



DECEMBER, 2023

ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY REPORT



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Healthcare Program

Executive Summary

Kasese Health Center (KHC) 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 December 2023, Kasese Health Center (KHC) saw **1761** clients at (OPD). Only 77 patients were seen during weekends and nights. The total number of patients seen in December is **1838** (KHC OPD). MOC in Kasese catchment areas saw **557**. Kasungu (Bowe) Outreach clinic saw **1660** clients. MOC's total number of patients seen is **2217**. The total number of patients seen in December 2023 is **4055** (Dowa: **1838 (45%)** & Kasungu **2217 (55%)**).

The Laboratory department tested **1501** for Malaria, out of which **467** were positive, representing a **31%** positivity rate. In Dowa, **968** patients were tested and **309(32%)** were positive cases; in Kasungu, **533** patients were tested and **158(30%)** were positive.

The Maternity department admitted **35** mothers and referred **16**. A total of **32** babies were born at the facility and **3** in transit (BBA). Out of **35** babies, **8** had complications (**4** Weight < 2.5 Kgs, **2** Asphyxia, and **2** Prematurity). The total Maternity attendance was **51 (35 admissions and 16 referrals)**.

The HTS department tested **187** clients, none positive.

The total number of patients seen at the eye clinic by an outsourced clinician is **39** and **1** was booked for surgery.

The public health department administered **428** doses of Johnson and Johnson (J & J) COVID-19 vaccine. Cumulatively, the department administered **2744** of COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer: **1113** and J & J: **1631**).

Cervical Cancer providers screened a total of **21** women and **2** were VIA positive.

The MOC team managed to conduct all **18** scheduled visits in the month representing **100%**.

Monthly Patients Data

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

Months - 2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
OPD Static	175	168	238	197	230	258	204	200	203	191	198	176	2441
	5	0	5	8	1	4	0	3	4	0	2	1	3
Bowe MOC	248	318	300	352	437	421	293	265	225	232	211	166	3472
	1	8	5	3	3	8	1	0	6	9	2	0	6
Kasese MOC	667	489	803	876	723	864	743	630	575	659	670	557	8256
Nights/Holiday	44	46	40	56	58	64	93	49	33	42	34	77	636
Total	494	540	623	643	745	773	580	533	489	494	479	405	6803
	7	3	3	3	5	0	7	2	8	0	8	5	1

Table 1: Monthly OPD And Outreach Clinic Attendance

Figure 1 below shows the total OCA patient attendance in 2023

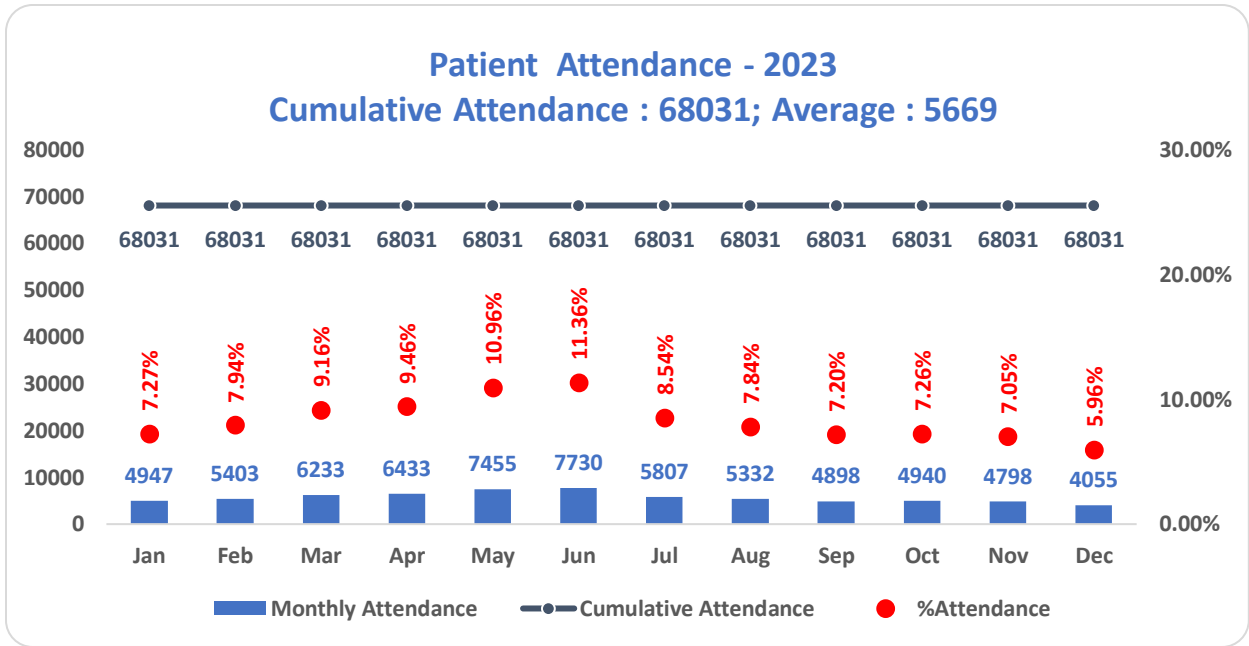


Figure 1: OCA Patient Attendance – 2023.

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

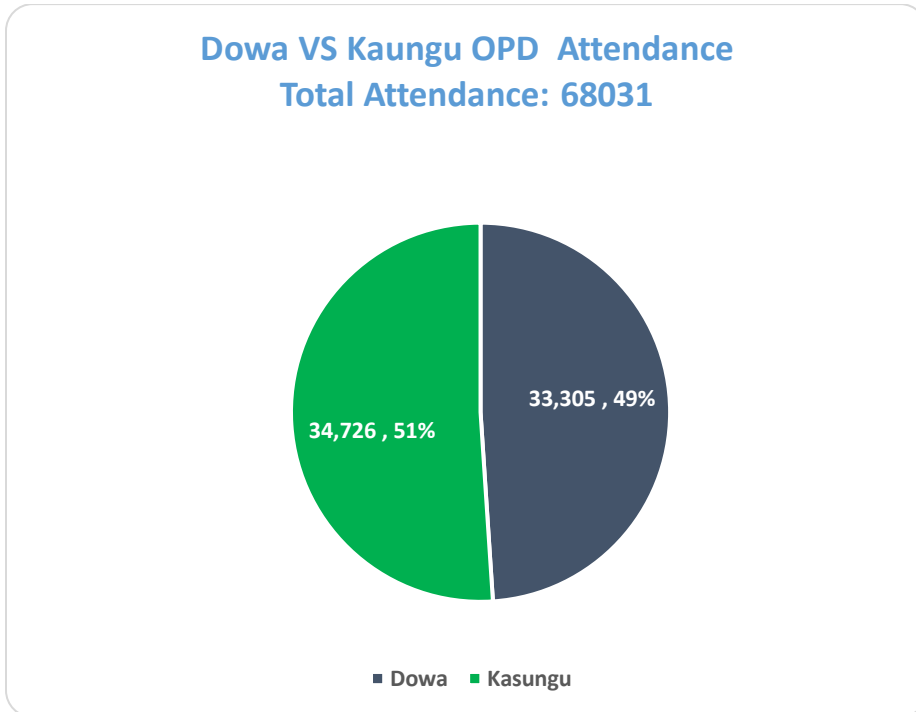


Figure 2: Dowa vs Kasungu (2023).

OCA MOC Updates

Figure 3 below shows the Kasungu patient attendance for December 2023

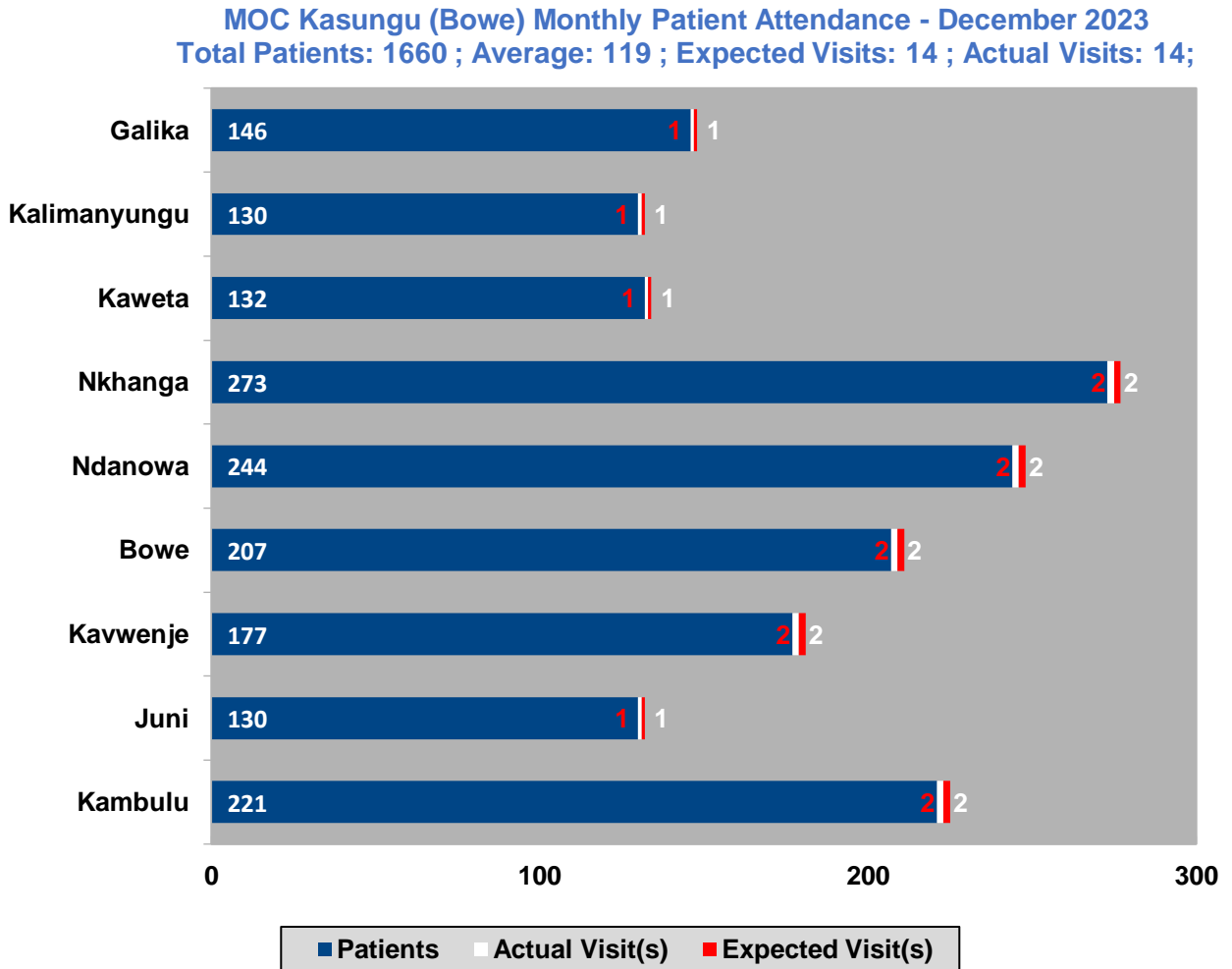


Figure 3: Kasungu Patient Attendance – December 2023.

