

**ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MONTHLY
REPORT**



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Acronyms & Abbreviations

ADC	-	Area Development Committee
AM	-	Area Mechanic
CBM	-	Community Based Management
CDSS	-	Community Day Secondary School
CONGOMA	-	Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi
DCT	-	District Coordination Team
EPA	-	Extension Planning Area
FEM	-	Financial Empowerment Microloan
JCE	-	Junior Certificate of Education
MSCE	-	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NGORA	-	Non-Governmental Organization Regulatory Authority
OCA	-	Orant Charities Africa
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
VSL	-	Village Savings and Loans
WASH	-	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WPC	-	Water Point Committees

Introduction

Orant Charities Africa (OCA) is a non-governmental organization serving in rural communities of Malawi. It was registered as an NGO in Malawi in 2014. OCA is registered under the Trustees Act and also with both NGORA and CONGOMA regulatory authorities. OCA serves in Malawi through healthcare and implementing development programs. It operates in the following thematic areas; Healthcare, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education, Agriculture, Business Development, and Energy and Environment. This monthly report outlines milestones from the month of June 2024 in our WASH program, Education, Agriculture and Business Development;

Water and Sanitation Program



Executive Summary

The WASH program aims to reduce morbidity and mortality of WASH-related diseases for the people of Kasese. This goal is achieved through the provision of WASH infrastructure and extension services. OCA WASH program mainly focuses on Water supply, operation and maintenance of WASH infrastructure, advocating for sanitation in

communities and schools, and collaborating with stakeholders. In June, the program conducted several activities aligned with these key implementation areas. Therefore, this report outlines the monthly progress, beginning with a summary, followed by a detailed description of accomplishments.

Summary of Monthly Achievements

The following milestones were achieved during the month;

- Water point repairs (Service/preventive: **41**; major repairs: **9**)
- Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Water Point Committee (WPCs)
- Land surveying exercise for a piped water project at Kabuluzi school and surrounding villages
- Community mobilization meeting for piped water project
- Borehole Drilling and Construction

Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements

The WASH program carried out the following key activities in the month;

