

ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY REPORT



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Healthcare Program

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 include: malaria, respiratory disease like pneumonia and bronchitis. However, non-communicable diseases are on the rise for example diabetes and hypertension.

For September 2023, Kasese Health Center (KHC) saw **2034** clients at (OPD). Only **33** patients were seen during weekends and nights. The total number of patients seen in September is **2067** (KHC OPD). MOC in Kasese catchments areas saw **575**. Kasungu (Bowe) Outreach clinic saw **2256** clients. MOC's total number of patients seen is **2831**. The total number of patients seen in September 2023 is **4898** (Dowa: **2642 (53.9%)** & Kasungu **2256 (46.1%)**).

The Laboratory department tested **1859** for Malaria, out of which **418** were positive, representing a **23%** positivity rate. In Dowa, **717** patients were tested and **101(14%)** were positive cases; in Kasungu, **1142** patients were tested and **317(28%)** were positive.

The Maternity department admitted **33** mothers and referred **12**. A total of **33** babies were born at the facility. Out of **33** babies, **6** had complications (**3** Weight < 2.5 Kgs Prematurity: **3**). The total Maternity attendance was **45 (33 admissions and 12 referrals)**.

The HTS department tested **267** clients, of which **6** were positive, representing **2.2%**.

The total number of patients seen at the eye clinic by an outsourced clinician is **36** and **4** were booked for surgery.

The MOC team managed to conduct all **20** scheduled visits in the month representing **100%**

Monthly Patients Attendance

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

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
OPD Static	1755	1680	2385	1978	2301	2584	2040	2003	2034	18760
Bowe MOC	2481	3188	3005	3523	4373	4218	2931	2650	2256	28625
Kasese MOC	667	489	803	876	723	864	743	630	575	6370
Nights/Holidays	44	46	40	56	58	64	93	49	33	483
Total	4947	5403	6233	6433	7455	7730	5807	5332	4898	54238

Table 1: Monthly OPD And Outreach Clinic Attendance

Figure 1 below shows the total OCA patient attendance in 2023

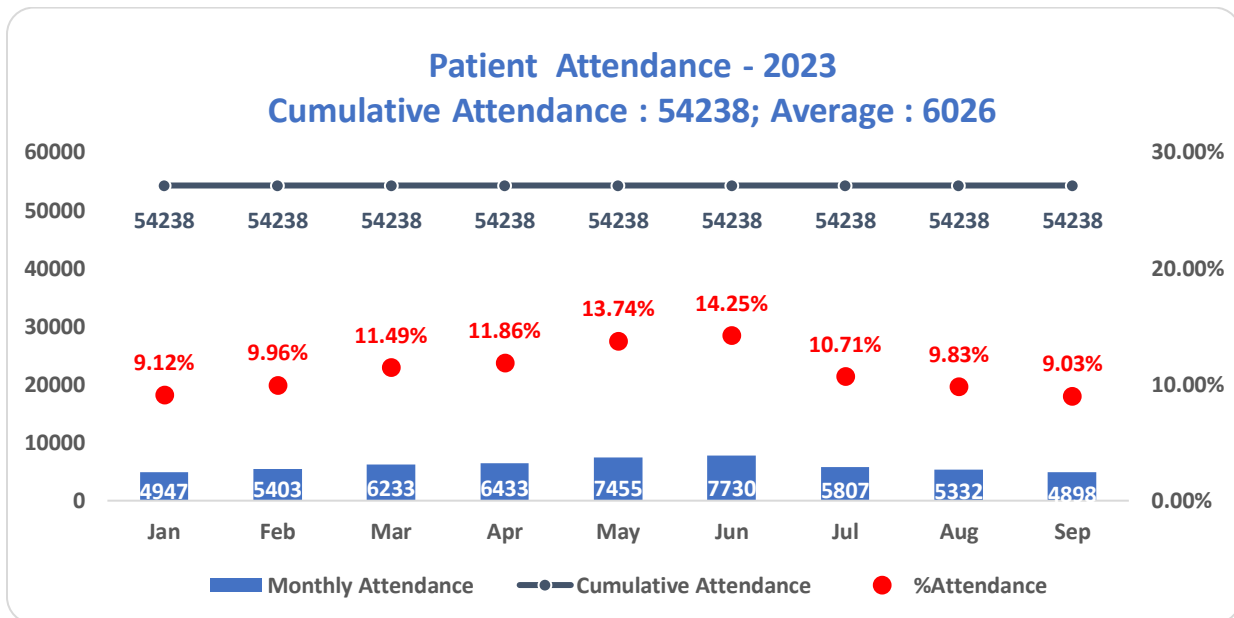


Figure 1: OCA Patient Attendance – 2023.

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

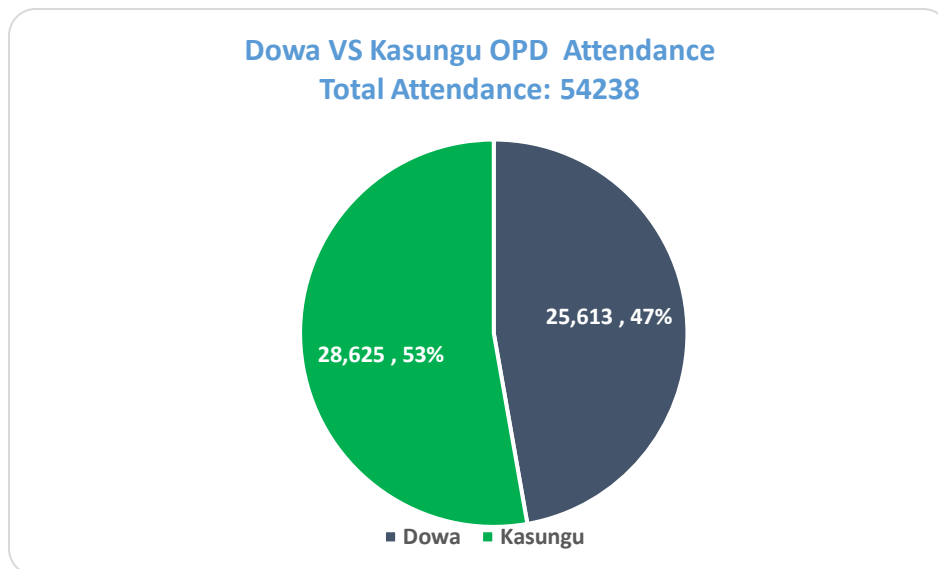


Figure 2: Dowa vs Kasungu (2023).

OCA MOC Updates

Figure 3 below shows the Kasungu patient attendance for September 2023

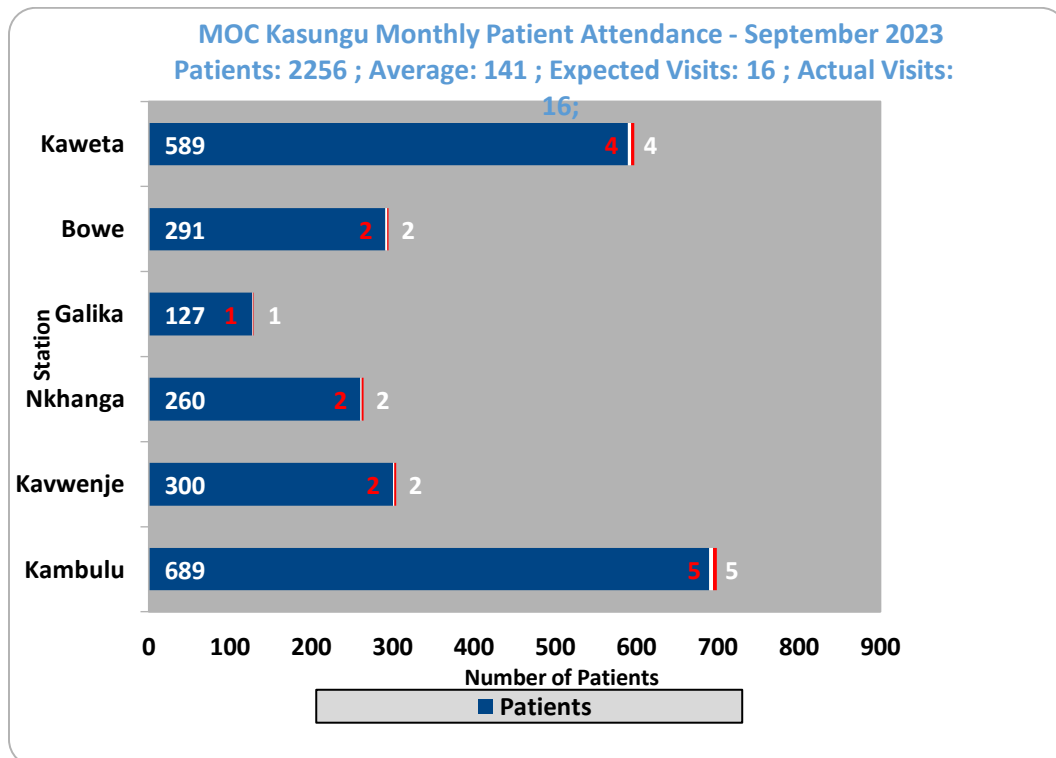


Figure 3: Kasungu Patient Attendance – September 2023.

