

ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MONTHLY REPORT



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Table of Contents

Acronyms & Abbreviations	2
Introduction	3
Water and Sanitation Program	3
Water Point Operation and Maintenance	4
Borehole Drilling and Construction.....	5
Latrine Construction at Tchale Primary School	6
Community Mobilization Meeting for Kabuluzi Piped Water Project.....	7
Hydrogeological Survey for Piped Water Project Borehole.....	8
Community-Based Management training for Matekwe Water Point Committee (WPC)	8
Agriculture and Business Development Programs.....	9
Agriculture Program	9
Learning visit on canal construction.....	10
Meeting on cooperative program.....	11
Area Development Committee Meeting.....	12
Agroecology farm	13
Fertilizer application at Irrigation Clubs	13
Weeding of Crops at Irrigation Clubs	14
Business Development Program	15
Business or entrepreneurship training	15
Sensitization meeting	15
Microloan follow up meeting.....	16
Microloan applications.....	17
Social Enterprise Training.....	17
VSL meetings	18
Opulence exchange visit	18
Education Support Program	19
2024 Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Exam results	20
Ulemu scholarship selection.....	21
Field visit with Opulence Malawi.....	22
Identification of new additional secondary school students	23

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 governing institutions. OCA serves in Malawi through Healthcare and implementing other development programs such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education, Agriculture, Business Development, and Energy and Environment. This monthly report outlines milestones from the month of September 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. This month, 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: **48**; Reactive maintenance: **6**)
- Borehole drilling in Vikwe and Matekwe villages
- Latrine construction at Tchale Community Day Secondary School (CDSS)
- Community mobilization meeting for piped water projects in Dowa
- Community-Based Management training for Matekwe Water Point Committee (WPC)
- Geophysical survey for piped water project borehole

Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements

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

Water Point Operation and Maintenance

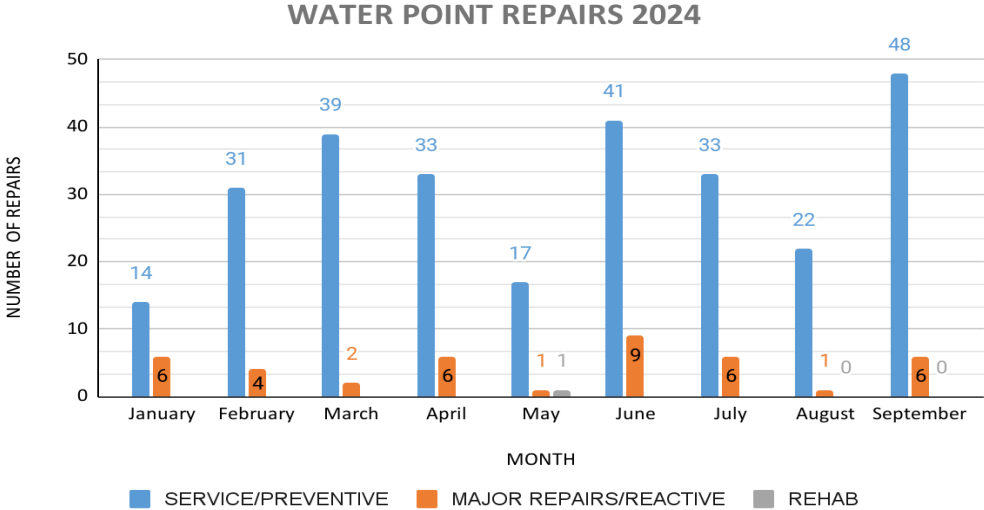


Preventive maintenance session for Amos borehole during the month

To ensure the sustainability of water points in the Kasese catchment, the OCA WASH program conducts repairs and maintenance of water points. Under this initiative, the program repairs boreholes in response to a breakdown, this approach is known as reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program conducts routine services for boreholes before they break down, and this approach is known as Preventive maintenance. Currently, the Kasese catchment has a total of **359** Afridev pumps. Out of these boreholes, **97%** of the Afridev pumps are functional while **45%** have adopted a preventive maintenance approach.

