

# ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MONTHLY REPORT



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## **Acronyms & Abbreviations**

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| ADC     | - | Area Development Committee                           |
| AM      | - | Area Mechanic  |
| AEDO    | - | Agricultural Extension Development Officer           |
| CBM     | - | Community Based Management                           |
| CDSS    | - | Community Day Secondary School                       |
| CONGOMA | - | Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi |
| 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 and Business Development. This monthly report outlines milestones from the month of December 2024 in our WASH program, Education, Agriculture and Business Development;

## Water and Sanitation Program



## Executive Summary

The OCA WASH program aims to reduce morbidity and mortality caused by WASH-related diseases for the people of Kaseke. This goal is achieved through the provision of WASH infrastructure and extension services. The WASH program implementation 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 and then a detailed description of accomplishments.

### **Summary of Monthly Achievements**

The following milestones were achieved during the month;

- Water point maintenance (Service/preventive: 28; Reactive maintenance: 3 )
- Review Meeting with Chiefs
- Review Meeting with Sanitation Entrepreneurs
- Review Meeting with Area Mechanics (AMs)
- Review Meeting with Health Surveillance Assistance (HSAs)
- Review Meeting with Area Development Committee (ADC)
- Kabuluzi piped water project launch
- Attendance of a Professionalised Repair and Maintenance (PRM)

### **Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements**

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

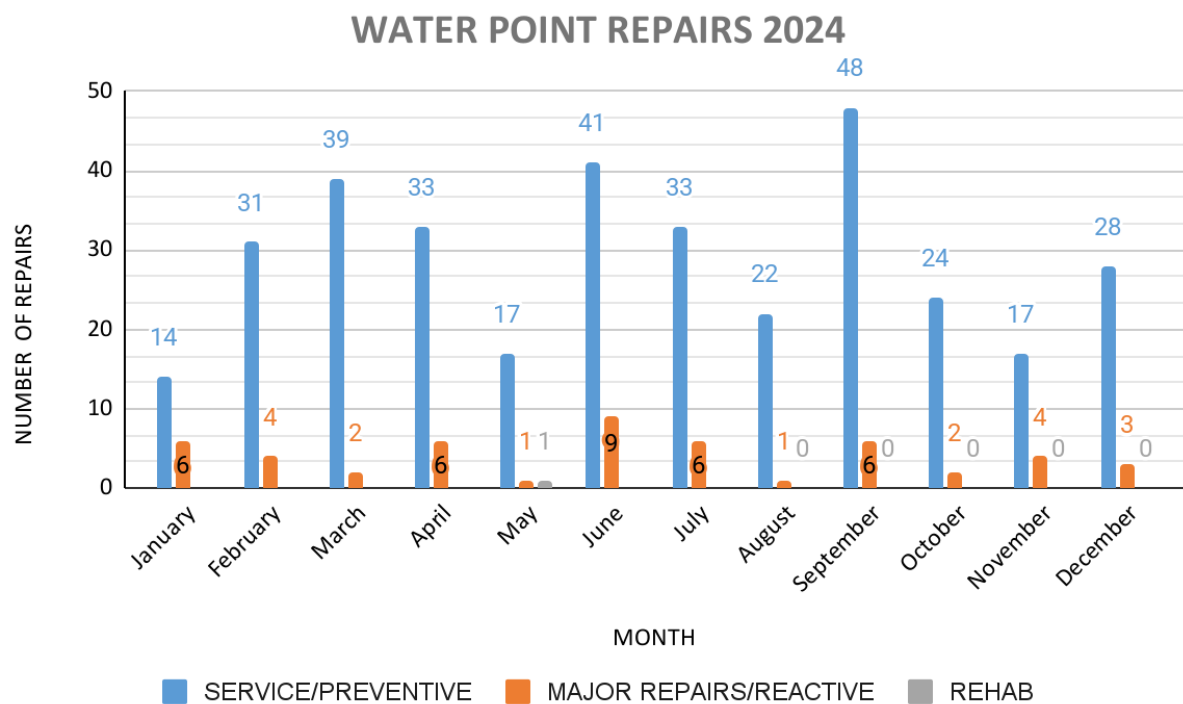
#### **Water Point Operation and Maintenance**



*A borehole maintenance session at Kaphiri school 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. The program supported **28** preventive and **3** reactive maintenance for water points. In total, 31 boreholes were maintained in December. From January to December 2024, the WASH program has conducted **50** reactive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **58** representing **86%**. This data indicates that the program is on track to reduce the need for major reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program has conducted **348** preventive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **320**, representing **116%** progress. This means the program surpassed the annual preventive maintenance target before the year's end. Below is a graph showing the progress of water point maintenance services in the Kasese catchment.



