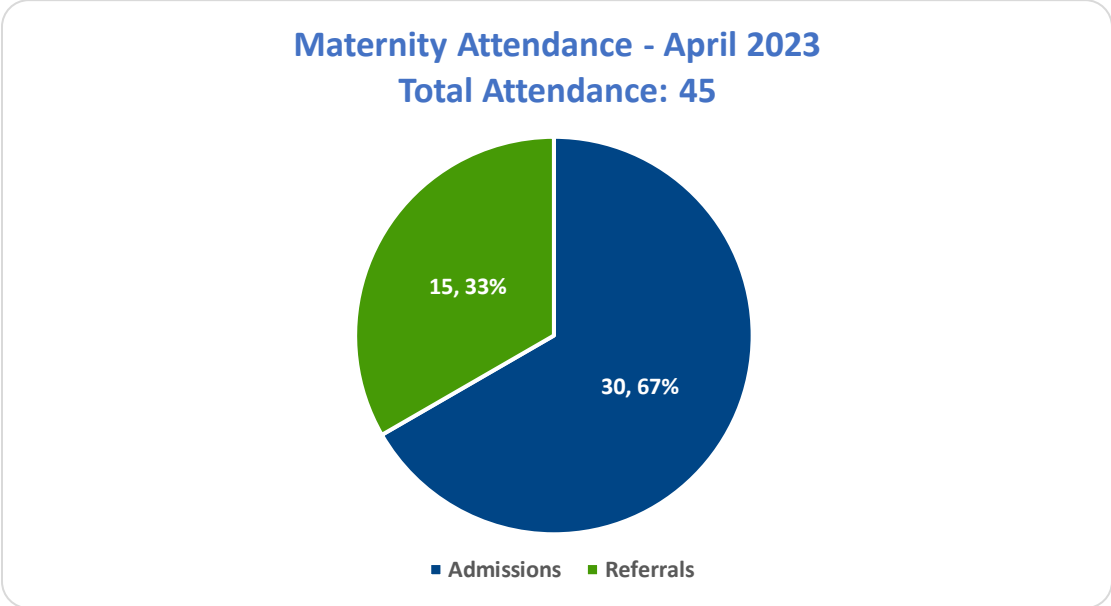
**Table 8: Newborns with complications – 2023**

Figure 5 below shows the total newborns complications for 2023.



**Figure 5: Newborns Complications – 2023**

Figure 6 below shows the total monthly Maternity attendance.



**Figure 6: Admissions and Referrals (April 2023)**

Table 9 below shows the reason for the referrals

<b>Referral Reason</b>	<b>Referred</b>
Foetal Distress	<b>4</b>
CPD	<b>1</b>
OPL	<b>4</b>
Young Prim	<b>3</b>
Premature Labour	<b>3</b>

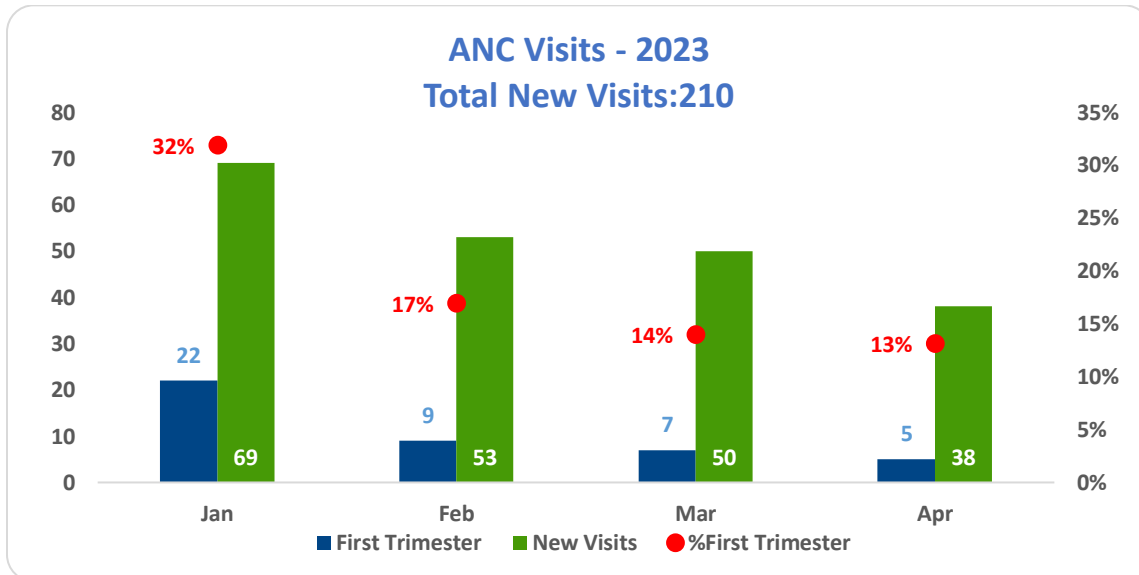
**Table 9: Referral Reasons - April 2023**

Table 10 below shows ANC attendance.

Month	New ANC Visit	First Trimester
January	69	22
February	53	9
March	50	7
April	38	5

**Table 10: ANC Attendance – 2023**

Figure 7 below shows 2023 Monthly ANC Visits.



**Figure 7: Monthly ANC Visits - 2023.**

## Cervical Cancer Control Clinic Report

Table 11 below shows the 2023 Monthly Cervical Cancer Screening.

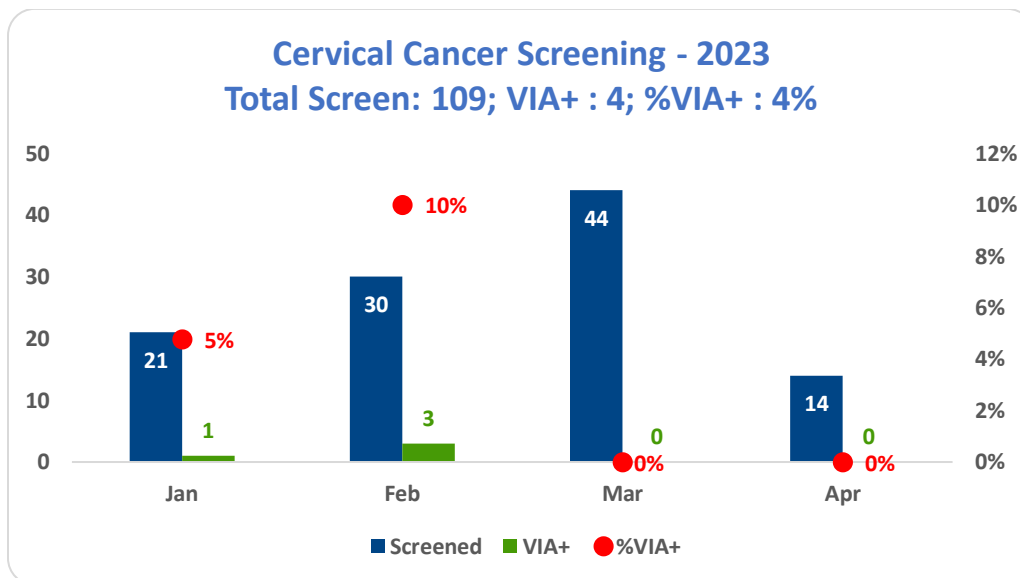
Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>Total</b>	21	30	44	14

<b>VIA Positive</b>	1	3	0	0
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**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 8 below shows 2023 Cervical Cancer Screenings.