Figure 4 below shows the Dowa patient attendance for December 2023

Dowa (Kasese Outreach) Monthly Attendance - December 2023
Total Patients: 557 ; Average: 139 ; Expected Visits: 4; Actual Visits: 4;

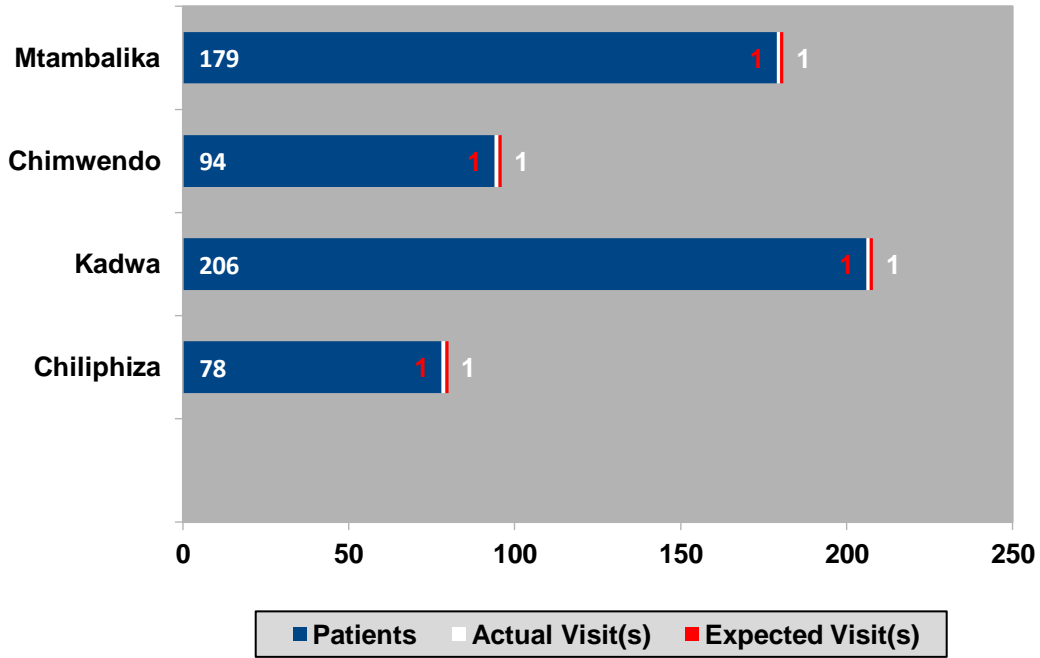


Figure 4: Dowa Patient Attendance – December 2023.

COVID -19 Situation Updates

The COVID-19 situation in the country remains low and in December 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 COVID-19 Data.

	Staff (OCA/HSA)	Others	Total
December Tests	0	0	0
December Positives	0	0	0

Table 2: COVID-19 Cumulative Data

4.2 COVID 19 Vaccine (Pfizer) – KHC Static.

Table 3 below shows Vaccine Doses Administered in 2023

Dose	Male	Female	Total
BFF	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
BFF	438	765	1203
Dose 1	41	40	81
Dose 2	63	87	150
Booster	82	115	197
Total	624	1007	1631

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

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

Table 5: Astra-Zeneca Administered at KHC Static (2023)

4.5 COVID 19 Vaccine Status – KHC Static.

Table 6 below shows Vaccine Status in December 2023

Vaccine Type	Beginning Balance	End Balance
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Table 6: Vaccine Status at KHC Static (December 2023)

Reproductive and Family Planning Health

5.1 Maternal and New-born Health Care

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Admissions	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	34	33	22	40	35	415
Referrals	13	8	14	15	13	23	12	23	12	17	8	16	174
Attendance	51	52	50	45	41	51	59	57	45	39	48	51	589
New Babies	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	36	33	22	40	35	417
Alive Babies	38	44	35	29	28	28	46	35	33	22	40	35	413
Facility Deliveries	33	36	32	29	25	26	44	34	33	22	33	32	379

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	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Weight <2500g	2	1	7	3	0	7	4	8	3	3	4	4	46
Prematurity	4	7	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	2	2	26
Asphyxia	1	1	0	1	3	1	2	4	0	0	1	2	16
Sepsis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Stillbirth Fresh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stillbirth Macerated	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
Neonatal Death	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Total	7	9	9	6	4	9	8	17	6	3	8	8	94
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Table 8; Newborns with complications – 2023

Figure 5 below shows the total newborns complications for 2023.

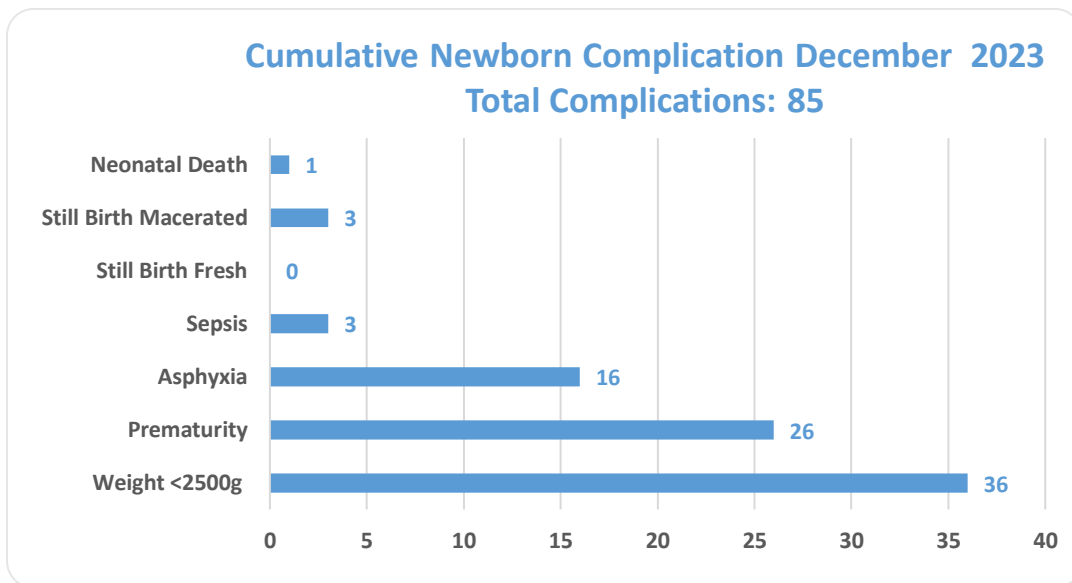


Figure 5: Newborns Complications – 2023

Figure 6 below shows the total monthly Maternity attendance.

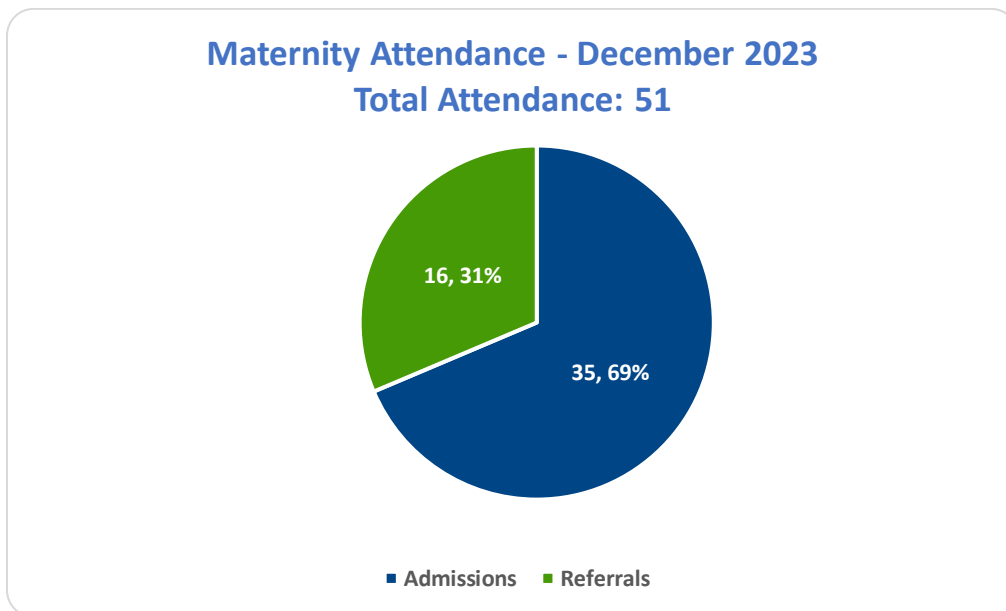


Figure 6: Admissions and Referrals (December 2023)

Table 9 below shows the reason for the referrals

Referral Reason	Referred
Fetal Distress	2
Young Primigravida	1
Obstructed Prolonged Labour	8
Short Stature	1
CPD	1
Cervical Oedema	1
APH	1
Pre-Eclampsia	1
Total	16

Table 9: Referral Reasons - December 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
October	98	33
November	87	32

December	71	28
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Table 10: ANC Attendance – 2023

Figure 7 below shows 2023 Monthly ANC Visits.

