



NOVEMBER, 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 November 2023, Kasese Health Center (KHC) saw **1982** clients at (OPD). Only **34** patients were seen during weekends and nights. The total number of patients seen in November is **2016** (KHC OPD). MOC in Kasese catchment areas saw **670**. Kasungu (Bowe) Outreach clinic saw **2112** clients. MOC's total number of patients seen is **2782**. The total number of patients seen in November 2023 is **4798** (Dowa: **2016 (42%)** & Kasungu **2782 (58%)**).

The Laboratory department tested **1276** for Malaria, out of which **288** were positive, representing a **23%** positivity rate. In Dowa, **885** patients were tested and **188(21%)** were positive cases; in Kasungu, **391** patients were tested and **100(26%)** were positive.

The Maternity department admitted **40** mothers and referred **8**. A total of **33** babies were born at the facility and **7** in transit (BBA). Out of **40** babies, **8** had complications (**4** Weight < 2.5 Kgs, **1** Asphyxia, **2** Prematurity and **1** Sepsis). The total Maternity attendance was **48 (40 admissions and 8 referrals)**.

The HTS department tested **261** clients, of which **4** were positive, representing **1.53%**.

The total number of patients seen at the eye clinic by an outsourced clinician is **65** and **3** were booked for surgery.

The public health department administered **143** doses of Johnson and Johnson (J & J) COVID-19 vaccine. Cumulatively, the department administered **2316** of COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer: **1113** and J & J: **1203**).

Cervical Cancer providers screened a total of **40** women and **2** were VIA positive.

The MOC team managed to conduct all **21** 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
OPD Static	1755	1680	2385	1978	2301	2584	2040	2003	2034	1910	1982
Bowe MOC	2481	3188	3005	3523	4373	4218	2931	2650	2256	2329	2112
Kasese MOC	667	489	803	876	723	864	743	630	575	659	670
Nights/Holiday	44	46	40	56	58	64	93	49	33	42	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>4947</b>	<b>5403</b>	<b>6233</b>	<b>6433</b>	<b>7455</b>	<b>7730</b>	<b>5807</b>	<b>5332</b>	<b>4898</b>	<b>4940</b>	<b>4798</b>

*Table 1: Monthly OPD And Outreach Clinic Attendance*

Figure 1 below shows the total OCA patient attendance in 2023

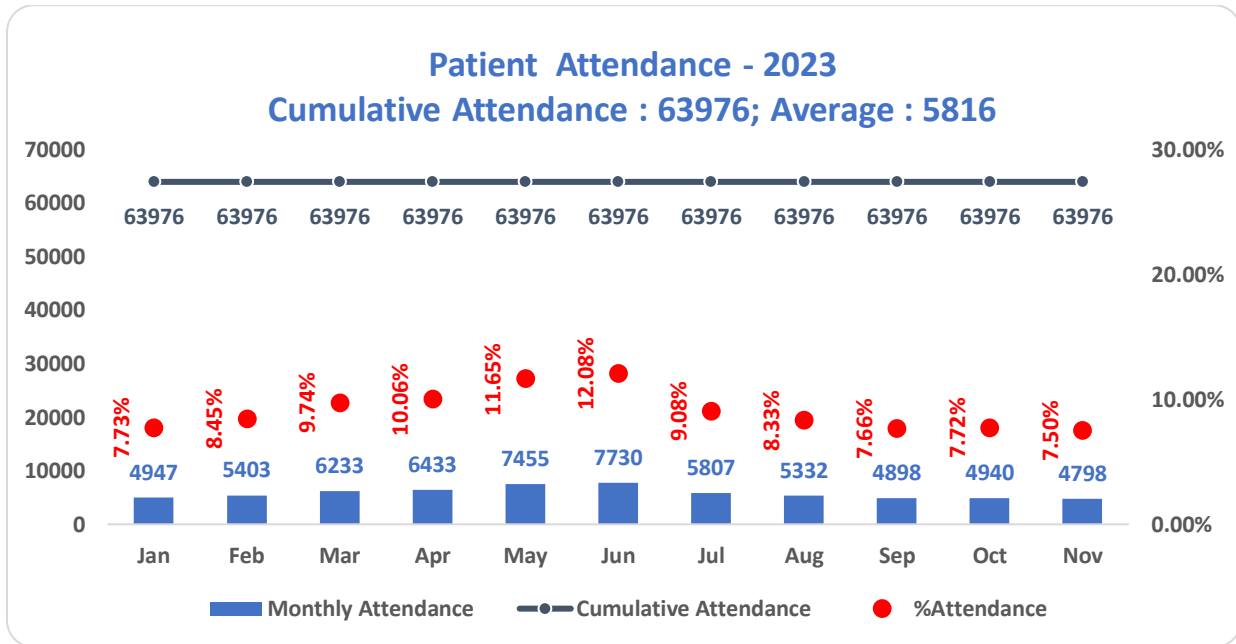


Figure 1: OCA Patient Attendance – 2023.

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

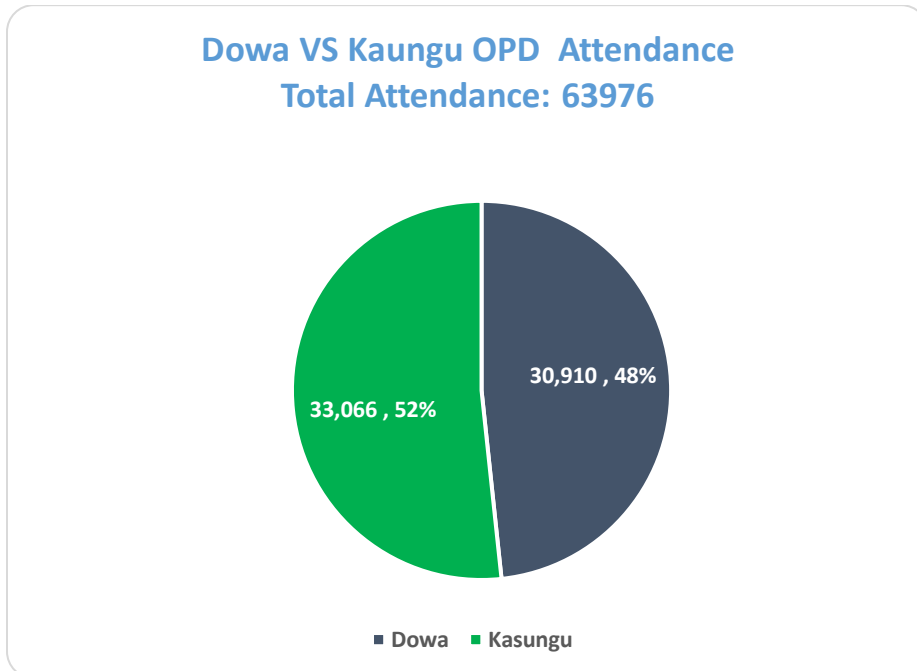


Figure 2: Dowa vs Kasungu (2023).

## OCA MOC Updates

Figure 3 below shows the Kasungu patient attendance for November 2023

**MOC Kasungu (Bowe) Monthly Patient Attendance - November 2023**  
**Total Patients: 2112 ; Average: 124 ; Expected Visits: 17 ; Actual Visits: 17;**