**Figure 8: Cervical Cancer Screening - 2023.**

### Eye Clinic

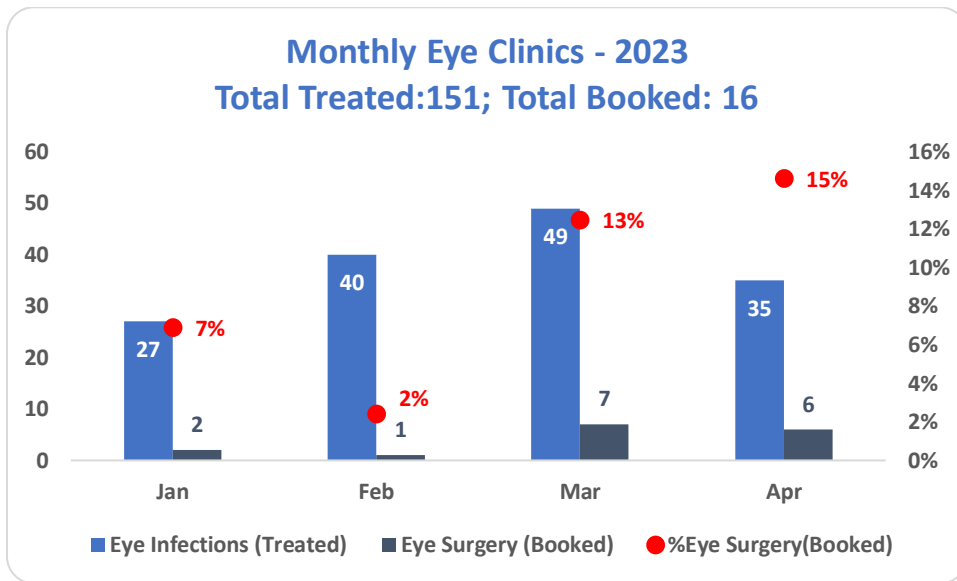
The outsource eye specialist continues to provide service in Kasese Health Center and operation is done at Kasungu District Hospital.

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

Month (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>Eye Infections (Treated)</b>	27	40	49	35
<b>Eye Surgery (Booked)</b>	2	1	7	6
<b>Total Seen</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>41</b>

**Table 12: Monthly Eye Clinic Table - 2023.**

Figure 9 below shows the 2023 Monthly Eye Clinics.



**Figure 9 Monthly Eye Clinics - 2023.**

### Malaria Report

Table 13 below shows Malaria tests for April 2023 (Dowa and Kasungu)

	Total Tested	Positives	Negatives	Positivity Rate
<b>Under 5</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>5 Years and Over</b>	<b>1879</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>1102</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2740</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>1744</b>	<b>36%</b>

**Table 13: Total Malaria Tests (April 2023).**

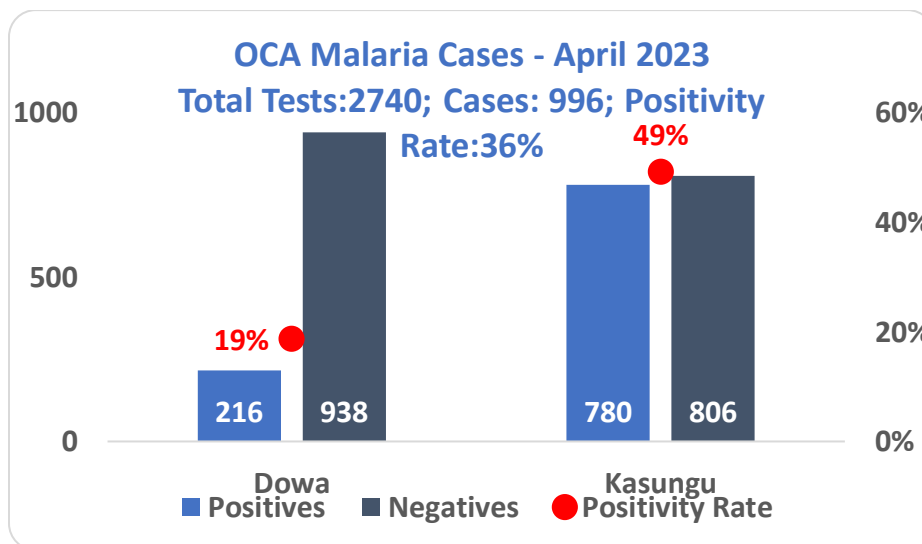
Table 14 below shows the total Malaria Cases (MRDT's Positive), LA Issued and Dispensed (OCA Clinics)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
<b>Suspected Malaria Cases</b>	1854	1498	2209	2740
<b>Suspected Cases Tested MRDT</b>	1854	1498	2209	2740
<b>Confirmed Malaria Cases</b>	508	354	635	996
<b>New Malaria Cases Registered</b>	508	361	651	996
<b>LA Dispensed</b>	503	361	651	995
<b>LA Issued</b>	120	600	940	1020

**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.

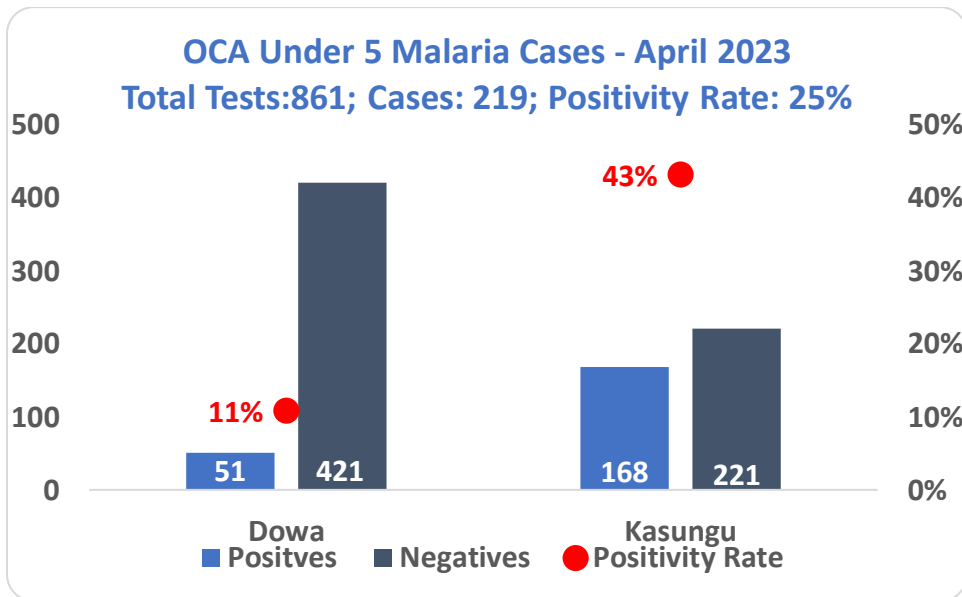
Figure 10 shows the total OCA Clinics Malaria tests (April 2023)



