

## ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MONTHLY REPORT



Compiled by:

**Gabriel Kapanda**

**Country Director**

Orant Charities Africa, P/bag

365, Lilongwe

[www.orantcharitiesafrica.org](http://www.orantcharitiesafrica.org)

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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
DMEC	-	District Monitoring and Evaluation committee-DMEC
EPA	-	Extension Planning Area
FEM	-	Financial Empowerment Microloan
JCE	-	Junior Certificate of Education
MEAL	-	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
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 other 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 August 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, Dowa District, Malawi. 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 August, 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 maintenance (Service/preventive: **22**; Reactive maintenance: **1**)

- District Coordinating Team (DCT) Meeting in Dowa
- Borehole drilling in Kanono village
- Latrine construction at Nyagara Primary School
- Learning visits to piped water projects in Dowa
- Field visit to Opulence Malawi implementation area
- Field visits with Non-Governmental Organizations Regulatory Authority (NGORA) officers

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

### Water Point Operation and Maintenance

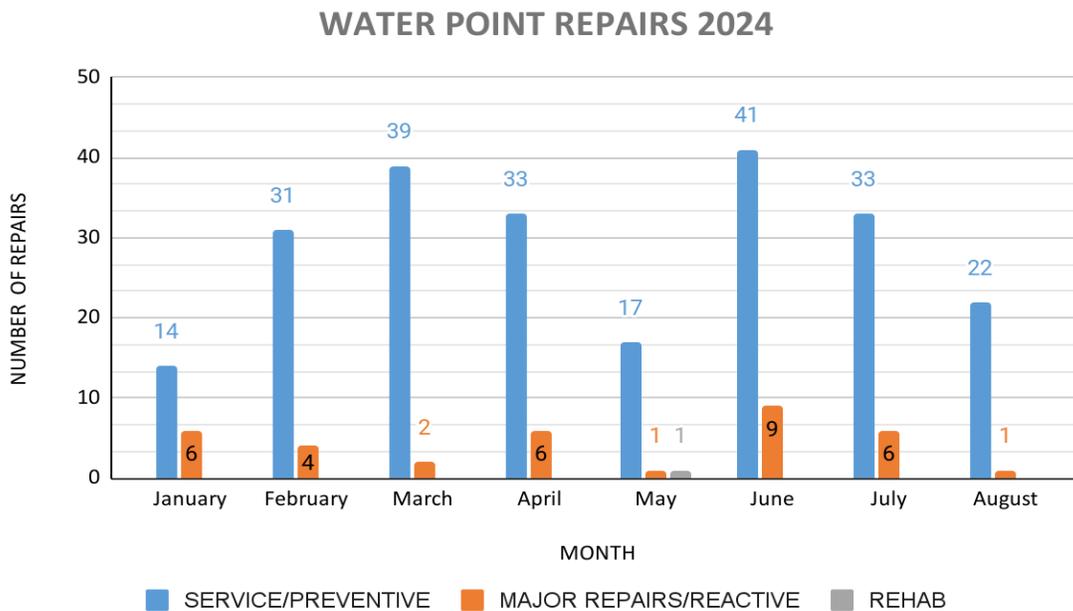


*Left - Preventive maintenance session for Katema borehole, Right - Preventive maintenance session for Mshangula borehole during the month*

To ensure the sustainability of water points in the Kasese catchment, the OCA WASH program conducts maintenance of water points. Under this initiative the program repairs boreholes which are broken which is known as Reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program also services boreholes before a breakdown to prevent major breakdowns which is known as Preventive maintenance.

This month, the program supported **22** preventive and **1** reactive maintenance activities for water points, thus **23**. From January to August 2024, the WASH program has conducted **35** reactive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **58**, achieving **60%** of the target. This data indicates that the program is on track to reduce the need for major reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program has conducted **231** preventive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **300**, representing **77%**

progress. Below is a graph showing the progress of water point maintenance services in the Kasese catchment;



## Borehole Drilling and Construction

To improve access to potable water, the WASH program drills new boreholes in areas with limited water access. This month, the program drilled 1 borehole in Kanono village. Before this intervention, the people from the village relied on unprotected hand-dug wells in their village. The new borehole in Kanono village is expected to supply water to **280** people. In 2024, the program has drilled a total of **6** boreholes out of its annual target of **10** representing **60%** progress.