### Commissioning of Kabuluzi Piped Water Project

As a way of handing over the newly completed Kabuluzi piped water project to the community, the WASH program organised a commissioning event at Kabuluzi school. The event was attended by students and community members from Kabuluzi school and surrounding villages. Also in attendance during the event were government officials, local leaders and OCA staff members. The event was characterized by speeches, traditional dances, and more importantly a tour of the key locations and villages of the Kabuluzi piped water system. During the event community leaders were very appreciative of the project Orant Charities Africa has implemented in their area and promised to manage

sustainably. Similar sentiments were also shared by government officials such as the Dowa District Water Development Officer (DWDO). During the event, the OCA Country Director, Mr. Gabriel Kapanda, was the guest of honour and handed over the project to the local leaders and the community from Kabuluzi area.



*OCA Country Director cutting the ribbon during the commissioning ceremony for Kabuluzi piped water project*

## **Professionalized Repair and Maintenance (PRM) Learning Workshop**



*A group photo of participants during the PRM workshop at Linde Hotel*

The WASH program was invited to a ne day learning workshop on Professionalised Repair and Maintenance (PRM) at Linde hotel in Mponela, Dowa. This workshop was organized by WESNET with support from Water for People. PRM involves trained personnel working within clear legal, policy, contractual, and accountability frameworks, who are monitored and evaluated against performance indicators and with agreed financing arrangements and transparent, regulated pricing structures to carry out repairs and support services for rural water infrastructure. This approach is very much similar to what OCA WASH program is currently doing with trained Hand pump Area Mechanics to promote the preventive maintenance of water points. The workshop was attended by WASH NGOs implementing hand pump maintenance projects in the central region of Malawi. The discussions during the workshop centred on sharing lessons and experiences of NGOs in regards to maintenance of hand pumps. The discussions further reviewed how different NGOs are incorporating aspects of PRM in their hand pump maintenance projects.

## **Review Meeting with Chiefs**



*A section of participants during a review meeting with Chiefs*

To ensure sustainability of its initiatives, the WASH program engages local leaders in planning, review and implementation of its programs. The WASH program conducted a review meeting with 5 Chiefs from the WASH program committee. The discussion during the meeting focused on the progress made by the program in 2024 and plans for 2025. The need for alternative sources of water in areas with saline water was one of the key issues during the meeting. Chiefs thanked OCA for the new piped water system in Kabuluzi. During the meeting, the Chiefs asked the WASH program to consider



implementing piped water projects in other areas with saline water. In response, the WASH program revealed that they are working on implementing another piped water project in Kasese pending assessments.

### **Review Meeting with Sanitation Entrepreneurs**

The WASH program implements all its initiatives in collaboration with different stakeholders. One of the key stakeholders in the promotion of sanitation are Sanitation Entrepreneurs or sometimes referred to as Sanitation promoters. Sanitation Entrepreneurs are responsible for construction of latrine slabs and corbelled latrines. The WASH program organised a review meeting with Sanitation Entrepreneurs. The aim of the meeting was to assess the progress made by Sanitation Entrepreneurs in 2024. During the meeting it was revealed Sanitation Entrepreneurs have constructed a total of 73 Corbelled latrines and 75 slabs in 2024. Corbelled latrines and slabs are constructed for communities at an agreed price.

### **Review Meeting with Area Mechanics (AMs)**



*A section of participation during AM review Meeting*

To ensure continued stakeholder engagement the WASH program conducts review meetings and feedback sessions with program stakeholders. The program organized an end of year borehole operation and maintenance review with Area Mechanics (AMs). AMs are government-trained local artisans who are responsible for the maintenance of boreholes, especially Afridev pumps. The key agenda for the meeting was to review progress and share reports for 2024 and set targets for 2025 in borehole maintenance. In attendance during the meeting were the 5 AMs from the Kasese catchment area. The key outcome of the meeting is the revision of targets for preventive and reactive maintenance for 2025.

## **Review Meeting with Health Surveillance Assistants**

The program also conducted a review meeting with HSAs. HSAs are government extension workers and they help the WASH in the promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices in the Kasese catchment area. The agenda for the review meeting was to discuss progress made by the WASH program in 2024 as well as review plans for 2024. During the meeting, the plans for 2025 were also discussed. In total **21** HSAs attended the meeting.



