



# Malawi Association for Christian Support Newsletter January 2013

[www.malawimacs.org](http://www.malawimacs.org)

Charity No. 1025616

## Quick Orthopaedic Action

It all started in July with a request for a wheel-chair. Fr Macdonald Njala Banda, Director of Chilema Ecumenical Lay Training Centre, wrote to say that Zainabu Mussa, a Muslim woman who was unable to walk, had done very well on her six-month Homecraft Training Course and was due to return to her home near Monkey Bay. Zainabu needed a wheel-chair to replace the one she had been lent while at Chilema.

When Eileen Eggington, MACS Project Officer, received the request she wondered if surgery could enable Zainabu to walk. Through a friend she contacted Dr Steve Mannion, an NHS orthopaedic surgeon in Blackpool who spends 50% of his time working in developing countries for CBM, a UK overseas disability charity. Steve said he thought surgery would make it possible for Zainabu to walk and he could do this during his next visit to Malawi.

However, he said that Mangochi District was poorly served for orthopaedic care and so he proposed a week-long programme of assessments and surgery for up to 30 people, plus training of local staff, to make it worthwhile. He said CBM would pay for his time. Trustees



Zainabu Mussa



Fr Banba, Mr Tione, Mr Chimangeni,  
Mrs Mlenga, Mr Lungu and Dr Mannion

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACKNELLA

agreed that MACS would fund the expenses of the orthopaedic programme.

Thanks to careful planning and preparation by Sandy Chimangeni, Orthopaedic Clinical Officer for MAP (Malawi Against Physical Disabilities), Grafiud Tione, MACS Representative in Malawi, and Fr Macdonald, arrangements were made for two days of clinical assessments and three days of surgery at Mangochi District Hospital. Fr Macdonald arranged and took part in the distribution of leaflets in Chewa and Yao through all the mosques and churches, inviting parents to

team was overwhelmed by numbers. During the week they assessed over 100 children and conducted successful operations on 13 girls and 15 boys who were suffering from a variety of disabilities, and Zainabu. They have all been given new life and hope for a brighter future. We will bring news of their progress in the next newsletter.

Steve Mannion is passionate about training. Clinical officers from St Luke's Malosa, St Martin's Malindi, Mangochi and Lilongwe hospitals both observed and

worked with him throughout the week. He is also committed to ensuring that they get further training.

We thank and congratulate Sandy Chimangeni, Nurse Sarah Mlenga, Steve Mannion and all the medical team who generously shared their wealth of practical orthopaedic experience to transform the



PHOTOGRAPH BY JACKNELLA

bring children with hand and feet disabilities to Mangochi District Hospital for assessment. Advanced orthopaedic operations are available in Blantyre and Lilongwe but they are over 100 miles away.

Monday 10th December arrived and the

lives of many. Thanks also to Fr Macdonald for energetically following up on his initial request, to Grafiud Tione for looking after all the administration of the programme and the staff at Mangochi District Hospital. A great team effort!

**VISIT [www.malawimacs.com](http://www.malawimacs.com)** to see a short film and more photographs of the orthopaedic programme. **There is other new material on the site which is well worth looking at.**

# ACCOMPANYING OUR PROJECT OFFICER

BY JULIE LUPTON

I joined Eileen Eggington and Grafiud Tione, MACS Representative in Malawi, on their annual Project Inspection tour in late September and early October. Being a relatively new trustee I was most grateful to have the chance to meet many people and to see a wide selection of projects.

My admiration for Grafiud Tione, and what he does for MACS increased enormously. His

confined to the occasional trip to the Lake.

At Nkope we met with the Committee for the Unit for the Blind at Nkope Primary School and looked at plans for the new hostels. There are currently 10 girls and 15 boys in the Unit but there is a long waiting-list. The two new hostels will accommodate 20 girls and 20 boys. Working together with the teachers and committee members, we received some helpful suggestions for improvements to the drawings. It is especially good to participate in a collaborative venture.

MACS aims to change people's lives through the education of children.

Without doubt the twenty-four blind children at Nkope will benefit from the new hostels once they are built.