This month, the program supported **48** preventive and **6** reactive maintenance activities for water points, thus **54** were maintained in September. From January to September 2024, the WASH program has conducted **41** reactive maintenance of water points out of

an annual target of **58**, achieving **71%** 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 **279** preventive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **300**, representing **93%** 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 2 boreholes in Vikwe and Matekwe villages. Before this intervention, the people from the Vikwe and Matekwe villages were accessing potable water from boreholes in neighbouring villages. The new borehole in Matekwe village is expected to supply water to **300** people. The borehole in Vikwe is expected to supply water to **200** people. In 2024, the program has drilled a total of **7** boreholes out of its annual target of **8** representing **78%** progress.



The borehole in Matekwe village during Apron construction

Latrine Construction at Tchale Primary School



Left - Old latrines at Tchale Secondary School, Right - Workers digging a pit for the new latrines at Tchale Secondary during the month.

To promote sanitation in schools, the WASH program constructs latrines for learners. During the month, the program began constructing a Girls' latrine block at Tchale Secondary School. Currently, the digging of the pit for the new latrines is in progress. In the meantime, the girls at the school are using dilapidated latrines which were on the verge of collapsing. This poses a risk to the health and safety of the students at the school. The new latrine block will be made up of four cubicles, three of which will be used as latrines and one will be used as a change room. The new latrines are expected to benefit **436** girls at the school. The latrines are being constructed through a coordinated effort between the community from around the school and OCA. The school community has provided sand, bricks and quarry while OCA has provided the rest of the construction materials needed and also paid for labour to construct the latrines. Construction of the latrine block is expected to be completed by the month end of October 2024.

Community Mobilization Meeting for Kabuluzi Piped Water Project



A section of participants during the community mobilization meeting for the piped water project at Kabuluzi School

The OCA WASH program plans to construct a solar piped water scheme at Kabuluzi School. OCA organised a meeting with the Contractor (Orifice Irrigation and Water Supply Limited), Kabuluzi school management, local leaders and the Primary Education Advisor (PEA). The agenda of the meeting was to introduce the contractor to the community, select a committee for the project and establish Terms of Reference for the contractor, community, and OCA. The following outcomes have been achieved after the meeting;

- The contractor will report for duty on Monday, 30th Sept 2024 and is likely to complete the project on the 15th November 2024.
- A committee of 10 representatives from the school and community has been selected and will be responsible for the management of the scheme during and after construction with support from OCA.
- The headteacher and Chiefs will be just advisors to the committee selected.
- The construction team will be based in the community in the course of the project and the community will provide a house the contractor will be renting.
- Communities will support the digging of the trenches at a fee incurred by the contractor to ensure the task is completed on time and efficiently.
- Communication between the community and the contractor will be done through the committee selected.
- Orant will be responsible for the overall supervision of the project in coordination with the selected committee.

- The contractor will always provide an update to the Orant and the committee at each stage of the project.
- The project will benefit 5 villages/areas namely; Kabuluzi school, Chidothi, Lungu, Kadewa, Chongole and Mandevu. These areas have a total estimated population of 2000. At least a water point with two taps will be constructed in each of the 5 villages in this project.
- The proposed site of the borehole and tanks is Kadewa village which is the highest point among all the 5 areas in this project. This site will be confirmed by the contractor during a hydrogeological survey before drilling.

Hydrogeological Survey for Piped Water Project Borehole

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 together with the contractor conducted a hydrogeological survey on the proposed site for the piped water project. Hydrogeological surveys are tests conducted before drilling a borehole to ascertain the quality and quantity of water available at a particular location. During the survey, three sites were identified as having sufficient amounts of water required by the program. Among the three sites selected one was identified as having the highest possibility of producing water of good quality. The next step after the hydrogeological survey is borehole drilling.

