

# 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 October 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: 24; Reactive maintenance: 2 )
- Borehole drilling in Saka village
- Monitoring Sanitation Entrepreneurs
- Distribution of school sanitation materials (11 schools)
- Kabuluzi Solar Powered Piped Water Construction Project Progress

- Community-Based Management (CBM) training for Kanono and Vikwe Water Point Committee (WPC)
- WASH Joint Monitoring with TA Chakhadza (4 villages)
- Installation of Borehole Plaques

## Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements

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

### Water Point Operation and Maintenance

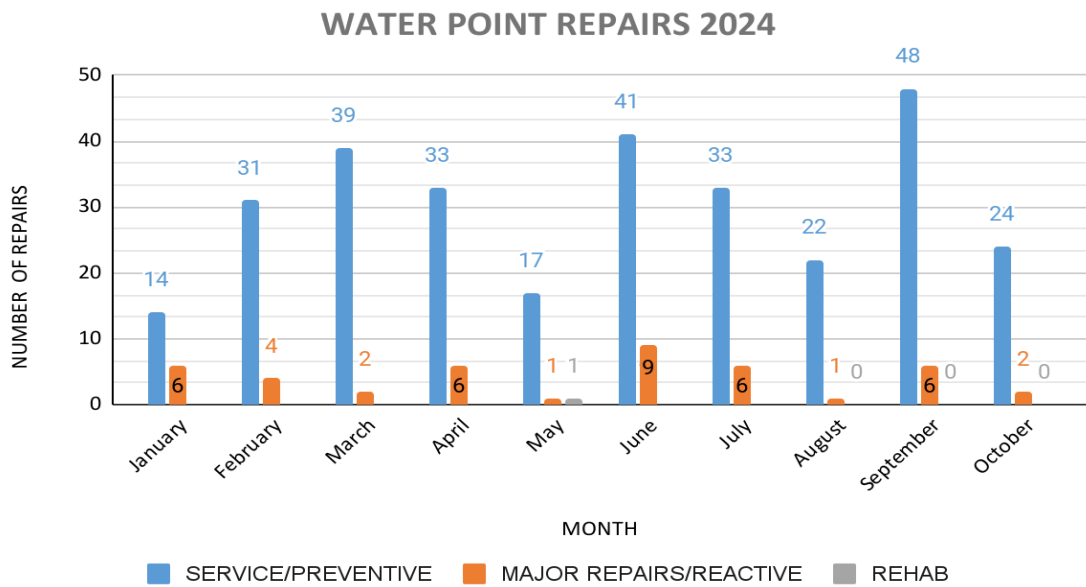


*Left to Right - Preventive maintenance session for Nyemba and Ndeka boreholes respectively*

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 **24** preventive and **2** reactive maintenance activities for water points, thus **26** were maintained in October. From January to October 2024, the WASH program has conducted **43** reactive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **58** representing **74%**. This data indicates that the program is on track to reduce the need for major reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program has conducted **303** preventive maintenance of water points out of an annual target of **300**, representing **101%** 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.



### 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 Saka village. Before this intervention, the people from Saka village were accessing potable water from boreholes in neighbouring villages. The new borehole in Saka village is expected to supply water to **200** people. So far in 2024, the program has drilled 8 boreholes out of its annual target of 10.



*Borehole drilling in Saka village during the month*



## Progress of Latrine Construction at Tchale Secondary School



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

In September 2024, the WASH program began construction of school latrines at Tchale Secondary School. The new latrines were meant for female students whose latrines were on the verge of collapsing. This poses a risk to the health and safety of the students at the school. The new latrines are expected to benefit **436** girls at the school. The last two weeks of October construction were delayed due to the unavailability of materials such as bricks, quarry and sand which are expected to be provided by the community as their contribution to the construction project. Now these materials have been made available and construction is expected to be completed by the month end of November 2024.

