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ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY PROGRAM 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
EDO	-	Environmental District Officer
FDGs	-	Focus Group Discussions
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
TA	-	Traditional Authority
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, Energy and Environment. This monthly report outlines milestones from the month of March, 2025 in our WASH program, Education, Agriculture, Business Development, Energy and Environmental Programs;

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program



Executive Summary

The WASH Program is undergoing a shift towards more sustainable practices in terms of borehole maintenance, and more notably shifting from only drilling boreholes to designing and implementing piped water projects as well. The Strategic Objectives of the Program includes;

1. Design, construct, and maintain WASH infrastructure
2. Promote sanitation and hygiene in communities and institutions

3. Involve new sustainability and educational practices in programs

In March, 2025, the program conducted several activities aligned with these key implementation areas as follows;

Summary of Monthly Achievements

The following milestones were achieved during the month;

- Water point maintenance (Service/preventive: 19; Reactive maintenance: 0)
- Attending DCT meetings
- Assessment of borehole drilling and piped water project sites
- Meeting with Kasese market committee

Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements

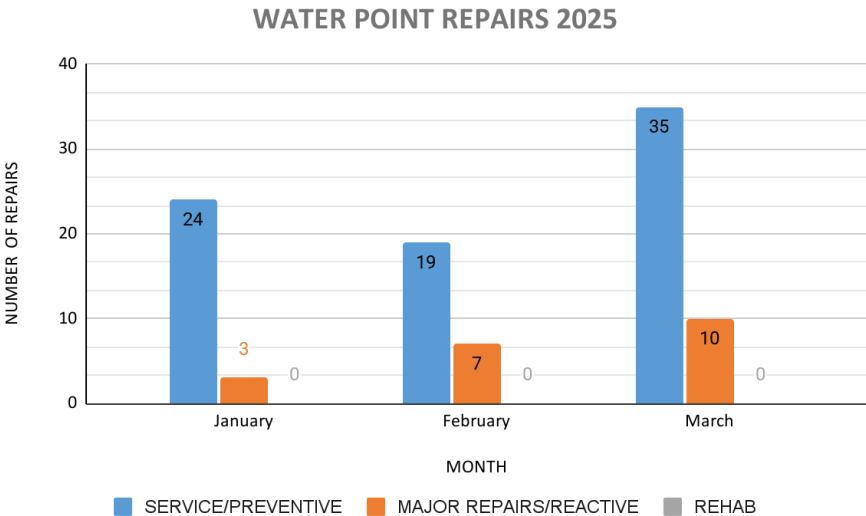
The WASH program carried out the following key activities in the month;

Water Point Operation and Maintenance



Major repair session in Masitala village 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. This month, the program supported **35** preventive and **10** reactive maintenance for water points. In the first quarter of 2024, the program has conducted **78** preventive and **20** reactive maintenance. Below is a graph showing the progress of hand pump maintenance in Kasese catchment;



Attending District Coordination Meetings

To ensure continued district stakeholder engagement and information dissemination, the WASH program attends District Coordination Team (DCT) Meetings which are organized by Dowa District Council on quarterly basis. DCT is a forum for WASH stakeholders at the district level. Members of DCT include Government departments and Non-Governmental Organizations engaged in WASH projects. During the month the WASH program attended two DCT meetings in Dowa. The program was privileged to present a program progress report for 2024. During the presentation the program highlighted the key achievements and outcomes for 2024. Similarly, achievements for

the first quarter of 2025 were also featured in the presentation. As a follow up to this meeting the WASH program plans to conduct a joint field visit with DCT members in Kasese catchment.



A section of participants during the DCT meeting in Dowa

Assessment of Proposed Piped Sites for 2025

To ensure that boreholes are allocated to villages where there is need, the WASH program conducts field assessment of proposed sites for solar piped water projects. The WASH program visited Matchondo, Samuel and Chimamba villages which have saline water to determine the feasibility for a solar piped water project. During assessments, OCA staff collect data on the number of people, current water sources, population distribution, and water quality issues etc. in the proposed villages. The assessment which was conducted indicates that there is a big potential for a solar piped water project in the areas visited. The assessment found that there are alot of saline boreholes in the villages which has left most of them unusable. Furthermore, the number of households who have limited access to potable water resulting from the saline boreholes is also high.