MACS receives many requests for help with building. In particular we are asked to build or renovate classrooms and teachers' houses. Having visited a number of schools in Malawi, I am convinced that responding to such requests is vital. With free universal

primary education in Malawi, the numbers of students in classes is mind-boggling. We



Julie and Committee looking at plans for Nkope Hostels

tact and patience, wise advice and the fact that he thinks so deeply before he speaks means that we really need to listen to him. Eileen's energy and dedication to the task in hand was amazing. Where, too often, I fell into the trap of seeing the problems and the pitfalls of things, Eileen celebrated the achievements and the progress. She wasn't unrealistic or naïve: she was positive! I learned a lot from her.

MACS responds to a wide range of requests for support from some of the poorest rural communities in Malawi. Although I lived and taught in Malawi for a total of ten years, my knowledge of the lakeshore and Malosa areas was



Learners in class, Mtengeza

visited one school where we were told there were 300 children in Standard One. It was hard to imagine how they fitted into the room.

"Sometimes children sit back to back on the floor with a teacher at either end", we were told. Teachers have a blackboard, if they are lucky, and that is about all. In the lower forms children often sit on the dusty floor, write in the dust and learn by rote. It was clear why whenever MACS donates desks they go to the senior classes with fewer learners. What is needed are bigger and lighter rooms that don't leak during the rains.

**“Sometimes children sit back to back on the floor with a teacher at either end”**

Motivating teachers in such surroundings is difficult. This is why, if teachers have decent housing, they are more inclined to stay in the rural areas. Teachers and healthcare workers all need good houses and this is something worthwhile that MACS helps to provide.

MACS also aims to help people through improved healthcare. We visited the Health Centre at Nkope where MACS is supporting improvements in the water system. Work is on-going here and much needed.

At St Martin's Hospital, Malindi, Vincent Chalira, the Senior Hospital Administrator, shared with us that he had just received a letter of resignation from a nurse who was leaving because of inadequate housing. The maintenance and renovation of housing to provide decent living conditions for all staff is incredibly important and this is something

MACS supports, whenever funds are available.

We visited villages in the Malosa area to see how some of the mosquito nets provided by MACS were being used. We heard of the successful reduction in the incidence of malaria and how this was directly attributable to the use of nets.

MACS gives support to parishes. When we arrived at Nakapa and saw the size of the church the community were building, we were amazed! But then we were told they regularly have 600 - 700 people worshipping. The enthusiasm of the local people was infectious and their welcome warm and genuine. MACS helps people to complete projects, particularly by enabling them to buy corrugated iron sheets to roof their churches and classrooms.

When visiting Malawi you are constantly faced with the enormity of the need. It makes you question what you are doing and whether you are doing the right things. The challenges are enormous and never-ending.

I was reminded that when faced with 5000 hungry people to feed, Christ responded by taking what was offered and blessing it. We are not told that he grumbled that people hadn't made a better plan for their day out. Nor are



**Teacher's house, Mpinganjira**

we told that he questioned whether a few fish and loaves were appropriate!

MACS trustees are approached by the people of Malawi who have identified specific needs. Helping with education, training, building and healthcare is indeed a privilege and one that we must continue to take seriously.

# MANY THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

MACS is 100% dependent on donations from individuals, groups and legacies for its work in Malawi. Particular thanks to people who arrange Standing Orders as this reduces the work of our Treasurer. Special thanks to Rose Barton who completed the Canterbury half marathon in aid of MACS, in a personal best time. She ran the second half marathon at Windsor on October 7th with another personal best time of 2 hours 12 minutes. Rose has raised a magnificent £555 for the new hostels at Nkope. Well done, Rose.



Rose



Anna and Nick

Congratulations also to Anna and Nick Ballard who cycled 300 miles over 10 days (the C2C UK cycle route) starting and finishing at Whitehaven on the west coast, and Tynemouth as their half-way point on the east coast. Anna was born at St Luke's Hospital, Malosa and spent her first four years at Malosa where her parents taught in the secondary school. Anna and Nick have raised an amazing £1725 (including Gift Aid) for MACS

Christmas by Candlelight was held in the beautiful

setting of St Augustine's upper chapel in Canterbury and raised £1400 for the Nkope Hostels appeal. Annie Barton Hodges and friends entertained the audience firstly in the chapel, by candlelight, then in the Refectory over canapés and wine! A wonderful Christmas present for the blind children at Nkope. Well done all involved.



