

Letter from Malawi

Dear Friends

Thank you for continuing to support people in Malawi who are making progress in trying times.

The general news in Malawi

Malawi experienced damage from a tropical cyclone (Storm Ana) in February. There was severe flooding and immediately 80,000 people lost their homes. In the same area, there was dramatic damage to a game park and a dam. The long-term effect which is still a challenge is that the hydroelectric station at the dam has still not been repaired – Malawi lost 1/3 of the national generating capacity and we are all still being supplied 6-12 hours per day with black outs at other times.

Another challenge this year has been the lack of foreign exchange in the country. The IMF and World Bank have a lack of confidence in Malawi after inspections and concerns about corruption. This has delayed planned payments and resulted in a lack of petrol and diesel, with fuel queues up to 3km long. Many people spent nights sleeping in fuel queues, but things are better at present in terms of fuel supply. The Vice President and others have been charged with corruption charges.

The final challenge that I would like to mention is the lack of fertiliser. Most farmers will not be able to afford fertiliser this year, and so crop yields will be low, even if the rains are good. We expect hunger and have stock-piled some maize for our staff. Many homes will not have the advantage of this capital and planning.

Specific project news

Blantyre Education and Supplementary Training fund (BEST)

As you know, we use the BEST process to choose students to sponsor. Some do very well indeed - Gertrude Chilunguni was top of her year for several years and has now started at Dental School in the second entry group of the first Malawi Dental School. Browsing down the list, Patience Selemani (picture here - once homeless and on the street, but rescued by STEKA below) has graduated in Nursing and Midwifery. Iso Ken Mphande and Juma Napwanga (both would have had to leave college for lack of funds) have qualified as Clinical Officers and registered with the Malawi Medical Council after completing their internship attachments. Wakana Maliwa (living alone, left college for lack of fees) has successfully re-entered school, passed very well and enrolled for a degree in Maths and Teaching.



Food aid and relief

We continue to support STEKA - an organisation and children's home to rescue street children and in most cases restore them to the family village. Godknows Maseko, the STEKA Director, was himself on the street at one time. This year he has advised government on homelessness and travelled to Germany to engage donors. We have provided food as planned.

Following the Cyclone Ana, I cycled into the disaster area (roads were impassable). I spoke with women sitting on the rubble ruins of their homes. Construction sites, lack of storm drain planning and lack of cement to make robust foundations are all factors. Women woke to the sound of the

river coming through their windows and carried their children to safety. When they returned, the houses were destroyed. We assisted with emergency rations and supplies by working with local churches.



Our day jobs and other work

At the Malawi Liverpool Wellcome Programme, Melita has been part of introducing the typhoid vaccine on which she led the foundational research country-wide. Trials show 85% of children from typhoid infection.

The CREATOR – Clinical Research Excellence and Training Open Resource – project has now progressed to the third floor of the construction.



Melita has completed 2 years of Theology training with Church Mission Society and has been admitted to the Order of Lay Readers as a Pioneer Minister in CMS.

In the next year, we will consider what is next for us. As the typhoid programme completes, and CREATOR is opened in 2024, we may move back to the UK after this latest 9 years in Africa. We value your prayers for this next chapter.

We are very blessed ourselves, and it is our privilege that you join us in helping others with food programmes, teaching and learning projects and small business development. On this occasion, I have attached full accounts since the St Brigids One World Group donation of £6000 on 13th December 2021. The several worksheets show that this has been a busy year, spending £23,000. You can see when transfers from sterling were made (the exchange rate is not stable), and when payments out occurred. There is also a sheet showing projected spends in 2023, allowing for unexpected events; if there is hunger we will step in to help as we are able.

Thank you again

Stephen and Melita

PS Melita produces a prayer sheet every 6 weeks or so. If you would like to receive that form of news, please do let us know. magordon@liverpool.ac.uk