Figure 4 below shows the Dowa patient attendance for September 2023

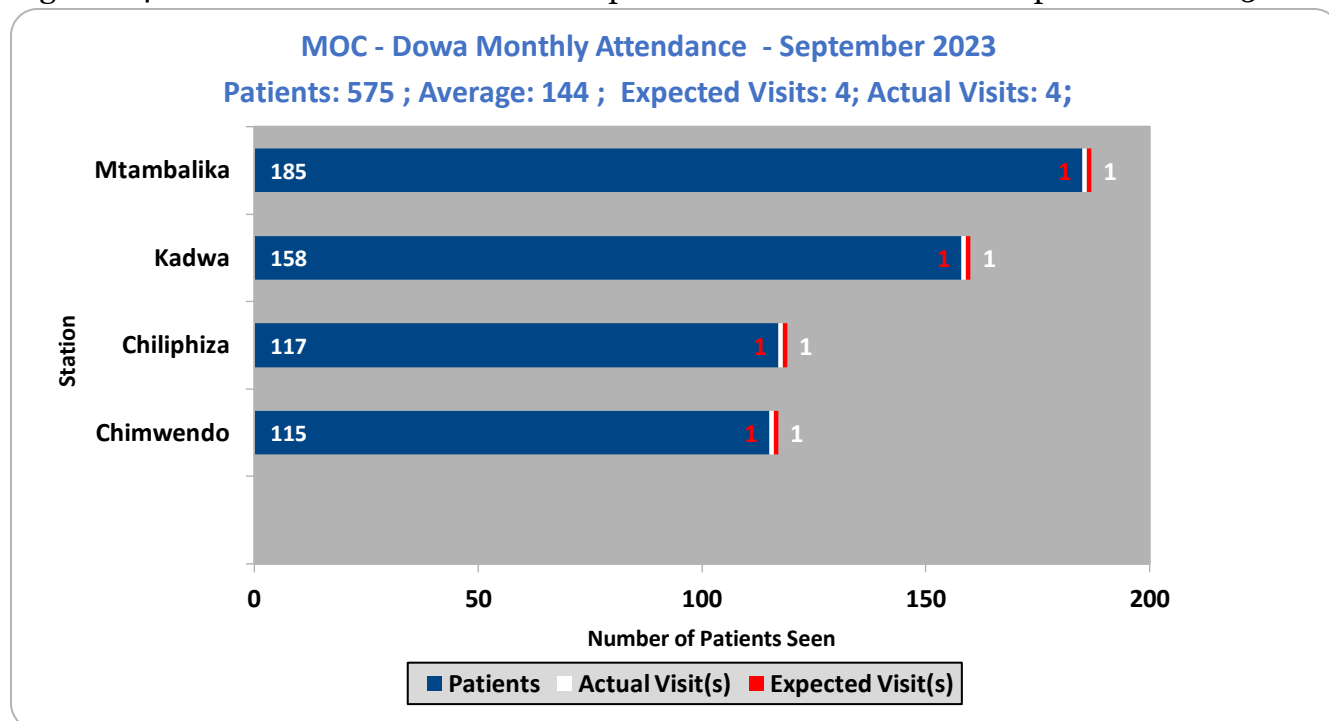


Figure 4: Dowa Patient Attendance – September 2023.

COVID -19 Situation Updates

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

Cumulative COVID-19 Data – KHC Static.

Table 2 below shows COVID-19 Data.

	Staff (OCA/HSA)	Others	Total
September Tests	0	0	0
September 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
BBF	539	574	1113
1st Dose	0	0	0
2nd Dose	0	0	0
Booster	0	0	0
Total	539	574	1113

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

Vaccine Type	Male	Female	Total
BBF	414	646	1060
Johnson & Johnson (J & J)	0	0	0
Booster	0	0	0
Total	414	646	1060

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 September 2023

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

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

Reproductive and Family Planning Health

Maternal and New-born Health Care

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Admissions	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	34	33	318
Referrals	13	8	14	15	13	23	12	23	12	133
New Babies	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	36	33	320
Alive Babies	38	44	35	29	28	28	46	35	33	316
Facility Deliveries	33	36	32	29	25	26	44	34	33	292

Table 7: Maternity Data - 2023

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

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total
Weight <2500g	2	1	7	3	0	7	4	8	3	35
Prematurity	4	7	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	22
Asphyxia	1	1	0	1	3	1	2	4	0	13
Sepsis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Still Birth Fresh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Still Birth Macerated	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	3

Neonatal Death	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	7	9	9	6	4	9	8	17	6	75

Table 8; Newborns with complications – 2023

Figure 5 below shows the total newborns complications for 2023.

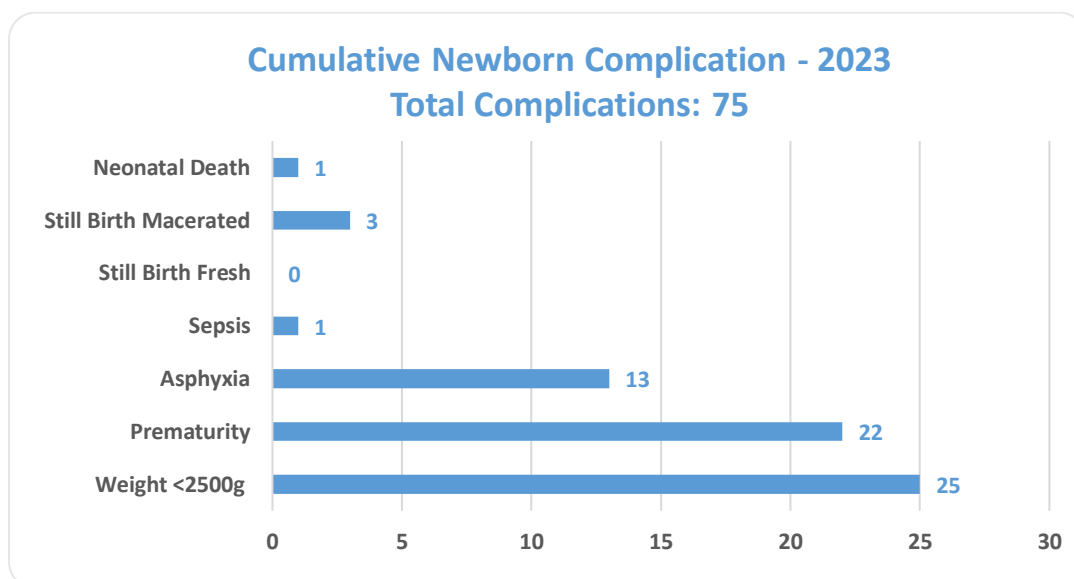


Figure 5: Newborns Complications – 2023

Figure 6 below shows the total monthly Maternity attendance.

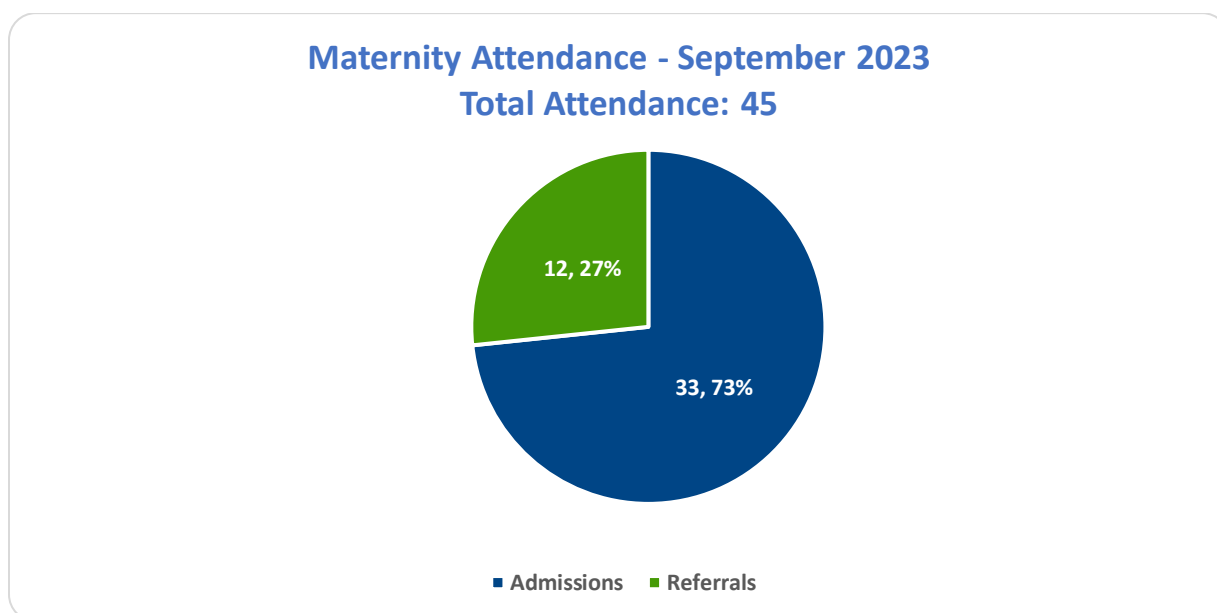


Figure 6: Admissions and Referrals (September 2023)

Table 9 below shows the reason for the referrals

Referral Reason	Referred
Anaemia in Pregnancy	1
Obstructed Prolonged Labour	1
Previous Uterine Surgery	1
Premature Labour	1
Malpresentation	1
Premature Scar	1
CPD	2
Foetal Distress	2
Big Fundus	1
Young Primigravida	1
Total	12

Table 9: Referral Reasons - September 2023

Table 10 below shows ANC attendance.

2023	New ANC Visit	First Trimester
January	69	22
February	53	9
March	50	7
April	38	5
May	78	16
June	69	8
July	78	9
August	95	22
September	64	19

Table 10: ANC Attendance – 2023

Figure 7 below shows 2023 Monthly ANC Visits.

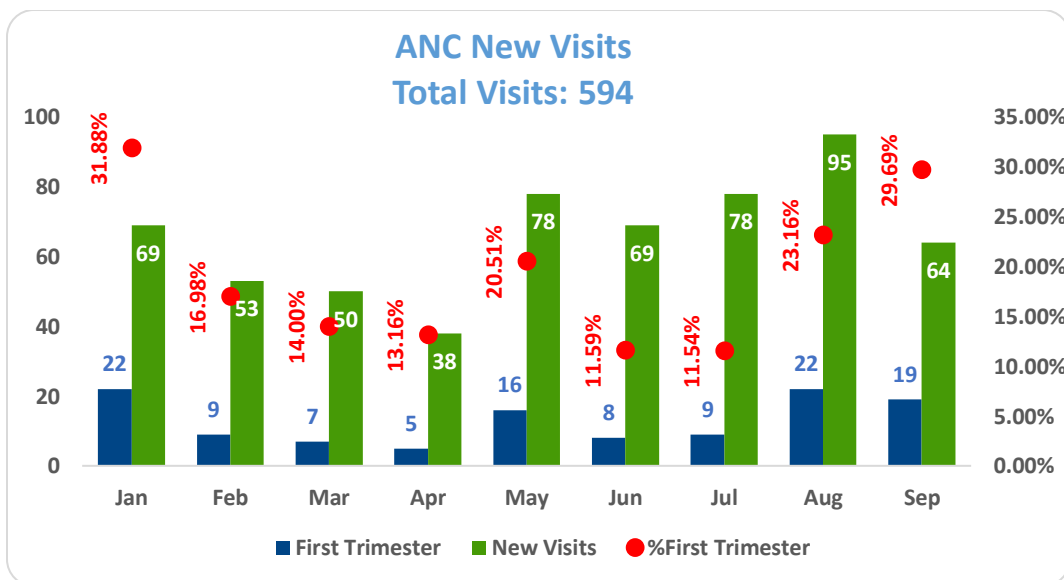


Figure 7: Monthly ANC Visits - 2023.