Abandoned borehole in Samuel village due to saline water captured during the assessment

Meeting with Kasese Market Committee

To promote participation in decision making OCA organizes stakeholder meetings for key stakeholders before introducing a new project. In March, the WASH program organized a meeting with the Kasese market committee who are a stakeholder in the WASH program. The meeting was organized with the aim of assessing the WASH status at Kasese market. During the meeting the members of the Kasese market committee identified three key issues in regards to sanitation and hygiene at their market. These issues included unavailability bins for collection of market wastes, hand washing facilities and pit latrines. Through the discussions it was agreed that unavailability of communal pit latrines was a major issue which needs to be addressed immediately. Despite this, members also stressed the need to address the other two challenges. Following the discussion OCA promised to support the market in the construction of latrines. The construction of the latrines is expected to begin in June and it will be a collaborative effort in which the community will contribute some materials such as bricks, sand and quarry stone.



Participants during a meeting with Kasese market committee members

Conclusion

The month of March marks the end of the first quarter of 2025. The program is satisfied with the progress made in this quarter as highlighted in this report and we look forward to accomplishing more in the second quarter of 2025.

Agriculture and Business Development Programs

Agriculture Program



Executive Summary

The Mission of the Agriculture program is to sustainably bolster Malawi's agricultural capacity by providing loans, educating farmers, investing in farming equipment and infrastructure, and improving access to markets. The program has the following strategic objectives;

1. Increase focus on education, business, and entrepreneurship through an improved connection to the Business Development Program
2. Audit core programs and improve relationships with key stakeholders for more sustainable programming.
3. Invest in the development of Malawian agriculture through cooperatives, increased storage capacity, value-adding activities, machinery, and by developing Orant's own capacities.
4. Develop permaculture on campus and in the community and act as center of education and sustainability

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 Sustainable Development Goals (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 in March are presented as follows;

Agroecology practice with lead farmers

The progress has been made in promoting agroecology practices among Lead Farmers (LF) through a series of training and the establishment of demonstration farms within their respective sections. The initiative aimed to build capacity among lead farmers to champion sustainable agricultural practices that enhance soil health while reducing dependency on external inputs. Following the training, lead farmers were supported to establish demonstration farms within their sections. These plots serve as learning sites for other farmers and are designed to;

- a. Showcase practical application of agroecology practices
- b. Act as innovative hubs for testing and adapting practices to local conditions
- c. Facilitate farmer-to-farmers learning

Each demonstration farm was established collaboratively with labour provided by the Lead farmers. There is growing interest among surrounding farmers to learn from the demonstration plots. The initiative has successfully laid a strong foundation for agroecology adoption through capacity building and demonstrations with lead farmers. There will be ongoing mentorship and refresher training, field days and exchange visits for lead farmers to strengthen peer-to-peer learning.



Establishing agroecology demonstration farms with lead farmers

Monitoring Agricultural Cooperatives

The monitoring visits on cooperative farms were conducted to assess the performance and progress of cooperative farms that received microloans through the OCA agriculture program. The goal of the monitoring visit was to evaluate how effectively the microloans were utilized, identify successes and challenges encountered during the production season.

A total of 14 fields were visited in March and it was observed that cooperative farmers used the loan for the intended purposes; all the farmers had cultivated maize using the fertilizer and seed microloans. There is high expectation from the farmers of getting better yields. The cooperative microloan initiative is showing a positive impact on farm productivity and livelihoods. Continued support and close follow-up will be essential to sustain progress and enhance repayment.



Cooperative member standing on his farm

Irrigation farming

The irrigation cycle has commenced in the month of March with farmers from Madzimayela irrigation club who are cultivating watermelon and tomatoes. The beginning of irrigation farming after the rainy season marks the importance of continued crop production, ensuring food security and income generation for farmers during the dry season.

Watermelon has been selected for irrigation farming this season due to its market demand and favourable growing conditions under irrigation. Tomatoes have been also selected due to its profitability and year-round demand. Currently, a nursery for the tomatoes has almost reached the transplanting stage hence transplanting will be done soon. Currently farmers are applying organic compost in preparation of the transplanting activity. Farmers have been further advised to practice intercropping with beans or other

crops. With watermelon and tomato crops currently under cultivation, farmers are optimistic about good yields and profitable sales.