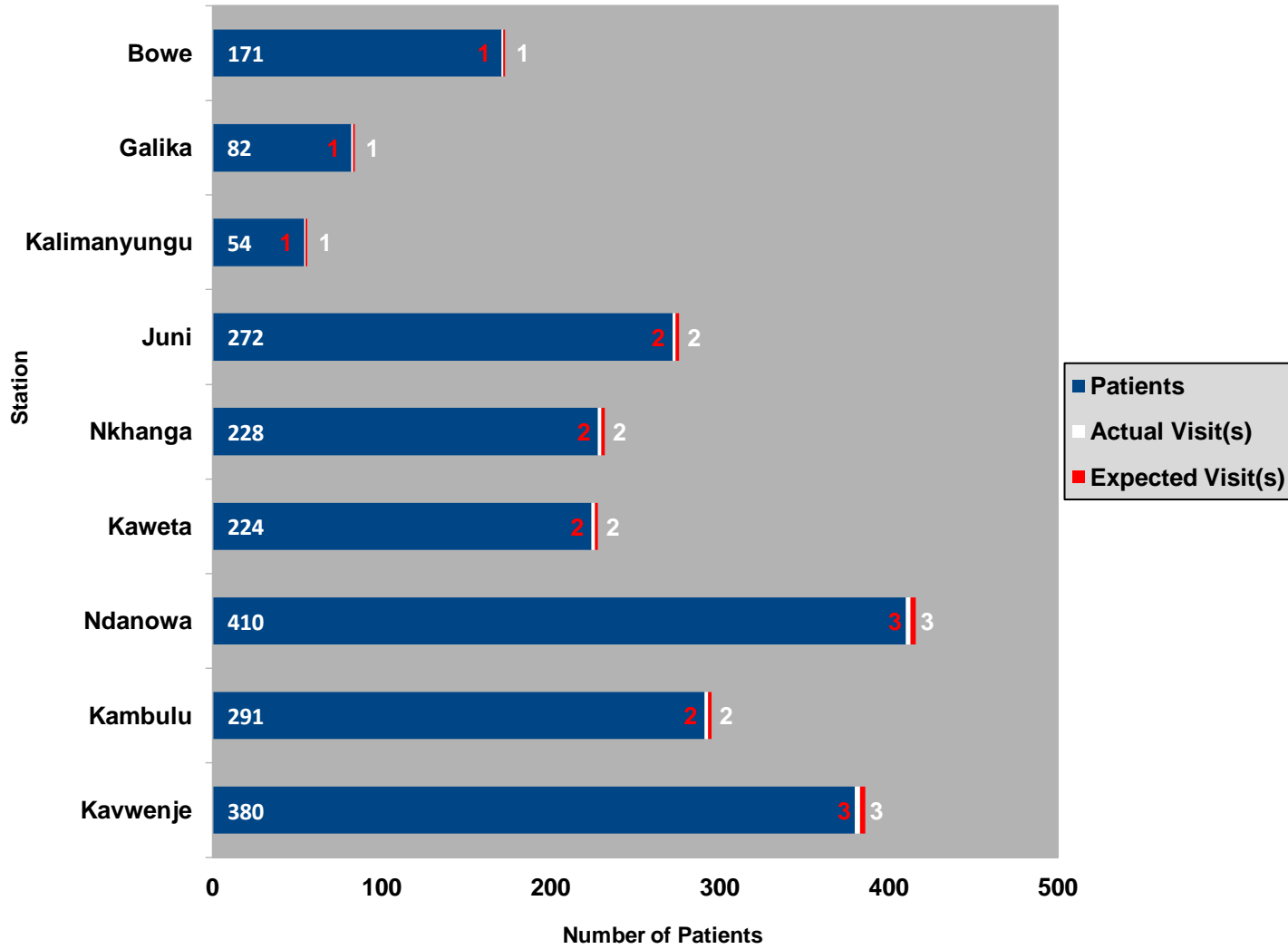


Figure 3: Kasungu Patient Attendance – November 2023.

Figure 4 below shows the Dowa patient attendance for November 2023

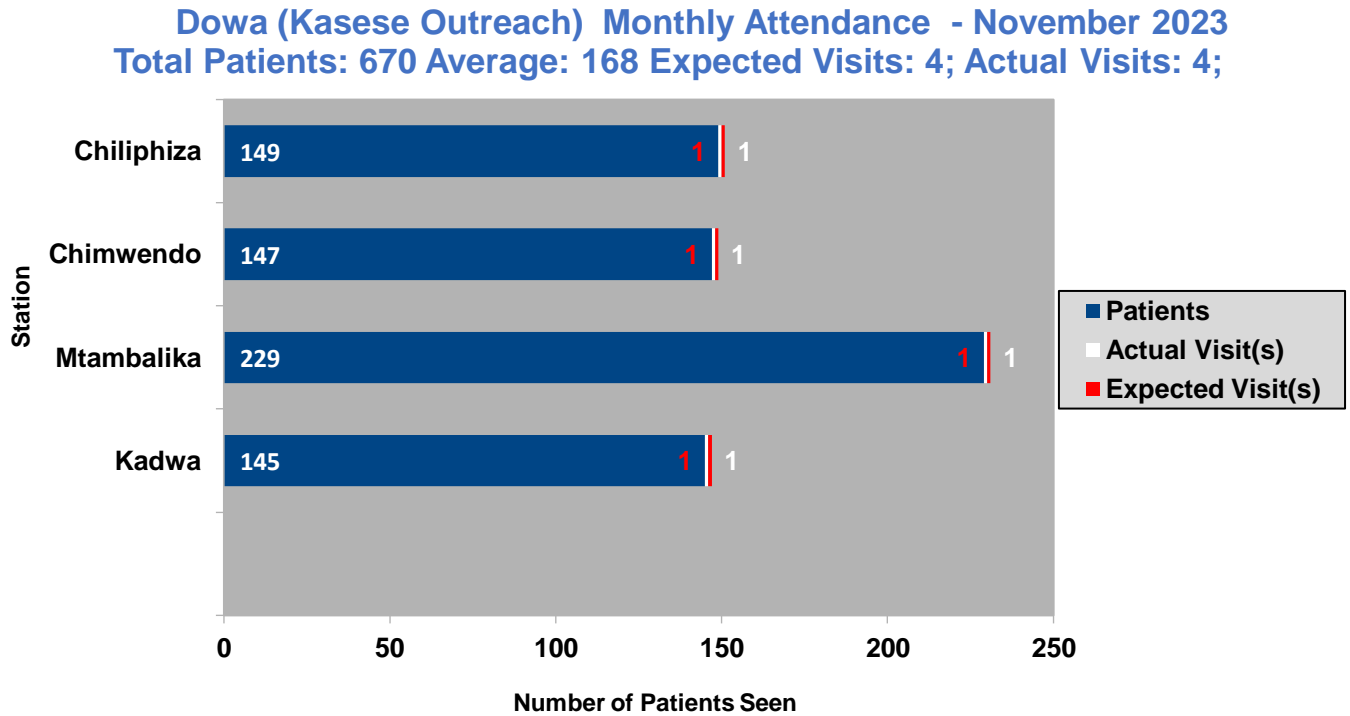


Figure 4: Dowa Patient Attendance – November 2023.

## COVID -19 Situation Updates

The COVID-19 situation in the country remains low and in November 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
<b>November Tests</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>November 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>BFF</b>	539	574	<b>1113</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Dose</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Dose</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Booster</b>	0	0	<b>0</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>BFF</b>	414	646	<b>1060</b>
<b>Johnson &amp; Johnson (J &amp; J)</b>	16	71	<b>87</b>
<b>Booster</b>	8	48	<b>56</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1203</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: Astra-Zeneca Administered at KHC Static (2023)

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



Table 6 below shows Vaccine Status in November 2023

Vaccine Type	Beginning Balance	End Balance
Pfizer	0	0
J & J	250	70

Table 6: Vaccine Status at KHC Static (November 2023)

## Reproductive and Family Planning Health

### 5.1 Maternal and New-born Health Care

Months	Ja n	Fe b	Ma r	Ap r	Ma y	Ju n	Ju l	Au g	Se p	Oc t	No v	Tota l
<b>Admissions</b>	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	34	33	22	40	380
<b>Referrals</b>	13	8	14	15	13	23	12	23	12	17	8	158
<b>New Babies</b>	38	44	36	30	28	28	47	36	33	22	40	382
<b>Alive Babies</b>	38	44	35	29	28	28	46	35	33	22	40	378
<b>Facility Deliveries</b>	33	36	32	29	25	26	44	34	33	22	33	347

Table 7: Maternity Data - 2023

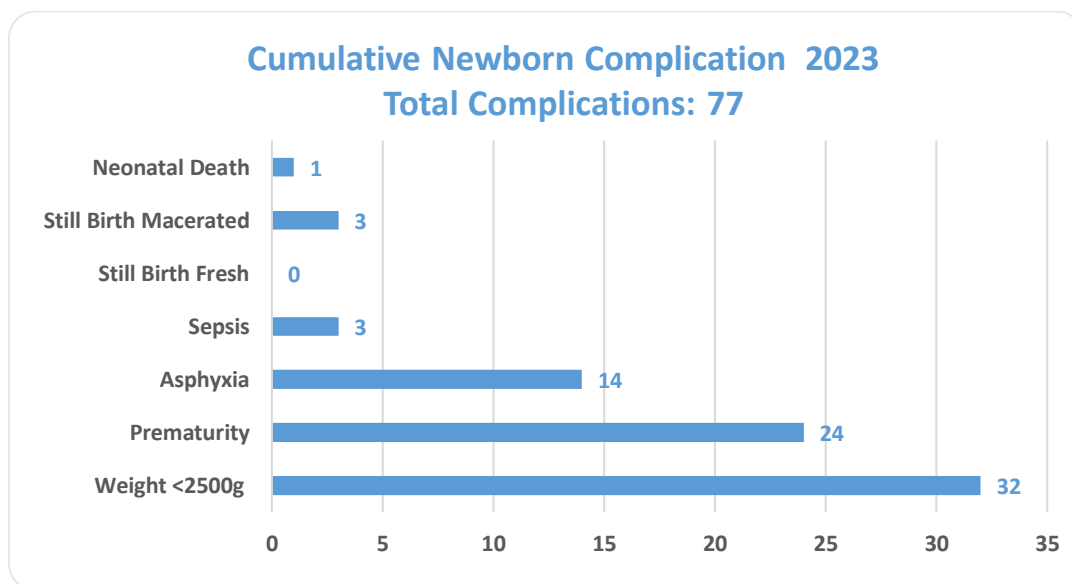
Table 9 below shows the Maternity Data of new babies with complications.