## Progress of Kabuluzi Solar Powered Piped Water Project



*Left top - A water point under construction at Kabuluzi school, Right top - Solar panels at Kadewa village during construction*



*Left top -A newly drilled borehole before installation of the pump, Right top - A tank stand at Mandevu village during the construction phase of the project.*

Following the completion of the preliminary activities last month, the OCA WASH program began construction of the Kabuluzi solar-powered piped water project. This project is the first of its kind for the WASH program. The program has contracted Orifice Irrigation and Water Supply (OIWS) Limited to carry out the construction works. The project is being implemented to counter the occurrence of saline water at Kabuluzi school and the surrounding area which has left a lot of people with limited access to potable water. The project aims to drill a borehole in an area near Kabuluzi area where there is a potential for water of good quality. Then pump the water using solar power to Kabuluzi school and surrounding areas where water will be accessed through communal taps. The construction phase of the project started early in October 2024. So far the high-yielding borehole has been drilled. Furthermore, a pipeline, water points, tank stand and solar panels have been installed and constructed. The construction phase of the project is expected to be completed by the end of November 2024. The project is expected to supply potable water to Kabuluzi school and 8 villages around the school namely; Chidothi, Kadewa, Khokhwa, Lungu, Kapeta, Chongole and Mandevu. The project has an approximately **1200m** pipe network with **10 taps** (5 water points). In total, the project is expected to supply water to an estimated population of about **1472** (233 households). Despite this, there is still potential to expand the water supply scheme to benefit other villages which are also around Kabuluzi school.



## Community-Based Management training for Kanono and Vikwe Water Point Committee (WPC)



*Left - A classroom session during CBM training for Kanono WPC, Right - A practical session during CBM training for Kanono WPC during the month*

To enhance the capacity of Water Point Committees (WPCs) to manage their water points, the OCA WASH program conducts Community-Based Management (CBM) training. During these training sessions, WPC members learn to perform minor repairs on Afridev pumps, implement good household sanitation and hygiene practices, understand community dynamics, and how to mobilize and manage funds for borehole maintenance. In the past month, the WASH program trained two WPCs for the Kanono and Vikwe boreholes. Each training session was attended by 11 WPC members. Kanono and Vikwe are new boreholes recently drilled by the OCA WASH program.

## Monitoring Sanitation Entrepreneurs



*On Top- Some of the newly constructed corbelled latrines in Kawondo village during the month*



*Left - Front view of one of the latrines constructed in Kawondo village, Right (Insert) -Mr. Kwadelanji (The Sanitation Entrepreneur) in an Orange shirt leaning on a drum while sharing a lighter moment with some community members during construction of corbelled latrines in Kawondo village.*

In 2023 the WASH program trained Sanitation Entrepreneurs who are responsible for the construction of durable low-cost Corbelled latrines and Pit latrine slabs for community members at an agreed price. During the month, the program embarked on an exercise to monitor the works of Sanitation Entrepreneurs in the community. This month the program monitored 1 Sanitation Entrepreneur Mr. Francisco Kwadelanji from Makombwa village. During the trip, it was observed that Mr Kwadelanji had constructed 13 corbelled latrines in Kawondo village, GVH M’biya. The 13 latrines were constructed through a coordinated effort with the people of Kawondo who mobilised funds and materials for this project. Before this initiative, the 13 households from the village were using latrines which were dilapidated and in the worst cases, some were using the bush to relieve themselves. Through Mr Kwadelanji this village can be used as a model village for other villages and other Sanitation Entrepreneurs to learn from. Furthermore, the effort by Mr Kwadelanji and the people of Kawondo is a source of encouragement to the WASH program that the Sanitation Entrepreneurs’ project can bear positive feedback when all stakeholders work together.



## Distribution of school sanitation materials



*Left - Students and a teacher from Ngala secondary school receiving sanitation materials donated by OCA, Right - Students and a teacher from Katalima school receiving sanitation materials donated by OCA*

The WASH program began the distribution of sanitation and hygiene materials to schools around the Katalima Education Zone. The program managed to distribute these materials to a total of 11 schools. During the exercise, mops, cleaning brushes, squeezers, hand washing buckets and cleaning buckets were distributed to the schools. The materials are expected to facilitate the adoption of good hygiene practices such as hand washing thereby reducing the occurrence of WASH diseases such as Cholera and diarrhoea. In November, the WASH program will distribute sanitation materials to Tchale zone schools which are also within the Kasese catchment area.

## WASH Joint Monitoring with Senior Chief Chakhadza



*Left - A meeting with WPC during the WASH joint monitoring field visit during the month, Right - WASH Field Assistant addressing chiefs at Nambamba during the month*

As a way of engaging local leaders in the promotion of WASH in Kasese catchment. The WASH program organised a Joint WASH monitoring exercise with Senior Chief Chakhadza. The Joint monitoring was conducted to enforce by-laws made by local

leaders, government extension workers and OCA regarding the adoption of good WASH practices such construction of latrines and adoption of preventive maintenance measures for water points (Afridev hand pumps). During the trip, the Senior Chief and OCA staff visited 4 villages (Chinyawu, Nambamba, Kwimbayani and Chuzu). At Nambamba the team also managed to attend a VDC selection meeting. During this meeting, WASH Field was allowed to sensitize the community on the importance of preventive maintenance. In attendance during the meeting were 50 chiefs from around the area.