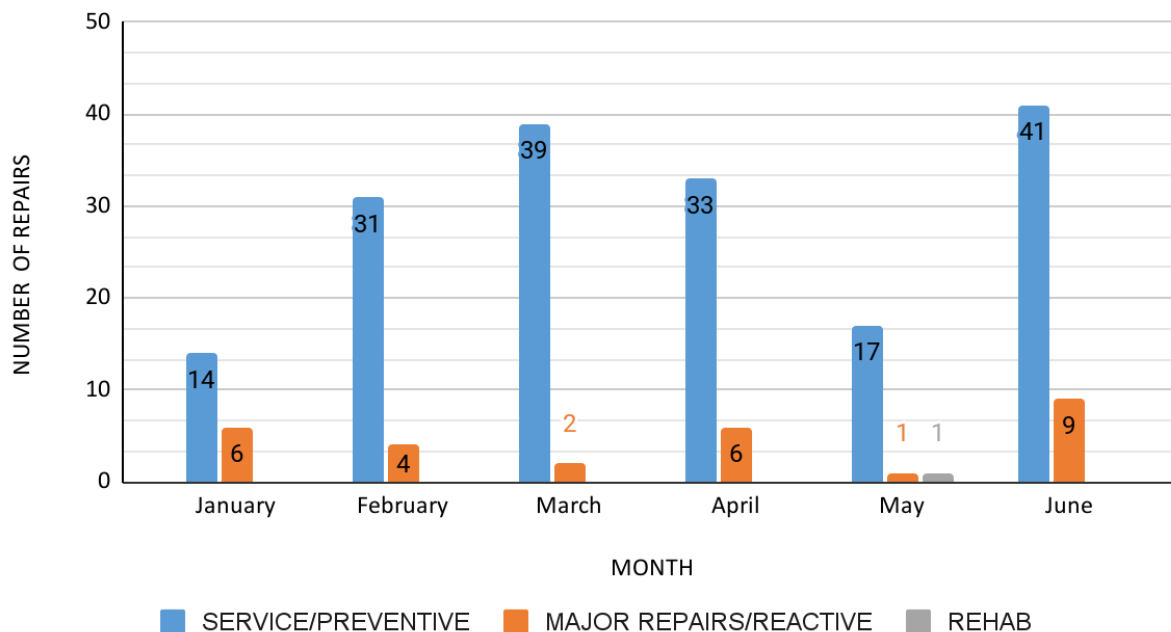
Water point Repairs and Rehabilitations



Left - Preventive maintenance session for Chitsulo borehole, **Right** - Preventive maintenance session for Chiyazu borehole during the month

To ensure the sustainability of water points, the WASH program conducts water point repairs. In June, the program supported **41** preventive maintenance and **9** major repairs of water points. In total, the program supported repairs and services of **50** water points. From January to June 2024, the WASH program has repaired **28** out of the annual target of **58** which represents **48%**. This data shows that the program is on track towards reduction of major repairs. The program has serviced **176** water points out of the annual target of **300**, representing **59%**. This data shows the WASH program has achieved more than half of its target for preventive maintenance for the year bearing in mind that this is just the first half of the year. Despite this, there is only a slight increase in the number of water points adopting preventive maintenance thus **44%** in the first quarter to **47%** by the end of the second quarter. As the second quarter comes to an end the program has maintained a water point functionality of **97%** (n=344) for boreholes in the Kasese catchment. Below is a graph showing the progress of maintenance services in the Kasese catchment.

WATER POINT REPAIRS 2024



Borehole Drilling and Construction

This month the WASH program has begun drilling boreholes in villages with limited access to potable water supply. During the month, the WASH program drilled two boreholes in Gwani and Kadango villages. The two communities were accessing potable water from neighbouring villages before OCA drilled a new borehole for them. The new

borehole in Gwani is currently supplying water to a total of **35** households while the borehole in Kadango is supplying water to **32** households.



Left - Borehole drilling session during the month, **Right**- Construction of Aprons for the newly constructed boreholes during the month.

Community Mobilization Meeting for Piped Water Project



Cross-sections of participants during the community mobilization meeting during the month

To ensure stakeholder engagement and participation in projects the WASH program conducts mobilization before beginning a new project. Stakeholders' participation in projects creates a sense of ownership which is important in ensuring sustainability of projects. Through these meetings, communities support OCA projects with locally available resources such as labour, bricks, and quarry and sand. The WASH program organized a community mobilization for Kabuluzi school management and surrounding community leaders for an impending piped water project. During the meeting, the WASH program manager made a presentation on the piped water project and the role of OCA and the community in the project. During the meeting, stakeholders welcomed the new piped water project from OCA and pledged to all the initiatives if needed.

Meeting with Nyagara School Management and School Latrine Project

Orant organised a meeting with Nyagara school management. The Meeting was organised to discuss the plans to construct new latrines for boys at Nyagara Primary. During the meeting, OCA presented a proposal on how responsibility will be shared between OCA and the community surrounding the school during the latrine construction project. Following the discussions, the school management welcomed the project and pledged to provide Quarry, sand and bricks for the project. On the other OCA will provide labour and all other materials which are not locally available such as Iron sheets, cement, timber, doors etc. The current boys' latrines at Nyagara are dilapidated and almost full. Currently, the school has an enrolment of **987** students. Of these **582** are boys while **405** are girls. Meanwhile, the WASH program has begun digging a pit for the new latrines at the school.



Photos of Boys' latrines at Nyagara Primary School which are in a bad state and are almost full

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



A class session during a CBM training for Gwani and Mano WPCs during the month

To build the capacity of WPCs in the management of their water points, the OCA WASH program conducts CBM training. During the CBM training WPC members are trained in minor repairs for Afridev pumps, Household sanitation and hygiene practices, community dynamics as well as mobilization and management of borehole maintenance funds. During the month the WASH program trained two WPCs from Gwani and Mano boreholes. Gwani is the new WPC for a newly drilled borehole while Mano is an old committee which was trained when receiving a borehole from other development partners in the past.

