

COMMUNITY ... Water

Borehole repairs



Water shortage was a real challenge throughout this trip. It's now the dry season, the land is brown and parched, rivers have dried up, and community water lines heavily rationed. So if a borehole pump breaks down, hundreds of people are affected and forced to walk miles, queue for hours at congested pumps—often resented by local villagers who can't get to their own supply—and carry heavy water loads on their heads back home. Then they turn around and do it all again. Hence, repairing broken borehole pumps is high on our agenda.

This trip we repaired seven, bringing clean, safe, local water back to over 10,000 people, including 2 schools.

Bwanali Village Borehole— one of the 7 repaired this trip

Boreholes repaired this trip:
 Bwanali Village
 Chitawotawo School
 Makhonja Village
 Michesi Primary School
 Mukaro Village
 Phodogoma 1 & 2



New water sources for desperate areas

But we went a step further—or perhaps some might say, “back”—and dug wells to see if that would help in remote areas where there's no close water source. Our first—in Msikita Village—was finished just as we left, and it was wonderful to see plenty of water being drawn out of the brick-lined well, even in the dry season, and eagerly drunk by thirsty children.



Water for the first time ever in this area



Alongside, we're establishing a tree nursery, so some of this precious new water resource could be used to irrigate trees planted out around the area for food, compost and fuel.



Left: proposed site of the next well— Bwanali, a large, remote, rural village spread over miles, with huge distances between water sources. We've given out milk/phala here for years, and repaired both of the boreholes at different times, but 199 extra families will benefit from the well.

Msikita Village

From nothing, the heart of this village has been transformed by the Community Centre we built last year, the well, and now the first stages of reforestation in a tree nursery.

Multi projects combining to empower the whole community!

Our thanks to Wilmslow Wells for working in partnership with us, funding these water-based projects

COMMUNITY ... Education

Education Sponsorship



New students were assessed and lists agreed for this academic year. We're still working with 3 local schools: Michesi Secondary (38 students), Chiringa CDSS (30), & Migowi CDSS (17), totalling 85 day students. We also sponsor 5 “night school” students—teens who haven't qualified to be selected for secondary education, or have missed out in some way, but are eager to learn. All school fees were paid for this term plus annual exam fees.

On the left are some of our pupils from Michesi Secondary school, proudly showing off their new uniforms. We had a blouse and skirt, or shirt and trousers made by local tailors, supplying them with good quality fabric and other materials, as previous years.

“Happy Days” Project



In November we launched our new sani-project—providing hygienic sani-wear for girls at school. Monthly periods are shrouded in stigma and mystery. Most schoolgirls we spoke to took 2 days off each month, due to embarrassment over possible leakage, smell, restricted movement and discomfort. A lot of lost education! So we looked for patterns for a simple, washable product. Eventually, thanks to “Days for Girls”, our pack developed to a holder, 6 liners, a pair of panties, and a zip-lock bag.

This was a challenging project to implement and run. It had two separate avenues:
 a) the establishment of small businesses to manufacture the goods, empowering local villagers to create income
 b) the free supply to girls to keep them in school all month—our “Happy Days” project.

We gathered our sponsored girls in each school, gave an informative talk around menstruation, and distributed sani-packs to a small number of girls for testing. Results were unanimous and enthusiastic. The girls reported that they had all stayed at school each day during their period, felt comfortable, secure and were able to run or play netball as usual. Using the zip-lock bag with a little water inside, made transport of soiled liners easy, and washing and drying, at home (outside, in public!) was no problem, as the items were unrecognisable!



*Above: Content of packs
 Below: delighted users!*

We gave packs to each of the girls on our Education Programme. It's life changing! Each can now attend all their lessons and work hard to achieve their goals.



Training

Training is a vital route out of poverty, so we were delighted to be able to host a variety of Courses.

The **Farming God's Way** training was hosted for 2 days, with 80 people attending each day. Dickson (FGW's trainer in Malawi) taught theory in person, from DVD's in our Training Hall, and practically in the field.



Friends, Chris & Cathrine, Tim & Joy taught an all-day Seminar to our staff on **“Marriage and the Family”**. This was particularly applauded by staff members as “life transforming” for their families. Couples, sitting apart in gender groups at the beginning (as per Malawi custom) were together and close by the end, with new vision for their joint futures.

24 **pastors** also received 2-day bible training and encouragement

Offices and the Classroom were the venues for one-to-one **computer training** by Cathrine for english-speaking staff members. This was invaluable as we try to build capacity into our guys. Word & Excel were broadly explored according to each person's experience & ability, with good progress made & confidence built.

2-day training to make **sanitary pads**. Joy worked with villagers empowering them to begin local production, and sent them off with a loaned sewing machine, patterns, a business plan, and a starter pack of chosen fabrics.