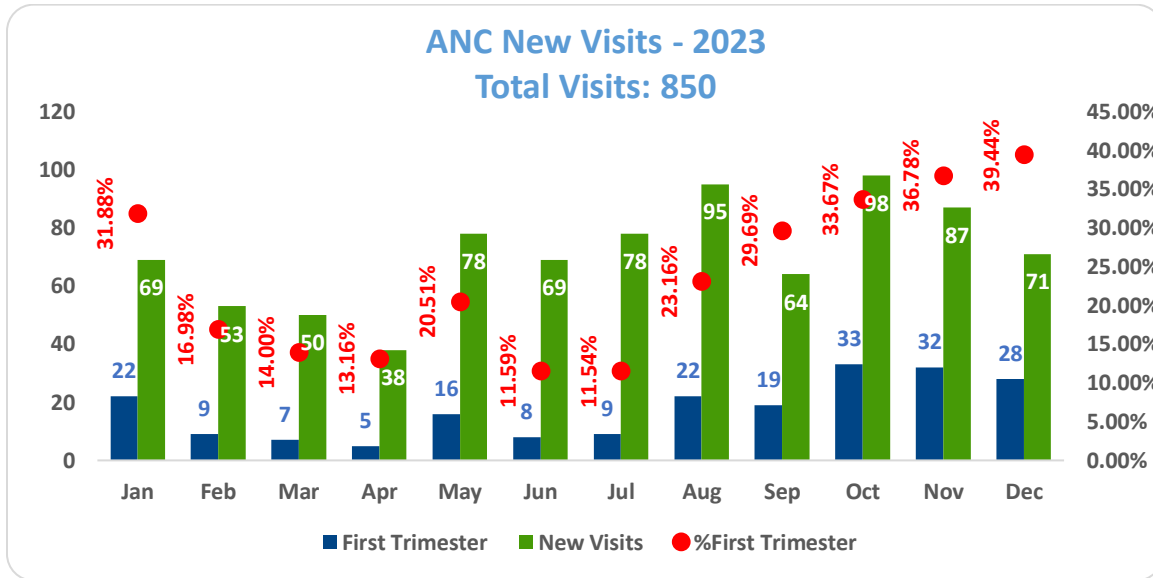


Figure 7: Monthly ANC Visits - 2023.

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	Oct	Nov	Dec
Total	21	30	44	14	0	0	16	64	20	36	40	21
VIA+	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	2	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.

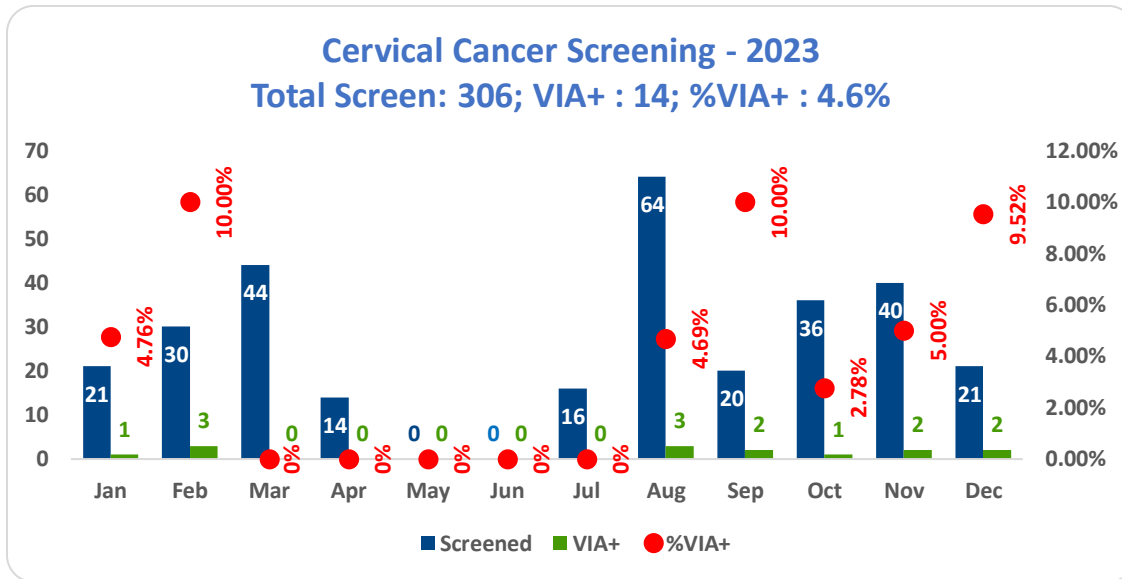


Figure 8; Cervical Cancer Screening - 2023.

Family Planning Clinic Report

Table 12 below shows the 2023 Monthly Family Planning Report.

Months	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
New Clients	55	41	57	53	53	62	57	59	43	67	21	41
Subsequent Clients	466	530	664	671	388	803	648	460	452	686	399	646
Total	521	571	721	724	441	865	705	519	495	753	420	687

Table 12: Monthly Family Planning – 2023

Figure 9 below shows monthly family planning data trends

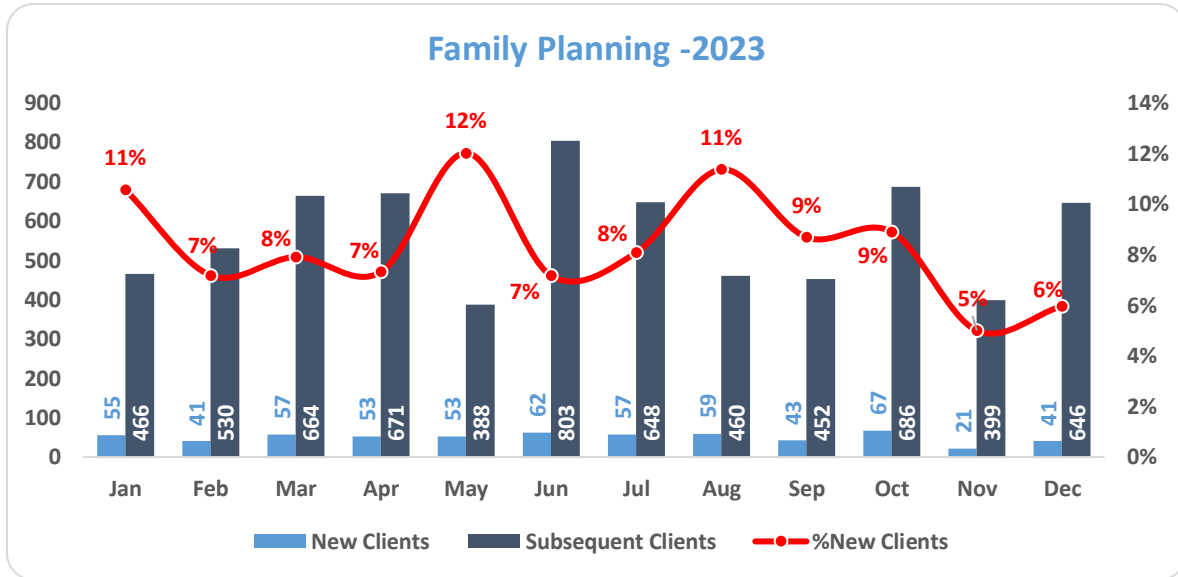


Figure 9: Family Planning Trends - 2023

Eye Clinic

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

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

Month (2023)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eye Infections (Treated)	27	40	49	35	30	39	27	36	32	37	62	38
Eye Surgery (Booked)	2	1	7	6	6	9	3	6	4	4	3	1
Total Seen	29	41	56	41	36	48	30	42	36	41	65	39

Table 13: Monthly Eye Clinic Table - 2023.

Figure 10 below shows the 2023 Monthly Eye Clinics.

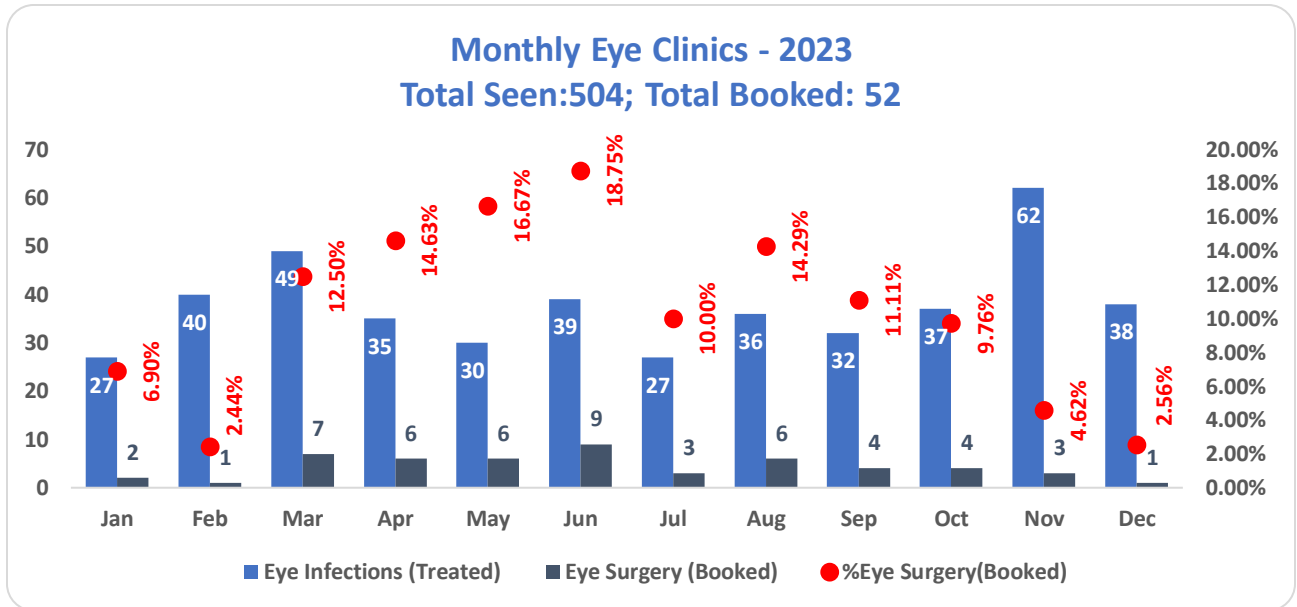


Figure 10: Monthly Eye Clinics - 2023

7. Malaria Report.

Table 14 below shows Malaria tests for December 2023 (Dowa and Kasungu)

	Total Tested	Positives	Negatives	Positivity Rate
Under 5	582	141	441	24%
5 Years and Over	919	326	593	35%
Total	1501	467	1034	31%

Table 14: Total Malaria Tests (December 2023).