Surveying and Designing Piped Water Project

As an initial stage of a solar piped water project for Kabuluzi school and surrounding villages, the WASH program embarked on a land surveying exercise. The surveying exercise was conducted with support from a private water contractor- Orifice Irrigation and Water Supply LTD. The exercise involved measuring distances, and elevations and collecting coordinates of important locations of the project. Following the survey, a design of the solar piped water scheme will be produced and then used during the construction phase of the project. The construction phase of the piped water project is expected to run from July to October 2024. The project is expected to benefit approximately **2000** people.



WASH Field Assistant Supervising the Land Surveying Exercise For The Piped Water Scheme At Kabuluzi School During The Month

Installation of Pipe Networks for New OCA Campus and Housing Project

In 2024 OCA is constructing new staff houses and a Library and Community centre. The WASH program in coordination with the OCA facilities department installed water supply pipe networks for the Agroecology farm, Housing project and Community centre construction sites. This exercise involved digging trenches, and installation of tanks, water meters, pipes and control valves at strategic points.



Left- *Installation of a water tank for the Agroecology project, Right - Installation of a pipe networks*

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to review the progress, challenges, and achievements of the WASH Program for June 2024. This month, the program made substantial progress in borehole drilling, borehole repairs, training of WPCs, latrine construction and piped water projects. Moving forward, the program is excited about the ongoing piped water project which is a first of its kind.

Agriculture and Business

Agriculture Program



Executive Summary

Our Agriculture program responds to the following SDGs; SDG1- End poverty, SDG2 which is dedicated to ending hunger, improving food security and nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture, SDG 8 of Decent work and Economic growth. Farming is one of the important activities which builds the economy of Malawi. Smallholder farmers depend on farming to improve their economic status and feed their families. OCA supports smallholder farmers 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;

Drip irrigation system installation

Drip irrigation is a water efficient method that delivers water directly to the plants root zone, reducing water wastage and improving crop yield. At first, watering on an agroecology farm was done using watering canes and horse pipes which are not water efficient. The installation of drip irrigation systems on the agroecology farm emphasizes sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices and the use of drip irrigation aligns with agroecology principles by conserving water and improving soil health. The drip irrigation system has several benefits which include

- a. Reduced water wastage by delivering water directly to the root zone, aligning with sustainable farming practices.
- b. It ensures plants receive the right amount of water, improving productivity and resilience.
- c. It requires lower energy costs compared to traditional irrigation methods
- d. It reduces runoff and soil erosion, maintaining soil structure and fertility.

Proper planning, installation and maintenance are crucial for the optimal performance of the system and alignment with agroecology principles.



Installation of drip system on OCA agroecology farm

Selling of Agroecology harvest

The agroecology farm which was established in the year 2023, has started giving out fruits such as papayas and vegetables which are ready for consumption. The marketing of these harvest currently focused on the local community. The focus is on building community relationships, ensuring sustainable practices and maximizing both social and economic benefits. The consumers are increasingly interested in organic and sustainably grown produce as it is grown without application of synthetic chemicals. The selling channel of agroecology produce is through on-farm sales where a farm stand is set to sell produce directly on-site. This type of selling channel promotes farm tours to the consumers to educate them about agroecology practices. By emphasizing community engagement and sustainable practice, the farm can build a loyal customer base, support the local economy and promote environmental stewardship.