**Figure 10: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (April 2023).**

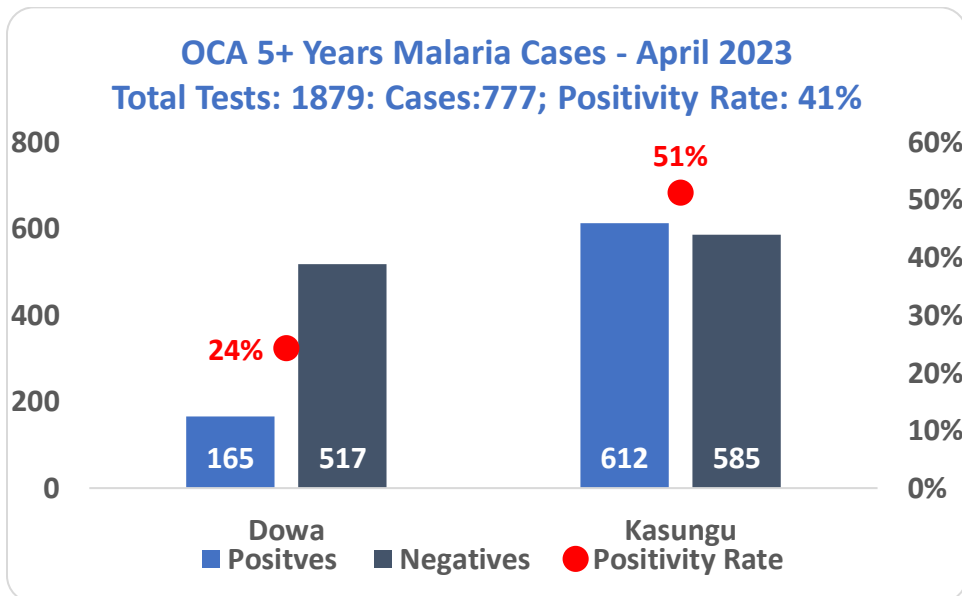


Figure 11 shows the total OCA Clinics Under 5 Years of Malaria tests



**Figure 11: OCA Clinics, Under 5 Years Malaria tests (April 2023).**

Figure 12 shows the total OCA Clinics 5 Years and Over Malaria tests



**Figure 12: OCA Clinics, 5+ Malaria tests (April 2023).**

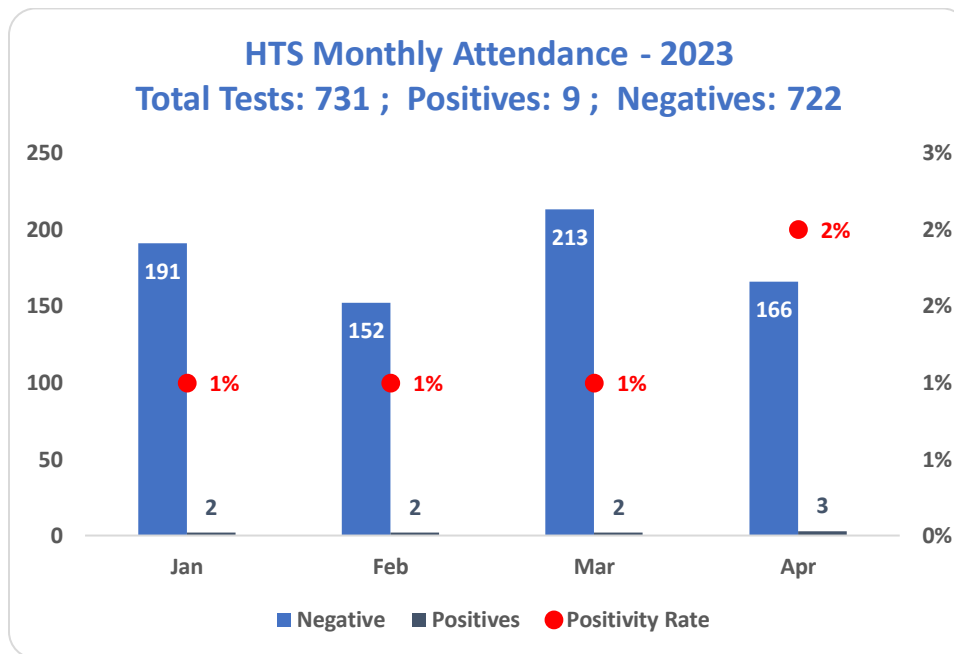
## HIV Testing Services (HTS)

Months	Total Tested	Positives	Positivity Rate
January	193	2	1%
February	154	2	1%
March	215	2	1%
April	169	3	2%

**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 13 below shows HTS' Monthly Attendance



**Figure 13: HTS Monthly Tests - 2023**

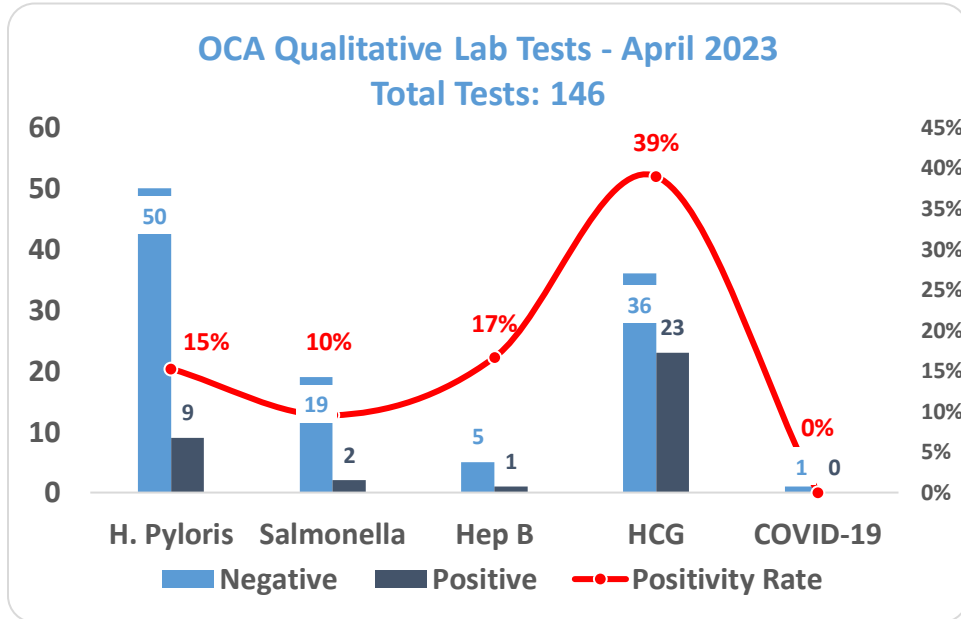
## Laboratory Services

Table 16 below shows qualitative Laboratory tests conducted in 2023.