Months (2023)	Jan	Feb	Ma r	Apr	May	Ju n	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Tot al
<b>Weight &lt;2500g</b>	2	1	7	3	0	7	4	8	3	3	4	42
<b>Prematurity</b>	4	7	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	2	24
<b>Asphyxia</b>	1	1	0	1	3	1	2	4	0	0	1	14

<b>Sepsis</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
<b>Stillbirth Fresh</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Stillbirth Macerated</b>	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
<b>Neonatal Death</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>86</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.

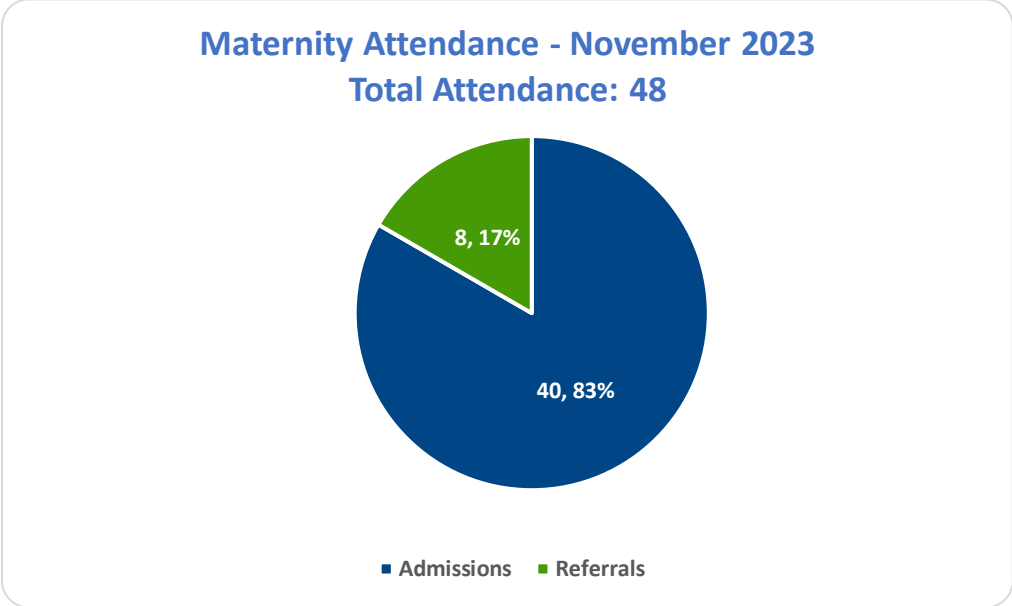


Figure 6: Admissions and Referrals (November 2023)

Table 9 below shows the reason for the referrals

Referral Reason	Referred
Foetal Distress	1
Young Primigravida	3
Obstructed Prolonged Labour	1
Elderly Primigravida	1
Ruptured Uterus	1
Multiple Gestation	1

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
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*Table 9: Referral Reasons - November 2023*

Table 10 below shows ANC attendance.

<b>2023</b>	<b>New ANC Visit</b>	<b>First Trimester</b>
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

*Table 10: ANC Attendance – 2023*

Figure 7 below shows 2023 Monthly ANC Visits.

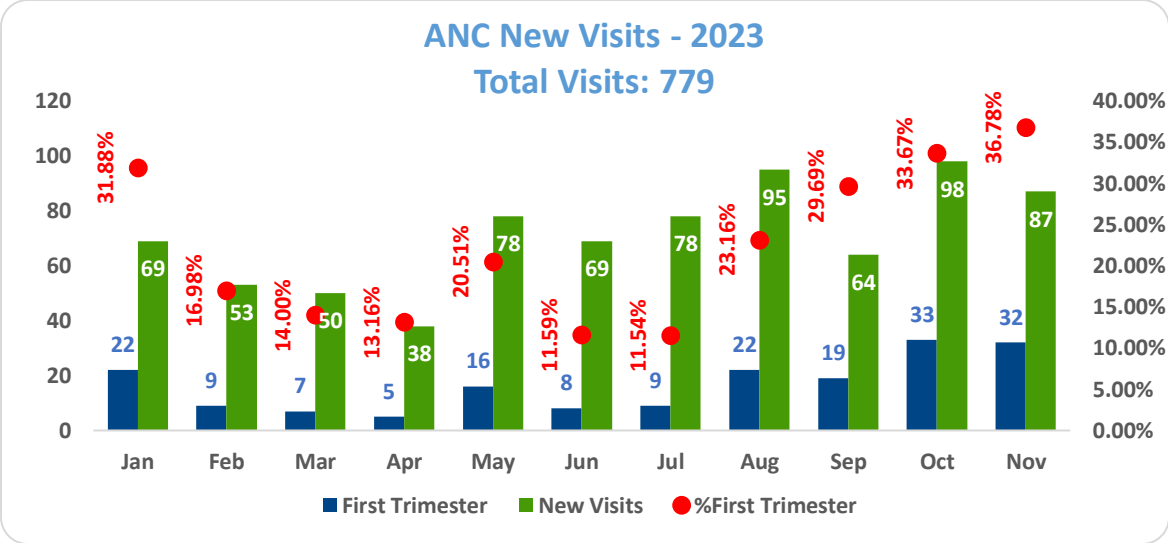


Figure 7: Monthly ANC Visits - 2023.

**5.2 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
<b>Total</b>	21	30	44	14	0	0	16	64	20	36	40
<b>VIA+</b>	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	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.

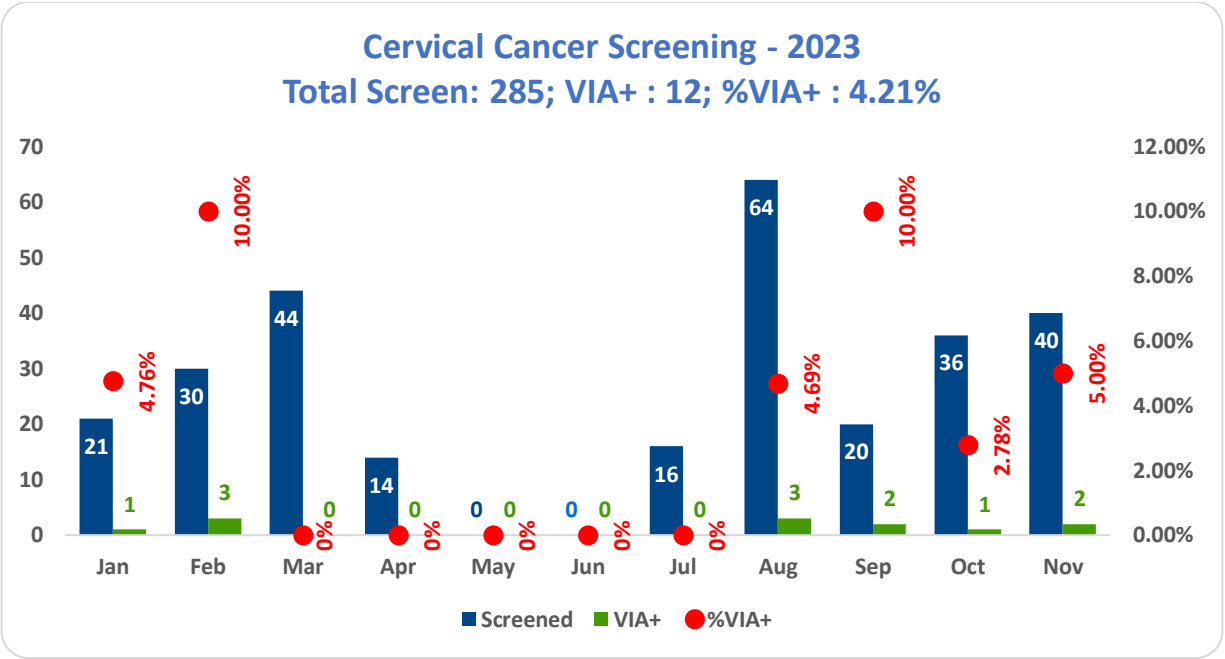


Figure 8; Cervical Cancer Screening - 2023.

### Eye Clinic

The 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
<b>Eye Infections (Treated)</b>	27	40	49	35	30	39	27	36	32	37	62
<b>Eye Surgery (Booked)</b>	2	1	7	6	6	9	3	6	4	4	3
<b>Total Seen</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>65</b>

Table 12: Monthly Eye Clinic Table - 2023.

Figure 9 below shows the 2023 Monthly Eye Clinics.