### **Installation of Borehole Plaques**

To recognise the contribution of individual donors in the provision of potable through boreholes, the WASH program installs plaques on boreholes funded by specific donors. The plaques have engraved names of the donor and other details of the borehole. Photos and videos of these boreholes with plaques are taken and shared with the donors in appreciation of their esteemed support in the promotion of access to safe drinking water.



*Kadango borehole with a recently installed donor plaque*

### **Conclusion**

October is the beginning of the last quarter of the year. The WASH program is excited about the progress made in 2024 so far. The program has achieved significant milestones in water supply, capacity building, operation and maintenance of boreholes, and school latrine construction. The progress made means the WASH program is in line towards achieving the annual targets.



# 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;

### Farm club cohort 2 Selection

The selection of farmers for OCA farm club cohort 2 was a structured process designed to ensure that only the most dedicated and capable individuals were selected. This process aimed to promote sustainable agricultural practices among participants. The selected farmers were those with potential to adopt improved agricultural practices, representative groups of farmers from various villages within Kasese farm and individuals committed to upholding the standards and values of the OCA farm club.

The selection procedure involves opening of applications for cohort 2 through Chiefs, Lead farmers and AEDO. The interested farmers were invited to submit their application forms through designated collection points. Applications were reviewed by a committee and a preliminary shortlist was created based on farm size, experience and commitment indicators stated by the applicants. The shortlisted candidates were contacted to verify

the information provided through on-site interviews with OCA representatives. Farmers who passed the on-site interview were selected to join the club.

After careful review and evaluation, 15 farmers were selected for the second cohort where 7 are female and 8 are male. The number has increased from 10 farmers to 15 farmers compared to last year due to several key reasons such as sufficient land resources to support a larger group of farmers and maintaining a minimum number of active participants even if a few members may need to withdraw along the way. With this expanded group, we aim to maximize the impact of the program, facilitating wider adoption of best practices and greater community engagement.



*One-on-one interviews with shortlisted farmers with OCA representatives*

### **Farm club cohort 2 orientation meeting**

This meeting was organized to welcome 15 new members of the farm club, introduce the Farm Club's goals and objectives, and outline expectations, resources, and responsibilities. Key topics included training schedules, available resources, and an overview of the farming techniques and technologies that will be covered during the program. Through the meeting conducted, members expressed strong interest about the Farm Club's mission and the opportunity to learn practical and innovative farming techniques. The orientation meeting for Cohort 2 was a success, with high engagement and active participation from new members. The meeting set a positive tone for the cohort, encouraging collaboration and dedication to sustainable farming practices.



*Orientation meeting with farm club cohort 2 members*

## **Irrigation club's microloan repayment**

Irrigation clubs received microloans in form of farm inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and chemicals. These inputs were considered essential to maximize the benefits of irrigation by improving crop yield and quality. The loans are structured to be repaid as the clubs generate income from the improved harvests facilitated by these inputs. Substantial proportion of the clubs have begun repaying their loans while others have requested slight extension due to different maturity levels of crops. The repayment rate demonstrates a positive trend, reflecting effective utilization of inputs. Some of the factors contributing to successful repayment include training on inputs utilization, enhanced market access and increased crop yields and quality.



*Harvested tomatoes ready for loan repayment*



## Mbeya Fertilizer making

Mbeya is an organic fertilizer made by mixing ingredients like animal manure, green plant matter, ash and mineral additives in specific ratios to produce a balanced nutrient-rich fertilizer. This type of manure was introduced to the community as a way of improving crop yields without heavy reliance on chemical inputs. Mbeya fertilizer is an affordable and sustainable option that builds on the principles of organic and regenerative agriculture. Other villages such as Mantchondo and Mandevu have started making Mbeya fertiliser, with training sessions on its production and application facilitated by Lead farmers. The adoption rate has been promising with farmers reporting positive impacts on crop health and reduced input costs. Farmers are producing Mbeya on-site, making it readily available and affordable for their members. The Mbeya initiative has provided several key benefits such as cost savings on inputs, enhanced soil fertility and health, increased crop yields, and environmental sustainability.