Table 15 below shows the total Malaria Cases (MRDT's Positive), LA Issued and Dispensed (OCA Clinics)

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Suspected Malaria Cases	1854	1498	2209	2740	3241	3092	2099	1434	1859	1353	1276	1501
Suspected Cases Tested MRDT	1854	1498	2209	2740	3241	3092	2099	1434	1859	1353	1276	1501
Confirmed Malaria Cases	508	354	635	996	1748	1241	542	258	418	274	288	467

New Malaria Cases Registered	508	361	651	996	1778	1245	548	273	418	274	288	467
LA Dispensed	503	361	651	995	1748	1245	548	273	418	274	288	465
LA Issued	120	600	940	1020	2877	520	150	120	150	300	353	270

Table 15: Total Malaria Cases, LA Issued and Dispensed Table.

Figure 11 shows the total OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Dowa, 2023)

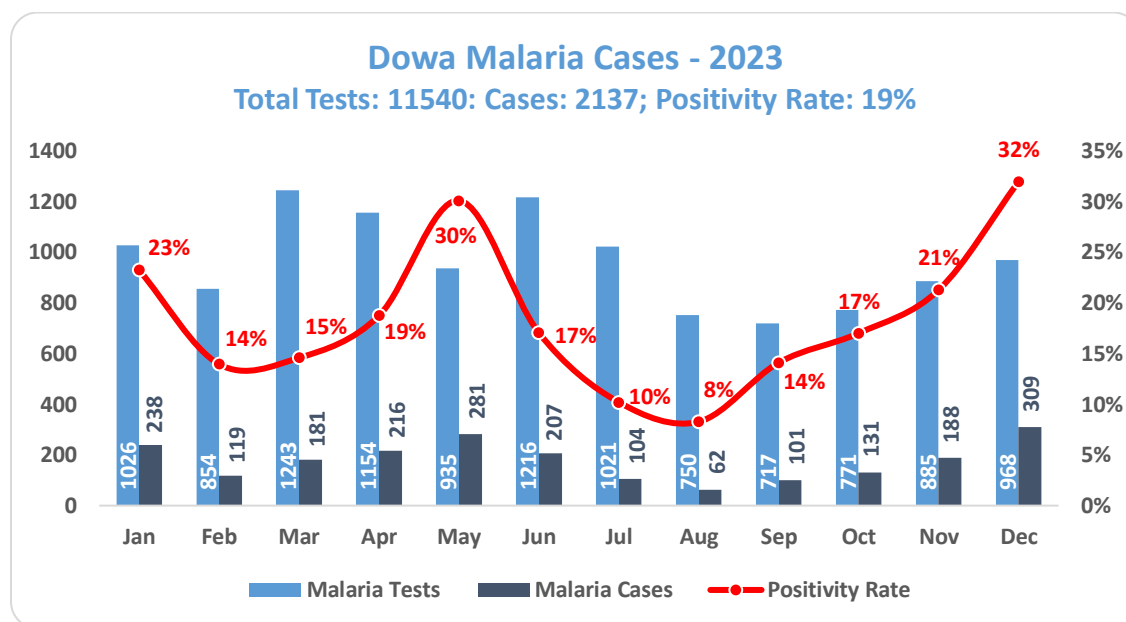


Figure 11: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Dowa, 2023)

Figure 12 shows the total OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Kasungu, 2023)

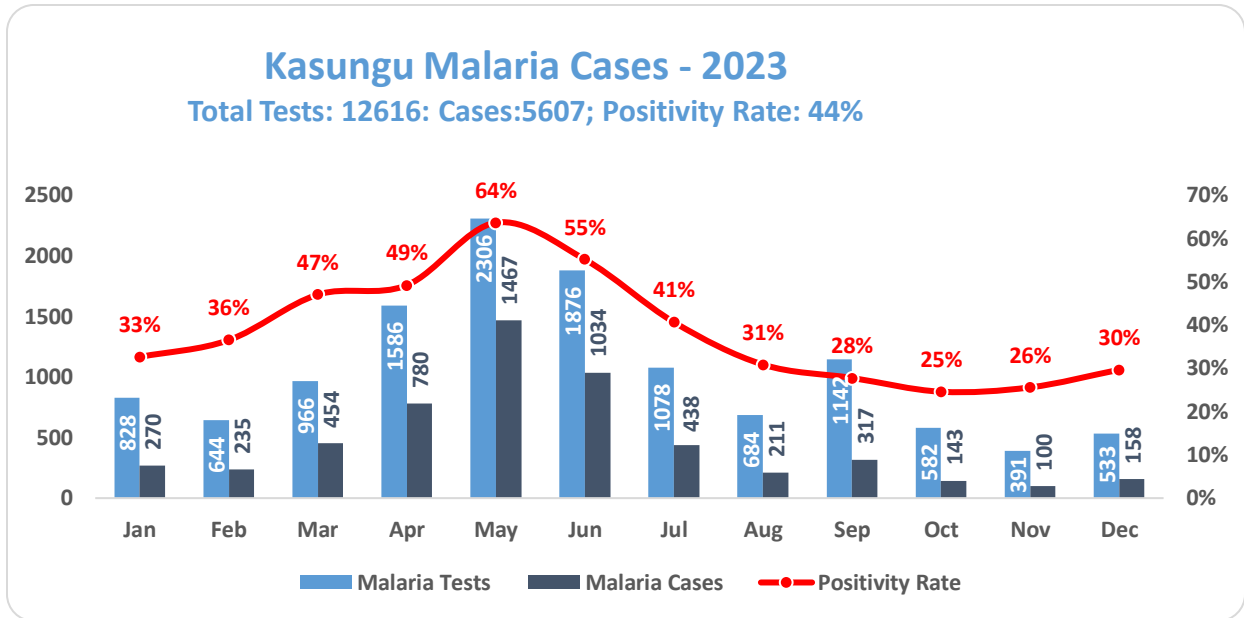


Figure 12: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Kasungu, 2023).

Figure 13 shows the total OCA Clinics under 5 Years of Malaria tests

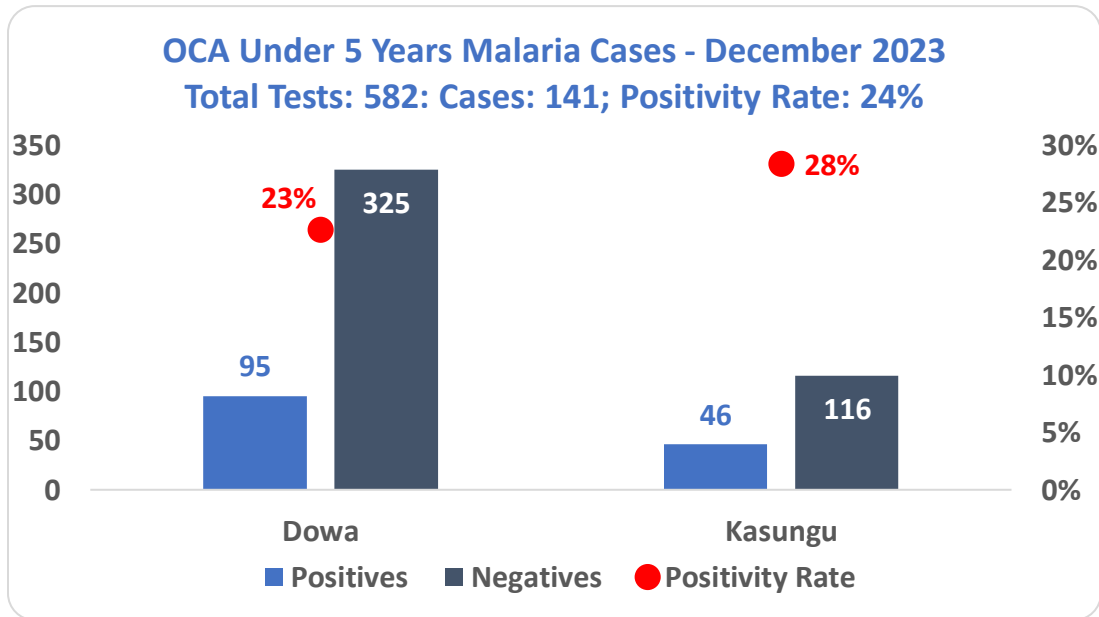


Figure 13: OCA Clinics, Under 5 Years Malaria tests (December 2023)

Figure 14 shows the total OCA Clinics 5 Years and Over Malaria tests

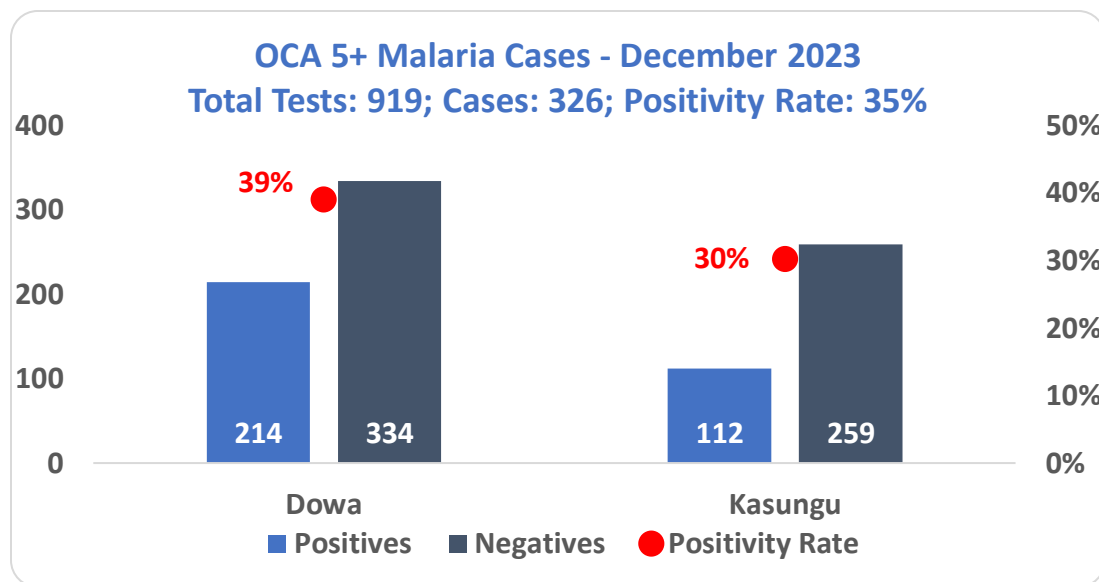


Figure 14: OCA Clinics, 5+ Malaria tests (December 2023).