	H. Pyloris		Salmonella		Hep B		HCG		COVID 19	
	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos	Total	Pos
<b>Apr</b>	59	9	21	2	6	1	59	23	0	0

**Table 16: Qualitative Lab Tests Data Table for OCA Clinics - 2023.**

Figure 14 below shows qualitative lab tests – April 2023



**Figure 14: Qualitative Lab Tests – 2023.**

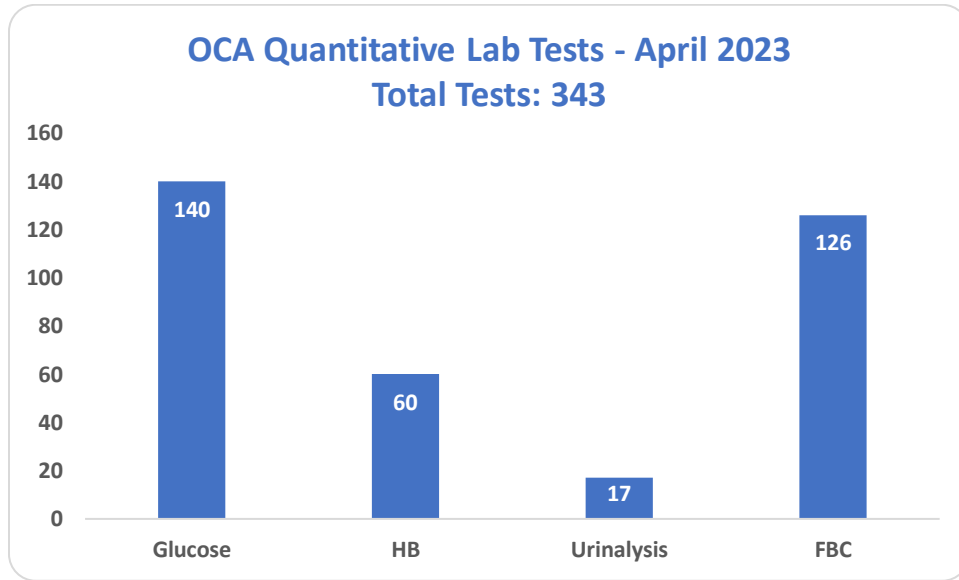
Table 17 below shows OCA clinics quantitative Laboratory tests conducted in 2023.

	Glucose	HB	Urinalysis	FBC
<b>Jan</b>	172	192	23	95
<b>Feb</b>	100	137	33	133
<b>Mar</b>	118	110	16	191
<b>Apr</b>	140	60	17	126

<b>Total</b>	530	499	89	545
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**Table 17: Quantitative Lab Tests Data Table for OCA Clinics.**

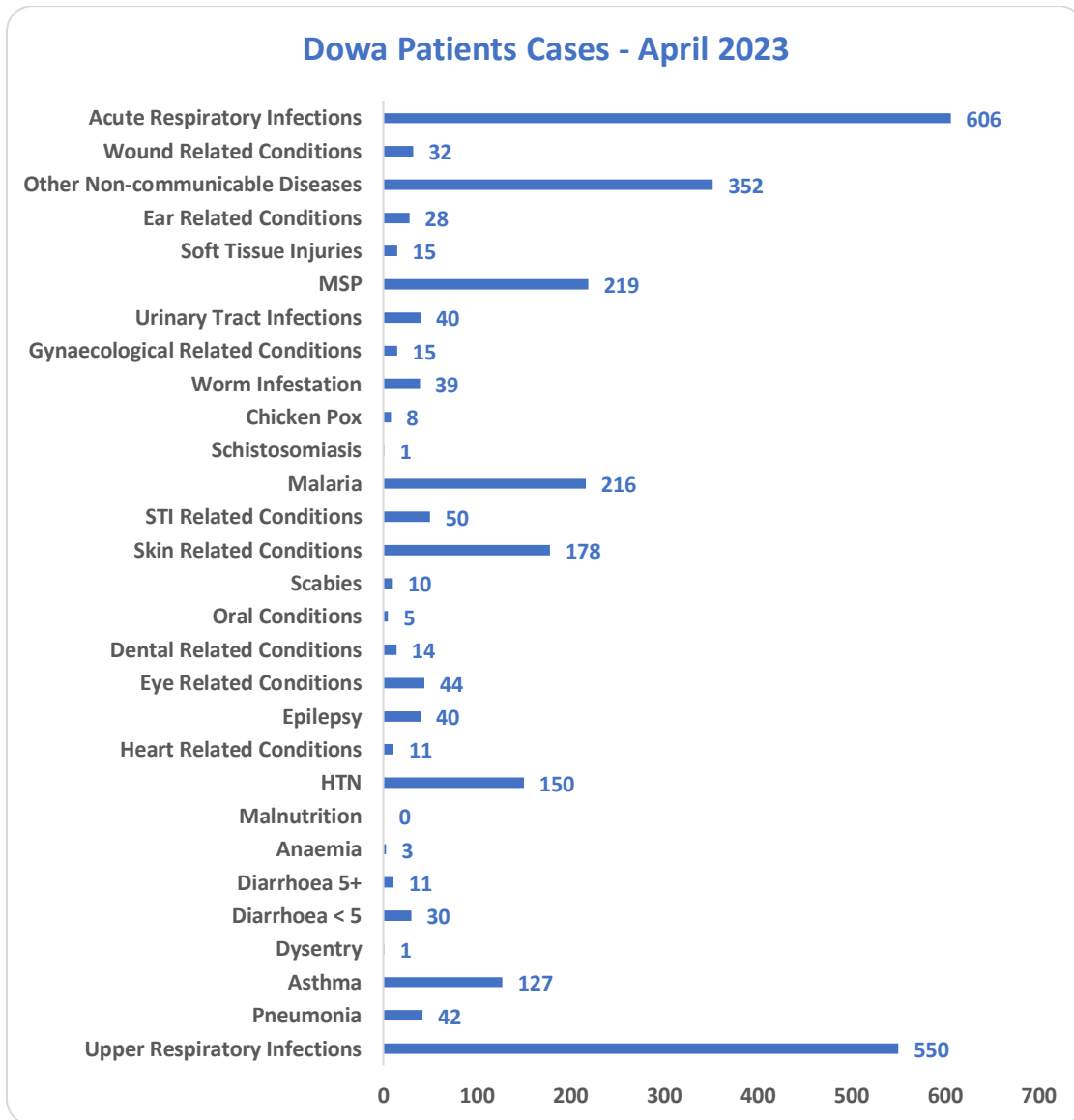
Figure 15 shows quantitative lab tests for the year 2023