Christmas by candlelight



One of Chombo's new classrooms

## NEW CLASSROOMS

The energy of the people of Chombo, near Nkhotakota, in providing bricks, sand and water made possible the building of two new classrooms. MACS provided the roof and other materials. This is a primary school with 2,143 learners and 12 teachers - an average of 179 learners for each teacher!

Fr William Kadalamba has written to say, "On behalf of Chombo School Committee,

I would like to convey my utmost thanks to MACS for making our dream come true. I would like to report that the project is now finished. It is our ardent hope that this project will assist our children to have a good environment when learning."

Difficult to see in the photograph are the new style windows encouraged by MACS. They are made of latched metal and provide more light and ventilation than the previously used patterned concrete blocks. A transparent roofing-sheet also provides more light. It will be interesting to receive comments on these developments from learners and teachers.

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## NEW WATER

Msalawatha is a remote village near Neno. Mrs Agnes Mkoko writes about the borehole provided by MACS. "Good News, the bore hole is working, people are drinking water from the borehole now, they are very happy and excited to drink safe clean water. The Group Village Headman, the Village Headman and the two Village Elders were there to witness that true, the water is coming.

They are very thankful and very appreciative for all that you have done to their village.

It is like a dream to them to drink this water, you know water is life. Even the young ones can also go and draw water



Young helpers at the borehole

easily now. May you please pass on our sincere thanks and appreciations to the MACS Trustees, for saving our lives from the many water-borne diseases. May the Lord bless you all."

## IN BRIEF

**GROUNDNUT OIL** Henry Chikakuda writes to say that MACOBO (Malosa Community Based Organisation) Volunteers are now producing oil from groundnuts, using a machine recommended by the Malawi Industrial Research and Technology Centre and provided by MACS. Their aim is to share this knowledge with many people in the community.

**NKOPE HOSTELS** It is hoped to start work in April on the new hostel for 20 blind and low-vision girls. Sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the £36,600 raised to date. Work on the hostel for 20 boys will start as soon as funds are available.

**MACS WORKING VISIT** Thirteen people will be visiting Malawi from 13-28 July. The visit includes working alongside people at



Making groundnut oil

Nkope at the Unit for the Blind, Primary School and Health Centre.

**BY EMAIL** Contact Tony Cox at [news.macs@gmail.com](mailto:news.macs@gmail.com) if you would like to receive MACS mailings by email. This would help save MACS the cost of printing and postage.

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## NEW PROJECTS

*The following projects have been approved since the last Newsletter:*

- a bridge over a river near Msalawatha Village in Neno District
- retaining wall and steps for Girls' Hostel at Malosa Secondary School
- 5-day permaculture course at Chirombo, near Monkey Bay
- contribution towards 6-month Vocational Course for Women at Chilema
- borehole for Msalawatha Village in Neno District
- roof for St Luke's church, Nakapa, Masuku Parish
- orthopaedic programme Mangochi District
- pit-latrine *Hands on Health* programme Kapiri Health Centre, Nkhotakota
- toilet and plumbing for Headteacher's house, St Martin's School, Malindi
- extend and renovate teacher's house, St Michael's School, Malindi
- completion of St Michael's church, Nembere, Magomero
- upgrading of electricity supply at St Martin's Hospital, Malindi in order to provide individual pre-pay meters in staff houses
- repair and maintenance of solar lighting at Lulanga Health Centre, Makanjira

## EVERY PENNY COUNTS!

There are always more projects to support than MACS is able to help and every little helps. MACS has signed up to [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk), an innovative fundraising website where thousands of people are raising money for charity every time they shop. With access to over 3000 retailers shoppers can generate free donations for their good cause. It is really simple to do. Just visit [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk), search for Malawi Association for Christian Support and follow the simple steps to sign up. It will raise vital funds for MACS. In the first month (December) easy fundraising raised £100. Can you join and RECRUIT friends? Thank you!

## WHO'S WHO

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- Trustees: Jane Arden, Annie Barton Hodges, Tony Cox, Richard Davies, Anthea Griggs, Sally Huband

## ANNUAL MEETING 2013

Saturday 21 September 10.30-3.30  
St Saviour's Hall, St George's Square, Pimlico SW1V 3QW

### ALL WELCOME

Drinks provided - bring your own lunch