Community-Based Management training for Matekwe Water Point Committee (WPC)



A section of participants during CBM training for Matekwe WPC

To enhance the capacity of Water Point Committees (WPCs) in managing their water points, the OCA WASH program conducts Community-Based Management (CBM) training. During this training, WPC members learn to perform minor repairs on Afridev pumps, implement good household sanitation and hygiene practices, understand community dynamics as well as how to mobilize and manage funds for borehole maintenance. In the past month, the WASH program trained one WPC from the Matekwe borehole. During the training, 11 WPC members were trained in borehole management and sanitation.

Conclusion

The end of September coincides with the end of the third quarter hence a perfect time to review program implementation progress for the year. In context, the WASH program is on track towards achieving key targets in borehole drilling, piped water projects, WPCs training, and construction of latrines. Therefore, the WASH program is excited with the onset of the new and last quarter of the year.

Agriculture and Business Development Programs

Agriculture Program



Executive Summary

Malawi's economy rely much on farming and OCA supports smallholder farmers to improve their economic status and reduce hunger problems. Its main focus in farming is equipping farmers with the knowledge of sustainable methods of farming. OCA supports smallholder farmers in both irrigation and rainfed farming through the provision of farm inputs microloans and agriculture expertise. The OCA 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. Some of the activities conducted during the reporting month have been explained below;

Learning visit on canal construction

The Agriculture department had a learning visit to Mponela Extension Planning Area (EPA) at Thawi Irrigation scheme with a focus on understanding the techniques of canal construction and how it can benefit the Irrigation clubs in the catchment area. The primary objective of the visit was to gain practical insight into the design, construction and maintenance of irrigation canals.

During the learning visit at Thawi irrigation scheme, OCA representatives learned about canal design to ensure even water distribution across the field. The design involved digging trenches of appropriate width and depth, aligning them with the slope and enforcing the sides with locally available materials such as stones, bricks and concrete. Maintenance practices were highlighted as key to prolonging the life of the canals. This includes clearing silt, repairing damaged sections and ensuring that water flow is not obstructed by debris or plant growth.

By observing successful projects at the Thawi irrigation scheme, the OCA representatives have a clearer understanding of how to implement and maintain an efficient irrigation system, which will lead to improved agricultural productivity and sustainability. OCA representatives anticipate applying the methods learned to enhance water management in irrigation schemes around the catchment area.



Learning visit on canal construction

Meeting on cooperative program

Meeting was held with Mwayiwathu farm club members and Lead farmers to discuss the potential benefits and steps involved in working together as a cooperative. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage collaboration among farmers to enhance agricultural productivity, improve market access and secure better terms for inputs. The meeting began with an explanation of what a cooperative is and how it differs from other forms of organization. The focus was on agricultural cooperatives which allows farmers to pool resources, work collectively and share the benefits equitably.

At the end of the meeting, several action points were agreed upon to move forward with the cooperative formation. Club members and Lead farmers were tasked with holding follow-up meetings to discuss the possibility of forming an executive committee to spearhead the cooperative.

The meeting provided a platform for both lead farmers and club members to learn about the benefits and challenges of working together as a cooperative. It was clear that while there are potential challenges, the advantages of forming a cooperative far outweigh them, particularly in terms of access to markets, resources, and financial stability. The group is now on the path towards forming a cooperative, with clear steps outlined to guide the process.



Meeting on cooperative program with OCA farm club members and lead farmers

Area Development Committee Meeting

A meeting was held with the Kachila Area Development Committee (ADC) members to update them on the progress of the ongoing OCA agriculture program. The session aimed to provide an overview of the program's current status, discuss achievements, challenges and identify areas requiring further collaboration. The ADC members were informed on agriculture program aims to enhance food security, improve livelihoods and promote sustainable farming practices through irrigation, agroecology and on farm farming training.

The meeting successfully updated the ADC on the progress of the ongoing agriculture program. The ADC stressed the importance of ongoing community sensitization and mobilization efforts to encourage more farmers to participate in training sessions and adopt new farming methods which OCA is implementing. The ADC expressed strong support for the program and provided constructive feedback on how to address the challenges encountered.