Irrigation club members taking care of tomato seedlings and watermelons

Program Meetings

The meeting was done with Kasese Producers and Marketing (KPM) cooperative members to encourage them in controlling post-harvest losses and the importance of timely loan repayment. The meeting was well attended by a total of 20 cooperative members.



Cooperative members attending to meeting

The members were taught on how timely repayment helps maintain trust between the cooperative and the organization providing them loans hence paving the way for future funding opportunities. Members showed dedication on forming peer accountability groups to encourage each other on loan repayment. Much effort was also placed on promoting teamwork, discipline and shared responsibilities to ensure the cooperative flourish and benefit all its members.

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. The Mission of the program is *to empower local entrepreneurs, especially women by offering fair and accessible business loans, expanding financial literacy, and promoting community saving culture through VSL groups*. The Strategic Objectives of the program are;

1. Expand Business Development program educational offerings
2. Begin offering medium-sized business loans
3. Develop VSLs through collaborative programming
4. Expand FEM program and continue to offer microloans and business support
5. Expand access and education for Digital Financial Services

Through the Business Development program, OCA consistently empowers women entrepreneurs by providing microloans, business development support, and digital financial literacy training. These initiatives play a crucial role in breaking the cycles of poverty that persist within our communities. As a result of these program activities, numerous lives have been transformed, contributing significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals number One and Eight.

Activities planned and Implemented

Business/Entrepreneurship Training

Business management and entrepreneurial skills are pertinent to successful management of business. In ensuring stable and sustainable businesses for the women entrepreneurs we work with, OCA through the Business development puts in more effort and resources to achieve that goal. In March 2025, training sessions for the Sapeya FEM group were organized. The five-day training session was essentially for empowering women entrepreneurs and their spouses in the program in *Communication and The Role of a*

Spouse in Business Management, operating a business as a separate entity and the barriers of growing and nurturing a small business.

These training sessions, particularly on clear and consistent communication with spouses, enhance business and relationship dynamics. By communicating and incorporating spouses in the affairs of the business, spouses may become more supportive and partake in major decisions pertaining to the business. Additionally, encouraging women entrepreneurs to view businesses as being distinct from their personal lives helps foster financial discipline. Again, by understanding the different challenges faced in business management ensures preparedness of the women to overcome such challenges.



Highlights of Sapeya FEM group training sessions

Digital financial literacy campaign

The Digital Financial Literacy (DFL) campaign continues through the community champions. These champions have been pertinent in activating and training DFL listening clubs. The campaign is aimed at sensitizing the communities on the usage of digital financial services (DFS) and how to overcome the various challenges they might face in using such services. The champions mostly target Village Savings and Loan groups on their usual meeting plans. This strategy has been employed for easy targeting, minimizing disruptions of people's daily schedules and resources for mobilizing separate meetings. With the support of the Hey sister champions, we successfully trained 6 VSL clubs with a total membership of 154 people.



Mkuyu (L) and Mtenthela (R) VSL clubs from Kashangula and Chapuwala villages

Loan recovery

Another core mandate of the program is to establish a recovery plan for loans disbursed to entrepreneurs. The established repayment plan for the Microloans is four months whereas the medium sized loans repayment schedule is eight months. The total amount collected from Microloan payments for the period is MWK 1,507,250. This represents 16.78 percent of the total monthly installment. This is not worrisome though because we have started the harvest season hence most of the loan recipients are banking on making repayments after they have sold their farm produce. This is also the time when businesses start to boom because of the sales from agriculture commodities.

Village Savings and Loan (VSL) group meetings

The VSL meetings ensure group cohesion and instills a serving culture among the women entrepreneurs. Through these meetings, women entrepreneurs share business knowledge, help each other in keeping track of business records and loan repayments. In the reporting period, women entrepreneurs from the various FEM groups held weekly meetings to make their usual saving deposits and record weekly sales and profits. The Kasese groups meet on Thursdays, the Mtambalika FEM groups hold their meetings on Wednesdays and the Kachigamba groups meet on Fridays. In the month, four meetings for each of the groups were recorded.



Kasese 1 and 2 FEM members during VSL meetings

In conclusion, the business Development program continues to be a driving force for community economic growth. By integrating targeted training sessions, community-driven digital financial literacy campaigns, and robust loan recovery measures, the program addresses key challenges faced by small businesses. Activities such as the Sapeya FEM group's business/entrepreneurship training emphasize not only business acumen but also the pivotal role of family dynamics and clear communication in entrepreneurial success. Additionally, the creation of Village Savings and Loan groups serves as platforms for fostering financial discipline, collaboration, and mutual support among participants. All these approaches adopted in the program are holistic in nature hence contributing to the attainment of the organization's overall mission and vision.