Cervical Cancer Control Clinic Report

Table 11 below shows the 2023 Monthly Cervical Cancer Screening.

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Total	21	30	44	14	0	0	16	64	20
VIA Positive	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	2

Table 11: Monthly Cervical Cancer Screening 2023

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.

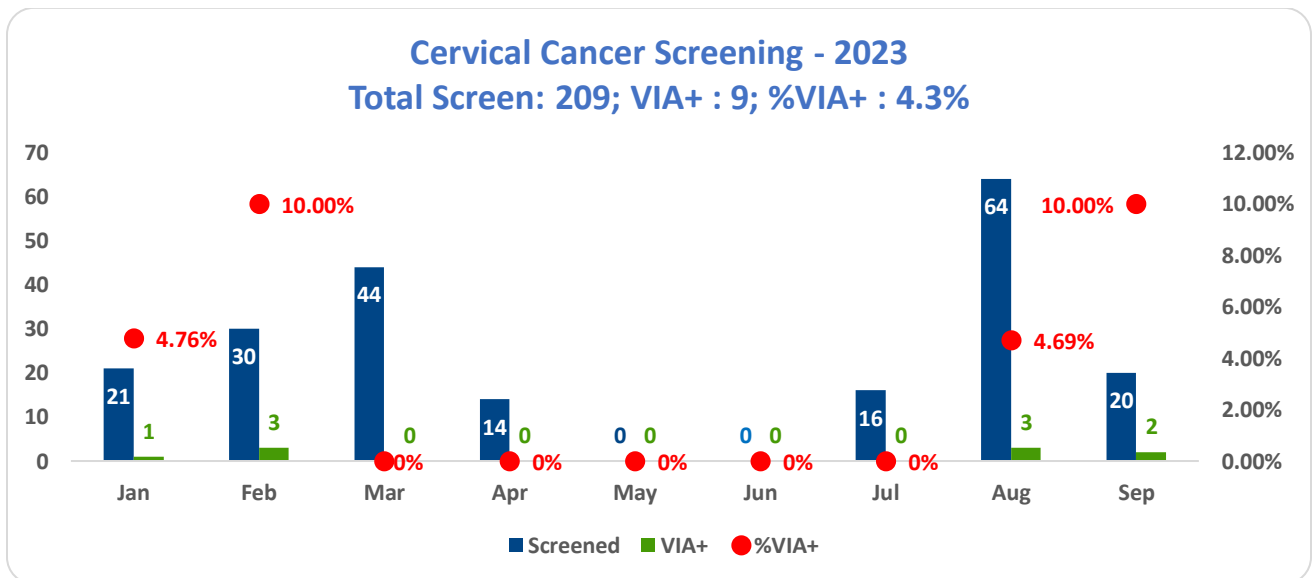


Figure 8; Cervical Cancer Screening - 2023.

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	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Eye Infections (Treated)	27	40	49	35	30	39	27	36	32
Eye Surgery (Booked)	2	1	7	6	6	9	3	6	4
Total Seen	29	41	56	41	36	48	30	42	36

Table 12: Monthly Eye Clinic Table - 2023.

Figure 9 below shows the 2023 Monthly Eye Clinics.

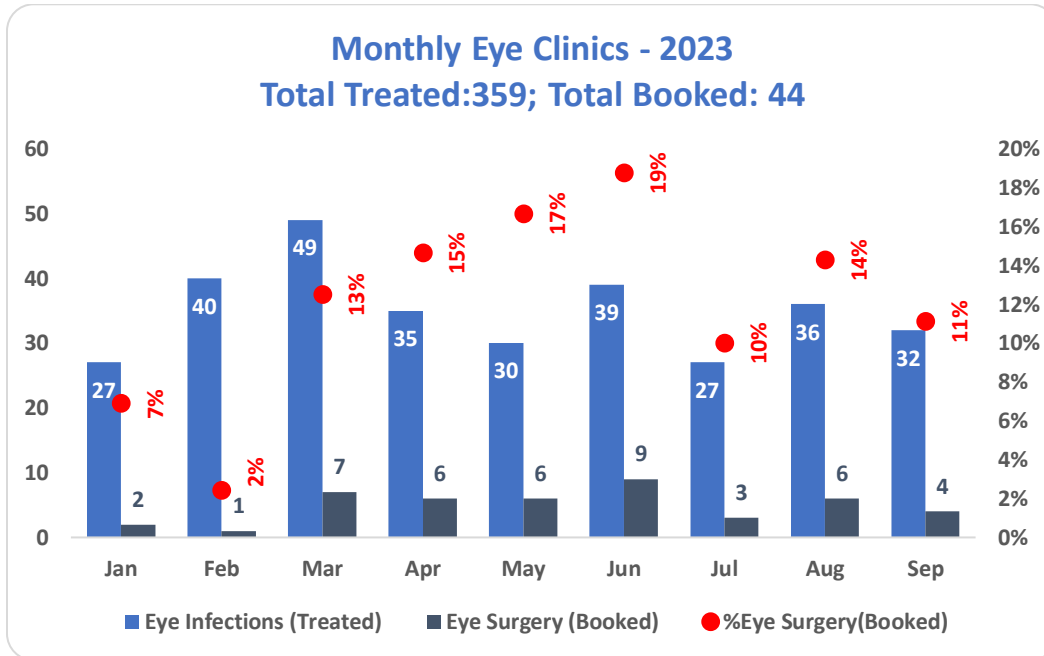


Figure 9: Monthly Eye Clinics - 2023.

Malaria Report

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

	Total Tested	Positives	Negatives	Positivity Rate
Under 5	781	158	623	20%
5 Years and Over	1078	260	818	24%
Total	1859	418	1441	22%

Table 13: Total Malaria Tests (September 2023).

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

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Suspected Malaria Cases	1854	1498	220 9	2740	3241	309 2	209 9	1434	1859
Suspected Cases Tested MRDT	1854	1498	220 9	2740	3241	309 2	209 9	1434	1859
Confirmed Malaria Cases	508	354	635	996	1748	1241	542	258	418
New Malaria Cases Registered	508	361	651	996	1778	1245	548	273	418
LA Dispensed	503	361	651	995	1748	1245	548	273	418
LA Issued	120	600	940	1020	2877	520	150	120	150

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

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

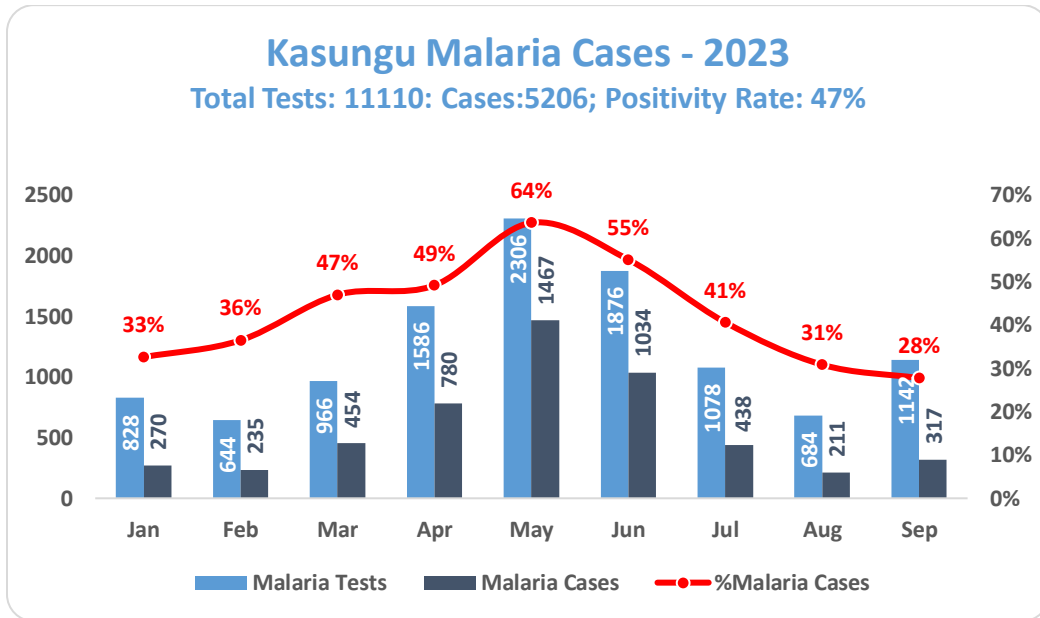


Figure 10: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Dowa, 2023).