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%
October	249	4	1.61%
November	261	4	1.53%
December	187	0	0.00%

Table 13; 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 15 below shows HTS’ Monthly Attendance

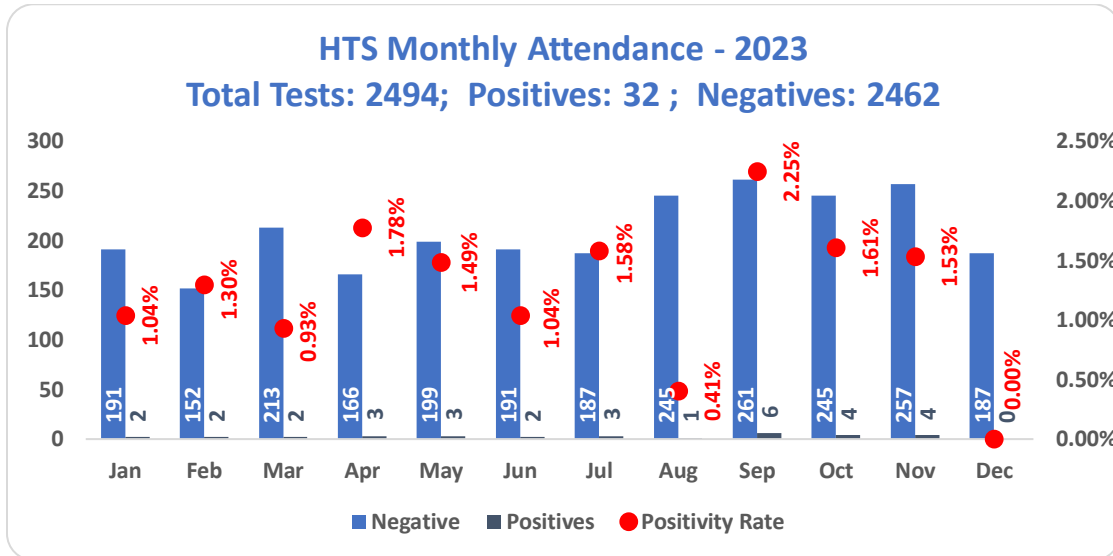


Figure 15: HTS Monthly Tests – 2023

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
Dec	65		20	1	1	0	46	15	0	0

Table 14: Qualitative Lab Tests Data Table for OCA Clinics - December 2023.

Figure 15 below shows qualitative lab tests – December 2023

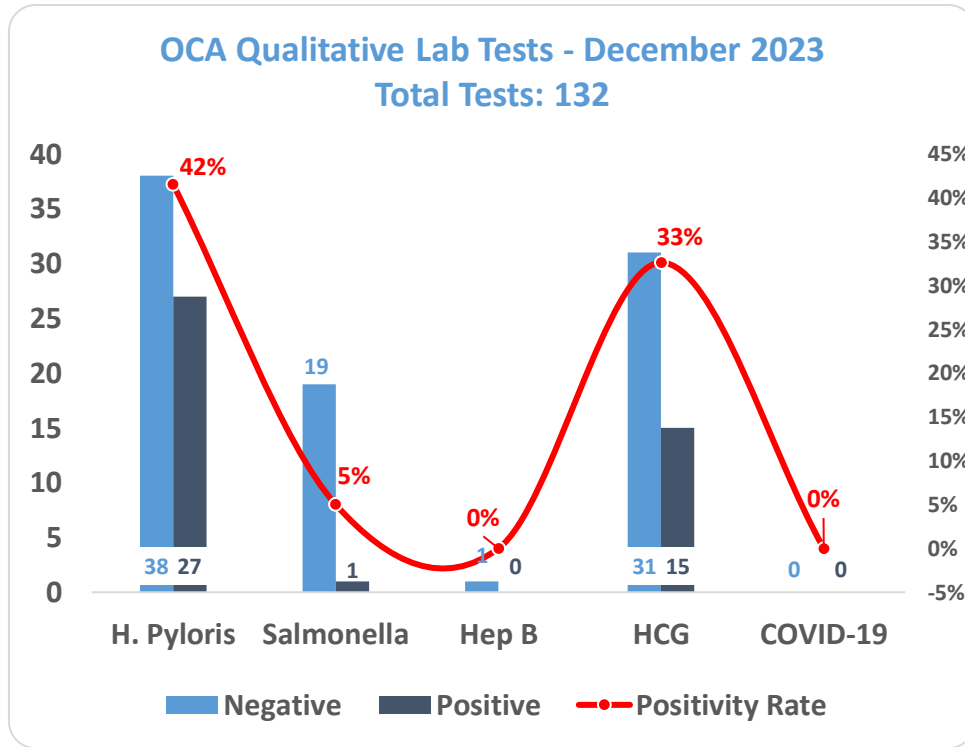


Figure 16: Qualitative Lab Tests – 2023.

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

Oct	66	43	15	129
Nov	87	50	10	137
Dec	58	49	7	70
Total	1060	1009	187	1506

Table 15; Quantitative Lab Tests Data Table for OCA Clinics.

Figure 17 shows quantitative lab tests for the year 2023

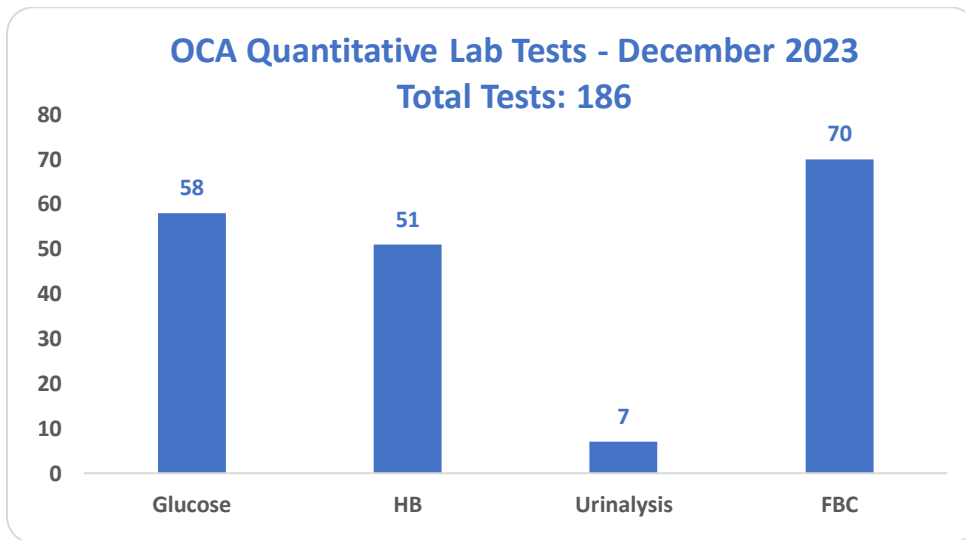


Figure 17: Quantitative Lab Tests – 2023.

Disease Group Trends

Figure 18 below shows Dowa disease occurrences for December 2023

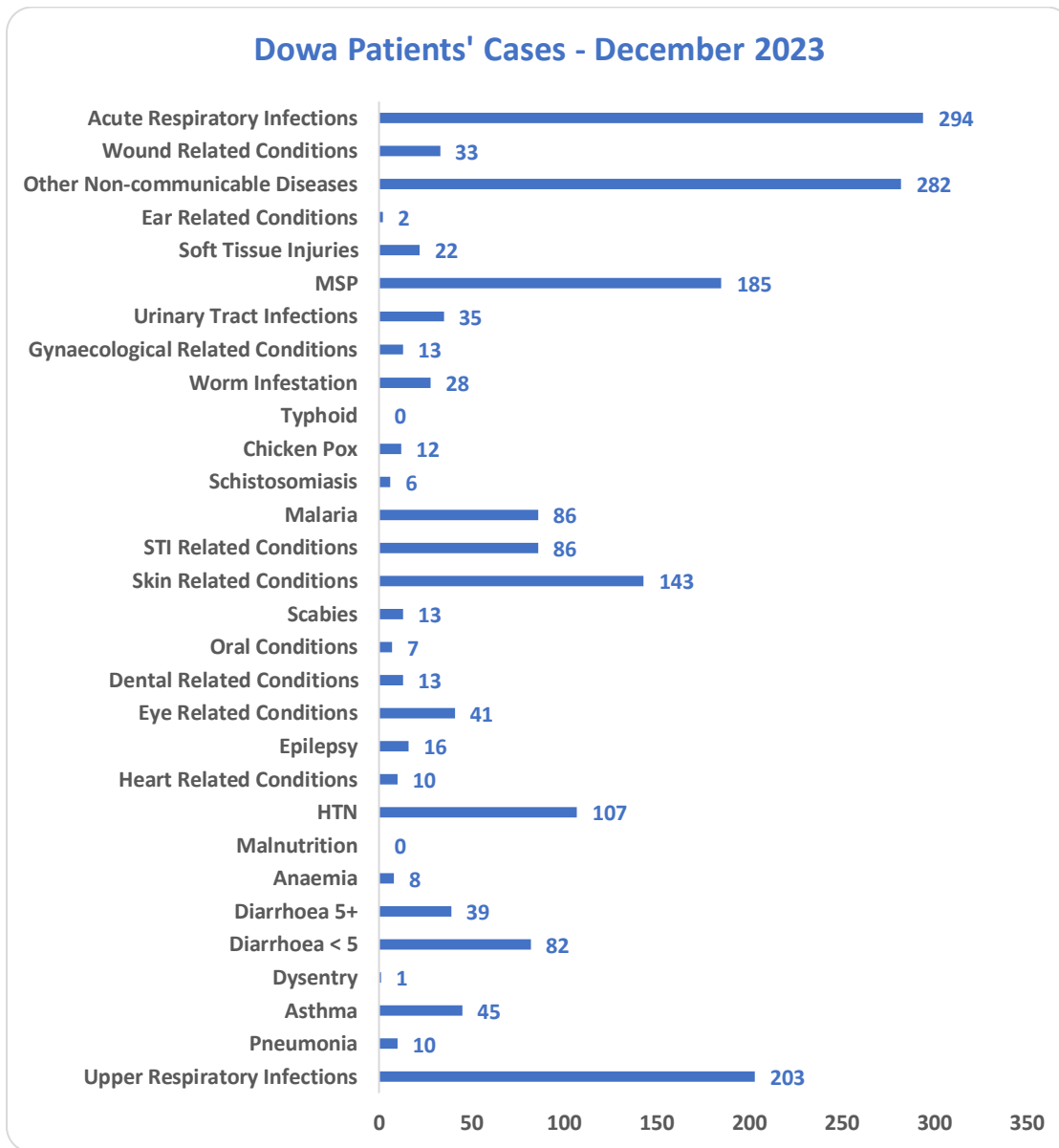


Figure 18: Dowa Disease Occurrences (December 2023).