Meeting with Kachila VDC members

Agroecology farm

OCA agroecology farm adopts sustainable agricultural practices that prioritizes environmental conservation, soil health and biodiversity. Banana cultivation has been one of the key focus areas given its importance as a food crop and its high potential for generating income for the farm and local community. Several agroecology practices have been applied in banana cultivation to improve productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability. The farm uses compost manure and mulch to improve soil fertility. This enhances the nutrient availability for the banana plants and reduces dependence on chemical fertilizers.

The current status of banana growth is at the flowering and fruiting stage where early signs of bunch development are promising. The hands are well formed and the bananas are growing evenly indicating good pollination and nutrient uptake. Based on the current growth patterns and the ongoing health of the plants, the farm is on track to produce a healthy banana yield. The first harvest is expected within the next 3 months, depending on the specific plant varieties and environmental conditions.



Banana fruits on agroecology farm at flowering stage

Fertilizer application at Irrigation Clubs

Top dressing fertilizer application process is an essential agronomic practice aimed at providing crops with additional nutrients during the growth cycle to enhance productivity, particularly nitrogen for leafy growth and overall plant health. Kambalani irrigation club is cultivating Maize crop which is in its vegetative growth phase, where nitrogen is critical for promoting development and overall plant vigor. The top-dressing fertilizer application has had a positive impact on the growth and development of the crops targeted. The use of nitrogen-rich fertilizers significantly boosted vegetative

growth, improved plant health and enhanced yield potential for maize crops. With careful timing, continued use of organic inputs and proper management practices, future top-dressing applications will further enhance crop productivity and sustainability on the irrigation clubs.



Top dressing fertilizer applied on Maize crops

Weeding of Crops at Irrigation Clubs

Weeding is a critical agriculture practice aimed at removing unwanted (weeds) plants that compete with crops for essential nutrients, water and sunlight. Effective weed control is particularly important in irrigation farming, as water availability can enhance both crop growth and weed proliferation. Tchale Irrigation club was involved in weeding using manual methods. This method involves hand hoeing or pulling weeds by hand and it is effective for smaller plots and crops where weeds are located close to crop roots. The weeding activities conducted by the irrigation clubs have had a positive impact on crop growth, water use efficiency, and pest management. Despite challenges with labor and weed regrowth, the efforts have contributed to healthier crops and higher yield potential, particularly for maize and tomatoes.



Weeds control using manual method at Tchale irrigation club

Business Development Program

Executive Summary

The OCA Business Development program continues to serve the Kasese community through its mandate of providing free interest loans and strengthening the capacity of women so that they are vigilant and successful in their businesses. Hence achieving OCA's overall goal thus improving livelihoods. In the month of September, the FEM which is under business development program had initiated a number of activities as narrated below;

Business or entrepreneurship training

With the aim of imparting business knowledge to the women entrepreneurs, the Business development program continues to invest in the expansion of business offerings. A five day training with the Kachigamba (Takondwa) FEM group was conducted. The main focus areas of the training were; Market and Marketing Research. The training took place in the Kachigamba area and was facilitated in collaboration with Mr Banda from Mponera technical college and Mr Changaya from Small and Medium Enterprise for Development Institute (SMEDI).



Mr Changala and some women during a role play session (L) and some women entrepreneurs during group discussion (R)

Sensitization meeting

As one way of increasing collaboration with stakeholders, a meeting with the Kachira village development committee was conducted. The meeting was done in conjunction with the agriculture program. The meeting was aimed at raising awareness about our programs and informing the members of the prerequisites of the Business development

and the Agriculture programs. The meeting took place at Ngoko training centre and was attended by ten key VDC members and the OCA BD and agriculture program managers.