## Agroecology in tomato and wheat production

Wheat and tomato are essential crops in many regions, providing a staple food source and significant income for farmers. Conventional farming practices for these crops often rely heavily on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and monocropping, which can lead to soil degradation, reduced biodiversity, and increased vulnerability to climate change. Agroecology offers an alternative by promoting farming methods that work with natural systems to create a sustainable balance, enhancing productivity and resilience while minimizing environmental impact. Agroecology in wheat and tomato production on OCA agroecology farm has shown promising benefits in enhancing soil health, reducing input costs and fostering ecological balance. By addressing the initial challenges and supporting farmers with training, incentives, and market access, agroecological practices on Wheat and tomatoes can be scaled effectively and has the potential for transforming farming into a more productive, economically viable and environmental sound system.



*Harvested wheat from OCA agroecology farm*



## Monitoring irrigation farming

Irrigation is a critical aspect of sustainable agriculture, especially in areas prone to inconsistent rainfall. Effective irrigation management ensures crops receive the right amount of water at the right time, minimizing water wastage and improving crop yields. Monitoring efforts focus on data collection for equipment performance, soil and crop conditions. The gathered data allows for informed decision-making and adaptive management practices. The monitoring activities were done in irrigation clubs of Madzimayela, Chigona, Mantchedza, Mvunguti and Tchale. Crops under monitored irrigation sites have shown better growth with reduced instances of water stress and soil erosion. Crops in monitored fields have shown slight to moderate improvements with healthier root development and more uniform growth.



*Maize and tomatoes were monitored in irrigation clubs*

## Conclusion

The selection of the new cohort of 2 Mwaiwathu club members is a great milestone of the program. It is good to see the members who graduated from the first cohort form a cooperative. Seeing wheat being produced in our Agroecology Farm shows the importance of diversification and that high value crops can be produced in our community.

## **Business Development Program**

### **Executive Summary**

The Business Development Program remains a vital program in the Kasese community, upholding its mission to empower women entrepreneurs by offering interest-free loans and essential capacity-building support. By equipping these women with financial resources and entrepreneurial skills, the program aims to foster business success and vigilance, ultimately contributing to the Orant Charities Africa's (OCA) broader mission of improving community livelihoods and reducing poverty.

In October, the program took significant strides by rolling out several targeted initiatives. These activities were designed not only to enhance the financial independence of the women but also to strengthen their business management skills, preparing them to navigate challenges and seize opportunities within their markets. Through these efforts, the program is helping women to build resilient businesses, create sustainable income streams, and uplift the economic well-being of their households.

### **Business/ Entrepreneurship training**

In October, the Business Development Program demonstrated its commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs by organizing a comprehensive four-day training for the Kasese 1 and 2 FEM group. The training aimed to impart critical business skills, with a focus on Market and Marketing Research, enabling participants to strengthen their enterprises and enhance their market presence. The training sessions were conducted in collaboration with experienced facilitator, Mrs Joan Chilemba, from the department of agribusiness under the ministry of Trade and industry. The facilitator brought her expertise in entrepreneurship and market research, offering the women practical insights and guidance on conducting effective market analysis, understanding customer needs, and positioning their products in competitive markets.



*Women entrepreneurs during a role play (L) and one of the participants, Editta, taking some training notes*

Market and Marketing Research are crucial skills for small business owners, especially women entrepreneurs, who often face additional barriers in accessing market information and resources. By covering these areas, the training empowered the women to identify target markets, understand consumer preferences, and create effective marketing strategies tailored to their business goals. Furthermore, the hands-on sessions included practical exercises, case studies, and role-playing to reinforce theoretical concepts. The facilitators also provided individualized support to address specific challenges faced by each business, allowing the entrepreneurs to leave the training with actionable strategies they could apply immediately.



*Tikondane and Tiyanjane women entrepreneurs during a lesson presentation*

## **Review of FEM applications**

In September, we received a wave of applications from women entrepreneurs actively running businesses in the Sapeya and Ngoko markets who were eager to join the FEM

program. These women expressed a strong interest in developing their business skills and gaining access to the resources and support provided by the program.