Figure 19 below shows Kasungu disease occurrences for December 2023.

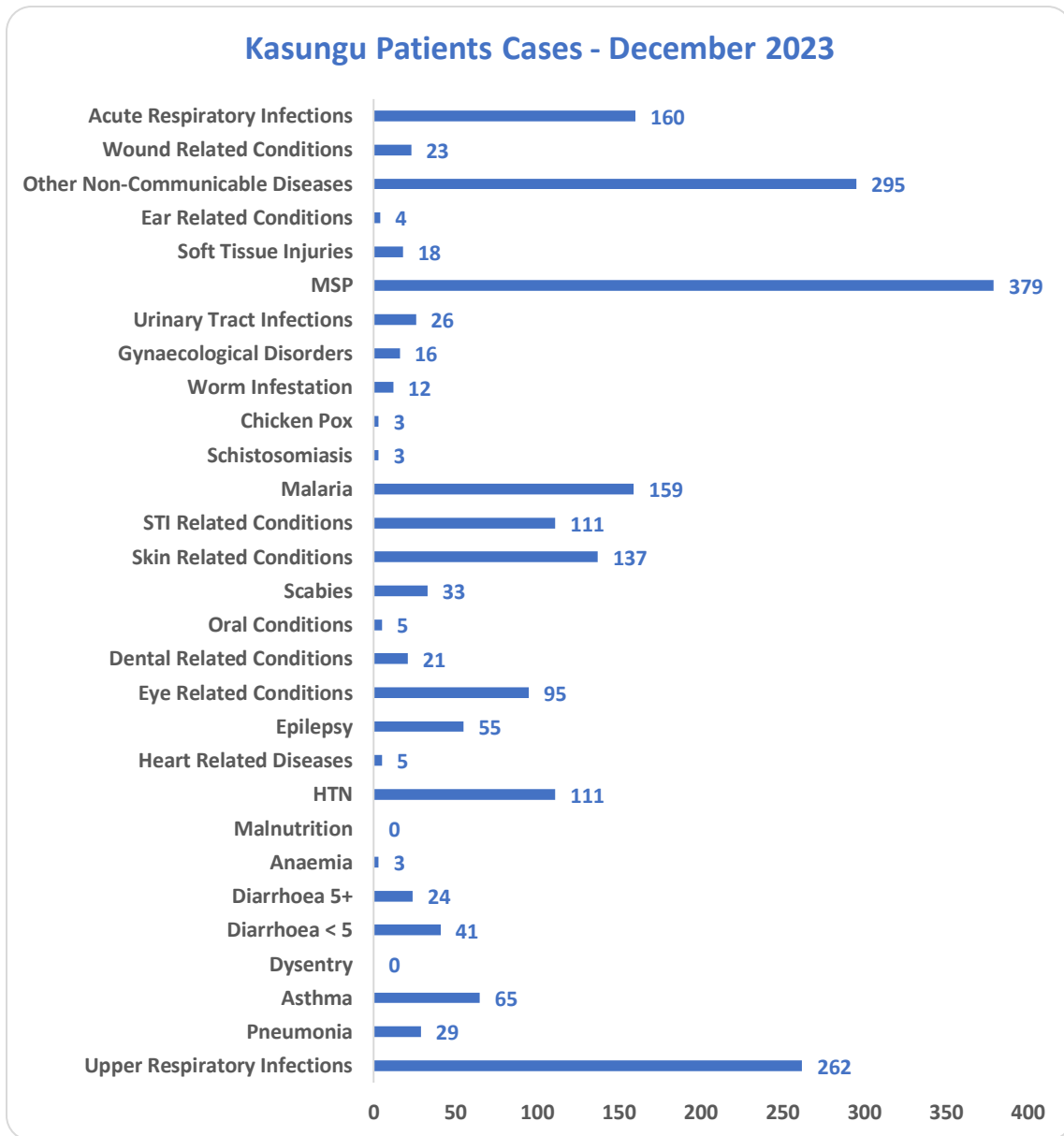


Figure 19: Kasungu Disease Occurrences (December 2023)

B. 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
October	MK 2,594,800	MK 418,190	21	MK 19,914
November	MK 2,656,600	MK 365,651	15	MK 24,377
December	MK 2,281,210	MK 304,651	11	MK 27,696

Table 16: Clinic Finances – 2023

Figure 20 below shows collections and referrals

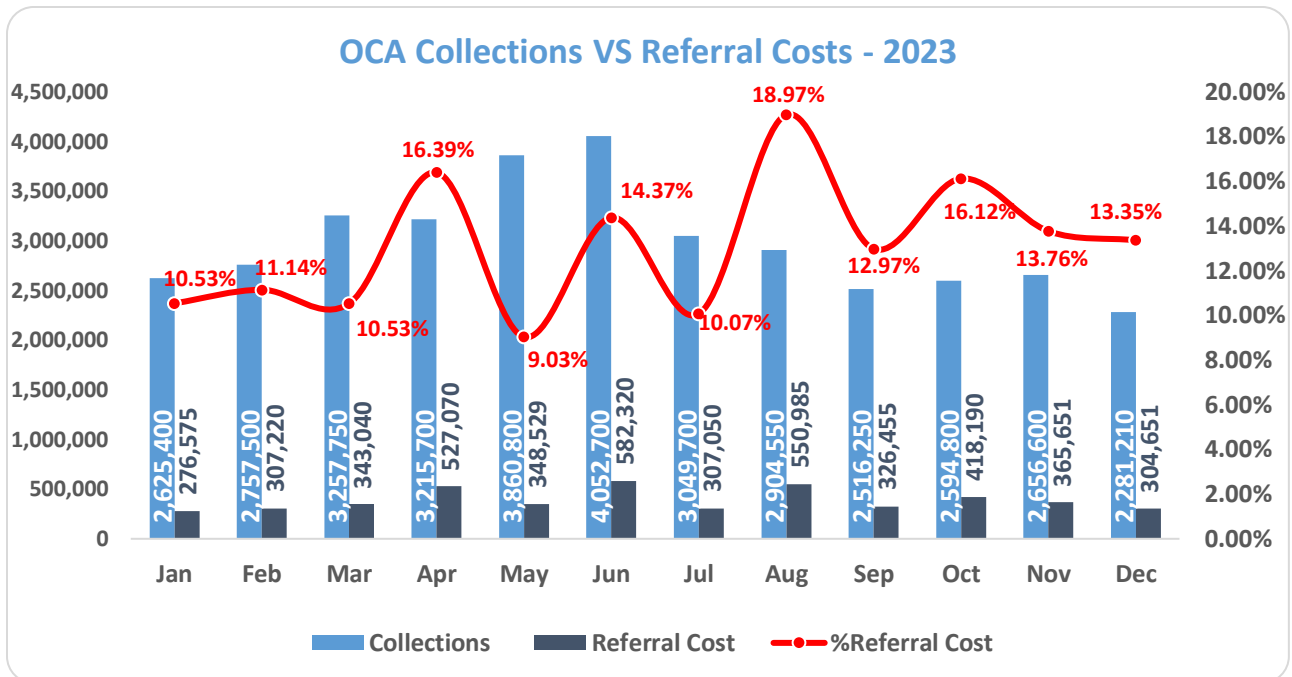


Figure 20: OCA Collections and Referrals - 2023

Figure 21 below shows referred clients

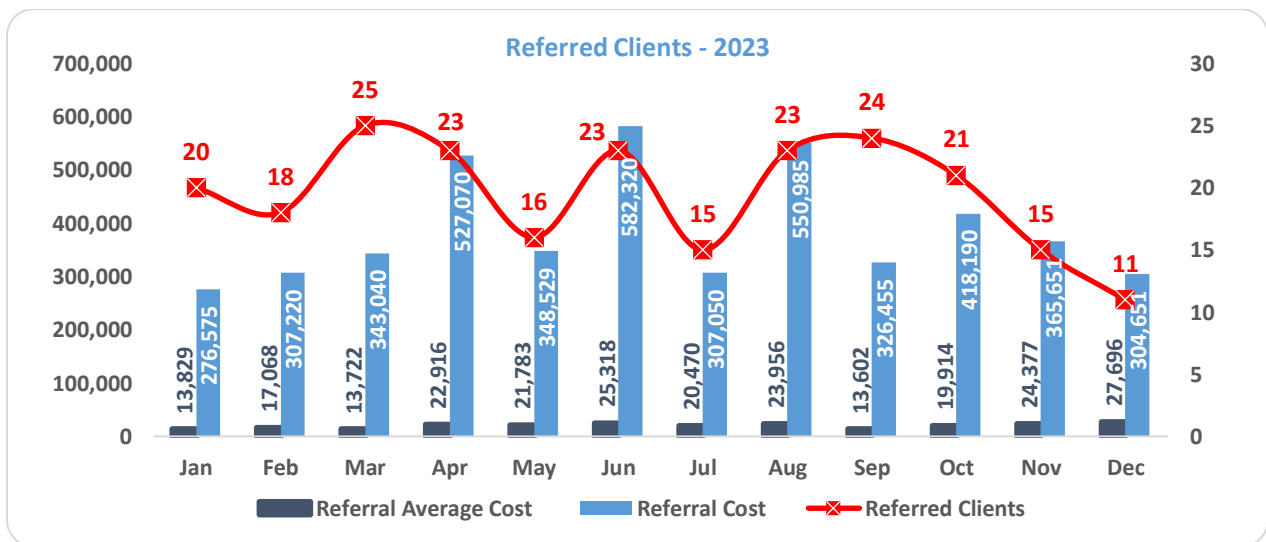


Figure 21: Referred Clients - 2023

C. Achievements and Challenges

1. Success Highlights

- At Antenatal Clinic there is an observation that in first trimester, there is a steady increase in attendance from July to December 2023 partly because of Chintenje incentive promotion at the clinic and according to DHIS2 report the impact is seen immediately in SP antimalarial prophylaxis complete doses and albendazole deworming doses, which the health center is among the 4 in the district doing well in its data elements.
- Towards the end of the year 2023 was an increase in new clients accessing family planning methods
- Kasese Health Centre has elected a service charter sign post to provide basic service information to the public provided by the health centre.