*Cross-section of participants during a WASH review meeting with HSAs during the month*

## **Review Meeting with Area Development Committee (ADC)**

The WASH program conducted a review meeting with ADC for the Chakhadza area. ADCs are a local development forum which consists of representatives from villages around Chakhadza in which the WASH program operates. ADCs are responsible for appraising and proposing development in their catchment area. The ADC meeting was attended by over **30** participants from all over the catchment area. During the ADC meeting, the WASH program made a presentation on the 2024 program implementation progress and 2025 implementation plans. Following the presentation, the ADC was impressed with the milestones achieved by the WASH program in 2024. In other discussions, the ADC asked OCA to consider financially supporting the training of ADC members since they were yet to be trained.

## **Follow up Meeting Kabuluzi Water Users Association (WUA) Committee**

The WASH program organised a follow up meeting with the Kabuluzi WUA committee following the commissioning of the Kabuluzi piped water project. The following were key

agenda; compilation bi-laws for the WUA, plans to open a bank account for the WUA and formulation of water point committees for taps. During the meeting bi-laws formulated by community members and local leaders were compiled into a single document which serves as a constitution of the WUA. It was also agreed that a bank account will be opened before the end of the year with Centenary bank which is at Madisi trading centre for convenience sake. During the meeting it was further agreed that the committees for each Water point should be formulated and these committees will be led by members of the WUA committee who are from each of the villages with taps.



*Kabuluzi WUA committee members during the follow up meeting*

## **Conclusion**

The month of December wraps up program implementation for the WASH program. The program is satisfied with the progress made in 2024. The biggest highlight for the year was the successful implementation of the Kabuluzi piped water project, the first of its kind by OCA. The program is already geared up for 2025 which also promises to be another exciting year in program implementation.

# Agriculture and Business Development Programs

## Agriculture Program

### Executive Summary

Malawi's economy relies 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. The activities conducted during the reporting month have been explained below;

### Agroecology Farming

Agroecology emphasizes sustainable farming practices that align with environmental principles. This approach focuses on enhancing soil health, building resilient agricultural systems, and reducing environmental harm. Last year, an agroecological banana cultivation initiative was launched and has now produced its first harvest. Banana suckers were planted with spacing that allowed for intercropping with annual crops like maize, soybeans, beans, and tomatoes. Regular monitoring ensured plant health and addressed emerging challenges promptly. The use of agroecological methods promoted vigorous plant growth without relying on synthetic fertilizers or chemical pesticides. After a year of careful management, the first banana harvest yielded healthy bunches that met quality standards. Soil quality improved significantly, with increased organic matter and nutrient levels attributed to organic inputs. This first year of implementing agroecological practices for banana farming has shown great promise in achieving sustainable productivity and enhancing farmers' livelihoods. The successful harvest represents a key milestone, paving the way for future expansion and innovation in agroecological farming.







*Good quality bananas from OCA agroecology farm*

## **Rainfed Planting**

The OCA farm and farm club have initiated rainfed planting for the 2024-2025 agricultural season, focusing on maize, soybeans, and groundnuts. While rainfed planting remains a crucial agricultural practice for farmers in Malawi, the increasingly unpredictable onset of the rainy season due to climate variability poses significant challenges. When the rains began, their distribution was erratic, marked by extended dry spells between rainfall events, leading to poor germination rates for all crops.

To address these challenges, immediate mitigation measures were implemented, including timely replanting and the construction of box ridges. However, the unpredictability of rainfall underscores the need for long-term investments in climate-resilient agricultural practices to reduce farmers' vulnerability to erratic weather patterns such as irrigation systems.



*Farm club members being trained on plant spacing for Soya, g/nuts and Maize*

## **Irrigation Clubs Crop Harvesting**

Irrigation clubs play a vital role in enhancing agricultural productivity by providing a consistent water supply for crops throughout the growing season. The main crops grown are maize and tomatoes. The Tchale and Kambalani Irrigation clubs have reported increased yields through consistent irrigation using solar pumps and the adoption of improved farming techniques. Coordinated harvesting schedules have facilitated bulk selling, improved market access and securing better prices from buyers. To build on this progress, there is a need to strengthen partnerships with buyers and explore value addition opportunities, which could stabilize incomes and reduce dependence on fluctuating raw commodity prices. Overall, the activities of these irrigation clubs have demonstrated significant potential for boosting agricultural output and improving farmers' livelihoods.



