

MALAWI ORPHAN APPEAL FUND has been active since 2000 and is a fully registered charity which submits accounts annually.

It is a small, focused charity, which directly links people in this area with a Malawian self-help group based in the village of Ntcheu and eight surrounding Tribal Authority areas. Every cent raised goes directly to its work in Malawi; the only expenses charged here are a portion of the costs when we visit Malawi. Two of our members have visited Malawi twice in the last ten years and those visits we considered essential to maintaining and developing our relationship with our partners. They also allowed us to see and confirm the work being done. We also pay Public Liability Insurance, bank fees and very occasionally a specific cost such as printing for raffle tickets. Our postage and phone, we cover ourselves. Our accounting service is free of charge and all general administration and organisation is voluntary.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Principally, to help orphans to stay in their home villages and continue their education. A spin off is some job creation and educational work in the villages generally. So we support:

- Supplementary food to most endangered orphans during the Hungry Season (our winter) in the gap before the new crops come in to enable them to stay in their villages. All children helped must go to school.
- Secondary school fees each year for approx. 40 children, often more. (Entrance is competitive and fees must be paid.
- Seed and fertilizer for a 3 HA 'garden' in eight centers each year. This food is for the benefit of the orphans. The work is carried out by our partners' committees of local villagers and orphan carers. They are not paid.
- We funded the capital cost of a small maize mill which now employs three, offers a local service and earns useful funds for the work with the orphans.
- We have supported a pig project, which breeds and distributes breeding stock in the villages and provides husbandry education. The pigs are reared for the benefit of the orphans and their villages.
- We have funded the building of a small vocational education school which offers supported education to selected orphans and charges others for courses. It also let out the hall for events and so supports itself. It is used for training and education also for village committees, agricultural etc.
- We occasionally support specific purchases: blankets for the cold, wet winter season on the plateau (our summer), bicycles - one for each village committee to speed up their communication time with the central village, a motorbike for a committee member to visit the growing projects and supervise fertilizer distribution, etc., sewing machines for a sewing training project, and so on.

OUR FUNDRAISING POLICY

To hold a succession of small events each year which are good value and a pleasure to our supporters; this policy to continue each year to provide a continuity of funding rather than a huge sum of money on a once-off basis.

MONEYS RAISED TO DATE

Approx. €180,000 over ten years.

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Started by a small group in 2000. Facilitated for first five years by Drs. Des and Yo Chavasse (Des is from Co. Waterford) who vetted our original contacts and then discovered the group who became our partners. Des and Yo, whose lives and working careers are spent in Africa, found our partners to be 'remarkable people'. When they left for Kenya, their friend Maggie O'Toole became our liaison for some years until her career changed but she still facilitates any difficulties in communication which occasionally arise, usually due to deficiencies in the Malawian infrastructure. Email and Skype have made communication much easier in recent years.

OUR PARTNERS are a group called COOM (Christian Orphan Outreach Mission). They are an ecumenical group who established to build an orphanage for the children on the streets of Ntcheu. When they surveyed the surrounding Tribal Authority areas and came up with a figure of at least 1,800 orphans in great need, they realised that an orphanage was an inadequate solution. Their Patron (Chairperson) is Evelyn Jesman, herself an orphan, who was supported in her education, did a Masters in Education in Canada, was a Schools Inspector in Malawi and subsequently started her own school which now receives children from three countries. She educates approximately 70 children each year without charge. Her fellow committee members are local business people, public servants and people of modest or no means at all. Our focus, to keep the orphans in their villages and educated, is actually their aim - adopted by us to support them.

Because our support has allowed COOM to develop an organization in their area and villages, and to do work which has strengthened that organization, they are now in the position of being chosen to facilitate other work; they have undertaken a pilot year of AIDS education in their area for the Malawian government, Feed the Children USA has asked them to distribute a fortified food for under 5s who are in danger (Likuni Phala) and the village committees cook and distribute this five days a week. However, we are their major source of funds for their core work. They are 'remarkable people'.

ACCOUNTING

We receive receipts for every cent we transfer. We have seen the work on the ground. What they have done with our money is so much more than we can imagine for such a sum.