**Figure 15: Quantitative Lab Tests – 2023.**

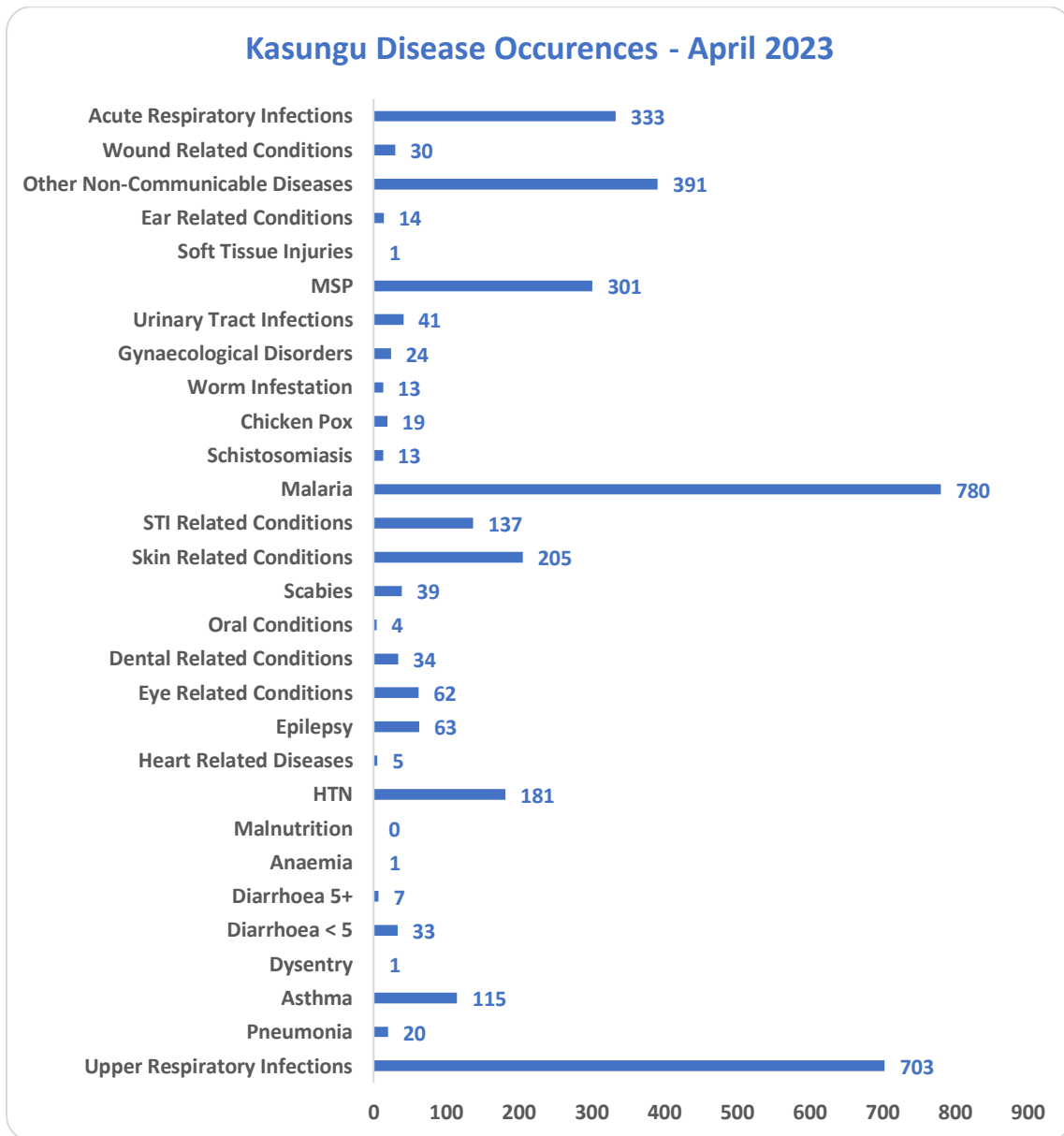
## Disease Group Trends

Figure 16 below shows Dowa disease occurrences for April 2023



**Figure 16 : Dowa Disease Occurrences (April 2023).**

Figure 17 below shows Kasungu disease occurrences for April 2023.



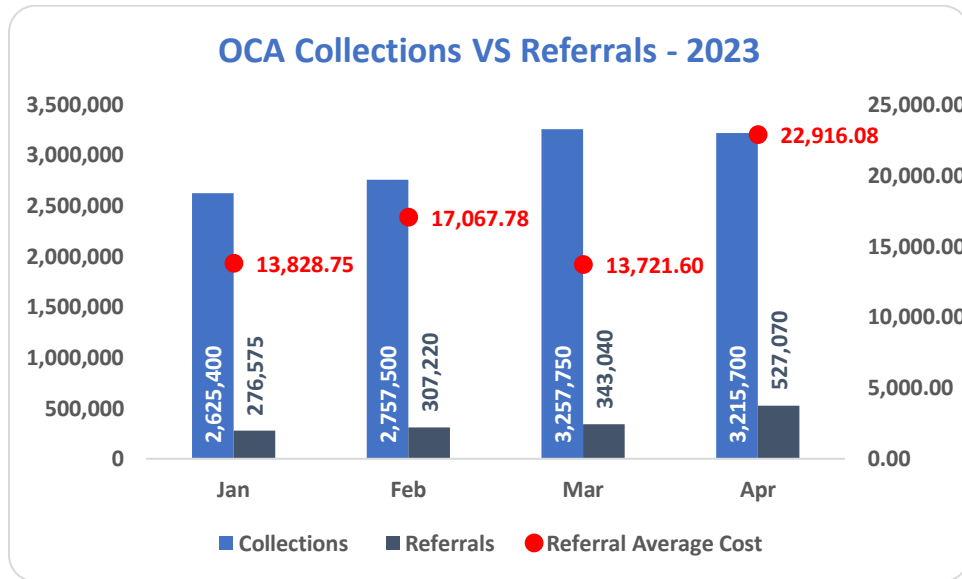
**Figure 17 : Kasungu Disease Occurrences (April 2023).**

## Healthcare Finance and Administration

Table 18 shows the clinic finance table for 2023.