***Left** - Borehole drilling in Kanono village during the month, **Right** - New borehole in Kanono village before handover*

## Latrine Construction at Nyagara Primary School



*Front and side view of the new latrines at Nyagara Primary School during the construction phase*

To promote sanitation in schools, the WASH program constructs latrines in schools with limited access to improved sanitation services. During the month, the program began construction of a boys' latrine block at Nyagara Primary School. Before OCA intervention the school had dilapidated boys' latrines which were on the verge of collapsing. This posed a risk to the safety of the children at the school. The new latrine block is made up of 4 cubicles each with one drop hole. The new latrines are expected to benefit a total of 582 boys at the school. The latrines have been constructed through a coordinated effort between the community from around the school and OCA. The community provided sand, bricks and quarry while OCA provided the rest of the materials needed and labor.

## District Coordinating Team (DCT) Meeting



*A section of participants during a DCT Meeting in Dowa during the month*

To enhance coordination with WASH stakeholders at the district level, the OCA WASH program attends DCT meetings. DCT is made up of district WASH stakeholders and other relevant government departments. The DCT coordinates the implementation of the WASH program or projects in the Dowa district. During the month, the OCA WASH program was invited to attend a DCT meeting in Dowa. The agenda for the meeting was the introduction of a new project being implemented by an NGO called Water for People. Water for People is planning to implement a WASH program in collaboration with Pump Aid and Self Help Africa aiming at promoting professionalized maintenance of water points.

### Visiting Piped Water Projects in Dowa

The WASH program is in the process of implementing its first solar piped water project in the Kasese catchment. In line with this, WASH program staff visited 3 piped water schemes to learn how other NGOs are implementing and sustaining these programs. The program visited Mtiti, Mbindo, and Thonde solar piped water schemes. During the visit, it was observed that organizations have made significant efforts in the provision of safe water. Despite this, there are still challenges in the sustainability of piped water schemes. It was observed that most communities benefiting from these schemes are struggling to raise funds for the maintenance of the schemes.



**Left** - Delegates during the field visit to Mtiti solar piped water scheme established by Water Missions, **Right** - One of the water points during a field visit to Mbindo Solar piped water scheme which was established by Self Help Africa.

## Field Visit to Opulence Program Implementation Area



*Left -Opulence and Orant charities staff appreciate how a composting toilet constructed by Opulence functions during the field visit, Right - The Agricultural program manager explaining operations of the Agroecology farm during the field visit.*

OCA received visitors from Opulence Malawi. Opulence Malawi is a local NGO implementing projects in Education, Financial Empowerment, Sanitation and Agriculture. The visit was organized by Opulence to share ideas and lessons for the betterment of the projects being implemented by the two organizations. During the visit, Opulence visited interventions by the OCA Agricultural, WASH, Education and FEM program. Similarly, OCA staff also visited Opulence projects in Madisi. During the visits, it was noted that Opulence and OCA were implementing similar projects in their respective catchments. Following the visits, Opulence appreciated the work OCA is doing in the Kasese catchment. As a way forward the two organizations plan to have a discussion on areas of partnership among different programs or projects being implemented.

## Field visit with Non-Governmental Organizations Regulatory Authority (NGORA) officers



*Delegates during field visits with NGORA officers*

OCA was also visited by NGORA officers from Dowa. NGORA is the registrar and regulatory body for NGOs. The Officers from NGORA came to monitor OCA field activities and how they are impacting the communities around the Kasese catchment area. The Officers visited interventions by the OCA Agricultural, WASH and Education programs. Following the visit, NGORA officers appreciated the work OCA is doing in the Kasese catchment. During the visit, the NGORA officers acknowledged that OCA interventions in the field were congruent with what is presented in annual reports submitted by OCA to their organization.

# Agriculture and Business

## Agriculture Program



### Executive Summary

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 agricultural expertise. Some of the activities conducted in August have been explained below;

### **Learning visit with Opulence Malawi**

During the reporting period, a learning visit with Opulence Malawi was of paramount importance for the growth and success of the OCA programs. The purpose of the learning visit was to engage with Opulence Malawi, a prominent entity known for its innovative approaches in agriculture and to observe and learn from their best practices. The visit was intended to enhance our understanding of their operational model, strategies, and

overall impact, which can then be integrated into our own organizational processes. The learning visit to Opulence Malawi provided valuable insights into their operational excellence, stakeholder engagement, and innovative practices. The knowledge gained from Opulence Malawi will inform strategic improvements within our organization, helping us optimize our processes and achieve greater impact in the OCA catchment area.



