

COMMUNITY ...

Zayambika Nursery School in Msikita Village

Msikita is a large, remote, vulnerable village of 1850 households—about 7000 people—under a Village Head and 3 sub-chiefs. It's inaccessible by vehicle during the rainy season, so can only be reached by bike or foot.

Back in 2009, a Nursery School—Zayambika (“it has started”) was founded which still runs today with the same 6 voluntary teachers, serving 3 villages. Eager for educational opportunities for their young ones, the school started under a tree and later, the villagers came together and built a simple school room. But, due to poor materials and lack of foundation, the building gradually collapsed and there were no resources to maintain or rebuild it.

83 children are currently registered, 51 boys and 32 girls and no building!



Welcome to Msikita Village

Right from the beginning this project was challenging—to build a Community Centre that would house the Nursery School along with other educational and community events. The remoteness of the location and being inaccessible by road until after the rains meant we couldn't even see the area earlier in the trip. But the villagers worked hard to build a “road” - a dirt track of clods

of earth, stones, branches and soil, so our 4x4 could make it most of the way to the village.



So the time came for an assessment visit, and the welcome we received from the village was amazing—their eagerness to facilitate their children's education, backed by years of voluntary teaching by dedicated villagers, impressed us enough to commit to the project. A hint about the novelty and importance of this development came as we left the village—most of the children ran ahead of us excitedly shouting “galimoto!” to each other. Galimoto is “car” in Chichewa—some had never seen one!

So, the decision made, we started to unpack the plan. The construction would be identical to the Mtikhe Community Centre we built last year—a very successful project. The foundations were dug as the ruins of the old building were torn down. We'd located and bought bricks locally and the villagers would transfer each of the 30,000 by foot, wheelbarrow or pushbike. They also brought in river sand in the same way. Our part was to provide everything else—50 bags of cement, 51 iron roofing sheets & timbers, doors, windows and labour. The building took shape, and by the time we left Malawi, it was up to roof level and our staff continued to monitor progress in our absence.



No commercial trucks would venture out so far on such poor roads, so every item needed to be transported by our motor-trike. This whole building project could never have been accomplished without this amazing vehicle—no wonder we need several more!



Building—almost finished—June 2016

Mtikhe Community Centre



Moringa trees flourishing at Mtikhe

Last year we built the Mtikhe Community Centre. In March, we visited to check all was well, but noticed little details hadn't been properly finished, which we put right. Window handles were fitted, the blackboards plastered and painted, and a desk made for the office. We were delighted to see trees planted around the edge of the concourse, and more seeds requested.



Old & new blackboards!

This prestigious building houses a wide variety of village pursuits, as well as the Nursery School, and is highly regarded.



COMMUNITY ...

Monjo Lea Primary School

This is a huge rural primary school with 1254 students, from 3 villages, aged between 6 -17 years.

We were approached by the Head Teacher, for help to create a constant water supply by connecting a 5,000ltr storage tank donated by Unicef, to the local community water pipeline, and supplying a new tap. Unfortunately, the tank didn't come with the wherewithal to connect it, and was at risk of being repossessed if not fitted.



The tank—at risk of repossession if not installed

Hunger and malnutrition are common here, so each student is given a porridge breakfast at the beginning of every school day. Erratic water supply placed a huge strain on the school curriculum to cook for so many, wash children's hands and equipment/utensils, ready for morning Assembly.

Originally, there was one tap shared by the school and local community, but in the dry season it tended to run dry, so the school needed a storage tank to hold and manage its own water supply on site.

The cost of building the tower to mount the tank and all pipes, labour and fixings was way beyond the ability of even an enthusiastic Head Master & actively supportive parents to raise, though they had already moulded and burnt bricks for the tower, and brought in river sand ready for the build.



Dave surveyed the area, made suggestions about location of the tower and tap, and the work began. Finding the right plumbing fittings was challenging, making the job so much longer, but the day before we left, the first water from the tank started to flow through the new pipeline to the tap, conveniently placed next to the kitchen and canteen. Despite the cement apron around the tap just being finished that morning, we were all delighted—and a little relieved—to see the water flow freely at such good pressure.



This is huge in the “development” world, and has already drawn teacher-training students to study it as an example of local pro-active success.

Pretty impressive for our area!

Borehole Pump Repair



Chabe Village Borehole

We repaired 6 borehole pumps, restoring clean, safe, local water to over 20,000 people.



Namba Village Borehole



Chatawo Village Borehole

Income Generating Activities

We issued 14 more small business loans, assessed as potentially sustainable, which included: trading in fish, maize, rice, goats, chickens, cooking oil, & bananas. All those due to begin repaying their loans as per their Loan Agreements have done so, the plan is to repay over 5/6 months to finish in November, before the serious hunger period begins.

Education

Our Education Sponsorship Programme is still supporting over 70 Secondary School students, and a new plan has been put in place to monitor their behaviour/achievement—to encourage positive results.