By October 2024, a total of sixty-six applications had been submitted for review. Following a detailed evaluation process, each application was carefully examined to ensure it met the specific targeting criteria established by OCA for the FEM program. These criteria are designed to identify women who not only demonstrate potential for business growth but also align with the program's objectives of empowering female entrepreneurs within the community. After thorough assessment, 35 women were shortlisted from the applicant's pool based on their compatibility with these standards. A thorough verification process will be conducted to choose members who may benefit from the training, mentorship, and resources that FEM offers, with the ultimate goal of supporting them in strengthening their businesses and achieving long-term success.

## **Loan Repayments**

October marked a significant milestone for Orant as it successfully concluded the first loan period for the Kasese groups, following the disbursement of a total of MWK 21,895,000 in loans to 27 women entrepreneurs in December, 2023. The initiative aimed to provide these women with essential working capital, enabling them to expand their businesses, increase productivity, and foster sustainable growth. Each recipient was granted a month-long grace period before beginning loan repayments. This strategic decision allowed the entrepreneurs to fully invest the funds in their businesses, establishing a stable foundation before focusing on loan recovery. By using this grace period to make necessary purchases and investments, the women could initiate income-generating activities without the immediate pressure of repayment, helping to stabilize cash flows early on.

Despite minor setbacks along the way, OCA's efforts in financial management and support paid off, resulting in the full recovery of all disbursed funds. This achievement speaks to the effectiveness of OCA's loan disbursement approach and the commitment of the women entrepreneurs to responsibly manage the funds. Additionally, OCA's support likely included financial education and guidance throughout the loan period, empowering the entrepreneurs to navigate challenges, maintain consistent repayments, and build a culture of accountability and financial discipline. This successful loan cycle underscores OCA's role in fostering economic empowerment among women entrepreneurs. By effectively managing this initial loan program, OCA has not only strengthened the financial resilience of individual businesses but has also paved the way



for future financial support initiatives, building confidence among stakeholders and creating a framework for more sustainable economic opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

## Monitoring visits and Weekly VSL Meetings

Throughout the month, the five FEM groups continued to hold Village Savings and Loan (VSL) meetings, providing a vital platform for women entrepreneurs to not only build their financial resources but also strengthen community bonds. These VSL meetings are central to cultivating a robust saving culture, empowering women to set aside regular savings from their earnings while fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collective support. For many participants, the regular act of saving within a trusted group setting instills discipline, creates a financial safety net, and lays the groundwork for long-term economic stability.

Beyond savings, the VSL meetings also serve as a space for women entrepreneurs to come together, share experiences, discuss business challenges, and celebrate successes. These gatherings foster a supportive environment where women feel empowered to openly discuss their journeys, exchange ideas, and provide practical advice based on their unique insights. By sharing experiences, they not only learn from each other's successes and mistakes but also build a strong network of trust, enabling them to work collaboratively towards mutual growth.



Stella (L) and Maligelita (R) During monitoring visits

In addition to savings and shared learning, VSL meetings include structured time for following up on loan repayments. This aspect of the meetings is essential for ensuring financial accountability within the group and maintaining the sustainability of the

lending model. The women collectively review the loan repayments made throughout the week, updating records to maintain transparency. This review process helps each member to stay on track with repayments, reinforcing commitment and a sense of responsibility. Moreover, the meetings provide an invaluable forum for discussing the daily challenges the women face in their businesses, ranging from managing cash flow to handling supply chain issues or navigating competition. By sharing these challenges openly, the women can brainstorm solutions, offer support, and even pool resources or strategies to tackle common obstacles. This peer-to-peer support helps to alleviate the isolation that entrepreneurs sometimes feel, especially when facing difficulties alone. VSL meetings foster not just economic growth but also a strong community of empowered women who are better equipped to navigate the complexities of running small businesses and lifting each other up in the process.



*Women entrepreneurs during VSL meeting*

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Business Development Program in Kasese has made impressive strides in empowering women entrepreneurs through a holistic approach that combines financial support, skill-building, and community-driven initiatives. By providing interest-free loans and targeted training in essential business skills the program equips these women to thrive in competitive markets, expand their businesses, and achieve financial independence. Together, these initiatives contribute to the impact of OCA's work in the Kasese community and its dedication to transforming lives through economic empowerment. Hence laying the foundation for broader social and economic progress, creating pathways for long-term prosperity in the community.



# 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.



Twenty Malawian schools are partners in the OCA education initiative. In addition to offering scholarships to students, we genuinely collaborate with government schools to enhance the educational experience for all children. Students' goals, academic performance, and attendance is enhanced, providing a viable path out of poverty in the end.

The following were the activities which were carried out by the education program in the month of October, 2024.