*Learning visit with Opulence*

## **NGORA Monitoring visit**

The monitoring visit was conducted by NGORA, aimed at assessing the progress, challenges and overall impact of the OCA programs being implemented. The visit served as an opportunity for NGORA representatives to evaluate the project's compliance with its objectives, identify areas for improvement, and provide constructive feedback for enhancing its effectiveness. The monitoring visit began with an introductory briefing, followed by a field visit to the key project areas. NGORA representatives interacted with beneficiaries to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's activities, outputs, and outcomes. They had the opportunity to observe the delivery of services firsthand, engage with beneficiaries, and review the project's physical outputs. Feedback from beneficiaries was generally positive, with many reporting that the project had significantly improved their livelihoods, health and education for their children. The beneficiaries appreciated the regular engagement and capacity-building efforts by the

OCA team. The monitoring visit by NGORA was successful in evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the agriculture program.



*Field visit with NGORA representatives at irrigation club*

### **Cooperative meeting**

In August, the potential of establishing a Kasese Farmers' Cooperative in collaboration with the farm club and lead farmers was explored. The idea was to promote a more structured and unified approach to farming, marketing, and resource management. The goal of this partnership is to improve productivity, enhance market access, and increase the overall profitability for the members involved. Lead farmers and Farm Club representatives showed a high level of interest in forming a cooperative, acknowledging the potential benefits in terms of improved bargaining power, access to markets, and shared resources. However, they also emphasized the need for capacity building and training to ensure all members are adequately prepared for the responsibilities and benefits of cooperative membership. To form a cooperative, at least 25 members are required as per cooperative rules and regulations.



*Meeting with Lead farmers on cooperative establishment*

### **Expanding agroecology to irrigation clubs**

The meeting was held with Madzimayela irrigation club to explore the potential of integrating agroecology farming practices. The meeting focused on the benefits of agroecology, the steps required to implement it, and the support needed for successful adoption. The goal was to introduce sustainable farming methods that can enhance productivity while protecting the environment and improving soil health. The meeting with the Irrigation Club was productive, with members showing strong interest in adopting agroecology farming practices. With proper support and resources, the transition to agroecology has the potential to enhance the sustainability and productivity of the farmers while protecting the environment and conserving water resources.



*Meeting with Irrigation club members on agroecology practices*

## **Tomato Staking**

Tomato staking is a common practice in tomato farming that involves supporting the tomato plants as it grows. It helps in improving plant health, fruit quality, and overall yield by keeping the plant upright and ensuring proper air circulation. Mvunguti irrigation club was doing staking using a single staking method where each tomato plant was tied to an individual wooden stake that is placed firmly into the ground next to the plant. Tomato staking is a highly beneficial practice that supports healthy plant growth, improves fruit quality, and makes harvesting easier. Through Implementation of the appropriate staking method and following best practices, tomato farming productivity and sustainability will be greatly improved.



*Irrigation club members conducting tomato staking*

## **Tomato Pruning**

Pruning of tomato plants was conducted at Mvunguti irrigation club to enhance plant health, improve fruit quality, and increase overall productivity. Pruning is a key horticultural practice that involves the removal of unnecessary plant parts, such as excess leaves and side shoots, to direct the plant's energy towards fruit production. The tomato pruning activity was successful in demonstrating the value of pruning to enhance plant health, fruit quality, and yield. Farmers now have the knowledge and skills to implement proper pruning techniques in their fields, leading to more productive and sustainable

tomato farming. With continued support, training, and access to necessary tools, pruning can become an integral part of improving the success of tomato farming.



*Pruning of tomato plants at Mvunguti irrigation club*

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

### **Executive Summary**

In pursuit of women's economic empowerment, OCA through The Business development program, continues to empower women entrepreneurs with business loans and Digital and financial literacy. In the reporting month of August, a number of interventions such as monitoring visits, Village savings and loan group meetings and market assessment surveys were implemented which contributed to the realization of the program's goals. Below, is a narration of the interventions carried out.

### **Market assessment Survey**

As the business development program is growing. Medium sized loans for businesses have been introduced with the aim of supporting business growth, innovation and economic growth. To identify businesses that may be supported in the pilot phase, a min-survey has been designed to collect information about businesses in the market areas where we are working in. As of August end 2024, the survey had been done partly in Mtambalika and in Kasese trading centres. The survey results will help inform which businesses may be supported.