2023	Collection	Referrals	Referral Cost	Average
			Cost	
<b>January</b>	<b>MK 2,625,400</b>	<b>MK 276,575</b>	<b>MK 13,828.75</b>	
<b>February</b>	<b>MK 2,757,500</b>	<b>MK 307,220</b>	<b>MK 17,067.78</b>	
<b>March</b>	<b>MK 3,257,750</b>	<b>MK 343,040</b>	<b>MK 13,721.60</b>	
<b>April</b>	<b>MK 3,215,700</b>	<b>MK 527,070</b>	<b>MK 22,916.08</b>	

**Table 18: Clinic Finances – 2023.**



**Figure 18: OCA Collections VS Referrals - 2023.**

## Achievements and Challenges

### 1. Success Highlights

- Malaria prevalence in Dowa and specifically in Kasese Catchments areas continues to be a low positivity rate of less than **20%** while in Kasungu district areas where the Mobile Outreach team operates remains around **50%**.
- The Health Centre received the staff from Invest in Knowledge organization (IKI), a research firm working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) who come to conduct a pilot study about vaccine management practices and temperature monitoring at Kasese Health Centre. The study aims to improve vaccine cold chain management and better understand vaccine discards and how it relates to vaccine storage temperature and management practices. They promise to share the finding of the study once it's done
- The Health Centre also received feedback from the Quality Improvement team from the Ministry of Health (MOH) who conducted a baseline assessment earlier at the Health Centre. Overall, the health Centre received a One Star after scoring **38%**, the assessment will be done every year and the stars scoring range from one to five stars using the KHEISER scoring system.
- Patient attendance was high compared to previous months, a total of **6433** patients were attended to both mobile outreach and the Static clinic.
- The outreach team conducted all **17** scheduled visits.

### Challenge Highlights

- The static clinic experienced a logistic assistance challenge during the vaccination campaign. The organizers of the campaign did not provide resources on time. Orant Charities Africa staff; Nurses, and Clinicians had difficulties in terms of transport to reach the designated villages. It was also difficult to organize for locum personnel to work at the clinic.
- The MOC team had a trailer breakdown.
- Recruitment of Pharmacy personnel for of the MOC delayed and this caused shortage of staff
- Shortage of some medications due to the high number of patients attended to.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: MOC April 2023 Schedule



### APRIL 2023 OUTREACH CLINIC SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	STATION	DISTRICT	ACTIVITY	TIME
1	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
2	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
3	Monday	Nkhanga	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am – 3:00 pm
4	Tuesday	Kavwenje	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am – 3:00 pm
5	Wednesday	Kantophole	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00pm
6	Thursday	Bowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am – 3:00 pm
7	Friday	Good Friday		Good Friday	Good Friday
8	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
9	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
10	Monday	Easter Monday		Easter Monday	
11	Tuesday	Kambulu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
12	Wednesday	Lisito	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
13	Thursday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
14	Friday	Kadwa	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00 am - 4:00 pm
15	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
16	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
17	Monday	Galika	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
18	Tuesday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm

19	Wednesday	Ndanowa	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
20	Thursday	Kalimanyungu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
21	Friday	Sapeya	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00 am - 4:00 pm
22	Saturday	Eid al-Fitr	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
23	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
24	Monday	Eid al-Fitr Off		Eid al-Fitr Off	
25	Tuesday	Chisuwe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
26	Wednesday	Miyowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00 am - 3:00 pm
27	Thursday	Chimwendo	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00 am - 4:00 pm
28	Friday	Mtambalika		Outreach clinic	08:00 am - 4:00 pm
29	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
30	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend

# Water and Sanitation Program



## **Introduction**

Four months into 2023, the WASH program is happy with the progress made in the promotion of sustainable access to WASH services in Kasese catchment. This report provides an outline of key achievements of the WASH program in April 2023. Furthermore, this report provides a cumulative update of some of the routine activities in 2023 so far. Apart from the routine activities, the focus of the WASH program in April was to strengthen stakeholder partnerships thereby establishing a base on which other major activities such as borehole drilling and training of sanitation entrepreneurs can build upon in the coming months.

## **Summary of Monthly Achievements**

In April the following milestones were achieved;

- Supported 20 water point repairs (Service/preventive: 13; repairs: 6; Rehabilitated: 1)
- Conducted refresher water point committee training for Chikwangula WPC
- Conducted a school WASH review Meeting with teachers
- Village Development Committee (VDC) sensitization campaigns for Joseni, Bweya, Nambela 1, and Nambela 2
- Distributed school sanitation materials at Nambola primary school

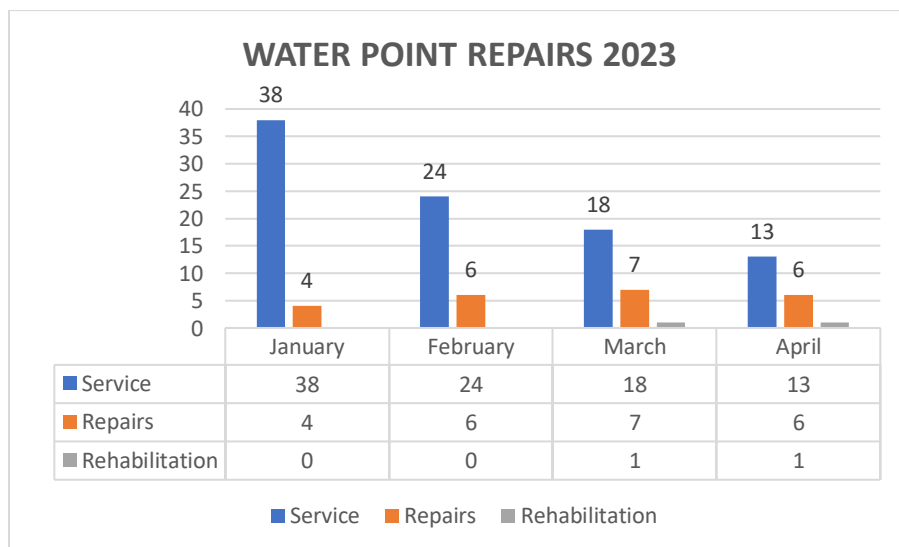
The WASH program carried out the following key activities in April 2023;

## Water point repairs and rehabilitations



*Left – Fulatila borehole with damaged apron before OCA intervention, Right - Borehole rehabilitation in progress in Fulatila village*

Statistics in the sub-Saharan region indicate that 1 in 4 hand pumps are non-functional at a given time. Sustainable Operation and Maintenance (O & M) of hand pumps is key in dealing with this persistent challenge. Water point repairs are a key component of O&M which has the potential to improve the sustainability of rural water supply services. The OCA WASH program in collaboration with Area Mechanics conducts water point repairs for all boreholes/hand pumps within the Kasese catchment. In April, the WASH program repaired a total of **20** water points (Service/preventive: **13**; Repairs: **6**, Rehabilitation: **1**). So far in 2023 the WASH program has conducted **23** main repairs and 2 rehabilitations. Similarly, **93** preventive maintenances out of the annual targeted 300 have been conducted.