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

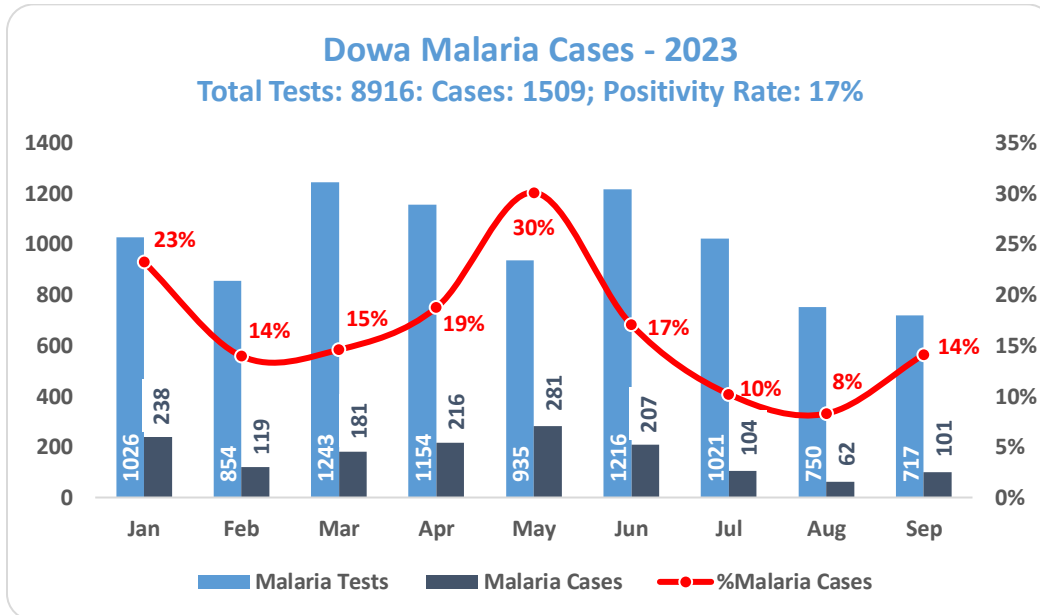


Figure 11: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Kasungu, 2023).

Figure 12 shows the total OCA Clinics under 5 Years of Malaria tests

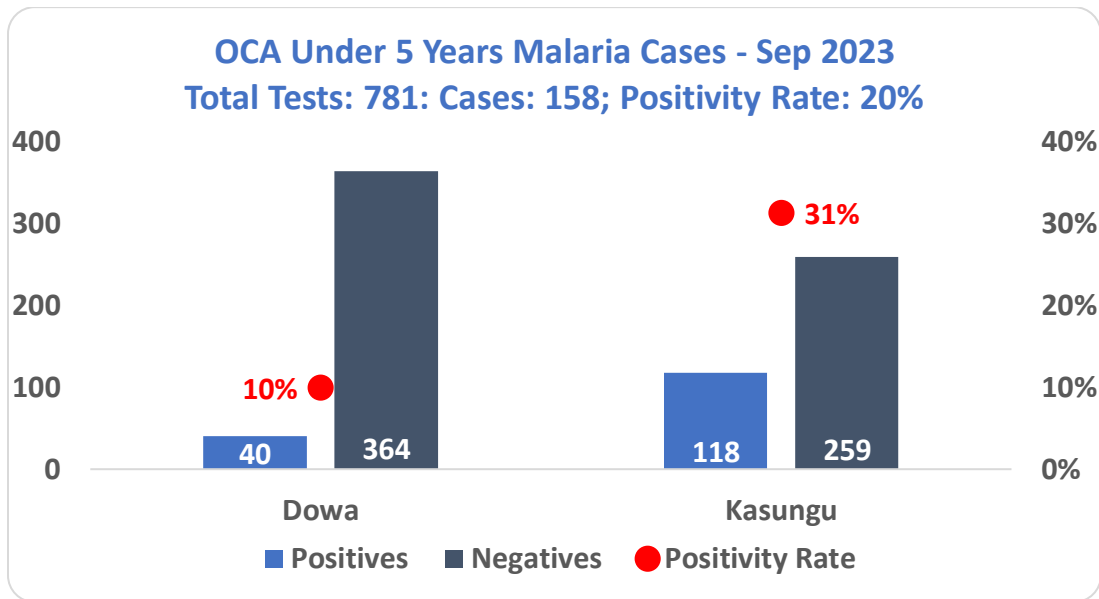


Figure 12; OCA Clinics, Under 5 Years Malaria tests (September 2023)

Figure 13 shows the total OCA Clinics 5 Years and Over Malaria tests

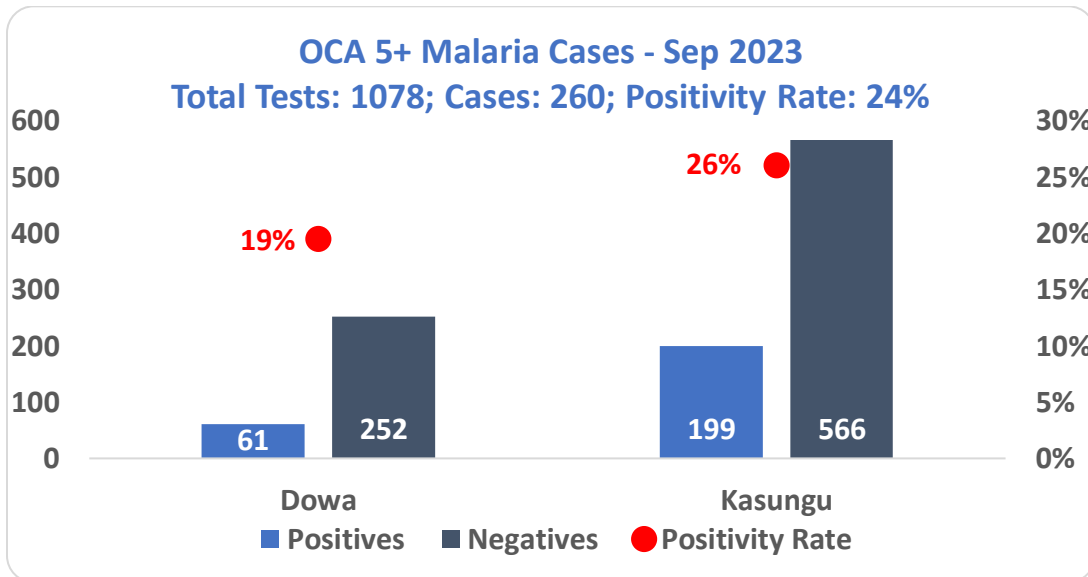


Figure 13; OCA Clinics, 5+ Malaria tests (September 2023)

HIV Testing Services (HTS)

Months	Total Tested	Positives	Positivity Rate
January	193	2	1.04%
February	154	2	1.30%
March	215	2	0.93%
April	169	3	1.78%
May	202	3	1.49%
June	193	2	1.04%
July	190	3	1.58%
August	246	1	0.41%
September	267	6	2.25%

Table 15; HTS Monthly Data 2023

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

Figure 14 below shows HTS' Monthly Attendance

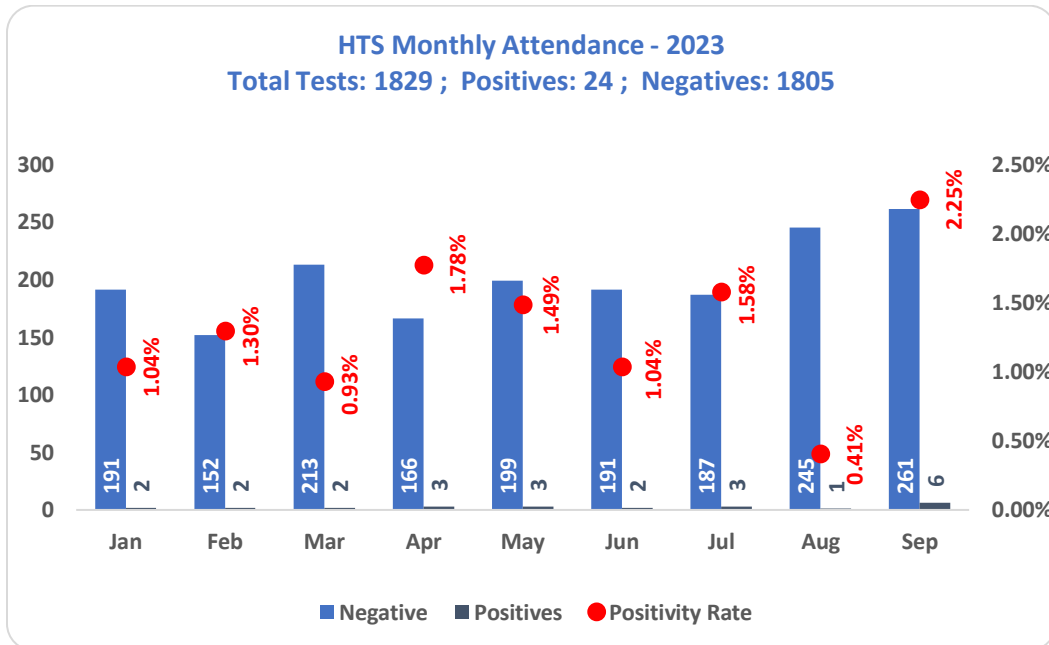


Figure 14; HTS Monthly Tests – 2023

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
Sep	105	23	6	0	4	0	69	20	0	0

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

Figure 15 below shows qualitative lab tests – September 2023

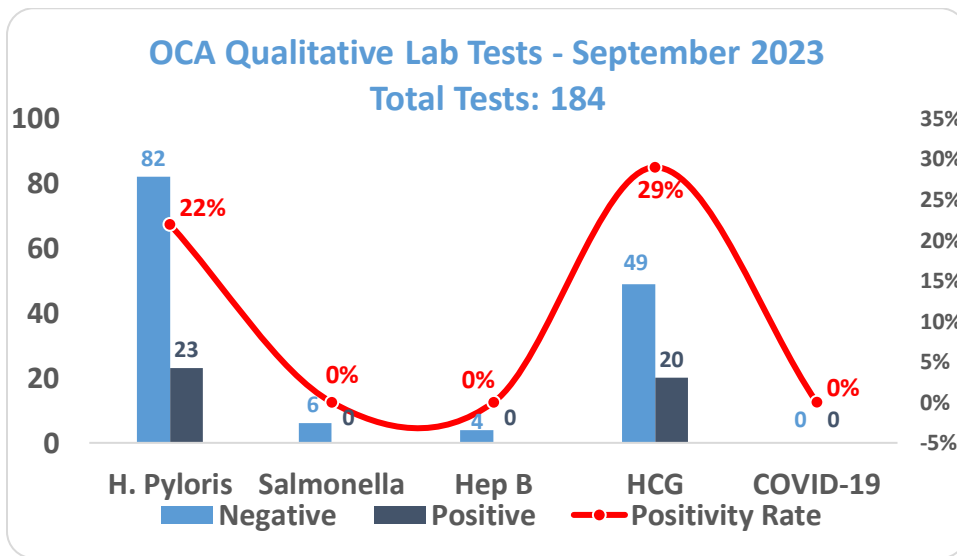


Figure 15; Qualitative Lab Tests – 2023.