*Well matured maize crop from irrigation farming*

## **Lead Farmers VSL Meeting**

Village Savings Loans (VSL) groups are instrumental in promoting financial independence and boosting agricultural productivity among Lead Farmers. In December 2024, the Lead Farmers (LF) VSL group dispersed the savings accumulated throughout the year. This group, consisting of 15 members, required each member to contribute MKW 5,000 monthly as shares. At the end of the savings cycle, the funds were distributed based on individual contributions and group agreements. The initiative yielded significant benefits, including improved access to funds for purchasing agricultural inputs, empowering LF as role models and financial facilitators, and enhancing financial literacy and trust among members. Overall, the sharing of VSL money has proven to be a valuable effort in advancing financial inclusion and agricultural growth.

## **Conclusion**

Although the rains have been erratic, we still believe that there will be a bumper harvest. It is good to see the Agroforestry farm on OCA campus flourishing and the Maize from irrigation clubs maturing thereby alleviating hunger challenges.

## **Business Development Program**

### **Executive Summary**

The business development program continues to offer a beacon of light to the women entrepreneurs around the Kasese catchment area by offering microloans and business management mentorship and support. By equipping the women entrepreneurs with financial resources and business skills, the program aims to promote business success and growth. This ultimately contributes to OCAs core mission of inspiring communities and improving livelihoods.

In December, a number of activities were implemented with the aim of enhancing the women entrepreneurs' preparedness in addressing business challenges and building resilience. This contributes to the women's economic well being through creation of sustainable income streams.

### **Orientation Training for Sapeya FEM Group**

A training session for the newly recruited Financially Empowering Microloan (FEM) group in Sapeya was organised. This five day workshop training was essential for empowering the members with leadership and business skills. Hence enabling women entrepreneurs to manage their businesses effectively. The main objective of the training was to orient the new members in foundational aspects of leadership and group dynamics, enabling them to work cohesively and efficiently as a team. We believe that leadership has the ability in fostering decision making skills and conflict resolution. Hence stirring the group towards achieving shared goals. Group dynamics on the other hand, mainly focused on building good communication and collaboration skills which will ensure inclusivity and unity in the group.

The training also focused on bookkeeping and budgeting. These are fundamental aspects of financial management as they ensure financial stability and accountability of the FEM members. These management skills tabled during the training were; recording financial transactions and developing budgets. This training was facilitated by Julie Maliro, a Community Development Officer from government offices in Mponela.





*New FEM members from around Sapeya trading centre during group deliberations*

## **Loan Disbursement**

Another core mandate of the BD program is to disburse business loans to boost businesses around the Kasese catchment area so as to improve people's economic well being. During the month, we disbursed microloans to five FEM groups; Kasese 1 and 2, Mtambalika 1 and 2 and Kachigamba. The total amount disbursed as microloans to FEM groups totaled up to MWK 42, 056, 600 and the total number of beneficiaries was 61. We also dispersed medium sized loans to 4 members who were previously in the FEM groups but have been graduated to access higher loan amounts. Each of the members in the medium category got a loan amount of MWK 2,500,000 making it a total of MWK 10, 000,000. This has been done upon assessment that their businesses seem to be growing and that the total business values have grown over the years that we have been working with them. An interest of 7 percent per annum has been introduced to them considering that the loan amount has been increased. The interest is introduced not to make profit but rather mitigate inflation which is usually higher.

## **Skill Building Classes for Tikondane and Tiyanjane FEM Groups**

As a way of ensuring sustainability for the FEM groups, OCA engages them in skills building workshops so that they can attain a certain skill that may help them in the future. This time around, the Business Development Program, in collaboration with Small Entreprises for Development Institute (SMEDI), organised a baking workshop for the Kasese women groups. The sessions centred on baking bread, doughnuts and scones. For some, this was not a new skill especially for the doughnuts as we also have women



entrepreneurs who are engaged in that business, but the trainer wanted to equip them with new and modern ways of baking that may help the women entrepreneurs access and penetrate new markets. This was a four day training which took place at the Kasese premises. There will also be continuous engagement with SMEDI as they continue to come so that the women become fully confident in the newly acquired skills.



*Tikondane and Tiyanjane FEM group during baking training session*



*Final product made*

## **Conclusion**

The Business Development program was impressed with the skilled building activity as women improved their skills in baking scones and other food. FEM groups also received loans in time to boost their businesses. The medium sized loan recipients have also shown great potential of becoming great business persons.

# Education Support Program

## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the activities and outcomes of the Education Support Program managed by Orant Charities Africa in Malawi. Our program aims to enhance educational access and quality by providing financial assistance to students and essential resources to schools. With the vision of fostering a conducive learning environment and promoting educational equity, we support students by covering school fees and addressing the needs of schools. The program continues to play a crucial role in breaking barriers to education, particularly for those from underserved communities.