*Phone accessories shop at Mtambalika trading Centre*

## **Monitoring visits**

In August, Women entrepreneurs were monitored on their various business posts to assess the business progress and give them support in areas that need improvement. Although women continually experience the hardships caused by hyper inflation, they have not given up on their businesses. Part of the monitoring visits was also to follow up on loan repayment as there are other women entrepreneurs who have not finished their loan repayments. As of August end, we had collected a sum of MWK 2,227,000 towards loan repayment for the two remaining groups.



*Josphine (L) and Ethel (R) on their business posts*

## Stakeholder meetings

### Opulence Malawi Meeting

During the month, a collaborative meeting was conducted with Opulence Malawi to learn from both parties what we do and identify areas of collaboration. Through the meeting, it was learnt that they also train VSL clubs within the same communities we are working in. The VSL groups are encouraged to reinvest their savings in group businesses as one way of multiplying their savings and as a mechanism for preventing fraud. They also use a dream save application that helps them keep accurate records of savings. The software instantly notifies the members via SMS of the individual's daily shares made. This is good as it helps group members to keep proper records of how much they have saved hence encouraging transparency and accountability to the group members. Furthermore, the application is free for their members as they pay the subscription fee on their behalf thereby making it accessible to the members. We also had the opportunity to visit the sites where they are implementing the projects and interact with the program participants.



*OCA and Opulence Malawi team*

### NGORA meeting

The Business development program was tasked to represent OCA at NGO Regulatory Authority stakeholder coordination meetings. The meeting took place on Thursday, 8th August, 2024 at Dowa district council offices in Dowa. The aims of the meeting were as follows;

1. To strengthen joint planning and feedback between NGOs and the councils;
2. Find means for generating funds for monitoring NGO work;

3. Create awareness on the key functions of Ngora by some District council officials including the Ministry of Gender department at district level.

The goal is to improve service delivery and enhance sustainability of NGO programs. During the meeting, actionable recommendations were made, some of which include revamping the district monitoring and evaluation committee (DMEC), a committee that is responsible for ensuring Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) and uniformity of monitoring tools within the council. It was also proposed that NGOs should make sure that they go through the council for approval before starting implementation. This will ensure that there is no duplication of efforts within the same area but rather synergies. It was also recommended that councils should provide support where necessary that will help smoothen NGO implementation and service delivery. For instance facilitating letters that may fasttrack duty waivers for materials brought in by NGOs.

## VSL Meetings

Village savings and loan group meetings continued to take place within the month for all the five FEM groups. Aside from cultivating a saving culture among the women entrepreneurs, VSLs meetings also help in uniting the women entrepreneurs to share experiences, business experiences and support each other. After the banking session, the women entrepreneurs also have time to follow up and record loan repayments made within the week and the challenges they face in their businesses on a daily basis and how to help one another.



*Tikondane FEM women during a village bank session*

# Education Support Program

## Executive Summary

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.

It is the objective of OCA to assist students in ending the cycle of poverty and preparing them for adult independence. OCA makes sure that students receive all-around growth through mentorship, counseling, and performance monitoring in addition to the educational benefits. Currently, OCA is supporting the education of **75** students (1 student in primary school, 66 students in secondary schools and 8 students in tertiary schools under Ulemu scholarship). The following were the activities which were carried in the month of August, 2024;

## Learning visit at Opulence Malawi



A learning visit at Opulence Malawi was conducted in the month of August 2024. Opulence Malawi is working in Madisi. We managed to visit their programs and it was learnt that under their education program they had distributed solar to families with school going children aged between 3-21 years. Under this program, they thought it is wise to provide lights to these families so that the students are able

to study during the night since they do not have electricity nor can they afford the solar. However, to develop a sense of ownership among the program participants, the solar panel recipients are required to pay an initial deposit of about MWK 40,000. This amount is either paid as a lump sum or as monthly installments of not more than MWK

4,500 per month. The amount collected is deposited into a community account and these funds can be used for other community initiatives.

After the provision of the solar they then looked at what the students will be studying considering that they also lack books. This is when they came up with the idea of constructing the library so that these targeted school going children have access to books. The library is under construction in Madisi at Mtanira primary school. It will have different sections such as a children's corner, computer area and also study hall. The internal study room is expected to accommodate at least 35 people or even more but will also have an outer compartment where people can sit and study whilst enjoying the fresh air. The library committee (which consists of the PEA, Head Teacher, Chiefs, ADC chair, Dowa Ministry of Education representative e.t.c) has been tasked to develop a policy on the library Management. Some of the issues that will be incorporated will include their target audience since T/A Chakhaza is too wide and also other activities to be done for example adult literacy e.t.c. The library will be registered under the Malawi Nation Library and will obtain membership as it is a requirement to do so and this will also help them to benefit from that partnership.