Harvesting on agroecology farm

Maize planting in Irrigation Clubs

Maize is a staple crop with significant economic and nutritional value, and irrigation farming can help optimize its growth especially in regions with variable rainfall. Tidalilainu irrigation club was involved in maize planting where the reliable water source for this irrigation club are wells that provide sufficient water throughout the growing season. The site soil quality is well drained and fertile which is rich in organic matter. The high yielding, early maturing and disease resistant maize varieties suitable for the local

climate and soil condition were selected for irrigation farming. Growing maize under irrigation reduces dependence on unpredictable rainfall, ensuring crop success even in dry spells. By adopting the irrigation practices, farmers can achieve higher productivity and contribute to food security and economic stability.



Planting of maize seeds

Weeding fields

Weeding is a critical agriculture practice that involves the removal of unwanted plants (weeds) from crop fields. In crop production, effective weeding is essential for ensuring optimal growth and maximizing yield. Madzimayela irrigation club is cultivating maize crops where timely weeding was encouraged. Timely weeding in maize field is important as;

- a. It reduces competition for resources such as water, nutrients and sunlight with the main crop
- b. It controls pests and diseases as it reduces habitat for the pests thereby decreasing the risk of infestations.
- c. It improves crop management as it facilitates easier access for other farming practices such as fertilization, irrigation and harvesting.

- d. There is improved yield as it ensures the crop receives the necessary resources to grow, leading to higher yields and better-quality produce.

The irrigation clubs use manual weeding which involves the use of hoes despite being labor intensive. The practice of weeding leads to healthier crops, better economic outcomes for farmers and enhanced environmental sustainability.



Weeds removal using hand hoe

Practicing of Intercropping

Intercropping is an agricultural practice that involves growing two or more crops in proximity within the same field during a growing season. Through training, Chigona irrigation club is practicing intercropping of Maize and beans. Intercropping systems enhance resource utilization, increase crop productivity and contribute to sustainable farming practices. The intercropping system has benefits in pest and disease management as a diverse cropping system can disrupt pest cycles and reduce the incidence of diseases. By carefully selecting crops, designing appropriate planting patterns and implementing effective management strategies, farmers can overcome the challenges associated with intercropping and achieve sustainable and productive farming systems.



Promoting intercropping practices on irrigation farming

Tomato seedlings transplanting

Successful cultivation of tomatoes often begins with the proper transplanting of seedlings. Proper transplanting ensures that seedlings develop strong root systems, adapt well to the outdoor environment and ultimately produce high yields. Incorrect transplanting can lead to stress, stunted growth or even plant death. Mvunguti irrigation club is practicing tomato production where transplanting activity is in progress. The club members were reminded of steps for transplanting tomato seedlings to reduce transplanting shock. By following the steps on transplanting, club members can improve the survival and growth of their tomato plants, leading to higher yields and better-quality fruits.



Tomato seedlings for transplanting

Business and Financial Empowerment Microloans (FEM)

Executive Summary

The Business development through its FEM program strives to contribute to the reduction of rural poverty by providing microloans and financial literacy to women entrepreneurs. The aim is to boost existing local businesses and create employment for other women so that they can ably provide for their families. The efforts are directed towards the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) specifically goal number 5 and 8. The program is also contributing to pillar number 2 of the Malawi vision 63 agenda on industrialization specifically on increased access to affordable finance thus OCA loans are interest free in nature. In the month of June, the FEM program conducted a number of activities as narrated below;

Feedback sessions

The Business Development program conducted feedback sessions with all the five FEM groups; Tikondane, Tiyanjane, Takondwa Tithandizane and Tamandani. The aim of the meeting was to review the concurrent December, 2023 to June 2024 and December, 2023 to September, 2024 loan periods. For the order groups; Tikondane and Tiyanjane, their loan periods were extended as some of the members had been given medium loans whereas the remaining groups followed the usual FEM revolving calendar of four months. From the feedback sessions, it was noted that by June, 2024 Takondwa, Tithandizane and Tamandani FEM groups had finalised their repayments marking *a 100 percent loan recovery*. On the other hand, Tikondane and Tiyanjane were still making their monthly installments.

During the meeting, individual business as well as household successes and challenges were recorded for the period. The most prominent challenge raised was the general *hyperinflation* which has resulted in high prices for commodities hence tightening the profit margins compared to what the women entrepreneurs had anticipated.