2. Challenges

- Throughout the year underweight (<2500g) remain the main complication of newly born babies followed by prematurity and asphyxia
- In Antenatal clinic there is a steady decrease in first antenatal visits from October to December 2023.
- Cervical cancer screening attendants drop significantly from 40 to 21 probably because of December holidays, one of the providers was sick and due to rainy season which render the roads impassable
- Towards the end of year in Dowa there are upward trends in malaria positivity rate from 8% in August to 32% in December while in Kasungu there is a steady increase from 25% in October to 30% in December. This is so because the end of the year is the beginning of the malaria epidemic season.

D. Way forward

There is a need to continue to sensitize the community in malaria prevention. This is a part of daily OPD health talks at MOC and KHC static clinics.

It's also important to investigate the main contributing factors to early pregnancy, newborn prematurity and underweight.

Appendices

Appendix A: December 2023 MOC Schedule

December 2023 MOC Schedule					
Date	Day	Station	District	Outreach Clinic	Time
1	Friday	Kadwa	Dowa	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
2	Saturday	Weekend			
3	Sunday	Weekend			
4	Monday	Nkhanga	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
5	Tuesday	Kantomphole	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
6	Wednesday	Chisuwe	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
7	Thursday	Galika	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
8	Friday	Mtambalika	Dowa	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
9	Saturday	Weekend			
10	Sunday	Weekend			
11	Monday	Kambulu	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
12	Tuesday	Kalimanyungu	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
13	Wednesday	Bowe	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
14	Thursday	Kavwenje	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
15	Friday	Chiliphiza	Dowa	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
16	Saturday	Weekend			
17	Sunday	Weekend			
18	Monday	Miyowe	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
19	Tuesday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
20	Wednesday	Lisito	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
21	Thursday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
22	Friday	Chimwendo	Dowa	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
23	Saturday	Weekend			

24	Sunday	Weekend			
25	Monday	Christmas Day			
26	Tuesday	Boxing Day			
27	Wednesday	Bowe	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
28	Thursday	Ndanowa	Kasungu	Outreach Clinic	09:00 AM – 3:00 PM
29	Friday	Preparation Day			

Water and Sanitation Program

Executive Summary

The WASH program's overall goal is to reduce morbidity and mortality in rural communities through improved access to water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in Malawi. The month of December is the last month of program implementation for 2023. This month provides an opportune time to review progress made by the program within the month and the entire year. Therefore, this report provides an overview of the key activities conducted and cumulative data for key interventions for 2023.

Summary of Monthly Achievements

In December the following milestones were achieved;

- Supported 25 water point repairs (Service/preventive: 20; major repairs: 5)
- Conducted Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Chigoma 2 WPC
- Completed construction of latrines at Mambala Primary School
- Drilled 4 boreholes (Chidya, Kalidele, Moses, Tsambewu)

Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements

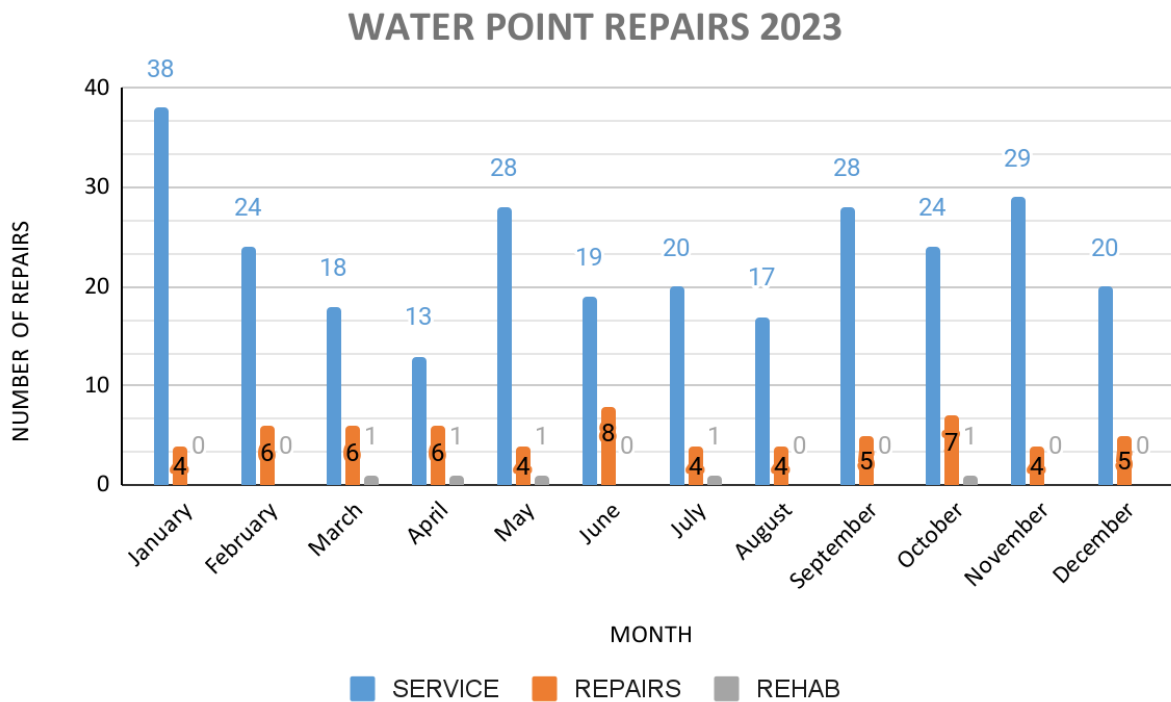
The WASH program carried out the following key activities in December 2023.

Water point/borehole repairs and rehabilitations



Left: Damaged apron of a borehole, Right: Rehabilitated borehole apron with support from OCA

One of the major activities of the WASH program is the maintenance of boreholes/water points. The water points are maintained by area mechanics (trained local artisans) with support from OCA. This is done to improve the functionality of water points thereby achieving sustainable access to water supply services for the people of Kasese. In December the program supported repairs for 25 water points. Out of the 25 water points repaired, 20 were preventive maintenance and 5 were major repairs. Overall in 2023, the WASH program has supported repairs of 346 water points. Out of these water points, 68 are major repairs, while 278 are preventive 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). During the month, the WASH program conducted CBM training for Chigoma 2 WPC. The borehole in Chigoma 2 was drilled with support from OCA in November 2023. During the training participants were trained in water point hygiene and minor repairs. Each training had 11 participants and was facilitated collaboratively between OCA and the Dowa district council. Cumulatively, in 2023 OCA has trained a total of 16 WPCs out of which 3 are refresher training while 13 are training for new water point committees.



A demonstration of how an Afridev pump cylinder works during CBM training for Chigoma 2 WPC

Borehole drilling



***Left** - Unprotected shallow well which was used as a source of drinking water in Taziwona village before OCA intervention, **Right** - Newly drilled borehole by OCA in Taziwona village*

To improve access to potable water supply the WASH program drills wells for communities with limited access. In December, the WASH program drilled 4 wells in Moses, Kalidele, Tsambewu, and Chidya 2. The 4 wells that were drilled in December 2023. These four wells are expected to benefit approximately 1040 people from these 4 villages. Overall in 2023, the WASH program has drilled 16 wells thus fully achieving the annual target of boreholes to be drilled.

Latrine Construction at Mambala Primary School



Left - Damaged boys' latrines at Mambala before OCA intervention, Right - Completed boys' latrines at Mambala Primary School.

In December, the WASH program completed the construction of latrines at Mambala Primary School in the Tchale Education zone. Construction of latrines started in November 2023. Mambala Primary has an enrolment of 502 out of which 272 are girls and 230 are boys. The new latrines being constructed by OCA will be used by boys since girls already have latrines which are in good condition. The boys' latrines at the schools were damaged by rain during the rainy season in 2021. The new block of latrines will have 4 cubicles of pit latrines. The newly constructed latrines are expected to be in use in January 2024 when the new school term opens.

WASH Joint Sector Review Meeting

In December, the WASH program was invited to attend the central region WASH Joint Sector Review (JSR). The JSR is an annual meeting in which WASH stakeholders share the progress of their WASH initiatives in Malawi. The JSR is conducted at the district, regional level and national level. This year OCA was invited to attend a central JSR which was held at Thope Lodge in Mponela. The meeting was attended by WASH NGO representatives and relevant government officials from district and national levels. During the meeting, the OCA initiative was presented through the Dowa Joint WASH presentation which was presented by the Dowa District Water Development Officer. OCA was among the NGOs that provided financial support to the JSR. The meeting was very important for OCA since it exposed OCA and its initiatives to other national stakeholders.



Participants during the JSR meeting at Thope Lodge in Mponela

Conclusion

The OCA WASH program is excited with the progress it has made in the promotion of water supply, sanitation and hygiene. The program has achieved almost all of its major objectives in the past year. All this was achieved through coordinated efforts between the WASH program, stakeholders and donors. Therefore, as the year ends, the WASH program wishes all stakeholders and its donors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Agriculture and Business

Agriculture

Executive Summary

Farming is one of the important activities which are building the economy of Malawi. Smallholder farmers depend on farming to improve their economic status and feed their families. OCA supports smallholder farmers in equipping them with knowledge on commercial farming. The activities are done in both irrigation and rainfed



farming through provision of farm inputs as microloans and agriculture expertise. Some of the activities conducted during the reporting month have been explained below.

Planting

As the rainfall season is underway for the growing season of 2023 – 2024, planting of Maize, Soya, beans and groundnuts has been the main activity during this month. The weather conditions during the planting season have been relatively stable, with adequate sunlight and moderate temperatures. This allowed farmers to initiate planting activities without significant interruptions. A diverse crop has been planted during this season, reflecting the agricultural diversity of the region. Mwayiwathu farm club has planted Maize and groundnuts on 20 acres of land. OCA has also planted maize, soya and groundnuts on 38 acres of land. The choices of crop varieties have been influenced by market demand, climate suitability and local farming traditions.

As the planting season progresses, close monitoring of weather conditions and proactive agricultural practices will be crucial. Early preparations for potential challenges including extreme weather events and pest outbreaks, will be essential to ensuring a successful harvest.