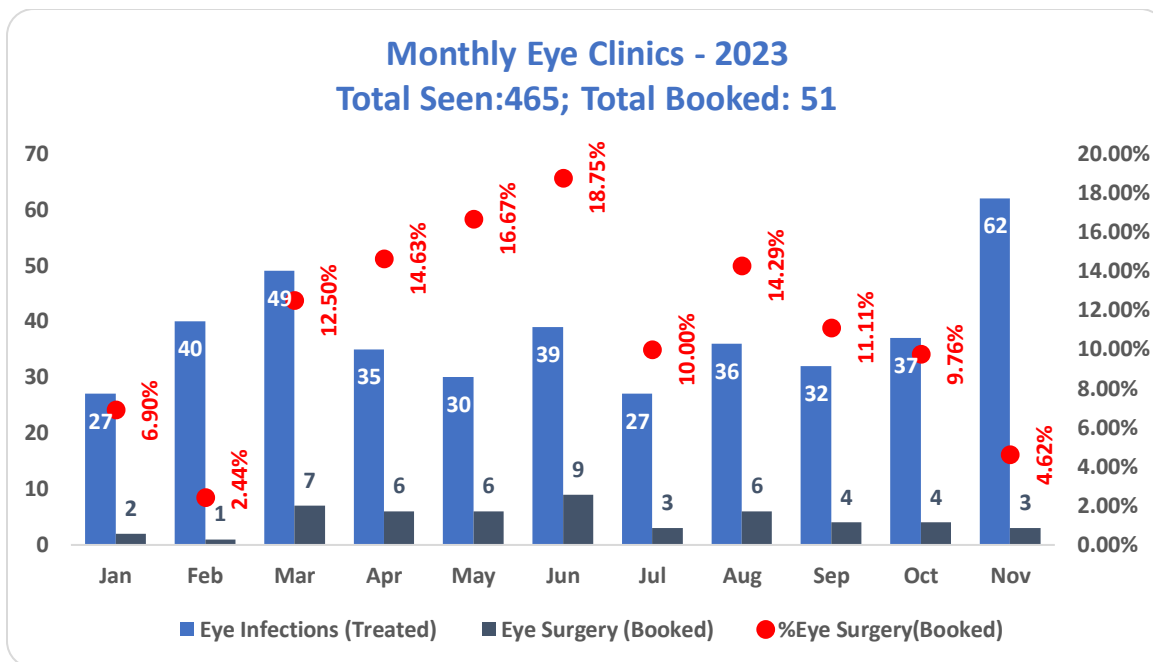


Figure 9: Monthly Eye Clinics - 2023.

## Malaria Report

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

	Total Tested	Positives	Negatives	Positivity Rate
<b>Under 5</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>5 Years and Over</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1276</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>23%</b>

Table 13: Total Malaria Tests (November 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	Oct	Nov
<b>Suspected Malaria Cases</b>	1854	1498	2209	2740	3241	3092	2099	1434	1859	1353	1276
<b>Suspected Cases Tested MRDT</b>	1854	1498	2209	2740	3241	3092	2099	1434	1859	1353	1276

<b>Confirmed Malaria Cases</b>	508	354	635	996	1748	1241	542	258	418	274	288
<b>New Malaria Cases Registered</b>	508	361	651	996	1778	1245	548	273	418	274	288
<b>LA Dispensed</b>	503	361	651	995	1748	1245	548	273	418	274	288
<b>LA Issued</b>	120	600	940	1020	2877	520	150	120	150	300	353

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

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

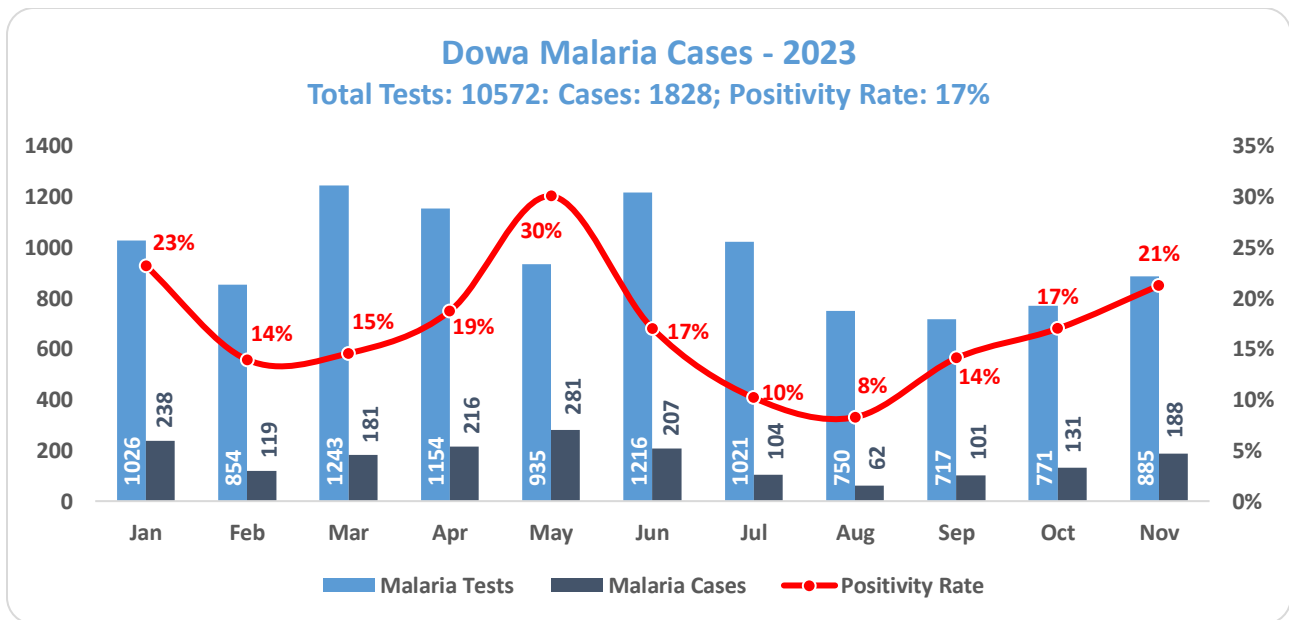


Figure 10: OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Dowa, 2023).

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



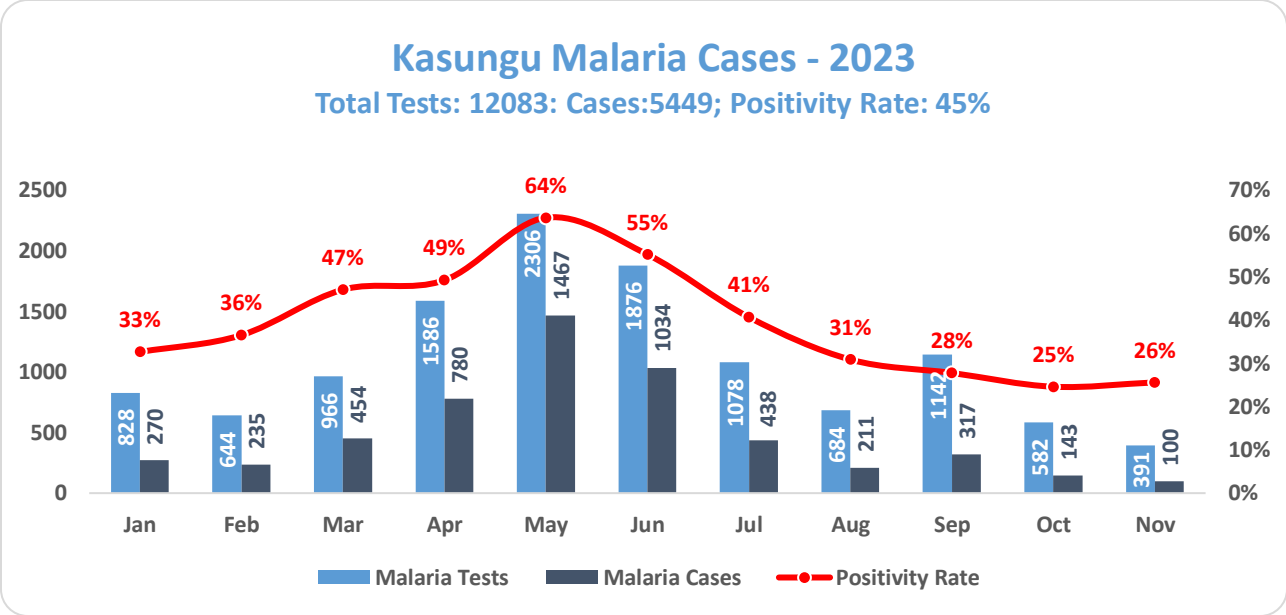


Figure 11:OCA Clinics Malaria tests (Kasungu, 2023).