## School monitoring visits

Sponsored students were visited in their respective schools by the OCA education program. Throughout the reporting period, Seven secondary schools were visited: Dowa, Madisi, Natola, St. Chavara, St. Peters, Chamkango, and Ngala. Monitoring students' academic progress, motivating them to put in more effort in class, and offering them both material and moral assistance were the goals of the visits. The OCA Education initiative provided school supplies to 35 students in total. Among the many items that were provided to students were; hard covers, pens, pencils, sugar, and hygiene products. The following are photos of some of the students Orant visited throughout the reporting period;



*Students from Natola (left) and Madisi CDSS (right) being visited by OCA Education personnel*



*Students from St. Chavara (left) and St. Peters Sec. school carrying supplies given by OCA*

Students also received mentorship in addition to the supplies. The students gain certain problem-solving abilities from these mentorship sessions, which helps them to some degree in resolving specific problems in their lives. Students are given advice on how to handle the various circumstances they frequently encounter in their academic lives. For instance, how they ought to interact with their classmates or speak respectfully. With such mentorship, they gain perspective on how to act in specific situations.

The students were very motivated by the information presented with them during the inspirational visit. They were invited to give their opinions, difficulties, and academic progress after their school reports were reviewed. The students conveyed their appreciation and gratitude for spending time with the OCA staff who support them in their academic journey.





*Students from Madisi (left) & Dowa Sec. school being mentored by OCA*



*Students from Ngala CDSS having a mentorship session with OCA education program*

### **Award presentation ceremony**

The OCA program visited Ngala Community Day secondary school for the award presentation ceremony. OCA has been in partnership with the school in order to improve the performance of students and also to instill them with a spirit of reading culture. The initiative was to improve the schools' library by providing books and also encourage students to make good use of the library by borrowing books and studying regularly. Therefore, OCA agreed with the school to open the library through the academic year. This means that the library is open even during the holiday. During the holiday for the end of academic year 2023/2024 the school's library was open for 21 days (3 days in a week for 7 weeks), and OCA was visiting to monitor the progress. However, upon seeing how some students are attending the library, the OCA education program thought it is wise to motivate the students so that they continue visiting the library. Also, other



students who were not visiting the library, will be motivated and learn from their friends who have been given awards.

By looking at the attendance sheet, it showed that a total of 19 students were frequently visiting the library and these students were given awards from OCA according to the number of days they visited the library. Students who attended the library from 18 days to 11 days (thus out of 21 days) were given school bags, hardcovers, calculators, mathematical instruments, rulers, pens and pencils. The other students who visited for 10-5 days were given hardcovers, rulers, pens and pencils.



*OCA giving awards to Ngala CDSS students for visiting the library frequently during the holiday*

At the end of the ceremony, all students were encouraged to work hard so that they pass with good grades and be able to achieve their goals. By working hard, they should make good use of the library by borrowing books to study and also by visiting the library even during the holiday so that they are not carried away with other activities from home which might lead them from dropping out of school.

## **Donation of books**



The OCA education program is working towards improving the schools around the catchment area in order to improve the performance of students and also for the students to learn in conducive environments.



We supported 10 primary schools from the Katalima zone with supplementary books. A total of 300 books were distributed to Katalima, Chinguwi, Chiwira, Mn'dinga, Bweya, Bwanyundo, Kalukulu, Ngala, Kabuluzi and Nyagara primary schools. The aim of distributing these books is to develop a reading culture to the students at a younger age, help them explore new different things, improve their English speaking and reading skills, and also, to develop the schools so that they are equipped with different kinds of books for teaching and learning.



*OCA distributing supplementary books to Katalima (left) and Ngala (right) primary schools*

In order to sustain the initiative, OCA is in collaboration with the primary schools in the Katalima zone; the books were donated through the library school monitors. In each school, there are library monitors (at least 2) who are responsible for the books. The idea is to be able to monitor how these books are being used and taken care of so that they are not only for this generation but also for the generation to come.

After distributing the books in the Katalima zone, there are other books remaining and the OCA education program plans to distribute the books to the Tchale zone next month (November). In the future, if funds are available, the Madisi zone will also benefit from this donation. However, this will be after observing how the donated books have benefited in the Katalima and Tchale zone.

## **Conclusion**

School monitoring visits, attending the award ceremony and distribution of books were key activities in the month. We believe the books which we have provided in the schools will promote the reading culture and help students excel in their studies.