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

	Glucose	HB	Urinalysis	FBC
Jan	172	192	23	95
Feb	100	137	33	133
Mar	118	110	16	191

Apr	140	60	17	126
May	51	162	21	106
Jun	75	71	11	100
Jul	52	48	4	108
Aug	95	48	13	150
Sep	46	39	17	161
Total	849	867	155	1170

Table 17; Quantitative Lab Tests Data Table for OCA Clinics.

Figure 16 shows quantitative lab tests for the year 2023

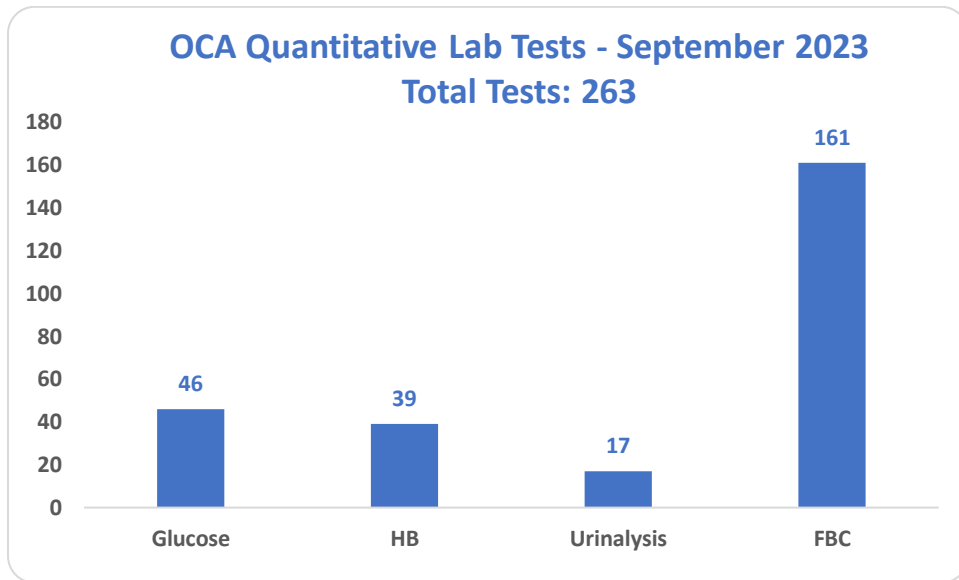


Figure 16; Quantitative Lab Tests – 2023.

10. Disease Group Trends.

Figure 17 below shows Dowa disease occurrences for September 2023

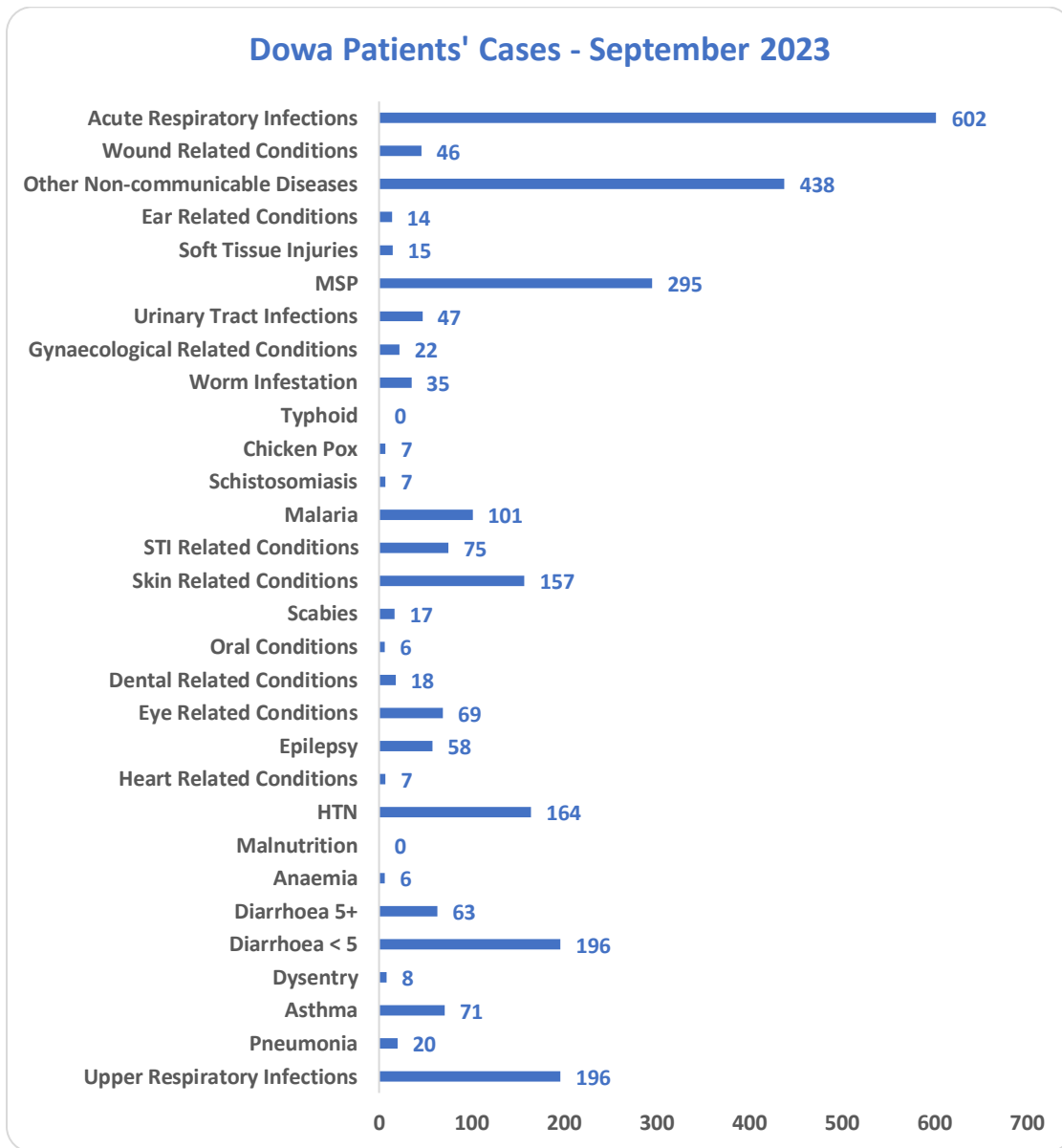


Figure 17: Dowa Disease Occurrences (September 2023).

Figure 18 below shows Kasungu disease occurrences for September 2023.

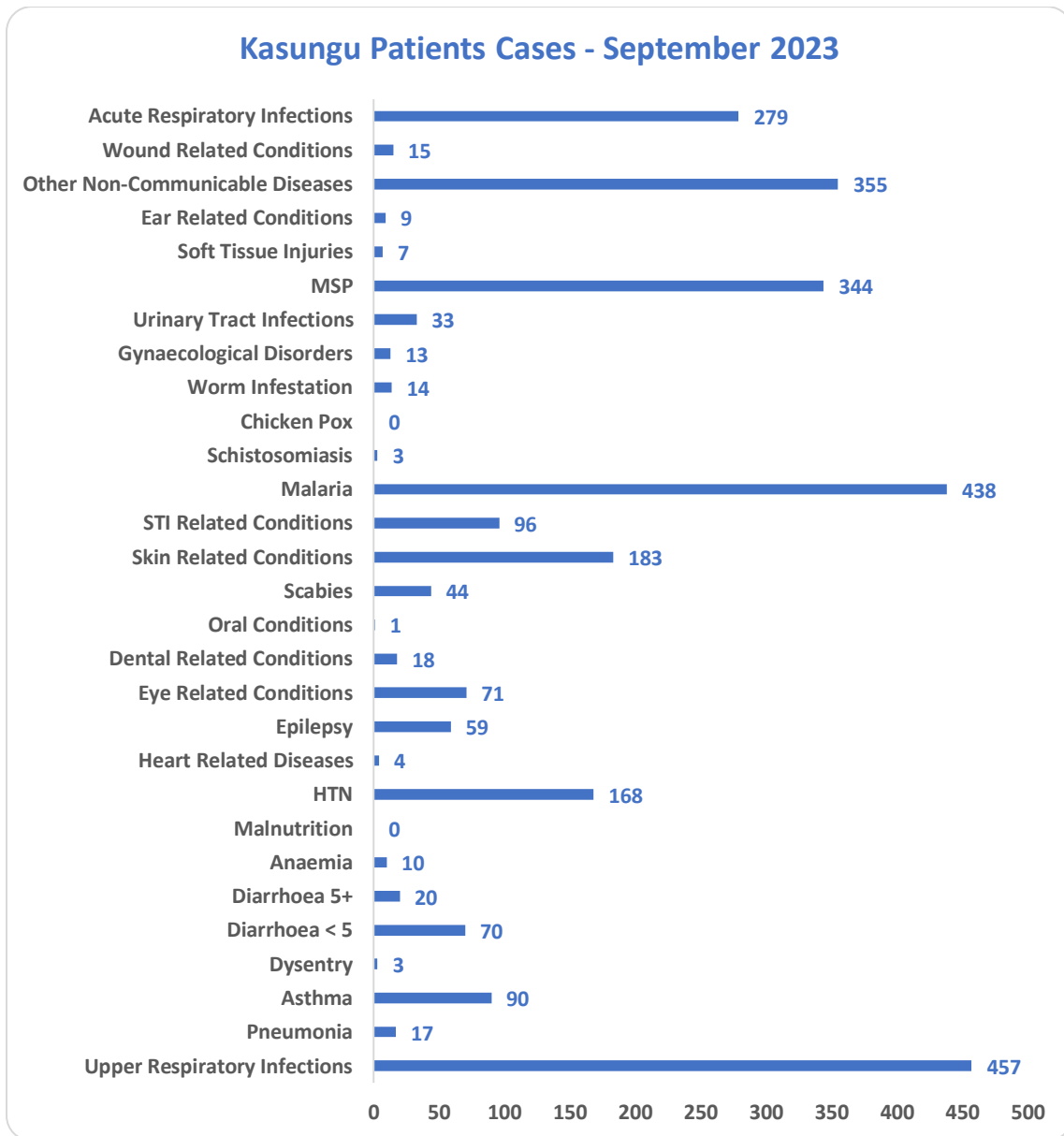


Figure 18: Kasungu Disease Occurrences (September 2023)

Healthcare Finance and Administration

Table 18 shows the clinic finance table for 2023.