Throughout the reporting period, we have focused on reaching students in need, ensuring they have access to a stable education, and equipping schools with the necessary tools and resources to improve teaching and learning outcomes. This report details the progress made, challenges encountered, and the impact our interventions have had on both students and schools around the Kasese catchment area.

## Monitoring of Donated Books

As part of our ongoing efforts, we recently provided primary schools in the Kasese catchment area with supplementary books and other learning materials to support students' learning outcomes. This report outlines the monitoring activities conducted to assess the distribution and use of the books. The primary objectives of this monitoring were; to assess the effectiveness and completeness of book distribution in schools, to evaluate the current state of the textbooks in terms of usage, condition, and impact on teaching and learning, to identify challenges faced by schools in utilizing the books and to gather feedback from educators and students on the usefulness of the books in enhancing learning.

The monitoring activities involved visits to schools in the Katalima zone. There are 10 schools in the Katalima zone and 9 primary schools were visited in the reporting month; Kabuluzi, Bweya, Kalikulu, M'ndinga, Bwanyundo, Katalima, Ngala, Chiwira and Nyagara. The 10<sup>th</sup> primary school (Chinguwi) was visited last month (November). Interviews were conducted with school headmasters, teachers, and some students and school records were reviewed to check for book inventory, usage rates, and any reported issues.



Monitoring of donated books at Ngala and Bweya Primary schools



Examples of how the donated books are stored in some schools in the Katalima Zone





From the visits in most schools, the books are still in good condition, they are being used by a lot of students and they sometimes borrow them to study. However, even though the books are well taken care of, the places of storing the books are not in a good condition as most schools do not have a library. At Bwanyundo primary school, they are about to construct a school library to safeguard all the books they have. OCA is planning to give the schools proper storage containers so that they

are kept safe.

### **Monitoring School Renovations**

As part of our efforts to enhance the learning environment, the OCA Education Program has been working on the renovation of a school block at Kabuluzi primary school, as well as addressing other key aspects of the school's condition. The objectives of the monitoring were to assess the progress and quality of the ongoing school block renovation, to identify challenges and areas requiring attention during the renovation process, to gather feedback from school stakeholders (teachers, students, and school management) on the improvements made.

The school block renovation covers plastering, roofing, flooring, windows, etc. The scope also includes provision of natural light access and painting. As of the days of monitoring visits, the quality of the renovation work appears to meet the expected standards, the renovation has achieved 60% of the work. Inside the damaged wall has been constructed, classroom walls (internal and external) have been plastered and windows have been properly installed to enable lighting. The following are pictures of Kabuluzi primary school renovations;





Some challenges faced during the renovation include; unforeseen structural problems, and communities delay in bringing the required items like sand and bricks. Before the renovation, many classrooms were poorly structured, poorly ventilated, with leaking roofs. The improvements made so far have led to better ventilation and a secured environment. Additionally, the school management has shared that the renovation will increase the students' performance as well as enrollment.

### **School Library Visit**

As part of the Education Support Program, OCA is committed to enhancing the educational environment of rural schools in Malawi. One of the key initiatives in this regard is the improvement of the library at Ngala CDSS, located in Kasese catchment area. The library plays a crucial role in enhancing students' learning experience, providing access to essential reading materials, and fostering a culture of reading.

The aims of this monitoring were; to assess the progress of the ongoing library improvement efforts, to evaluate the current state of the library infrastructure, including space, furniture, and resources, to identify challenges or delays encountered during the improvement process and to gather feedback on the library's impact and the improvements made.



*OCA at Ngala CDSS library*

The library space has been significantly improved, with changes made to the overall layout, furniture arrangement, lighting, ventilation, etc. The space is now more accessible and conducive to students. Additionally, a variety of new book pamphlets have been added to the library collection by the school development funds. The improved library has seen an increase in student visits by approximately 70% of students each week. Students are using the library for several activities, such as reading and research.

While the school has acquired these new books, there is still a need for additional resources, particularly humanities and language textbooks. And also, science book pamphlets for the Junior classes (form 1 & 2). The school also faces challenges in staffing the library. There is a need for a librarian or trained personnel to manage the library and guide students.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the education support initiatives implemented by OCA have made significant strides in improving the quality of education in rural schools and providing critical resources to underprivileged students in Malawi. Through the provision of teaching materials, infrastructure support, and direct assistance to students, we have witnessed measurable improvements in learning outcomes and school attendance. The efforts to enhance the learning environment whether through the provision of textbooks, renovation of school facilities, or support to students in need have not only increased access to education but also helped foster an environment where students are more engaged and motivated to learn.