Education Support Program

Executive Summary

The Orant Education Program contributes to SDG 4 of Quality Education and also SDG number 5 of Gender Equality. Currently the Education Program is undergoing a gradual shift in funding towards local schools on top of the support of individual students. The Program Mission Statement is *to support and empower local underprivileged students and schools by supporting primary, secondary and tertiary students with tuition, supplies, and mentoring needs, and investing in local schools and their teachers*. The following are the Strategic Objectives of the Education Program;

1. Strengthen local schools and educational institutions and prepare for Orant Library and Community Center
2. Continue secondary school sponsor program
3. Strengthen tertiary education support

OCA education program supports vulnerable primary, secondary and tertiary school students with basic needs, tuition fees and supplies in addition with upkeep for accommodations and food to the university students.

We also offer monitoring and mentorship sessions to students as a way of ensuring better performances in their studies and bringing powerful motivation to all the students. OCA also plays a big role in supporting local schools around the Kasese catchment area so that the quality of education should go up and benefit more students.

This report contains several activities that were conducted by the Education Program in the month of March, 2025;

School Monitoring Visits

Education program visited 9 secondary schools where our sponsored students learn. During the visit, all the students were monitored in their educational performances and we mentored them to work extra hard in their studies. We also collected school reports to see how the students are performing and it turned out to be a good progress from the students as some of the students have improved in their class performances.

On the same visit, we also interacted with the students on the challenges affecting their education process and we were able to come up with some solid solutions that help to clarify those challenges. A total of 32 students were provided with supplies e.g. soap, sugar, hardcovers, pens, sanitary pads, school bags and other materials to meet their educational needs. The following are pictures of sponsored students distributed with supplies from OCA;



Dowa secondary school (Left) & St. Chavara secondary school (Right)



Maranatha Girls Academy (Left), Dzenza Secondary school (Middle) & Kasungu Sec. School (Right)

Kabuluzi School Block Renovation

The Orant Education program visited Kabuluzi primary school to monitor the renovated school block (STD 6 & 7 block) that have been renovated by OCA in the past months. The monitoring period was to ensure that the school block is well renovated and provides a supportive and inclusive learning environment to the students that fosters their educational excellence. Meanwhile, the school block is finished, well renovated and ready

to be used in the next start of another term. The pictures below show the renovated school block at Kabuluzi primary school;



Interior view



Exterior view

Monitoring of Books in Primary Schools

Orant's Education Program spent time at Five primary schools and One secondary school in our catchment area with the aim of monitoring the books that were donated by the education program (in total 6 schools). The schools that were monitored are Chilinkholi primary school, Mambala primary school, Chandawe primary school, kamongo primary school, Nambora primary school and Tchale CDSS. The monitoring visit to the schools, was to verify the usage of the books. The students are reading the books to gain more knowledge and learn how to speak good English.





Learners reading the donated books at Mambala (Left) & Kamongo (Right) primary schools

Graduation Ceremony



We are thrilled that one of the Orant ULEMU scholarship students graduated from college. Esther Maupa graduated with a Diploma in Agriculture at Mwimba College. OCA supported Esther since her secondary school years at Nkhamenya Girls secondary school. This Diploma is one of her greatest achievements. With Orant support, she was able to complete her studies that made her accomplish her goals. Esther will use this achievement as a stepping stone in her career to make a difference in the community and the nation. Such achievements bring hope to other underprivileged students.

Conclusion

OCA tries its best to improve Education in the Kasese Catchment area by supporting needy students and local schools. This to empower individuals with knowledge and skills that enables them to make informed decisions and also improve their socio-economic status.

Energy and Environment Program

Executive Summary

Energy and Environment program is one of the programs at Orant Charities Africa with an aim of limiting the risk of climate change by introducing renewable energy and environmental conservation activities around Kasese catchment area, TA Chakhaza in Dowa. The Program Mission Statement is *to mitigate the effects of climate change and promote an environmentally-friendly, sustainable, and independent Malawi by investing in renewable energy, conducting local research, advocating for the environment, educating communities, and developing partnerships*. The Strategic Objectives of the program includes;

1. Develop program leadership
2. Oversee expansion of solar infrastructure in Malawi
3. Ensure protection and representation of the environment
4. Research and educate on sustainable alternative methods of agriculture and water

Management

In March, 2025, The Energy and Environment program representative met with the Environmental District Officer, monitored fuel efficient cookstoves project and conducted awareness campaigns on tree planting.