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

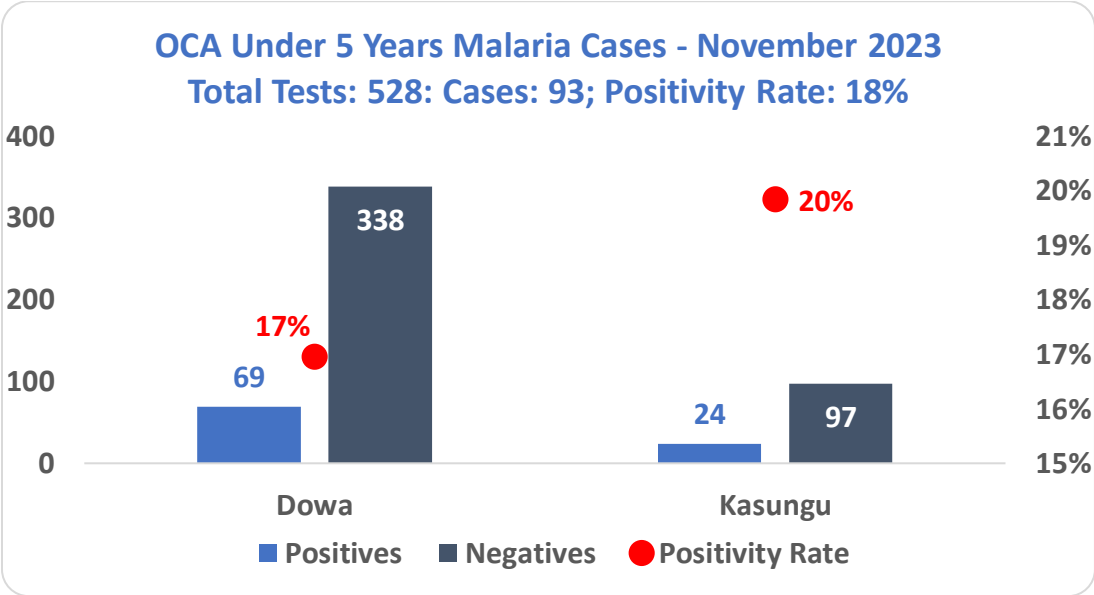


Figure 12; OCA Clinics, Under 5 Years Malaria tests (November 2023)

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

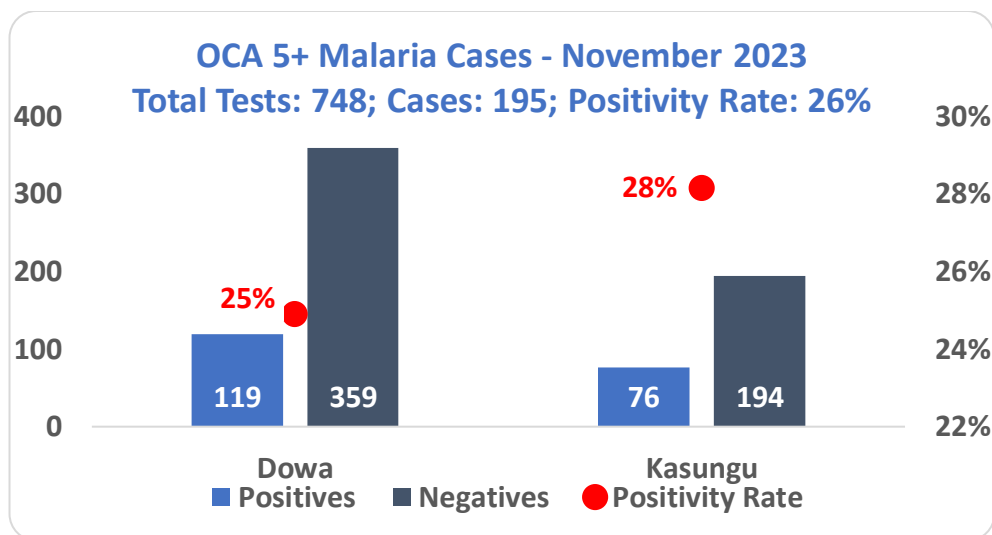


Figure 13; OCA Clinics, 5+ Malaria tests (November 2023)

### 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%

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

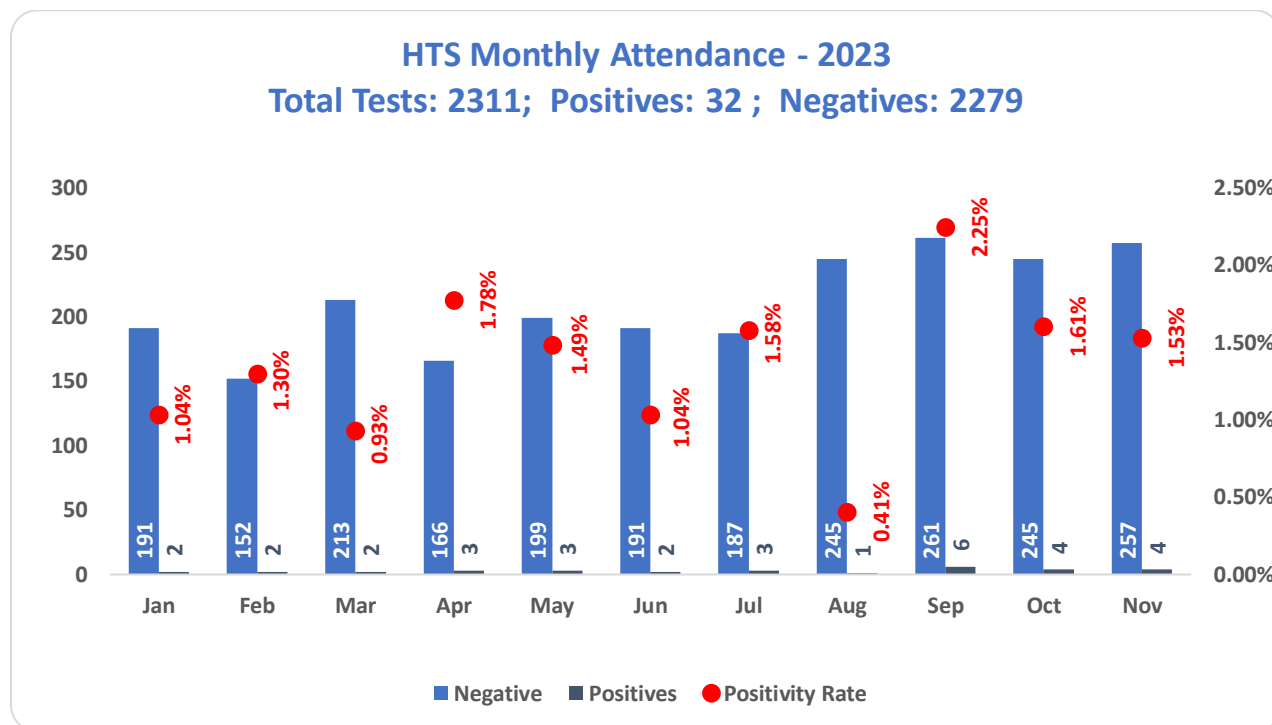


Figure 14; HTS Monthly Tests – 2023

### 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
<b>Nov</b>	79	3	28	2	4	1	74	36	0	0

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

Figure 15 below shows qualitative lab tests – November 2023

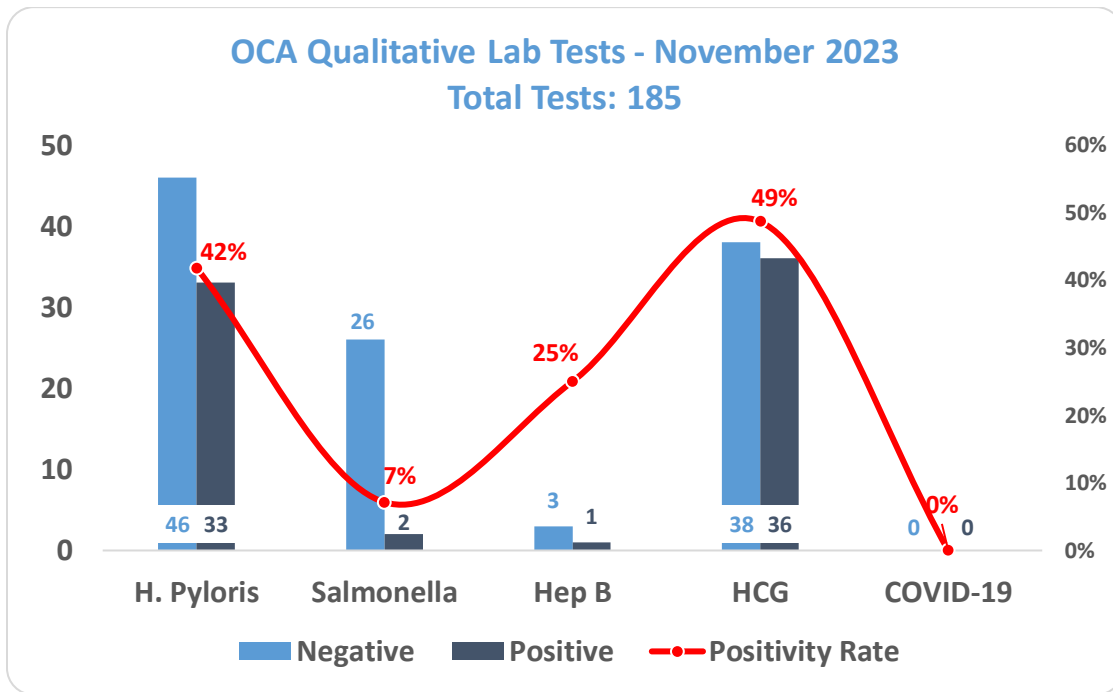


Figure 15; Qualitative Lab Tests – 2023.