ON SITE ...

Food Programme - 2016/17

Gathering enough maize for the next Food Programme was challenging ...



We usually buy at harvest at the lowest price, but big trucks started rolling in from Blantyre, buying up all the maize and transporting it out of the area. Nationally, the harvest had been a disaster and the Government had stopped all exports of maize, so grain from our area, that might have fed our locals, was transported out to richer locations

So our team went out to scour the area, and eventually found 28 tonnes (about 112,000 meals). Calculations of issue will be finalised in December when we'll have a clearer idea of how the rains are affecting the next maize crop.

Storeroom expansion



We needed more space to store the maize in good condition, so we set about expanding our storeroom facilities. Sounds easy—just adding 3 walls to our existing storeroom, but the process involved closing our rabbit breeding programme, dismantling the hutches and moving them and the livestock into the community. Old staff toilets had to go too, so a new toilet block was built.

Foundations were then dug for the new storeroom. The building was completed just before we left Malawi—a whole rejuvenated storeroom complex. The old storeroom was brought up to spec (a) and the “weighing room” (b)—which connects both the old and the new—was also sorted. Each room has been ratproofed, whitewashed, fitted with electric lights and sturdy double doors, tin-trimmed to combat rats. The maize bought—560 x 50kg bags, will be dried, winnowed, weighed, and stored in our special anti-weevil grain bags until Christmas when the Food Programme begins.

Goats



The goats are doing well, most does are pregnant so the milk yield has plummeted, but they're due to start producing kids—and milk—in June. However for the first few months, most will go to their own kids, especially the female ones, grounding them well for their future introduction to our milking herd—so we'll still be challenged milk-wise for quite a while. **LATEST NEWS! 13 kids born, 8 females!**

Agriculture

Moringa is still our prime crop, and the team are gradually extending planting at our Makhonja site though the rains waterlogged the soil for a time. However, they have been harvesting leaves, drying them in the 3 dehydrators and processing regularly, providing the nutritious food supplement to the vulnerable. We've formed a “Moringa Team”, to go out into the community, training in moringa growth, care, nutritional value & cooking.

Growing **cassava** for seed multiplication continues and veg is still being grown/distributed to the needy.

Our tree nursery, grows seedlings to give away—over 3000 **trees** were germinated in the community this 1st year.

Thank you

To all our amazing supporters who empower this work to go on impacting lives in the rural areas, and especially

- the Evans' (storeroom)
- FOMA (Msikita C.C.)
- The Mulberry Trust and other special donors (maize)
- Wilmslow Wells (water)

Help us help them

Donate monthly by **Standing Order** (Please ask for info)

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

Jas 1:27

June 2016



Aid Africa

the amazing work goes on

A report by Lynda Mills, including Feb-May trip

Life is still tough in the rural areas, and this trip was lived out against the backdrop of acute local hunger, stifling heat, water shortages, erratic electricity supply, and the deteriorating health of one of our key staff members. But, despite the challenges, we managed to accomplish all we'd planned to do - and more!



Our catchment area is T/A Nazombe:- 64 villages, 38,166 people, plus outlying adjacent areas - in all, about 40,000-50,000 people.

COMMUNITY ...

Food Programme 3rd & 4th issue

The people were hungry. The third issue of our 2015/16 Food Programme took place as we arrived in February, distributing 25kgs maize (27,000 meals), 4 packs of soya meals, & 2 soaps to 270 vulnerable families (1170 people), aiming to provide a meal a day for the following month.



However, it was soon evident that due to the late rains, the harvest wouldn't be ready till April, so the hunger period would stretch another month—could we provide a 4th distribution?

Thankfully, with help from our friends and supporters, we were able to buy in enough grain to issue maize, soya meals and soap again, to the 270 households, helping them survive through to the next maize harvest.

Milk & Phala Programmes



The Milk Programme has been stretched almost to breaking point as 10 of our goats have been mated, so their milk ceased as their pregnancies advanced. This led to a major shortage of milk—and a sort out of the babies on our lists.

We kept our nutritious goats milk for just the tiny infants who had no alternative supply (orphans, or mothers with breast problems, AIDS, or too seriously malnourished to provide milk), and topped up with formula. The older babies had cows milk, or phala—a maize based porridge, fortified with fish, soya, peanuts, moringa and sugar.



Elderlies' Luncheons



Monthly meals for the elderly are still an important, and appreciated, aspect of our work. Undoubtedly, this will be the best meal each has had that month, and to make sure they don't miss the fun, some start arriving on site in the early morning.

Animated chat, enthusiastic singing, prayer, and even a little bit of dancing usually follow so it's a special social event as well.

Solar

Still considering the possibility of lighting homes with small solar units—after research, we bought 50 panel/bulb units to test locally. Staff members are trying them out. If these particular units are successful, then we'd like to roll them out to hundreds of vulnerable homes, and possibly students for home study. If not, we need to investigate further for alternative designs and suppliers.