*A visit at Opulence Malawi library construction*

Orant is looking forward to learning more from this Library project once it has started operating since there are also plans to construct a community library at Orant. The education program will work hand in hand with Opulence in order to help promote education in our area.

## **Library visit**

OCA is in collaboration with Ngala CDSS and we are currently working to enhance its library services. Throughout the month, the Ngala CDSS library sessions were increasingly monitored. The OCA education program often checked in on students at the school library. Even on holidays, the Ngala CDSS Library is open for business from 8 a.m.

to 12 p.m. This is the agreement which was made between Orant and Ngala CDSS. The goal is to instill a reading culture in the students for the entire academic year.

The attendance book was examined during the visit, and it was in excellent condition. It demonstrated that students are actually making effective use of the library. We talked about successes, difficulties, and future directions for the library's improvement. With all that was learned and discussed, it was a really productive meeting.



*Orant with Ngala CDSS Librarian (left) and students checking out books at the library (right) during the holiday*

## **Review meeting with parents**

The education program participated in a review meeting with parents and sponsored students who reside in the Kasese catchment area. A total of 65 people attended the event (25 pupils and 40 parents). Reviewing our prior discussion on the value of education and parents' roles in their children's education was the main goal of the meeting. According to the opinions, many parents are actively concerned in both their children's welfare and education. Many of them are able to review their children's progress reports and motivate them to put in extra effort. Above all, parents play a crucial role in providing guidance to their kids so that they don't become overly invested in things that will ultimately cause them to quit school.



OCA meeting with parents and sponsored students

At the end of the meeting, the OCA education program thanked the parents for their hard



work and collaboration with Orant to support the children's academic success. Furthermore, the parents who do not express interest in their kids' education were encouraged to start becoming involved. The parents expressed their gratitude to Orant for meeting their children's fundamental needs while they are at school and for supporting their education. They also pledged to support their children's going forward so that we

may all strive toward expanding access to high-quality education. The students pledged to put in additional effort so they could support their parents in the future.

### **Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) Exams**

During the reporting period, JCE exam results were released and a total of **32** OCA students sat for the examination. This examination is the first secondary school national examination; it is written by the students after completing junior secondary level which covers two academic years. All the 32 students passed and they qualified for the award of the Junior Certificate of Education. This represents a 100% pass rate.



*Some of the students who passed JCE*

### **Monitoring visit by the Non- Governmental Regulatory Authority (NGORA)**

OCA was visited by the NGORA and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) officer from Dowa district council to monitor our projects. Since Orant sends the annual reports to NGORA, they have to visit the programs and monitor in accordance with the reports they receive. They had a chance to interact with the education program and visit our activities and Ngala CDSS which is one of the Orant partner and sponsor schools was visited. At Ngala they managed to interact with the teacher librarian by asking him about the relationship with Orant and how it is helping to improve the education status of students. The librarian narrated that the school has a good relationship with Orant and it has improved the performance of students due to the book pamphlets and laboratory material which Orant gave them. Additionally, the librarian also appreciated the support of OCA sponsoring students at the school.

Lastly, the visitors also interacted with one of Orant's sponsored students. The student explained to them that the sponsorship is helping him because his parents would not afford to pay for his school fees and he is now able to concentrate in class. He further appreciated the school materials which Orant gives them.



*Monitoring visit at Ngala CDSS with NGORA and M&E officer from Dowa*

### **Meeting at Kabuluzi primary school**

OCA education program conducted a meeting at Kabuluzi primary school. The meeting was attended by the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), Chiefs, the Head teacher and other members of staff from Orant. The aim of the meeting was to inform all the stakeholders that the school has been chosen as the first school to be working with Orant in terms of improving the education status of the school. The school has been considered after analyzing the needs assessment which was conducted in all the 20 primary schools around the Kasese catchment area and Kabuluzi has been on position one after ranking the schools in accordance to their needs.



*OCA Meeting with stakeholders at Kabuluzi primary school*

It was a very successful meeting and the stakeholders appreciated the support to be given by Orant, which is renovating the school, especially the block 4 class room. The renovations will include treatment of termites around the whole campus, maintenance of the roof, floor, windows, veranda and also painting. During the meeting, the OCA team demonstrated on how the renovations will be done and they welcomed the idea. As

community participation, they also agreed to take an initiative to contribute sand, bricks, quarry and also part of labor. Orant is expecting these materials to be organized so that the renovations can start as soon as possible.