Kachira VDC members during business development presentation session

Microloan follow up meeting

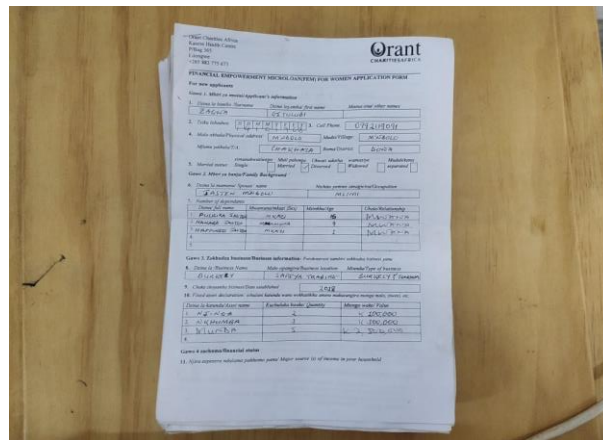
An interface meeting with Kasese (Tikondane and Tiyanjane) FEM Groups to map the way on loan repayment. These two groups were given higher loan amounts which resulted in the change of the repayment to eight months and an extra month for investment as compared to the four months loan period adopted by the rest of the FEM groups. The period was from December, 2023 to October, 2024. An average of 28% for each of the groups had been recovered from the loans which had raised suspicions as to whether the women entrepreneurs would be able to finalize repayment. Payment of school fees and other necessities for their children and the effects of hyper inflation were among some of the challenges that were raised during the meeting. There is assurance that the women entrepreneurs will work hard to finalize their repayments so that they may be able to access loans in December, which they believe will aid them in their commercial farm activities. Furthermore, they are counting on the savings made through VSL groups to bail them out in repaying their loans.



Tikondane and Tiyanjane women during a review meeting

Microloan applications

One of the core objectives of the business development program is to Expand FEM program and continue to offer microloans and business support. It is in this line that we facilitated the distribution of microloan application forms to women entrepreneurs so that they could express interest to be part of the program. The target market was Sapeya trading centre hence women in surrounding villages came to collect the microloan application forms. A total of 54 forms were distributed and submitted for review.



FEM application forms

Social Enterprise Training

The Business development program attended a training workshop in Social enterprise which was organized by Corporate Africa in collaboration with CONGOMA. The aim of the training was to capacitate stakeholders to successfully develop social enterprises that may help them in sustaining Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) activities. Hence

driving positive change, improving lives and contributing to the development of Malawi. The training was initiated upon noting that many NGOs are phasing out due to lack of funding. Through the meeting, we have managed to create networks that will foster partnerships with like-minded organizations.



Different stakeholders that attended the social enterprise training

VSL meetings

The women entrepreneurs continue to make small deposits through their local village bank as a way of saving income. In the reporting month, weekly meetings were conducted by various FEM groups. For Tikondane and Takondwa, they usually have their meetings on Thursday. Tithandizane and Tamandani hold their meetings on Tuesday whereas Tiyanjane meets on every Friday. In September, all the groups reported to have carried out all the weekly meetings.

Opulence exchange visit



Opulence Malawi visited Orant to appreciate the work that we do. This learning visit came after the OCA team had also visited their project site. In the business development program, the Opulence team was privileged to meet the first cohort of women entrepreneurs OCA has ever worked with. The women entrepreneurs were able to share their experiences and how they have benefitted in the program. Among other things, the women entrepreneurs also shared about the group knitting project and had brought with them some samples which they sale for the Opulence team to appreciate.



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.

Through its education sponsorship program, Orant Charities Africa (OCA) covers the tuition for students enrolled in Malawi's primary, secondary, and university levels. The scholarship will not end until each student has earned the required amount of knowledge and expertise. The program also involves mentorship, counseling, and performance

monitoring. The following were the activities which were carried out by the education program in the month of September 2024;

2024 Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Exam results

OCA had 29 students (25 girls and 4 boys) from different secondary schools who wrote the 2024 MSCE examinations in the month of July. 26 students passed and 3 failed, representing 89.6 % pass rate, with the highest student scoring 10 points. From the 26 students, 17 students are qualifying to apply for public Universities.