2023	Collection	Referrals	Clients	Average Cost
January	MK 2,625,400	MK 276,575	20	MK 13,829
February	MK 2,757,500	MK 307,220	18	MK 17,068
March	MK 3,257,750	MK 343,040	25	MK 13,722
April	MK 3,215,700	MK 527,070	23	MK 22,916
May	MK 3,860,800	MK 348,529	16	MK 21,783
June	MK 4,052,700	MK 582,320	23	MK 25,318
July	MK 3,049,700	MK 307,050	15	MK 20,470
August	MK 2,904,550	MK 550,985	23	MK 23,956
September	MK 2,516,250	MK 326,455	24	MK 13,602

Table 18: Clinic Finances – 2023

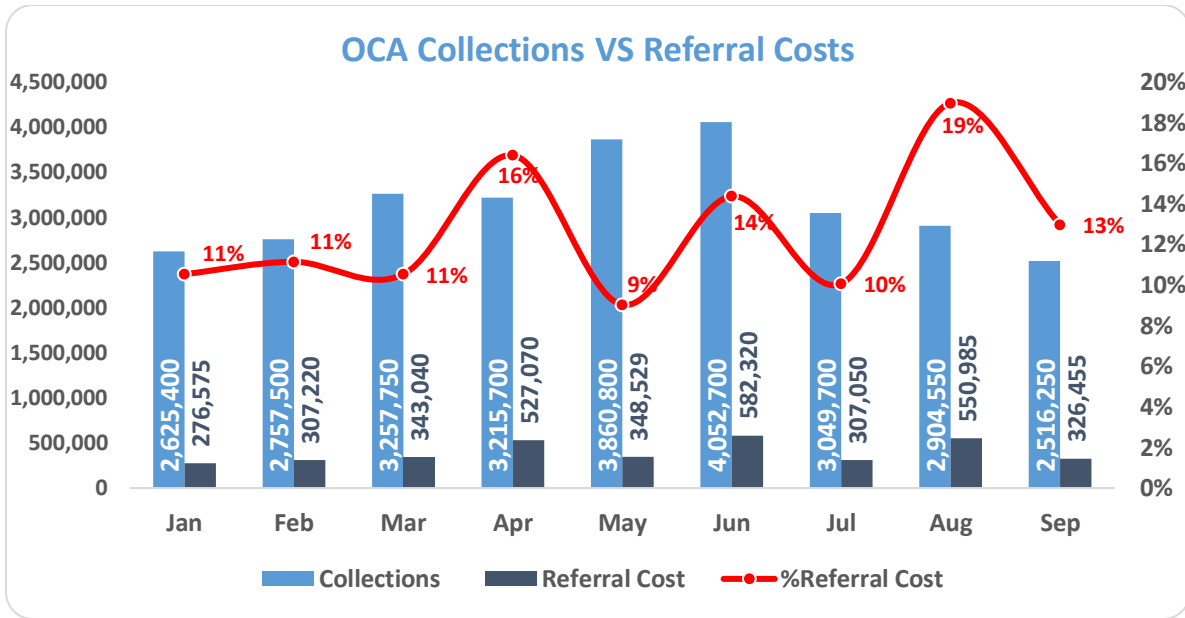


Figure 19: OCA Collections VS Referrals - 2023.

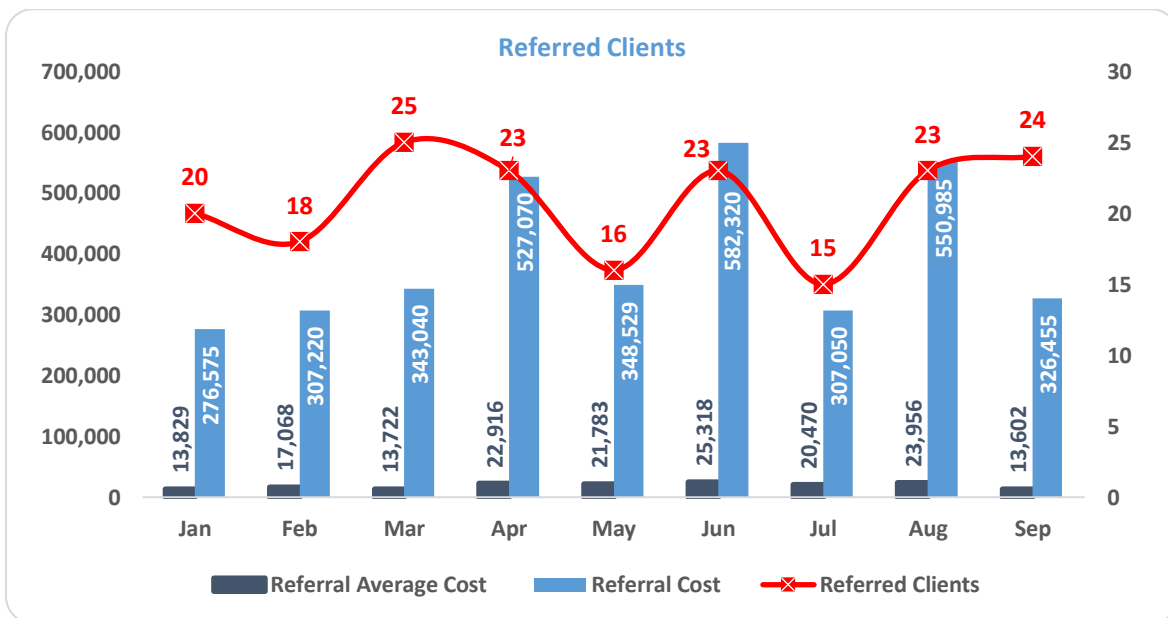


Figure 20: OCA Referred Clients - 2023.

Achievements and Challenges

Achievements

- The Health Centre has managed to send Patient Care Attendant (Beauty Banda) for a certified initial Integrated HIV, Hepatitis, and Syphilis testing services training in Blantyre. The training is organized by MOH – with technical support by public institute of Malawi.
- The Health Centre received supervisors from the MOH – Integrated Malaria Supportive Supervision and Mentorship (IMSS&M). Overall, the Health Centre is doing well in terms of data recording, IPT3, ITN distributions, and no stock out of anti-malarial for the past 4 months and well updated stock cards.

Challenges

- The Malaria program supervisors recommended that laboratory staff should attend a 5-days training on the following:
 - Microscopy Diagnostic Refresher Training
 - Parasite Counting (Density) Species
 - TB Diagnosis
 - Laboratory ethics course
- Low TB screening at the Health Centre

Way forward

To organize for a meeting with all the OCA Healthcare Program staff to find out the reason for low TB screening at the Health Centre.

To send lab technician for new Malaria Microscopy training at CHISU.

Appendices

Appendix A: September 2023 MOC Schedule

SEPTEMBER 2023 OUTREACH CLINIC SCHEDULE					
DATE	DAY	STATION	DISTRICT	ACTIVITY	TIME
1	Friday	Kadwa	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
2	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
3	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
4	Monday	Nkhangwa	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
5	Tuesday	Chisuwe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
6	Wednesday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
7	Thursday	Kantomphole	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
8	Friday	Mtambalika	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
9	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
10	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
11	Monday	Kambulu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
12	Tuesday	Kalimanyungu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
13	Wednesday	Lisito	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
14	Thursday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
15	Friday	Chiliphiza	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
16	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
17	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
18	Monday	Galika	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
19	Tuesday	Ndanowa	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
20	Wednesday	Bowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
21	Thursday	Miyowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
22	Friday	Chimwendo	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm

23	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
24	Sunday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend
25	Monday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
26	Tuesday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
27	Wednesday	Kavwenje	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
28	Thursday	Kambulu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
29	Friday	Preparation day		Preparation day	Preparation day
30	Saturday	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend	Weekend

Water and Sanitation Program

Executive Summary

In September, the WASH program organized several activities in line with the overall program of promoting access to WASH services to the people of Kasese. These activities were coordinated with different stakeholders. This monthly report provides a narrative of the key activities conducted.

Summary of Monthly Achievements

In September the following milestones were achieved;

- Supported 33 water point repairs (Service/preventive: 28; major repairs: 5)
- Conducted borehole drilling in 2 villages; Chika and Phiko.
- Conducted a combined Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Chipoyo and Katunundu
- Construction of latrines at Kalikulu Primary School
- Monitoring Sanitation Entrepreneurs from Bweya and Joseni VDCs
- KPI reporting
- DCT Meeting (Red cross-project exit)

DETAILED NARRATION OF MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENTS

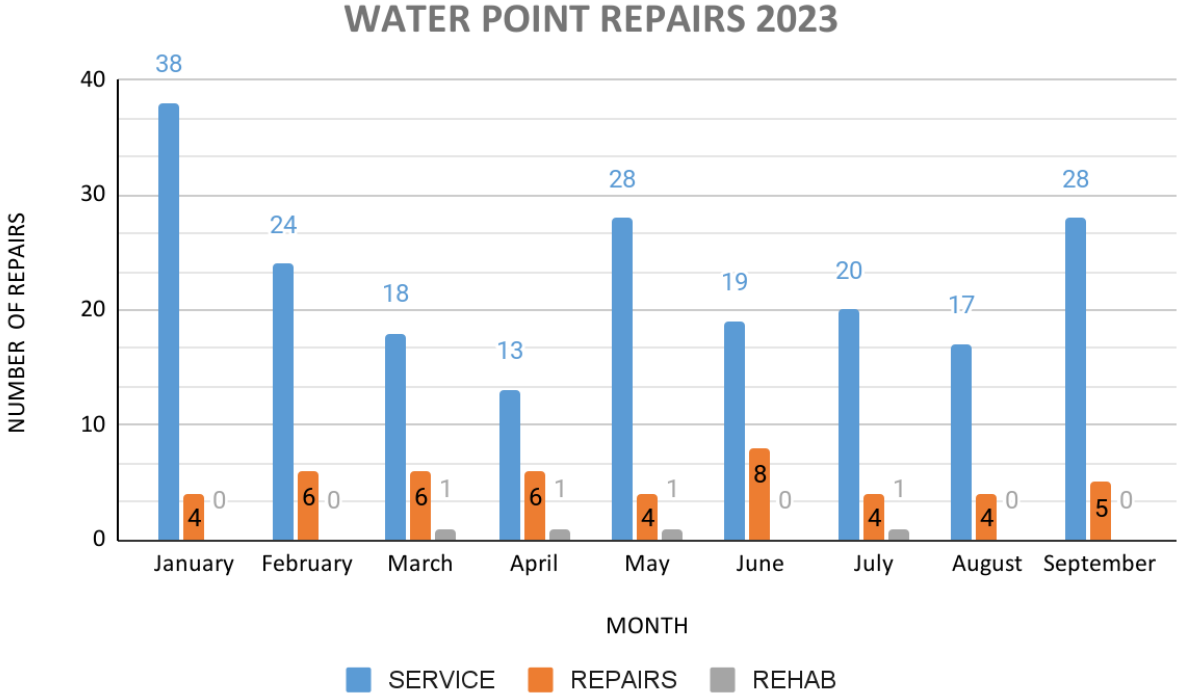
The WASH program carried out the following key activities in September 2023.