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>May</b>	51	162	21	106
<b>Jun</b>	75	71	11	100
<b>Jul</b>	52	48	4	108
<b>Aug</b>	95	48	13	150

<b>Sep</b>	46	39	17	161
<b>Oct</b>	66	43	15	129
<b>Nov</b>	87	50	10	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>1436</b>

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

Figure 16 shows quantitative lab tests for the year 2023

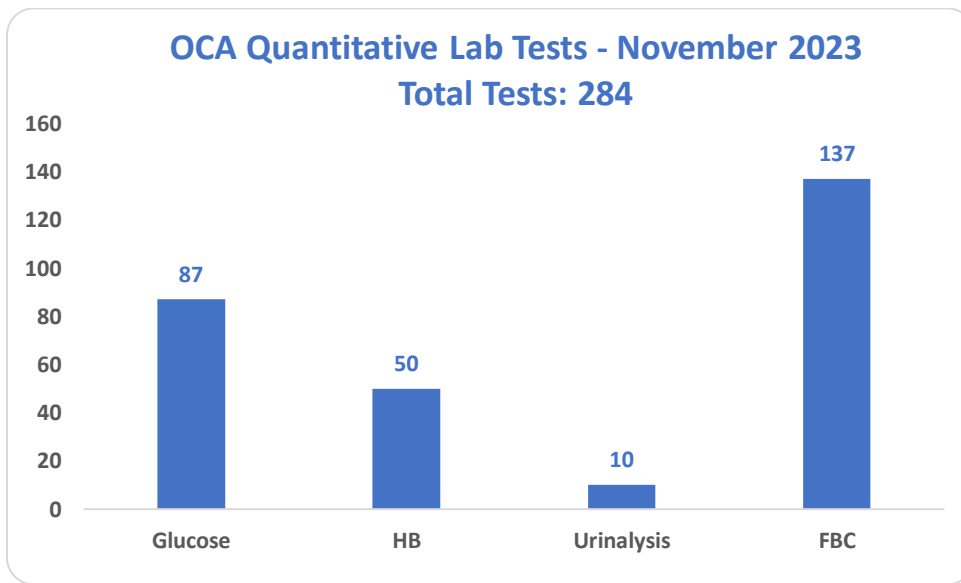


Figure 16; Quantitative Lab Tests – 2023.

## Disease Group Trends

Figure 17 below shows Dowa disease occurrences for November 2023

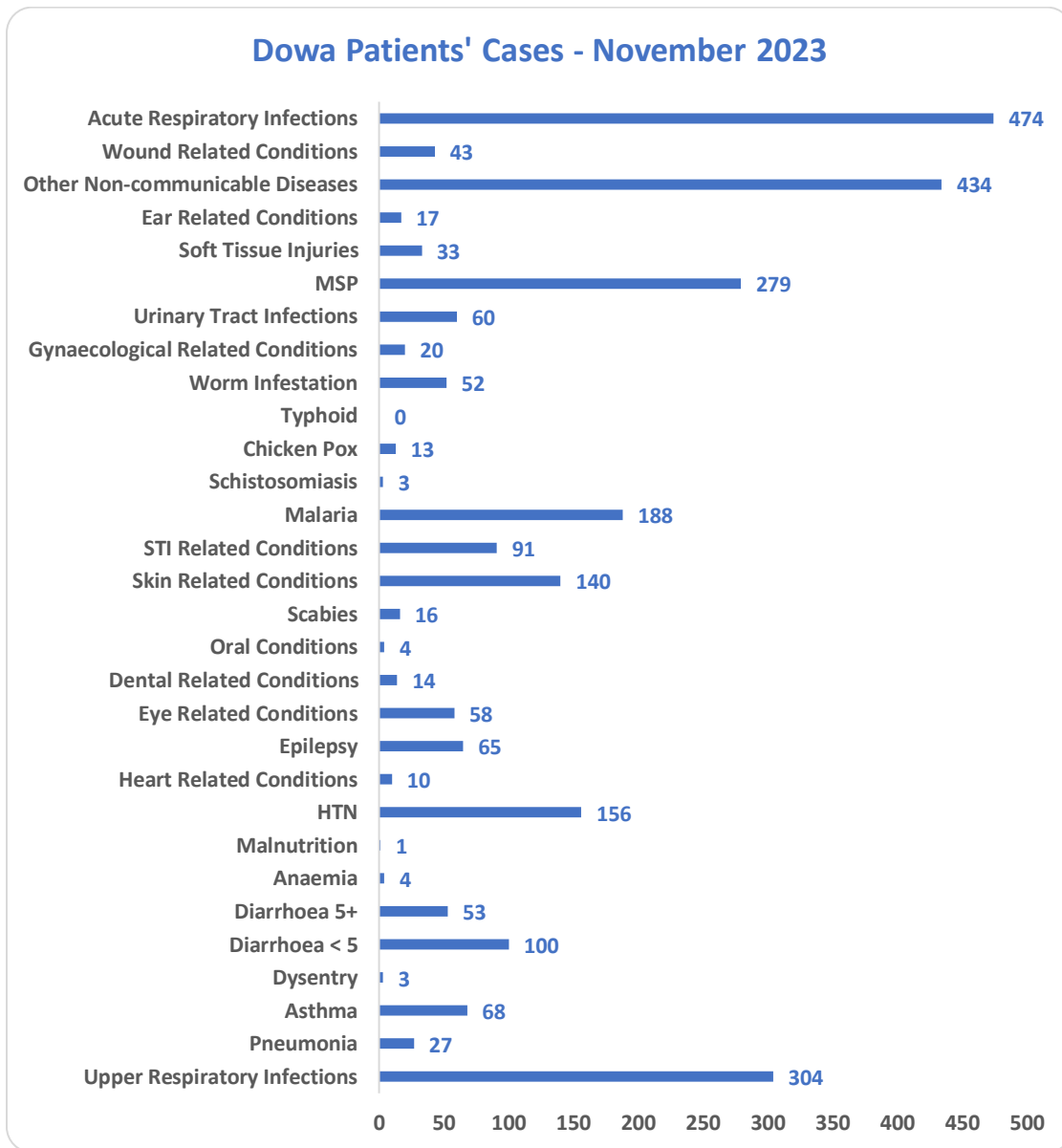


Figure 17: Dowa Disease Occurrences (November 2023).

Figure 18 below shows Kasungu disease occurrences for November 2023.