Detailed Narration of Implemented Activities

Considering a number of activities implemented in the reporting period, discussed below are the outcomes of the conducted activities:

Meeting with the Environmental District Officer

The meeting was planned to introduce the Energy and Environment Program, and the Manager at Orant Charities Africa to the Environmental District Officer (EDO). The EDO warmly welcomed the energy and environment program to partner with his office in energy and environmental issues across the district. Therefore, the EDO was quick to address the outlined points on energy and environment.

- Environmental degradation has heavily affected Dowa district.

- Dowa energy access is 1% connected to the national grid.
 1. Planning to improve accessibility to 10% by 2030.
- Agriculture and environment service committee.
 1. Meets quarterly.
 2. This is a platform headed by the Director of Agriculture and Environment where agriculture and environment activities update and plans are being discussed.
- District Environmental Sub Committee.
 1. Composed of all environmental technocrats.
 2. Meets monthly to discuss environmental affairs in the district.
 3. Drafting of the District State of Environment Report (DSOER) in the next annual calendar.
 4. Inclusion of energy and environment activities in the social economic plan.
 5. Village action plans show that environmental degradation has a key impact on development.
 6. District development plan.
 - I. Energy and environment is discussed in the plan.
 - II. There are also actions to be implemented to address the gaps identified.

It should be noted that OCA's Energy and Environment Program Manager is a default member of the District Environment Sub Committee and Agriculture Service Committee.

Monitoring the Progress of Nkhuni Pang'ono, Moto! Cookstove

Nkhuni pang'ono, moto! Cookstove activity had been implemented in the area of senior Group Village Headman M'biya under Traditional Authority Chakhaza with the aim of reducing pressure on the existing trees. This is being achieved because the cookstoves were designed to be using a very small amount of firewood when cooking as compared to locally three stone stoves. This has helped Orant Charities Africa through the Energy and Environment program to contribute towards preserving carbon sink. Following the construction of Nkhuni Pang'ono, moto! Cookstoves which started in February, 2025 through trained Lead Community Volunteers (LCV), the office of Energy and

Environment was in March, 2025 conducting monitoring visits around the targeted GVH M'biya in order to monitor the progress of the construction of the cookstoves as well as guide on other technical expertise of the cookstove. Therefore, at least 175 cookstoves were constructed around the targeted community.



Nkhuni Pang'ono, Moto! Cookstoves at Kawondo village

Tree Planting Activity



Sensitization and awareness campaign at Sewule village.

Climate change has been affecting farming activities around the catchment. This could've been the result of wanton cutting down of trees for firewood, timber, and tobacco curing which had shifted carbon into the atmosphere leading to global warming and shifted rainfall patterns. Considering that people around the catchment depend on agriculture as a main source of income which has been affected by the change in weather patterns, Orant Charities Africa through energy and environment programs has ventured into a tree planting activity at senior group village headman M'biya which will help in creating a large surface area for carbon sink. A table below outline villages and a total of 161 proposed registered beneficiaries at GVH M'biya to implement tree planting activity:

Village	No. of Beneficiaries
Kawondo	20
Sewule	29
Mbwekete	13
Ngoma	12
M'biya	7
Mano	22
Mntandaza	21
Kammata	26
Nyemba	2
Mkhalapadzuwa	9

This activity will help in preserving gazetted forest reserves because the communities will have trees at their disposal for other needs like firewood, timber, and tobacco curing which will help to reduce pressure on gazetted forest reserves. Outlined below are the activities conducted in March, 2025 for tree planting activity:

- Sensitization and awareness campaign on climate change and tree planting .
- Identifying tree planting beneficiaries.
- Verification of the identified beneficiaries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The manager of Energy and Environment in March, 2025 visited the environmental district office to introduce the program to the Environmental District Officer, conducted monitoring site visits for Nkhuni Pang'ono, Moto! Cookstoves, and conducted sensitization and awareness campaigns on climate change and tree planting at GVH M'biya. All activities were implemented successfully with support from other program managers and administration.