Water point repairs and rehabilitations



Area Mechanic repairing a pump during the month

In September, the WASH program repaired a total of 33 water points (Service/preventive: 28; major repairs: 5; Rehabilitation: 0). During the month, MK 195, 075 was spent by communities on preventive maintenance while OCA paid MK 301, 300 on major repairs of boreholes. So far in 2023, a total of 256 repairs have been conducted. Out of this 205 are preventive maintenance while 51 are major maintenance. Below is a graph showing the progress of water point maintenance for the WASH program;



Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Water Point Committees (WPCs)

To empower communities to manage their water facilities, the OCA WASH program conducts community-based management training for Water Point Committees (WPCs). The WASH program conducted CBM training for Katunundu and Ngoma_Chiphoyo WPCs. The borehole in Ngoma_Chiphoyo village was drilled by OCA in July 2023 while the borehole in Katundu village was drilled in August 2023. During the training water point committees were trained in water point hygiene practices and minor repairs. The training in Ngoma village was attended by 12 participants while the one in Katunundu was attended by 11 participants. Following the training participants in the two villages

were grateful to OCA for the gift of water and promised to take care of the new boreholes with the skills acquired during the training.



Left - A Classroom session during CBM training for Ngoma_Chiphoyo, **Right** - A practical session during CBM training for Katunundu WPCs during the month

Borehole drilling

In September the WASH program drilled 3 wells; 2 Chika and Phiko villages while 1 was drilled on the OCA campus. The wells in Chika and Phiko will approximately supply water to 200 and 225 people respectively. On the other hand, the one on OCA campus will supply water to the community centre and new OCA houses under construction. Before the OCA intervention, the people from Chika were using unprotected water from the Bua River while the people from Phiko were relying on unprotected shallow wells as their main source of water. Both the wells in Chika and Phiko villages are now in use. So far in 2023, the WASH program has drilled 10 community wells against a target of 16 wells for the year.



***Left** -A woman collecting water from the river in Chika village before OCA intervention **Right** - A dawn of hope; a newly constructed water point in Chika village during the construction of the Apron*

Latrine Construction at Kalikulu Primary School



Damaged girls' latrines at Kalikulu before OCA intervention



Construction of girl's latrine at Kalikulu Primary School before handover

In August, the WASH program began construction of latrines at Kalikulu Primary School. The latrines are being constructed as a response to the damaged latrines at school during the rainy season. Currently, the construction of the latrines is in progress and both the substructure and superstructure of the latrines are almost over. The latrines are expected to be completed by the end of October 2023. The latrines and a changing room are expected to support a total of **264** learners from the school. In total Kalikulu has an enrolment of **512** learners out of which 248 are boys and 264 are girls.

Monitoring Sanitation Entrepreneurs



***Left** - Exterior view of a latrine constructed by Daniel Msosa (Sanitation Entrepreneur) from Joseni VDC, **Right** -Interior view of a latrine completed with pit latrine slab during the monitoring visit*

During the month the WASH program visited 2 Sanitation Entrepreneurs from Josen and Bweya VDCs. The visit aimed to monitor progress made by the sanitation entrepreneurs since the completion of their training in July 2023. The sanitation entrepreneurs are responsible for the construction of pit latrine slabs and corbelled latrines in their communities. During the monitoring visit, it was observed that some progress has been made by sanitation entrepreneurs despite some challenges they had faced. It was observed that one of the sanitation entrepreneurs had already managed to construct and install **four** pit latrine slabs in his village while the other had only made **two** latrine slabs. Despite this progress, there is still room for improvement on both the WASH program's side and the entrepreneur's side. The WASH program needs to intensify regular monitoring while the sanitation entrepreneurs need to market themselves in their communities since this is a new initiative. The increase in the price of cement was highlighted by sanitation entrepreneurs as a major challenge in the promotion of their products as this has a bearing on the cost of production of pit latrine slabs. For example, in June the price of cement was at MK 12, 000 and the price was increased to MK 16,000.

KPI reporting

The WASH program conducts Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reporting every two months. During these sessions the WASH program reports on the progress made by the made concerning the agreed KPIs. The KPIs are collected to help in measuring progress and facilitating informed decision-making regarding the WASH program. These meetings are usually attended by OCUS members of staff/ board members and relevant OCA staff members.

Harmonization Meeting with PumpAid

During the month the WASH program attended a project harmonization meeting in Mponela, Dowa. The meeting was organized by the Dowa District Water Office (DDWO) to foster a coordinated project implementation between the OCA WASH program and the Pump Aid Beyond Water Project. These two projects are implementing similar projects in Traditional Authority Chikhadza B. The meeting specifically aimed at minimizing duplication of efforts and ensuring that the two projects do not impinge on each other in project implementation. During the meeting, it was agreed that since all projects are

promoting Operation and Maintenance (O & M) of hand pumps, OCA will focus on promoting preventive and reactive maintenance while Pump aid will focus on both promoting preventive maintenance and supply of spare parts for preventive maintenance.

DCT Meeting (Red Cross project exit)

In September, the WASH program attended a District Coordination Team (DCT) meeting organized by the Dowa District Council. The meeting aimed to review the progress made by the Red Cross Cholera Preparedness project and approve the exit of this project. During the project Red Cross made a presentation on the achievements, and KPI for the project in line with the project goal. Following the project, it was agreed that the Red Cross had made significant progress in the project which was enough to grant the exit of the progress.

Conclusion

As we wrap up the month of September, the WASH program is excited about the progress made in program implementation in all key implementation areas. The WASH progress remains motivated to work extra hard to achieve the program objectives for the year.

Agriculture and Business

Agriculture

Executive Summary



During the month of September 2023, the agriculture program performed several activities in supporting smallholder farmers in the communities. The activities aimed at empowering the local farmers to live independent lives by having enough food and improved economic levels in their homes through practice of permaculture,

irrigation and rain farming. Below are activities which were carried out during the reporting period.

Exchange visit to BOMFA

Mwayiwathu farm club had an exchange visit to Bowe Farmers cooperative (herein referred to as BOMFA) which was organized to promote knowledge exchange and collaboration in the field of agriculture. Mwayiwathu farm club was introduced few years ago compared to BOMFA where they continue to learn more. The objectives of the exchange visit were to explore innovative farming methods, and to foster partnerships and cooperation in agriculture. The exchange visit featured a wide range of activities such as Knowledge transfer on running Village Savings and Loans (VSL), sustainable agriculture, Procedures they follow in collecting farm loans, leadership skills and marketing of the farm produce. The exchange visit will help Mwayiwathu farm club to improve their areas of weakness and have better direction of their club as they are about to graduate or form a cooperative.



Mwayiwathu farm club learning from BOMFA cooperative farmers

Ploughing Fields

Ploughing is a fundamental agriculture practice which involves turning over the top layer of soil to prepare it for planting. Ploughing plays crucial roles in agriculture such as weed control, soil aeration, soil structure improvement, and pest and disease management. Ploughing is evolving to address sustainable and environmental concerns. OCA farm has

been ploughed to improve the soil conditions and make more suitable for crop production.



Ploughing OCA farm in progress

Harvesting and Marketing

Tchale and Chigona irrigation clubs are cultivating maize and beans. Harvesting has commenced which is followed by market identification since maize can be sold as fresh or dried. The clubs receive support from OCA in form of farm inputs to carry out its activities of irrigation farming. Marketing of the produce was done and better prices have been discovered and members are expected to get better profits which will bring a lot of smile on farmers faces. Club members were encouraged to exercise good agriculture practices which will improve cob size hence helping in attracting customers and getting better prices for the produce. Potential buyers were identified from markets of Lilongwe, Kasungu, Madisi and Mponela. The cultivation of Maize has helped in reducing hunger challenges in the communities as a lot of households have food from irrigation farming.

Pests and disease control

To produce good quality crops which will easily attract customers, there is need to control pests and disease which mostly affect the quality of the produce. Control has to start from early stage of the plant as it is highly susceptible to pests and disease which easily disturb the quality of the plant. Kambalani irrigation club is cultivating Maize where plants were affected with fall army worms and the problem was observed early and control measures were conducted. The club was supported with synthetic chemicals and some expertise on

proper dosage rate, right time of application and the right way of spraying the chemicals. Some knowledge on the use of indigenous methods of controlling fall army worms was also shared with them. The indigenous knowledge will help in reducing cost of production. The club members were also reminded on the best time for the control of pests and diseases which is early in morning or evening hours as stomata are open for chemical penetration.