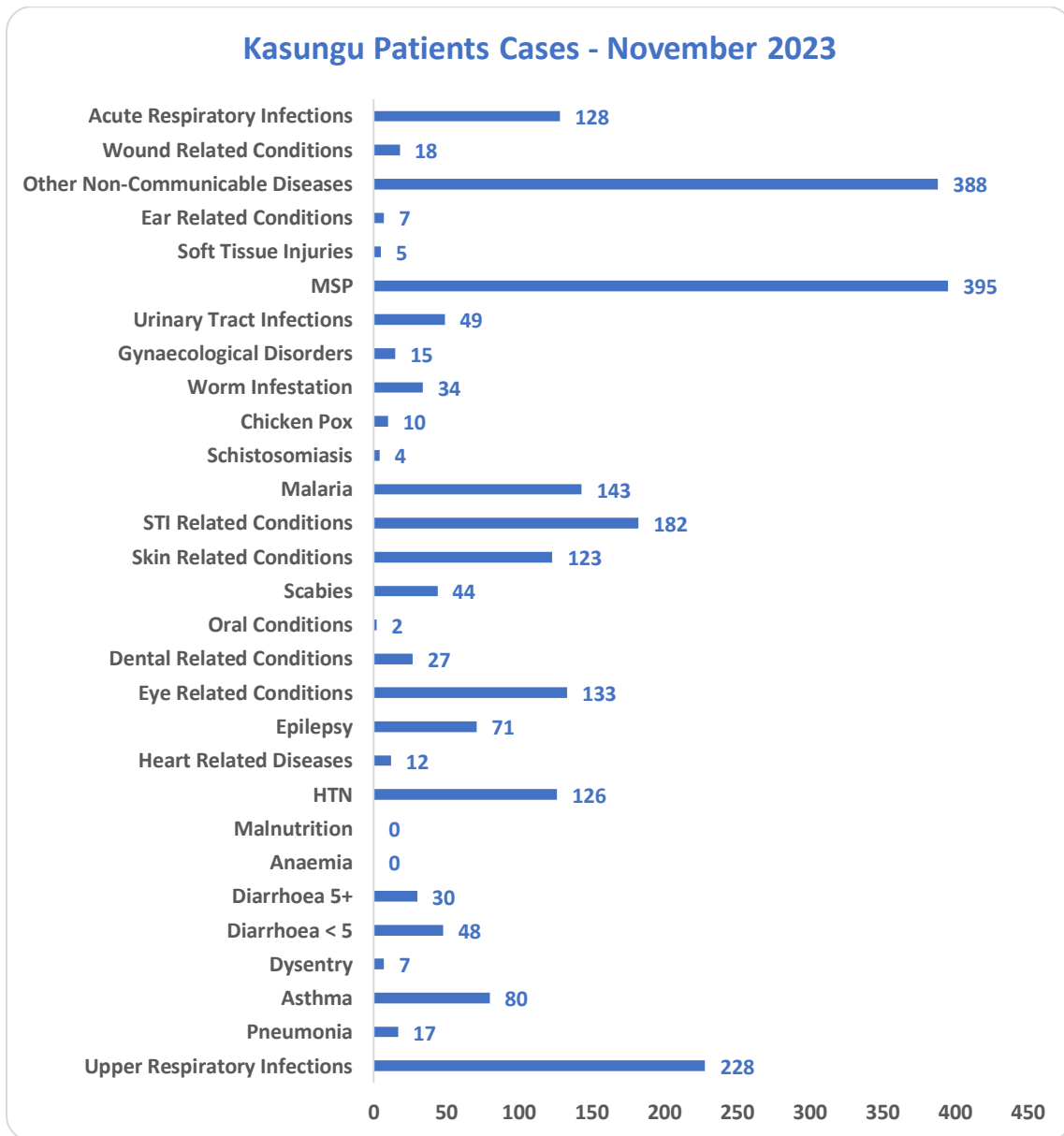


Figure 18: Kasungu Disease Occurrences (November 2023)

## **B. Achievements and Challenges**

### **1. Success Highlights**

- There is an increase in maternal admission with a decrease in referrals. However, the main reason for referral remains young primigravida less than 17 years.
- There is an increase in cervical cancer screening with 5% VIA+ positivity rate this reporting month.
- There is an increase in eye clinic attendance.

### **2. Challenges**

- There is an increase in newborn complications mainly underweight and prematurity.
- In comparison with the month of October 2023 there is a decrease in maternal ANC visits by 11.2%.
- There a steady increase in malaria positivity rate in Kasese catchment area in Dowa district from 8% in August 2023 to 21% in November 2023
- The leading disease seen in Outpatients Department(OPD) remains:
  - The acute respiratory infection
  - Non-communicable disease
  - Musculoskeletal pains
  - Malaria

## **C. Way forward**

- There is a need to continue to sensitize the community in malaria prevention.
- It's also important to investigate the main contributing factors to early pregnancy, newborn prematurity and underweight.



## Appendices

### Appendix A: November 2023 MOC Schedule

NOVEMBER 2023 OUTREACH CLINIC SCHEDULE					
DATE	DAY	STATION	DISTRICT	ACTIVITY	TIME
01	Wednesday	Nkhanga	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
02	Thursday	Chisuwe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
03	Friday	Kadwa	Dowa	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
04	Saturday				
05	Sunday				
06	Monday	Kantomphole	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
07	Tuesday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
08	Wednesday	Lusito	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
09	Thursday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
10	Friday	Mtambalika	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
11	Saturday				
12	Sunday				
13	Monday	Ndanowa	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
14	Tuesday	Galika	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
15	Wednesday	Kavwenje	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
16	Thursday	Kalimanyungu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
17	Friday	Chiliphiza	Dowa	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
18	Saturday				
19	Sunday				
20	Monday	Miyowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
21	Tuesday	Juni	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
22	Wednesday	Bowe	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
23	Thursday	Kambulu	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm

24	Friday	Chimwendo	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	08:00am - 4:00pm
25	Saturday				
26	Sunday				
27	Monday	Kaweta	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
28	Tuesday	Ndanowa	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
29	Wednesday	Lusito	Kasungu	Outreach clinic	09:00am - 3:00pm
30	Thursday	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. In November, the program conducted several activities in line with this overarching goal. Therefore, this report provides an overview of the key activities conducted.

## **Summary of Monthly Achievements**

The following milestones were achieved;

- Supported 33 water point repairs (Service/preventive: 29; major repairs: 4 )
- Conducted Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Chig WPC
- Started construction of latrines at Mambala Primary School
- Drilled 2 boreholes
- Conducted refresher training for Area Mechanics

## **Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements**

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

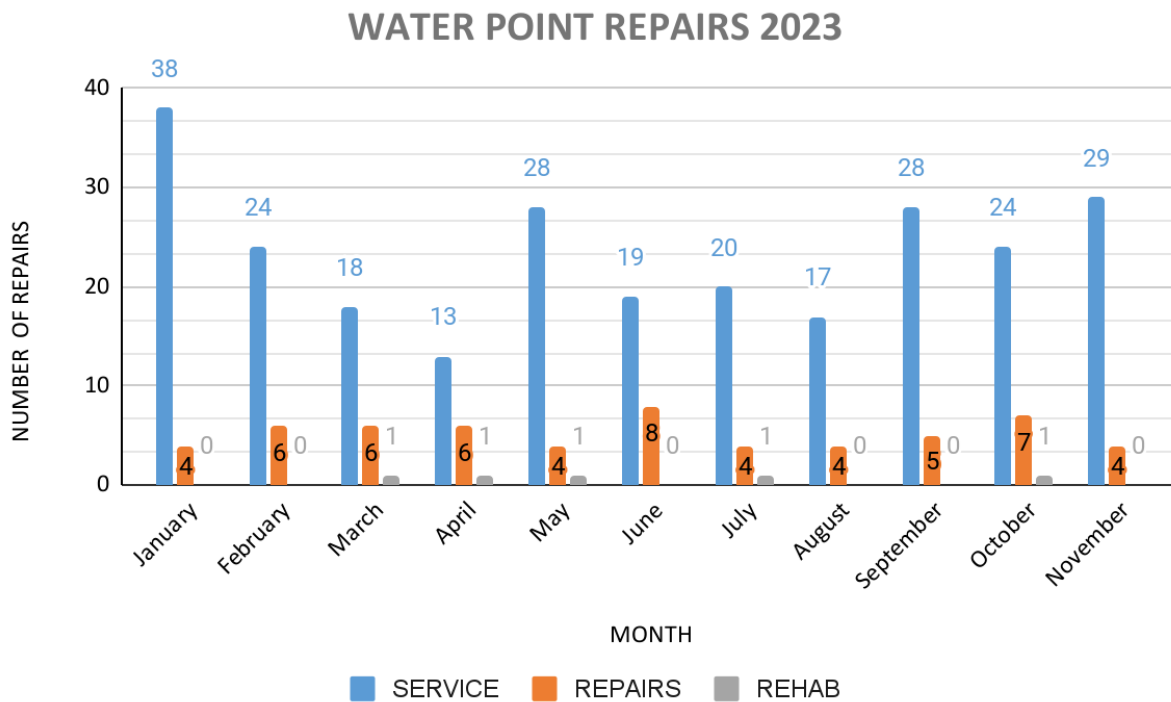
## Water point/borehole repairs and rehabilitations



*Borehole repair during the month*

The WASH routinely conducts repairs and rehabilitations of water points in the Kasese catchment area. These maintenance services aim to improve the functionality of these water points thereby achieving sustainable access to water supply services for the people of Kasese. Recent data indicates that the functionality rate is at 97% out of a total of 326 water points in the Kasese catchment area. This is a big achievement for the WASH program in 2023. Despite this, some of the functional boreholes (11%) have saline water hence affecting their utilization.

In November, the WASH program repaired a total of 33 water points (Service/preventive: 29; major repairs: 4). So far in 2023, a total of 321 repairs have been conducted. Out of this, 258 are preventive maintenance while 63 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). During the month, the WASH program conducted CBM training for Tazona WPC. The borehole in Tazona 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 Classroom session during CBM training for Taziwona WPC*

## **Borehole drilling**



***Left** - Unprotected shallow well which was used 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 November, the WASH program drilled 2 wells; Taziwona and Chigoma 2 villages. The wells in Taziwona and Chigoma 2 will supply water to 225 and 300 people respectively. Before the OCA intervention, the people from Taziwona and Chigoma were using water from unprotected shallow wells which are prone to contamination. The two wells have been fixed with Afridev pumps. Both the wells in Taziwona and Chigoma 2 villages are now in use. So far in 2023, the WASH program has drilled 14 community wells against a target of 16 wells for the year.

## Latrine Construction at Mambala Primary School



*Left - Damaged boys' latrines at Mambala before OCA intervention, Right - Construction of boys' latrines at Mambala Primary School in progress.*

In November, the WASH program began construction of latrines at Mambala Primary School in the Tchale Education zone. 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. These latrines are expected to be completed by the end of December 2023.