## **Refresher Water Point Committee (WPC) training**

To ensure that communities have up-to-date skills in the management of their water points, the WASH program conducts refresher trainings for water point committees. Contrary to the full water point committee training, the refresher training targets committees that were already trained and have been identified as lacking some necessary skills in the management of their water points due passage of time or other unforeseen circumstances. In April, the WASH program conducted a refresher training for Chikwangula WPC. Chikwangula borehole was drilled in the 1980s and members of the initial committee are no longer in service. Despite this, the water point is fully functioning following a number of rehabilitations over the years. So far in 2023, the WASH program has trained 5 WPCs (3 WPCs from 2022 and 2 refresher training).



*Practical session during refresher training for Chikwangula WPC*

## **School WASH Review Meeting**



*Left – classroom session during school WASH review meeting, Right- A group photo of participants during the School WASH review meeting*

Schools are among the key strategic entry points for the OCA WASH program in the promotion of sanitation in the Kasese catchment. It is a common belief that good practices and behaviour learned in schools can be easily practised and adopted in homes. It is in line with this belief that OCA promotes sanitation in schools. Furthermore, the promotion of sanitation creates a good learning environment for school-going children hence promoting access to quality education.

During the month, the WASH program organized a 1-day review meeting for school WASH stakeholders at Katalima Teachers' Development Centre (TDC). The meeting aimed to review the progress of WASH interventions in the past year and strategize new interventions for 2023. Head teachers and School Health and Nutrition (SHN) teachers from 12 schools around Kasese attended the meeting. Also in attendance during the meeting were representatives from the Dowa district water office and SHN Coordinator from the Dowa district education Office.

Following the meeting, stakeholders expressed their gratitude for the interventions the WASH program is implementing in the schools. Despite the success in other areas, stakeholders pinpointed poor access to sanitary pads as among the challenges among adolescent girls in primary schools around Kasese.

### **Village Development Committees (VDCs) Sensitization Campaigns**



*Left - A section of participants during the VDC meeting for Nambela 1 & 2, Right – Participants during the VDC meeting for Bweya & Joseni*

Community participation is key in ensuring the sustainability of community development initiatives as it creates a sense of ownership. To promote sustainable development, the WASH program always engages key stakeholders in the implementation of its initiatives. One of the key stakeholders in the WASH program is the VDC. VDC is a representative body from a group of villages responsible for identifying needs and facilitating planning and development in local communities.

The VDC is responsible for allocation, strategizing, and monitoring development activities in a group of villages. During the month, the WASH program embarked on a journey to meet 10 VDCs from around Kasese to mobilize them towards a new sanitation project. The new sanitation project aims to train local entrepreneurs in pit latrine slab making and construction of Corbelled latrines. During the month WASH program managed to sensitize 4 VDCs from Bweya, Joseni, Nambela 1, and Nambela 2.

### **Distribution of sanitation materials (Continuation)**

Since March, the WASH program started the distribution of sanitation materials in schools to promote sanitation. During the month the WASH program delivered sanitation materials to Nambola primary school. So far under this initiative 5 out of the targeted 14 schools from around the Kasese catchment have received sanitation materials. Schools that have already received sanitation materials include; Katalima, Chiwira, Chinguwi, and Nambola. Each school has been provided with three 50L buckets with handwashing taps, three 20L buckets, 6 mops, 6 squeezers, and 6 brushes.

### **Challenges**

- Transport was among the major challenges during the month due to a vehicle break down. This had an impact on the scheduling of activities during the month.

### **Conclusion**

Significant progress has been made in program implementation by the WASH program so far in 2023. The WASH program is optimistic for smooth program implementation in the second quarter of 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;



The activities conducted during the reporting month have been explained below;

### Training in Agroforestry

The Agriculture department attended 6 days of training at Mitongwe woodland farm in Ntcheu district in agroforestry and agroecology. The training was organized by Stand as One Ministry with the aim of training and supporting field extension workers and NGO trainers in the agriculture sector. The training focused on promoting organic farming whereby the use of Manure, nitrogen fixer plants, pest repellent plants, and soil cover plants was encouraged to be practiced in the farms. As soils have been highly degraded in communities, practicing agroforestry systems is more important with the aim of rebuilding nature. The lessons learnt in the Agro-forestry will be propagated to the smallholder farmers within the OCA catchment, OCA farm and campus.





*Practicing Agroforestry and agroecology systems*

### **Manure production**

Organic farming is becoming more practical among smallholder farmers as synthetic fertilizers are becoming more expensive in the country. During last year's dry season, OCA trained smallholder farmers on Mbeya manure making and encouraged them to practice manure-making in their homes. Several farmers practiced the use of Manure in their farms during the last growing season. The results have been positive which have encouraged farmers to do more manure farming in the coming farming season. Data was collected on one of the farmers who cultivated a 10 x 10m Maize plot using Mbeya manure on his farm at Buza village. The farmer used Mbeya manure only to cultivate this plot and was able to harvest 3 Maize bags of 50kgs (150kgs) from this plot. This has been a great achievement for this farmer as he has been struggling with his farming for several years. Currently, farmers are looking for more training in different types of manure-making so that they can be able to make more manure and farm big land with the use of manure only.



*Maize crop cultivated using Mbeya Manure*

### **Irrigation farming**

As the rainfall season ended, irrigation farming has resumed promoting continuous food and income supply among smallholder farmers. Currently, all the irrigation clubs which OCA worked with in last year's irrigation farming are interested to work with OCA this year. Several clubs have already resumed their work which includes Chigona, Tchale, Madula, Madzimayela, Ndalusa, Kasangadzi, and Mantchedza irrigation clubs. These clubs are producing different crops such as Maize, vegetables, Tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and beans. The club members were also encouraged to practice crop rotation and polyculture. Madzimayela is producing tomatoes and Beans where crop rotation has been done and polyculture has been practiced. This farming system promotes the invention of the agroecology farming system.



*Transplanting of tomato seedlings in progress*

## Harvesting of crops

OCA and Mwayiwathu farm club cultivated Maize, Soya, and groundnuts where harvesting is in progress for all these crops. The growing season has had enough rain for the production of these crops compared to last year's growing season. Despite good rains for the crops, Soya beans were affected with the fungal disease at the late stage of flowering which has affected the yield of Soya. The disease was discovered but at a late stage hence application of pesticides was not much effective hence low yield. There has been another challenge in Maize production where theft of Maize brought down the crop yield. The harvesting is in progress and is expected to be complete by the end of the month of June. There are good expectations for the yields from the crops cultivated despite theft and diseases.