Planting on OCA and Mwayiwathu farms

Demonstration farming

Demonstration farming plays a pivotal role in showcasing innovative agricultural practices, sustainable techniques and modern technologies to local farmers. The demonstration plots have been established on the OCA farm with support from Bayer, Seed-Co, farmers world and Mgom'mero seed companies. Various crops have been showcased in demonstration plots emphasizing both staple and cash crops. The selection of the crops takes into account local demand, climate suitability and market trends. Demonstrations have included traditional crops alongside newer, more resilient varieties. The demonstration plots have focused on highlighting best practices in agriculture such as precision farming techniques, organic farming methods and integrated pest management.

Fertilizer application

Basal dressing fertilizer application in maize crop is a serious step in optimizing nutrient availability for crops. A variety of fertilizers can be used for basal dressing based on soil nutrient analysis and crop requirements. The type of fertilizer used on the OCA farm was NPK with composition of 23:10:5+6s+1Zn. The composition was tailored based on Malawi's soil conditions so that they meet the specific needs of the crops being planted and ensure a balanced nutrient profile. Basal dressing fertilizer was applied using precision application methods such as dollop method to ensure uniform distribution and maximize nutrient uptake by the crop while minimizing wastage.

Meeting

The Agriculture Program Manager attended a DAECC meeting where various NGOs presented progress of reports. Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) have several projects in Dowa district and for the month of December, they were presenting to DAECC the success they have made during the period they have been in Dowa. CARD has provided financial literacy classes to smallholder farmers, irrigation farming practices, provision of collateral to access loans with banks. Also supported smallholder farmers in having access to business opportunities through provision of cooking oil refinery machines, production of chickens and pigs, and insect farming. The projects being implemented made progress despite some challenges which they went through.

Agroecology farm

OCA agroecology farm as a holistic and sustainable approach to farming, integrates ecological principles into agricultural systems, fostering biodiversity, resilience, and environmental health. The farm currently has been embraced with local maize with an aim of creating a resilient and self-sustaining agroecosystem. Intercropping practices are actively implemented to maximize resource utilization and increase overall farm productivity. Companion planting strategies were employed to enhance nutrient cycling, reduce weed pressure and create a balanced ecosystem that supports the health of both plant and soil.

The agroecology farm which involves the use of organic manure and natural pest and disease control has produced its first onion of good quality. The agroecology farm which was introduced in the month of September 2023, was involved in several trial crops including onion. Onion cultivated on the plot of 2m by 10m has produced almost 35kgs of onion which is a good start. There are different types of trials which are taking place on the farm including production of local maize. This is done with an aim of training farmers in production of different types of crops with low production cost.



Onion harvested from OCA agroecology farm

Weeding

For the good health of the cultivated crops, weed management is a crucial aspect for good harvest. Manual weeding technique was used to take off the weeds in the field. Weeding operations were timed based on the growth stage of the crops and the emergence of the weed species. Early weeding interventions were prioritized to prevent weed competition with crops during critical growth phases. The diligent implementation of weeding strategies has positively influenced crop performance. There is improved crop growth and reduced competition for resources.



Maize crops well weeded on OCA farm

Business and Financial Empowerment Microloans (FEM)

Executive Summary

Through its financially empowering microloan program for women, OCA continues to help women entrepreneurs with business microloans and financial literacy as part of its mission to enhance livelihoods. Currently, the program helps 68 female business owners in the Kasese, Kachigamba and Mtambalika markets. The Fem program organized and carried out a number of activities in December, which are described below.

Disbursement of loans

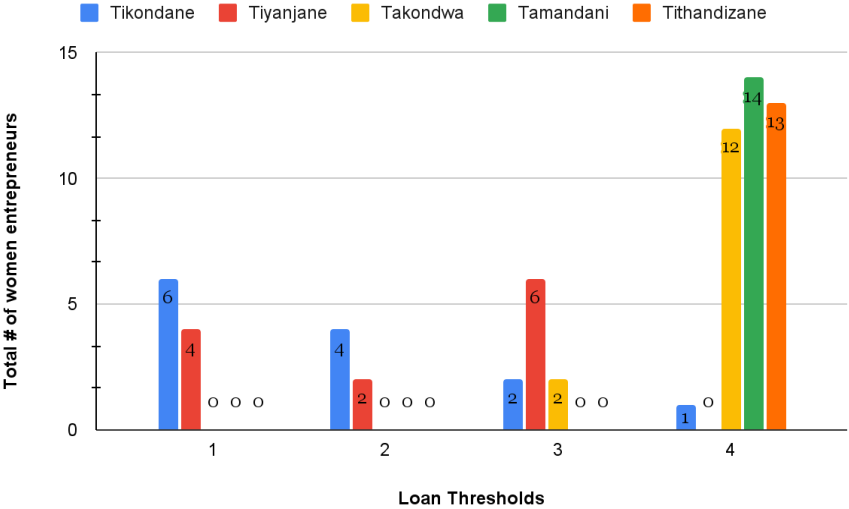
The FEM program managed to disburse a total of **MWK30,585,700** as loans to 66 women entrepreneurs. The loan breakdown to the five FEM groups was as follows; MWK 12,495,000 was given to Tikondane FEM group, MWK 9,400,000 was disbursed to Tiyanjane FEM group, Takondwa received MWK 4,295,700, Tamandani got a total of MWK 2,475,000 and Tithandizane FEM group got the least amount of MWK 1,920,000 . It should also be noted that some of the long serving members from Tikondane, Tiyanjane and Takondwa groups were upgraded and had the privilege of getting higher amounts as compared to the previous loan cycles. The revision of the amount of loans accessible to women entrepreneurs was done Upon scrutiny of their businesses and how well their businesses were doing. Additionally, devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha contributed to the revaluation of the thresholds.

Previously, we had three Microloan thresholds. During the December Loan period another threshold was introduced making it a total of four thresholds. The businesses that were rated to be doing extremely well than others had access to get loans from a million kwacha up to 1.5 million kwachas. Whereas those businesses rated to be doing fairly well were ranked as second and were allowed to get microloans ranging from MWK 601, 000 to MWK 999,999. In the third threshold, the members were allowed to get a maximum of MWK 600,000 with the minimum member being given MWK 401,000. The last threshold ranged from as low as MWK 1 up to MWK 400,000. This threshold was mostly for newly recruited businesses, existing members' businesses that were still not doing so well and for members who had opted to get smaller amounts. Below is a table showing the previous thresholds and the revised thresholds.

Loan Thresholds	Current Amounts in MWK	Previous amounts in MWK
1	1,000,000 to 1,500,000	
2	601,000 to 999,999	401,000 to 600,000
3	401,000 to 600,000	201,000 to 400,000
4	1 to 400,000	1 to 200,000

The total number of loans given to women entrepreneur segregated by FEM group and thresholds is as follows;

- 1st threshold; 6 members from Tikondane and 4 members from Tiyanjane
- 2nd threshold; 4 members from Tikondane and 2 members from Tiyanjane
- 3rd threshold; 2 member from Tikondane, 6 members from Tiyanjane and 2 from Takondwa
- 4th threshold; 1 member from Tikondane, none from Tiyanjane, 12 from Takondwa, 14 from Tamandani and 13 from Tithandizane,



Village Savings and Loans

The Tikondane FEM members wrapped up their January to December savings cycle on December 29th. The top recipient received Mwk 389,500, while the bottom recipient received Mwk 64,100. The total group savings were Mwk 2,903,200.00 which translates to 94% increase as compared to 2023 savings. These savings have really helped the women to be able to farm despite the fact that the value of the money was affected by devaluation. However, the members of Tiyanjane had decided to split their savings in January 2024. As for Takondwa members, they managed to save Mwk 691,500 which is also a good start considering that it was only seven members and that the previous year the group did not save anything tangible.

	Total Shares	Total Interests	Total Receivables
Migail	136,500.00	102,700.00	239,200.00
Patricia	62,000.00	36,800.00	98,800.00
Olipa	267,000.00	122,400.00	389,400.00
Alinet	219,000.00	97,200.00	316,200.00
Lonily	86,500.00	73,000.00	159,500.00
Lizinet	47,000.00	17,100.00	64,100.00
Edilina	226,000.00	142,900.00	368,900.00
Deborah	86,000.00	43,000.00	129,000.00
Dorothy	121,500.00	42,100.00	163,600.00
Gloria	81,000.00	72,800.00	153,800.00
Maligelita	82,000.00	27,600.00	109,600.00
Mary	72,000.00	49,800.00	121,800.00
Rabecca	98,500.00	105,900.00	204,400.00
Grace	187,500.00	47,400.00	234,900.00
Total	1,784,500.00	988,700.00	2,773,200.00

Education Support Program

Executive Summary

Education is one of the powerful tools to break the poverty cycle and provide students with a brighter future. At Orant we create a supportive environment



as well as the resources to help students with their studies.

We ensure that every opportunity is given to the students in our program to complete schooling to the best of their ability.

The following were the activities which were accomplished by the Education program in the month of December, 2023.

Monitoring visits

The OCA education program visited sponsored students in their respective schools. The aim of the visits was to collect letters which the students wrote to their sponsors. Every term (semester), students are encouraged to correspond with their sponsors through letters as one way of communicating to them about their academic life. The sponsors respond to the letters and the communication keeps going. A total of 30 letters were collected from students and sent to their sponsors.



Students from Lilongwe girls sec. school writing letters to their sponsors

In addition, the students also received counseling on good behavior. They were told to have good behavior because it is extremely important in school life as it sets foundations for their success later in life. Good behavior is a transferable skill in life and it can bring on many virtues, such as professional success through being focused and staying healthy. Furthermore, good behavior is what helps students to achieve good performance in school. Visiting these schools was important and the students were greatly inspired from what was shared with them.



Students from Likuni girls Sec. school being inspired by OCA education personnel

Library visit

The OCA education program also visited Ngala CDSS Library. The aim of the visit was to monitor progress. It was noted that many students are visiting the Library frequently. One of the major reasons could be because it was the end of term one exams. During the visit, we also had the chance to check the Book pamphlets which were donated to them. The Pamphlets were in good condition but there was a need for them to be laminated so that they don't get damaged. OCA education program personnel collected the Pamphlets to help them with lamination so that they are ready to use next term (second term). *The Pictures below showing students studying (right) at Ngala CDSS and the Pamphlets (left) which were donated by OCA*



Conclusion

In the month of December, 2023 students wrote their end of first term examinations and they went for a holiday of two weeks. Next term (second term) will start in January 2024.