		Boarding students	Day students	Total
# Of students who wrote MSCE	29	28	1	29
Passed	26	25	1	26
Failed	3	3	0	3

2024 MSCE results

Out of the 117, 434 candidates who sat for the 2024 MSCE examination, in at least six subjects including English, 97, 222 candidates have qualified for the award of the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). This represents a **54.79%** pass rate. OCA is pleased to report that the 26 students are among the **54.78 %** pass rate for the 2024 MSCE exams results in Malawi.



Some of the OCA students from Ngala CDSS (left) & Madisi Sec. (right) who have passed the 2024 MSCE

Ulemu scholarship selection

The Orant Ulemu committee had a meeting to review the application forms for the Ulemu scholarship 3rd cohort. In the 2024/2025 academic year, OCA received 49 applications for the Ulemu scholarship. 10 applications were from previous OCA students and 39 non-OCA students. All 10 OCA previous students are first year students and there is a mixture of first year and continuing students from the 29 non-OCA students.

During the selection process, students with an MSCE score less than 20 points were prioritized and also those who wrote good essays. However, the first meeting was to review application forms for the OCA previous students. Next meeting we will review the applications from the non-OCA students and then finally select the eligible students.



Selection of the 3rd cohort for the Ulemu scholarship

The initial plan of the scholarship is to assist students who were previously assisted by Orant in secondary school. We noted a gap in students' academic life that after graduating secondary school they were failing to progress in the University due to lack of tuition and support. The University loans from the government of Malawi does not meet the needs of all vulnerable students. It is within this background that OCA decided to help university students. However, it has been noted that more university students lack support including students who we did not support previously in secondary school.

The selection of the students will be disclosed next month (October) after the government has released names of students which have been given the loans. This is so because we want to give the scholarship to someone who has not benefited from any scholarship or loan. If the selected students will be given government loans, we will give the scholarship to other students with the lowest grades from the students who qualify.

Field visit with Opulence Malawi

Opulence Malawi visited OCA programs and the education program was also visited. Since students were on holiday, we managed to visit the Ngala CDSS library because the library opens even during the holiday. Opulence had to appreciate the relationship between the school and Orant. They visited the school's library to see how the students are using the library. The librarian explained to them the support of book pamphlets they received from Orant and how it is helping a lot of students. And also, the initiative of opening the library during the holiday was an agreement between Orant and the school. The reason for this initiative was to instill a reading culture in the students and also to help the students to stay away from bad association or behaviors in the community which may lead them to drop out from school.



A visit at Ngala CDSS library with opulence Malawi

The visitors from Opulence also visited the Ngala CDSS laboratory to see the lab materials which Orant donated to the school. The deputy Head Teacher explained how it has changed the situation of students learning science subjects since in the past students were going to Madisi secondary school and Natola CDSS to write practical exams during JCE and MSCE exams. Now they are writing Practical exams at their school. Opulence was very much impressed with what Orant is doing and they encouraged us to keep on assisting the students and also to maintain a good relationship with the schools as well as the community.



OCA and Opulence visiting Ngala CDSS laboratory

Identification of new additional secondary school students

OCA is delighted that many of the previous sponsored students have completed schools successfully, and some have gone on to university education. Able students from primary schools are selected to continue their education at district and national, or day secondary schools. The fees, transport and other educational costs are well beyond the reach of their families. This is the reason Orant Charities Africa provides education support to students who are needy but deserving. Each year, the OCA education program receives overwhelming requests for educational support from parents as well as students. This year OCA received 42 requests for educational support and 21 students were identified for verification. The verification exercise started in the month of September and will continue until next month (October) whereby eligible students will be added to the program. A total of 12 students were visited in the month of September and OCA learnt that these students were still at home due to school fees challenge. With the availability of funding, OCA is planning to add 10 new secondary students into the program.



Verification exercise of new secondary students

OCA will continue to provide the opportunity for bright and hardworking students to receive quality education and reach their potential.