Tithandizane and Tamandani FEM members (Left) and JoAnn, Lester and Lynda (Right)

Umodzi Village Business Manual Distribution

In attempts to expand the Program’s educational offerings, the UVBM was distributed to the FEM members from the various FEM groups and two other women entrepreneurs from the Kasese trading center. The total number of books distributed to the women entrepreneurs was **70**. These books will help equip our women entrepreneurs with business knowledge and skills required in managing their businesses effectively. The books may also encourage women entrepreneurs to develop a reading culture hence putting them in a position where they may be researching for information that may help them succeed in their businesses.



Tikondane (Left) and Tiyanjane (Right) FEM members after receiving the UVBM

Monitoring Visits

Routine monitoring visits were conducted to assess business performance for the women entrepreneurs in the program. Although the businesses continually suffer with the effects of inflation, the women entrepreneurs are working very hard to ensure that they make

ends meet. By June, 2024 the inflation rate was 32.70 percent. This represents a 5.4 percent increase as compared to the same period in 2023. During the month, a group monitoring visit with OCUS board members to Mtambalika was also conducted. The aim of the visit was to introduce the newly established FEM group members as well as to give them a word of encouragement.



Rebecca (Left) and Emily (Right) on the business posts

Village Savings and loans weekly meetings

VSLs are pertinent to the Business Development program as they help instill a saving culture among the groups that we work with hence ensuring sustainability of the programs. They also ensure that participants achieve their long term goals and cushion them from emergencies thereby contributing to their wellbeing. The FEM groups continue to meet for their weekly meetings; Tithandizane on Tuesdays, Tamandani on Wednesdays, Tikondane and Takondwa on Thursdays and Tiyanjane on Fridays. During the month, all the groups managed to hold four meetings each making it a total of twenty VSL meetings held.



Tiyanjane FEM members during VSL meeting

Knitting Project Review meeting

Upon receipt of their first cheque of MWK 302,000 from the sale of baby hats, the members met to plan on how to invest the money raised. From the discussions, the women had agreed to buy maize and pesticides so that it can be kept and be resold at a later date. By June end, they had acquired and kept 10 bags of Maize. The baby hats and booties making project continues as they had also received a donation of yarn from one of OCUS's board members, Jo Ann Graham.



Some of the knitting project members

Education Support Program



Executive Summary

In Malawi, there is a serious shortage of high-quality education, especially in rural areas. There are numerous obstacles that prevent students from finishing their education, such as the high rate of child marriage, inadequate government support, and difficult access to educational resources. Because of this, a large number of children in Malawi end up trapped in a cycle of low life, poverty, and restricted access to high-quality education. As such OCA tries to address these and other problems. OCA seeks to increase children's and youth's access to high-quality education, providing them with the tools and resources they need to achieve their goals, enhance their quality of life, and eventually aid in Malawi's national development. The Orant Education Program contributes to SDG 4 of Quality Education and also SDG number 5 of Gender Equality.

The Orant Education initiative aims to improve the quality of education service delivery in Malawi so more girls and boys effectively move through and complete secondary school with measurable gains in learning outcomes. We ensure that every child deserves unobstructed access to education, a happy, healthy, and safe childhood, regardless of their circumstances. Activities carried out by the education program in June 2024 included the following;

School monitoring visits and distribution of supplies

We are aware that effectively supporting students entails making investments in all facets of their lives, offering them social and financial support, and trying to alter the circumstances behind their marginalization. For this reason, OCA covers the cost of books, sanitary protection, and other necessities in addition to school fees.

The OCA education program made school visits to sponsored students. During the period, *Five* schools; Dowa, Tchawale, St. Chavara, St. Peters, and Nkhamenya Secondary School were visited. The visits were intended to keep an eye on the academic progress of the pupils, motivate them to put in extra effort in the classroom, and offer them both material and moral assistance. The OCA Education program provided school supplies to a total of 43 students, and among the materials they received were sugar, washing & bathing soap, hardcover books, pencils, pens, sanitary pads, and many other items.