All participants invited to training sessions were served with a meat, veg & rice meal and soft drink at mid-day—gratefully received in these days of hunger.

ON SITE ... OHP Centre

Goats



Our dairy goats are in good condition, despite the inevitable difficulties of finding green foodstuff at this time of the year. During November, we produced 8 ltrs of milk a day, enough to help 40-50 acutely vulnerable babies. This amount, along with solar challenges with refrigeration, meant storage problems, and led us to open 2 new outlets for the milk. We had 5 male kids to distribute, so we issued them into different areas to improve stock in local communities.

Water

Supply through the community pipeline to site was poor—we went for weeks without any water coming, though occasionally some flowed at night so our tanks were filled. However, to meet the needs of all departments, we set up a water-collecting night shift making 4-5 journeys before dawn to local boreholes with our trike packed with 20ltr containers. This would take the pressure off for the best part of a week, but not permanently.

Reforestation & Moringa

By the end of the trip our Tree Nursery was flourishing, and Community Tree Nurseries checked. Several were removed from our programme as initial interest had waned, but 3 new Nurseries were funded, and all issued with equipment and seeds—mtangatanga (firewood/fuel), glycidia (soil improvement) & moringa (nutrition)



Moringa is still our main crop, we have thousands of trees on both sites, but are eager to plant more for processing into the food supplement for community nutrition. Poor electricity supply hindered developing improvements to our milling machine and dehydrators—we planned to power them using parts of an old generator—but need connectors from the UK, as none were found locally.

Site maintenance

We've been on our current site since 2008, gradually adding buildings/improvements as required. All our expected building work has now been completed, so this trip we surveyed the site, listing renovations needed to bring the buildings and facilities up to date. This included work in all the goat venues, Processing Unit, Training Hall/Classroom, water & solar supply—all successfully completed. Vehicles were also repaired/serviced—we want to set a good example of care.

Staff

On the whole, our 16 staff members are doing well. Sadly, we lost Gladson, our Project Leader, in June, after working together for 9 years. Inevitably, this left a void, but John is "growing" into his new role, handling the project work with energy and thoughtfulness, and representing OHP well. Loveness, our Field Officer, is also developing in skills and outlook, and providing leadership support alongside her own tasks and responsibilities in the community.

Open Hand - giving

The success of our underwear appeal meant we took more than 700 items to Malawi—panties were used in the "Happy Days" packs and some were kept for the next phase. We also gave out reading & sight glasses, babies' jumpers, knitted blankets, quilts, and girls dresses, all kindly donated by supporters in the UK.



Plastic sheeting for roofing, is invaluable to the vulnerable, so was urgently distributed before the rains

Thank you!

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Pure and genuine religion... means caring for orphans and widows in their distress.

Jas 1:27

December 2016



Aid Africa

the amazing work goes on

A report by Lynda Mills, including Sept-Nov trip



Life is still tough in the rural areas, despite challenges of intense heat, hunger, little electricity and water, we still made steady progress. We opened several new milk drops, repaired 7 borehole pumps—restoring clean safe water back to about 10,000 people—and dug our first well. We replaced roofs for elderly folk, and issued plastic sheeting to families to repair their own. Our Sani-project was launched establishing 4 businesses as people were trained to make the products and units were issued to all the girls on our sponsored education programme—a life-changing opportunity for them to stay in education, secure and comfortable for the whole month!

COMMUNITY ...

Food Programme - 2016/17



It's evident that the hunger situation is likely to be the worst we've ever known this year, so we managed to buy in more maize—a further 5,000 kgs, totalling 30 tonnes in our storerooms—enough for 120,000 meals.

This will be distributed to 300 assessed families for 3 months, starting Christmas 2016

Milk & Phala Programmes

Visits to our Bwanali milk drop proved interesting. The milk supplied had done wonders for the babies there and their health and weight had all improved, so we looked for a more needy area to place our milk. However, we'll continue to provide the likuni phala (fortified porridge) for 40 youngsters there, at least for the next few months during the "hunger period", as this whole area is particularly vulnerable.



Following pleas for help, we identified acute need in remote villages and following family assessments, we gathered 20 babies together at Namata—our new "milk drop", initially twice a week. But older toddlers were also malnourished, so we organised nutritious phala to be made for 25 of them too. Another "milk drop" was born next to a Health Centre, and we still provide milk direct from our Centre on a daily basis.



Comments from visitors following their first trip to Malawi, and Aid Africa's Open Hand Projects:

Our first impression of the country and project exceeded the picture we had built up. We knew about the goat and tree planting programmes, and the feeding projects in the villages, but to see these in action, how it all worked, impacting the lives of so many people, was amazing....

Joy & Tim