*Harvesting on OCA farm in progress*

## Postharvest handling of crops

Other losses in farming are mostly encountered during the harvesting period hence Mwayiwathu farm club was trained on how to manage such losses. Postharvest handling of crops is aimed at maintaining the quality, nutritional value, and marketability of the harvested crops. Farmers were encouraged to harvest the crops when they are fully matured and dry to overcome challenges of mold growth hence maintaining the quality of the crop. Sorting and grading of produce were encouraged to be done as it ensures consistent quality and marketability. By following the postharvest handling process, the farmers will be able to sell their crops at good markets, and crops will maintain their quality for a long period.

# **Business and Financial Empowerment Microloans (FEM)**

## **Introduction**

FEM program strive to improve livelihoods of people in the Kasese catchment area through provision of microloans to women entrepreneurs. These loans are meant to boost the businesses' capital for existing businesses and a business investment opportunities for start-ups. Aside from the microloan seed capital, the women are given business support through capacity building classes and monitoring. The program was first piloted in 2018 and as it stands, we have three active FEM groups; two around Kasese trading centre and one in Kachigamba market. Below is a narrative of some of the activities implemented in the reporting month.

## **Monitoring of businesses and loan recovery**

In April, Women entrepreneurs were monitored on their various business posts to assess the business progress and give them support in areas that are lacking. Although it was a bit hard for the women to remain on their business posts as it is a harvesting period, some would still strive to make it to their businesses. Aside from the economic hardships, we have seen businesses picking as businesses have started blooming again giving us hope that loans will be repaid by the agreed date.

Part of the monitoring visits was also to follow up on loan repayment as the women were still lagging behind on their loan repayments. As of April end, we had collected a sum of MWK 996,300 towards loan repayment for all the three. Through the visits, we realised that many of the women had banked their hopes on selling of agricultural produce as a way out for finishing the loan repayments and again income for the families.



Tamele (left) selling Msima and Chikondi an apprentice for stella who runs saloon business

## **Registration of businesses**

As a way of making sure that the businesses are fully recognised by the government, OCA facilitates the registration of businesses for the women entrepreneurs. In the reporting month, five businesses were selected to be registered with the registrar general of the Malawi government. With the system change for business registration, the women are required to first have a tax identification number (TIN) which is issued by Malawi Revenue Authority. In the reporting month, we managed to facilitate applications for TIN for the five members whom we are planning to register their businesses. The following women had their businesses registered: Dorothy Jelawo, Stella Kalimbakatha, Patricia Banda, Malita Banda and Rebecca Yohane.

## **Knitting Project**

In the month, we had received donations of yarn and other knitting/ crocheting materials from the United States of America. One of the donors championing the Knitting Project is Jo Ann Graham. The yarn was later distributed to the women entrepreneurs so that they could knit/ crochet baby hats. This has boosted the women's knitting/ crocheting project as many baby hats and boots have been made. As of now, 50 baby hats have been produced and the women hope to sell them and reinvest the proceeds in another business which will seem viable with the timing.



### **Weekly village savings and loan group meetings**

The village savings and loan groups had a series of meetings lined up to make deposits and share business ideas and experiences. Being their first experience being in a VS&L group, Takondwa members are still finding it hard to commit to the group and make investments. This has been manifested in the savings they are making. In the month of April, the whole Takondwa group managed to raise and save MKW 60,600, Whereas Tikondane saved MKW 285,300 and Tiyanjane saved MKW 186,000.



### **Conclusion**

Despite businesses continuing to experience adverse effects of the inflation, the women entrepreneurs are tirelessly working hard in ensuring that their businesses are still standing and at the same time being able to contribute towards their loan settlement. Although the repayment instalments are not in full, there is progress as there is a downward movement in the loans still owing. As we are approaching the sales season for agricultural produce, we believe businesses will improve for the better.

# Education Support Program



## Introduction

OCA education sponsorship is provided to students who cannot support their education independently due to financial challenges. With the help of OCA donors, students can get access to Primary, Secondary, and even University level education. In order to be a sponsored student, OCA follows some basic eligibility criteria which includes those belonging to a low income or very poor family and also having a great interest for studies. The following were the activities which were conducted by OCA education program in the month of April, 2023.

## School Visits

In the month of April, 2023, the OCA education program visited students from Dowa secondary school, St. Peters secondary school and St. Peters primary school. The aim of the visit was for monitoring the progress of students, mentorship and for the provision of school supplies. Through these mentorship sessions, the students are able to develop certain problem-solving skills which to an extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives. The students are advised to cope with different situations they tend to face in their school life. For example, how they should talk politely or relate with their peers. This advice will give them perspective on how they should behave in certain scenarios.

It was an inspiration visit and the students were greatly inspired from what was shared with them. Their school reports were checked and they were asked to share their views, challenges, and how they are faring in school. The students were impressed and very thankful for spending some time with the OCA personnel to encourage them.

Apart from encouragement and mentoring the students, Dowa secondary school students were also supported with school Uniforms. These were for students who are supported by OCA under Geoshack sponsorship. School uniform plays a key role in promoting self-confidence, and a feeling of belonging within the student body. It contributes to the students' wellbeing, removing the additional pressures of deciding what to wear and added stress of meeting the expectations of their peers.



[Students from Dowa secondary school carrying their School Uniforms given by OCA](#)

In the same reporting period, students from St. Peters primary (standard 8) and secondary school (form 2) were also visited. These students were visited for encouragement since they are writing the National exams in the coming month (May). The students were encouraged to study extra hard and prepare well for the exams so that they should pass with good grades. OCA education program believes that a few words of encouragement offered to the students makes a huge difference to a student's morale. It tells them that they are on the right path and should continue putting in more effort to maintain consistency in their performance.





A Student from St. Peters sec. school (left) and St. Peters primary school (right)

## **Student and Donor correspondence**

In April, 2023, one student from Tchawale Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) found an individual donor to be supporting her. Before having a donor, she was being supported by OCA in general. This student communicated with her donor through letter writing. The donor from USA wrote a letter to the student through the education program personnel and the student responded back. Students are encouraged to communicate with their sponsors frequently because hearing from sponsors is very meaningful to them; it boosts their self-esteem and builds a life- changing relationship. And for the sponsors, communication is an important aspect of their sponsorship.

## **Conclusion**

The basic goal of the OCA education program is to support a child in order to break the cycle of poverty, and help them to be self-dependent individuals throughout their life. OCA ensures that students are not only getting benefits of education but all-around development from activities such as mentorship, counselling and monitoring performance.