Staking of Tomatoes

As a way of keeping tomato fruits away from damage by pests, staking has to be done in good time to keep the tomato fruits away from touching the ground. Timvane and Ndalusa irrigation clubs were monitored during tomato staking. Staking is being done in tomato production to ensure cleaner and healthier tomatoes are produced. Staking helps in keeping tomato fruits off from ground hence reduces losses from fruit rots which can be as the result of tomato fruits touching the ground (soil). Farmers are also trained on importance of staking tomato plants, stalked tomato plants are easier to spray or dust for insect and disease control and easier to harvest than those sprawling in the ground. The methods of staking which was brought to the farmers were by the use of stakes which is readily and commonly available in their area. This will help in bringing more profits at the end of the production process.



Timvane irrigation club conducting staking in tomato field

Pruning of Tomatoes

Timvane irrigation clubs are producing tomatoes and Maize. Activities of taking-off dead leaves and side brunches were being done. Pruning was done with an aim of maximizing photosynthetic efficiency and minimizing risk of pests and disease. The process of pruning was monitored where the use of a knife or a fingertip was encouraged. In tomato production, the pruning process targets most suckers and dead leaves. Suckers are the shoots that are formed in the axils where side brunches meet the stem. If too many stems are allowed to develop, energy is used in developing the multiple growing tips and fruit production may be slowed. More stems will also result in smaller fruit size produced. Farmers are encouraged to remove the suckers while they are small in size and it is necessary to remove all suckers that grow below the first flower cluster. This helps in keeping the main supporting stem strong. Club members were also trained to avoid the removal of upper suckers that will eventually produce flowers and fruits. This will help farmers to have fewer stems which will produce fewer fruits though large in size which is mostly liked by the customers.



Pruning in tomato field in progress

Business and Financial Empowerment Microloans (FEM)

Executive Summary

As OCA continues to make a sustainable impact in Kasese communities, in Dowa, Malawi, the FEM program supports women entrepreneurs in ensuring that they are well equipped to run and maintain their businesses. In the month of September, the FEM program had a number of activities lined up. Below is a narrative of the activities conducted;

Review of FEM applications

The review processes for the FEM program applications had started to select women entrepreneurs who are eligible to be part of the program. The target area for selection was Bweya and Joseni and the common market which is bridging the two villages is Mtambalika. The total number of applications received was **364**; 136 applications from Bweya villages and 228 applications from Joseni village. Out of the 228 applications from Joseni village, 36 candidates were selected and will be visited for verifications. Out of the 136 applications from Bweya village, 29 candidates were selected and will be visited for verifications. We hope to select and formulate two FEM groups of at least 10 to 20 participants in each group.

Loan repayment

By September, MWK 2,004,000 had been recovered from the microloans representing 18 percent of the total amount of microloans which were disbursed in July and August. The loan balance has raised suspicions as to whether the women entrepreneurs will be able to settle the loan within the agreed loan period. However, the women entrepreneurs are hopeful that by November they will be able to sort out their balances as most of them had reinvested their business proceeds in short term assets like livestock and agricultural products like maize and groundnuts. These assets were specifically kept to be resold when prices pick up and help FEM members in reconciling their loan balances.

Monitoring visits

Operating a business in Malawi has not been very smooth as the kwacha keeps on depreciating. Within the third quarter only, the kwacha depreciated two times from K1,063 to the United States dollar to K1,095, representing a 3 percent decrease. This has negatively affected the women's business capital and the total sales revenues recorded as the sales keep going down. From the monitoring visits conducted within the month, the average sales revenues per person recorded for the month of September, 2023 were MWK167,718 which was lower as compared to the average sales revenues of MWK174,571 recorded in the preceding month.

The monitoring visits also assisted in reviewing the loan status repayments for individuals and making recovery plans with the women so that by November they should be able to finish repayment.



FEM Women on their Business Posts. Top photo: Idah Banda in her grocery shop

Left: Florence Sanudi and Right: Jeniffer Malomo

From the visits, it was noted that from the Takondwa group which is in Kachigamba, there are other women who are doing quite well. These women are Margret and Selina. From the profits generated for the period, Magret was able to build two thatched roof houses which she is renting out to female students who are doing self boarding at one of the local schools in Kachigamba. These houses will be bringing extra income to her household and at the same time she's able to support these students who did not have a proper place to live during their school sessions. Sellina's house, on the other hand, was affected with last season's heavy rains. From her savings, she has rebuilt and enlarged her house and built an outdoor oven to be used to bake scones by herself which at first she was ordering from other local bakers.



Sellina (L), the oven (M) built by sellina and Magret (R)

Village savings and Loan (VSL) groups

As per norm, the groups continue to meet for their savings meetings. This time around, they have now stopped getting loans and the members are concentrating on clearing off their balances so that come December, they should be able to cash out their initial deposits and invest in their visions which they had set at the beginning of the year 2023. Tiyanjane is a bit behind in savings as they had started a bit later compared to the Tikondane FEM group. Takondwa however had used their savings to clear off their Microloans from OCA hence they have just restarted their VS&L group.

From the Non FEM groups which were formulated in July 2023, there is also progress as they have started to meet on Tuesdays for the deposits. Through the VS&L monitoring, the groups hope to become self-sustainable in terms of buying maintenance materials for their farm equipment and again be able to fulfill their dreams.



Education Support Program

Executive Summary

Quality education in Malawi is a big problem, particularly in rural areas. There are many barriers to students completing their education, including lack of funding, poor access of school resources and the prevalence of child marriage. As a result, many children in Malawi end up stuck in a cycle of limited access to quality education, poverty and low life. Orant Charities Africa is a Nonprofit Organization that works to combat these issues among others. The Organisation works to improve access to quality education for children and young people, giving them the support and resources to help fulfill their ambitions, improve their quality of life and ultimately contribute to Malawi's development as a country.

The month of September, 2023 was the beginning of the new academic year (2023/2024) for all primary and secondary students in Malawi. During this month, the OCA education program was busy preparing sponsored students for school and made sure that all of them have reported at school. The following activities were conducted by the OCA education program in the reporting period.

School visits

Since it was the beginning of a new academic year and a lot was to be done in the Education program, only two schools were visited. Natola CDSS and Madisi secondary schools were visited. The aim of the visits was to make arrangements for some two

students. One student who was learning at Ngala CDSS and her parents has moved to another area far from the school has transferred to Natola CDSS. Natola CDSS is for both day and boarding students and OCA visited the school to make sure that the student is in boarding school since the school is still far from her home. At Madisi secondary school, the visit was to find a replacement for one student who failed the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) exams.

Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Exams

OCA had 20 students (16 girls and 4 boys) from different secondary schools who wrote the 2023 MSCE examinations. All the students passed, representing a 100% pass rate, with the highest student scoring 11 points. From the 20 students, 18 students are qualifying to apply for public Universities.

		Boarding students	Day students	Total
# of students who wrote MSCE	20	18	2	20
Passed	20	18	2	20
Failed	0	0	0	0

2023 MSCE results

Out of the **154, 132** candidates who sat for this examination, in at least six subjects including English, **83, 846** candidates have qualified for the award of the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). This represents a **54.40%** pass rate. OCA is pleased to report that all the 20 students are among the **54.40%** % pass rate for the 2023 MSCE exams results in Malawi.

Donation of Lab materials

In the same month, OCA through the Education program donated Laboratory materials to Ngala Community Day Secondary School (CDSS). Despite sponsoring students in various schools, Orant would also want to focus on supporting schools within our community. This is so because we want to promote



excellent education by providing every student with the resources they need to excel. We envision a future where every child, regardless of their background, has access to quality education and equal opportunities for growth.

At Ngala CDSS, students used to learn science subjects theoretically because they did not have neither Laboratory nor materials for practical lessons. Through the Community Development Fund (CDF), they managed to construct a Laboratory but they lacked the materials. When parents and community members are actively involved in education, they provide additional resources, support and accountability to schools, leading to better student performance.

Orant donated the Laboratory materials with the aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. We understand that true learning happens when students can actively engage in hands-on experiments and experience the joy of discovery. These resources will allow the students of Ngala CDSS to explore the realms of science, develop critical thinking skills, and ignite their passion for learning. We firmly believe that investing in education is investing in the future. By equipping our schools with the necessary tools and resources, we empower our students to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.



The Official opening of Ngala CDSS Lab by the Central East Education Divisional manager (left) and OCA handing over Lab materials to Ngala CDSS (right)

Local schools are an integral part of our community. When we donate to a local school, it helps the school's development and shows that we are investing in improving our community.

Update on sponsored student

One of the students who sat for the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) examinations, **“Omega McDonald”** and was having challenges of going to a day school (Mponela CDSS) which she was selected to because of the distance from her home (Kasese) has finally gone to school. The student has started school at Rise Malawi secondary school. It is a boarding school, and one of the best private secondary schools in Madisi trading center.



Omega's arrival at school

Orant Ulemu Scholarship

Selection of new students

The selection has prioritized only three students for the 2023/2024 academic year because the tuition fees in public universities have been raised (From MWK400,000 to MWK 650,000/ Year) and also not to exceed our annual budget since in January one student was also selected.

The Orant Ulemu scholarship will therefore support the education of **4** University students (3 females and one male) in the 2023/2024 academic year. The male student who is in first year has already been supported with tuition for one semester (second semester) because his grades were missing and he had to repeat a semester. Three students in first year will be supported for the whole academic year with tuition, food and accommodation.



OCA team during the selection of students for the Ulemu scholarship

Withdrawal of students from the Ulemu scholarship

Two students (Both in second year) from the Ulemu scholarship have been withdrawn from the scholarship for the following reasons;

- a. One student lied to us that she has been awarded a one-year scholarship for tuition. She indicated to have scored good grades and appeared on the Dean's list. Which was an act of dishonesty.
- b. Both of them applied for tuition and stipend scholarship from the Higher Education Students' Loans and Grants Board (HESLGB) against the Terms and Conditions of Orant Ulemu Scholarship (12) which stipulates that ***'students with current scholarships or government loans will not be considered for Ulemu scholarship'***

The above reasons show that the students were not appreciating the scholarship given by the Organization. And their actions were likely to deprive other needy students from benefiting from scholarships since they wanted to benefit from two scholarships at once.

However, we have decided to replace these students with other students who do not have any scholarship. These students applied for the Ulemu scholarship for the 2023/2024 academic year. The withdrawn students remained with two years to finish University, so their replacements will also be supported for two years.