OCA encouraging and supporting students from Tchawale (left) & St. Chavara (right) secondary school



A student from St.Peters Secondary. school carrying supplies given by Orant

In the same reporting month, the OCA education program and Board members from Orant Charities US (Lynda Baumgartner and Jo Ann Graham) visited Kabuluzi and Nyagara Primary schools. The two schools were visited following the results which were found after conducting a school assessment survey in the schools around the Kasese catchment area. The results of the survey showed that these two schools had the lowest scores in some categories like infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, challenges of water (Kabuluzi), toilets (Nyagara) e.t.c. However, the findings also indicated that

there is good participation of the community in both schools. The Board members were interested to know more about the schools and have a deep understanding about them. The Head teachers from the two schools were very open to share information about how they run the schools, challenges as well as strengths of the schools. Students were also visited in their classrooms just for greetings.



OCA's visit to Kabuluzi primary school



OCA's visit to Nyagara primary school

The visits were very fruitful and a lot was shared and discovered. Going forward, OCA will continue to visit and assess the schools and see how best we can work with them in order to promote education.

Additionally, Nkhamenya girls' secondary school was also visited together with one of Orant Charities US Board members. The students were visited for encouragement, especially the form 4's since they were about to start the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination the following week. At Nkhamenya, there are 9 students



sponsored by OCA who will sit for MSCE this year. The students were greatly inspired and they promised to keep on working hard and pass the examination with good grades.

Apart from encouraging the students at Nkhamenya girls' secondary school, the Jo Ann Graham, also met with a student she has been sponsoring for four years (form 1 to 4).

The student is graduating from secondary school this year and it was their first time to meet. They were all happy to see each other and Jo Ann Graham encouraged the student to work extra hard because she is very much proud of her and she is wishing her all the best during the MSCE exams. The student was so thankful to her sponsor and she assured her that she will pass the MSCE with good grades and go to college so that she fulfills her dream of becoming a Nurse.

Attending Program meeting

The OCA education program attended a meeting which was organized by Opulence Malawi. Opulence Malawi is an NGO which is also operating in T/A Chakhaza and has three thematic areas; Agriculture, Education and also Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) empowerment. The main agenda of the meeting was about a community library which Opulence is planning to construct at Mtanira primary school in Madisi. The meeting was conducted at Mtanira F.P school and the 11 participants were; the Primary school Education Advisor (PEA), Mtanira primary school Head Teacher, The principle from the Ministry of Education, Senior Group Mtanira, Area Development Committee (ADC) chair, OCA education Program Officer (Amanda Kazembe) and 5 staff members from Opulence Malawi.



OCA attending a meeting at Opulence Malawi

It was a very important meeting to OCA since there are also plans of constructing a community library in Kasese. A lot was learnt from Opulence Malawi like what the library will look like, the target audience, staffing, source of funds/books, type of books and other materials to be found in the library e.t.c. Opulence Malawi indicated that the library project is for five years after which it will be handed over to the school. First year will be for constructing the library, second year for training staff and stocking, third year for implementation, fourth year is for the exit strategy and fifth year will be for handing over the library.

Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) Exams



OCA had students who took the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) examinations in June 2024. When students are in form two, they write national exams and receive their certificate. It should be noted that, 32 of the 95 secondary school students that OCA is funding this year have taken the JCE exams. They are from the following schools; St. Chavara (2 students), Dowa (6 students), Likuni(1 student), Nkhamenya (13 students), Kasungu (1 student), Loyola (1 student), Natola (3 students) and Madisi (5 students). OCA is anticipating positive outcomes from these students due to their diligence and strong performance.

Conclusion

We are hopeful that our students will excel in both Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). We continue to provide students with necessary supplies needed in schools. It is good to see the school libraries flourishing and students developing more reading culture.