### **Area Mechanics (AMs) refresher training**

One major stakeholder in the WASH program is Area Mechanics (AMs). Area Mechanics are local artisans responsible for the maintenance of water points especially Afridev pumps on behalf of the water point committees (WPCs). The WASH program works with the OCA WASH program when conducting pump repairs.

In November, the WASH program organized a refresher training for 5 AMs from the OCA catchment area. The training was attended by 3 more AMs from outside the Kasese catchment upon request from the Dowa district water office. In total 8 AMs attended the refresher training. During the training AMs were trained in fishing out pipes and other objects stuck in the boreholes during maintenance. Furthermore, the training also acted as an annual review of progress made by AMs in 2023.



*AMs showcasing some of the items they have received from OCA such as receipt books, hacksaw blades and spanners.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Significant progress has been made in 2023. Despite this, there is a need for some extra effort to meet targets for the WASH by the end 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 reporting month have been explained below;

### Harvesting and marketing

The success of the Maize cultivation, involves a well-coordinated approach which encompasses crop watering, pest and disease control, harvesting and marketing. During the reporting month, Kambalani and Ndalusa irrigation clubs were involved in harvesting of their crops. The maize crop was harvested and sold as green (fresh) to be eaten as roasted or cooked maize. Marketing analysis was conducted thoroughly to understand demand, pricing trends and potential competitors. The Marketing analysis was done in nearby Markets such as Madisi, Bua, Chinkhoma, Kasese and Mponela. Good prices were identified where club members will be able to sell their produce at profit. A total of 32 club members will be able to benefit from these markets.



*Harvesting and marketing of Maize at Kambalani irrigation club*

### **Ridge making**

Proper ridge making involves the careful consideration of various factors to create raised beds that enhance water drainage, prevent soil erosion, and optimize root growth. As the rains are about to start, ridge making has been the main activity taking place at the OCA farm. The ridges have been aligned to ensure efficient water drainage to prevent waterlogging, minimize soil erosion by strategically placing ridges in accordance with the fields topography and create optimal conditions for root penetration and nutrient absorption. Ridges were adjusted based on crop type and local climate. The spacing for ridges was 75cm between ridges for the crops such as Maize, soya and groundnuts. Mwayiwathu farm club was monitored during ridge making to ensure proper ridge spacing is followed.



*Ridge making in OCA farm*

## **VSL Training**

The irrigation clubs of Mvunguti and timvane 1 were introduced in the Village Savings and Loan (VSL) program. The aim of this training to farmers was to empower the irrigation clubs by promoting financial inclusion, encouraging savings and facilitating access to small loans. The irrigation clubs were encouraged to form VSL groups to easily achieve their club goals. Continued support and follow-up activities will be essential in increasing the impact of the VSL in the long term. To ensure the sustained success of VSL groups, ongoing monitoring and support mechanisms will be established. This will involve regular follow-up sessions, monitoring and periodic assessments of group dynamics and financial records.

## **Pest and disease control**

Controlling pests and diseases in agriculture is crucial for maintaining good crop health, ensuring food security and sustaining agricultural productivity. Irrigation clubs of Madula and Madzimayela were attacked by pests and diseases. Integrated pest management (IPM) approach was introduced to the club members to overcome these challenges. These IPM approaches include cultural control where farmers were encouraged to practice crop rotation and intercropping, and chemical control methods. Farmers were encouraged to follow these approaches to reduce the problems caused by pests and disease such as crop losses.

## **Staking and pruning**

Staking and pruning in tomato production is more important as it has an impact on yield quality and disease prevention. Timvane 2 and Ndalusa irrigation club are producing tomatoes. Farmers from these clubs were encouraged to do staking and pruning. Staking helps in providing support for tomato plants to prevent sprawling and enhance airflow. Staking is done using stem or strings. Pruning is also done by removing unnecessary foliage, redirecting energy for fruit development, and improving air circulation. Pruning is done through suckering, lower foliage pruning and top pruning. Farmers were encouraged to use sharp and disinfected materials to avoid spread of pests and disease.

## **OCA agroecological farm**

OCA agroecological farm was introduced in the month August 2023 where different varieties of crops were planted. Agroecological farming design involves crop diversity, polyculture systems and agroforestry practices. These systems help in minimizing pests and disease risks, encourage growth of multiple crops in the same area, and incorporation of trees and shrubs to improve soil health and microclimates. Harvesting of other crops such as vegetables from this farm started in the second month from the time the agroecological farm was introduced. This time around the farm is making progress where papaya have started giving out fruits. There is high expectation of beginning harvesting of these fruits in the month of February 2024.



*Papaya tree in OCA agroecological farm*

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

### **Executive Summary**

FEM program continues to support women entrepreneurs around Kasese trading centre through provision of interest free microloans which are repaid in four equal installments and periodic entrepreneurship courses aimed at equipping women with essential business skills to enable women to successfully manage their businesses. These microloans and entrepreneurship courses are meant to empower women so that they

become financially self-reliant and be able to support their households. In the month of November, FEM had accomplished the following activities as narrated below;

### **Feedback sessions**



Feedback sessions with Tikondane and Tiynanjane FEM group meetings were organized with the purpose of reviewing the June to December, 2022 loan period. Some of the issues under review were; progress on loan repayment, general challenges encountered during the period and to assess if the women entrepreneurs were able to achieve their short term goals.

By November 30<sup>th</sup>, all the women entrepreneurs had settled their outstanding loan balances. With the business skills that the women entrepreneurs have acquired, they are able to diversify and switch to a business that is trendy at the time. Successes such as purchases of livestock, being able to feed families and cultivate food crops which ensure food security for members in 2023 were documented for the period. There were also a few challenges recorded, most of which were arising from price fluctuations for both food and non-commodities due to the worldwide economic inflation. Although there were such challenges, most of the businesses were able to thrive and are still operational.

### **Monitoring visits**

Routine business check-ups were done to individual businesses and group meetings. The aim of the visits was to motivate women entrepreneurs as well as keep them on course of good business practices that may help in growing their businesses. Visits to the newly added Takondwa FEM group were also done to help the women finalize their business plans before disbursing loans.



Picture 1 Takondwa FEM members: Idah Banda(L) and Jeniffer Malomo (R)

## Loan repayments

In the June to December, 2022 loan period, FEM program had disbursed loans amounting to MWK 6, 160,000 to Tikondane and Tiyanjane respectively. In the reporting month, all the members from both cohorts had managed to fully settle their loans. All payments were made through OCA’s airtel mobile wallet.

## Weekly VS&L meetings

VS&L meetings continued to take place for both Tikondane and Tiyanjane FEM groups. These meetings help the women to be able to save some proceeds from the business on a weekly basis as it may not be as easy to keep money in their houses for a long time. Furthermore, it is an opportunity to bring together all the members of each group so that they may share business experiences and keep each other updated. During the month, Tikondane and Tiyanjane members prioritized these meetings as a way of rekindling their knitting skills and teaching those that were still lagging behind. The members seemed to have had quality time spent together. The women entrepreneurs managed to Knit scuffs, baby hats, boots and table mats just to mention a few.



# Education Support Program

## Executive Summary

The Orant Education program aims to improve the quality of education service delivery in Malawi so more girls and boys successfully progress through and complete secondary school with measurable improvements in learning outcomes. We believe that every child deserves unhindered access to education, a happy, healthy, and safe childhood, regardless of their circumstances.

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

## Monitoring visits

The OCA education program visited sponsored students in their respective schools. Three schools were visited during the reporting period; Loyola, Kasungu and Nkhamenya secondary schools. The aim of the visits was to monitor students' academic performance, encourage them to work extra hard in school and also to provide them with material and moral support. A total of 27 students were supported with school supplies by the OCA Education program. The supplies which were given to them includes; Hard covers, Pens, pencils, Sugar, sanitary products and many more. Below are pictures of some of the students who were visited by Orant during the reporting period



OCA visit to students at Loyola (left) and Kasungu (right) Secondary school



Nkhamenya girls secondary school students after receiving supplies from OCA

In the same reporting month, 30 students (from 7 different schools) sponsored by Geoshack donors received letters from their donors.. The individual donors from the USA wrote letters to the students through the education program personnel and the letters were delivered. 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.

During the visits, students' examination fees were also paid. In this academic year (2023/2024), Orant has 28 and 31 students who will sit for the MSCE and JCE exams respectively. It is important to pay for these fees so that students are able to concentrate in class because their needs are met.

### **Library visit**

Monitoring of the Library at Ngala CDSS is still in progress. The education program together with the Orant Executive Director visited the schools' Library for review. During the visit the attendance book was checked and it was very good. It showed that students are really making good use of the Library. Achievement, Challenges, and also way forward on how we can continue to improve the Library was discussed. It was a very fruitful meeting since a lot was learnt and shared.



### **Meeting at Ngala CDSS Library**

Apart from visiting the Library, The Science Laboratory was also visited. In the month of September, Orant donated Lab materials to Ngala CDSS, and the visit was just to see its progress and check how students are benefiting from the materials.



Ngala CDSS Science Lab visit