



Malawi Music Fund

Newsletter No. 4 August 2019



Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the Malawi Music Fund

My visit to Malawi in April was rather different from previous visits since it came in the aftermath of the cyclone which devastated parts of southern Malawi. I write about this on pages 2 and 3.

It's been a busy year, with a variety of fundraising events in Orkney ranging from a Fashion Show organised by the West Mainland Junior Strathspey and Reel Society to a Come and Sing event and a workshop for visiting recorder players. Activities in Malawi have been plentiful too and our group of orphaned children have continued to enjoy their weeks at Likhubula. Though music remains at the heart of what we do, our activities have included



dance, sport and craft – and parachute games! And four our older boys, led by houseparent

Kingsley Mmambo, have successfully undertaken the challenging two-day hike to the summit of Mount Mulanje.



In December a group of children visited Mulanje Mission Hospital where they sang in the children's and maternity wards,

taking gifts of clothes, nappies and toys, all donated in Orkney.



In April a local filmmaker recorded videos of Likhubula Children's Choir performing two songs which you can see on MMF's facebook page.



We continue to provide bursaries to pay for school fees, uniforms and other expenses for children who would otherwise have to give up on their education, and we're currently enabling five young people to



continue into higher education. The most recent of these is Veronica Lipululu. After finishing school Veronica took a diploma in animal welfare. Then an internship with the SPCA in Malawi enabled her to save

enough money to begin a BSc degree course in veterinary medicine. Now we're sharing the costs of this 5-year course with the SPCA.

This year saw our first university graduate. Mayeso Kachingwe, who came to us in 2007 at the age of 11, graduated in May with a BSc in Food Technology. Mayeso is now an intern with Feed the Future, a USA-funded organisation which helps small-scale farmers improve their productivity and income. In April Mayeso was able to join us as a tutor, helping our primary children to prepare for the challenging primary school leaving exams.



As always, we're grateful to everyone who has supported us.

Thank you!

Glenys Hughes

In March, several countries in southern Africa were hit by a severe cyclone. Although most of the news coverage was of the devastation in Mozambique, in Malawi almost 900,000 people were affected, with over 700,000 of these in need of assistance. 173 emergency camps were set up for families who had lost homes, crops and possessions. One of the affected areas was Mulanje, very near the Mozambique border and the area in which we run our activities.

At the end of March, shortly before I left Orkney, we held a 'Come and Sing' event in King Street Halls. The event had been planned some months before as a fundraiser towards our core activities. However, in the light of the news from Malawi our trustees felt that we needed to respond to the appeals for emergency aid. So at the end of the concert we held a retiring collection specifically for this. People responded generously and the amount raised, plus several other generous donations, meant that I left Orkney in April with £2,000 to spend on some form of emergency help.

I wasn't sure what I would find when I arrived in Malawi. But there had been two weeks of fairly dry weather. Bridges over rivers had been repaired and though some fields remained flooded roads were passable. So I was able to drive around the villages and see the conditions. It was clear that crops had been ruined and that many houses, built of mud bricks and often with grass roofs, had collapsed.



I visited Namindola School, a primary school of 1,824 pupils. Two of the eight classrooms had lost their roofs in the cyclone.



The school was being used as an emergency camp for 280 displaced families.



The camp was being managed by the school's head teacher, Lawrence Mussa. My visit was during the Easter holidays, so the pupils weren't at school; but Lawrence was concerned about how they would all cope once the children returned after the holiday. Lawrence was very clear about the needs of the families. There was a need for blankets, maize flour, cooking pots, plates, mugs, salt, sugar, soap and, importantly, buckets so that water could be collected from a bore hole.

I felt that here was an appropriate use of the money which had been donated. So with a Malawian colleague and friend, Rev. Maxwell Songola, I toured the local markets and we managed to buy everything on Lawrence's list.



We knew we couldn't provide for the needs of 280 families so we decided to buy 100 of everything and rely on Lawrence and his assistants to

distribute to the most needy families, giving priority to those with children.



While I was preoccupied with all this, my Malawian colleagues were running our usual activities with the forty orphaned children and young people we currently support. Of course the families of these children too had suffered from the cyclone. While none had needed to move out of their homes, most houses had suffered damage and all the families had lost crops. So each of the children's guardians was given a 50 kilo bag of maize plus a small cash gift to help in buying vegetables.



After I returned home, Lawrence, the Namindola head teacher, contacted me to explain that his pupils were now back at school. If the families in the camp could be provided with heavy duty plastic sheeting they would be able to return to their villages and construct temporary tents to live in while they set about the process of re-building their homes. The cost would be £350. I felt we should respond to Lawrence's request and the families now have the sheeting and have returned to their villages, relieving conditions in the school which is still having to cope with the loss of two classrooms. As a bonus, when the villagers re-build their houses they will be able to use the sheeting to line and waterproof the roofs. Until the start of the school holiday in July, classes at Namindola School continued to be held outside in the hot sun.



Now, thanks for a generous donation from Kirkwall East Church I've been able to send funds for the replacement of the classroom roofs. The work will be done during the summer holiday and I look forward to seeing the new roofs in August. A huge thank you to everyone who donated so generously and helped to support these resilient people.

Meet our Malawian colleagues

The support and commitment of our colleagues and friends in Malawi is invaluable. We interviewed David Zuzanani, manager of Likhubula House, and Eneles Chaononga, one of our houseparents.

Q: Tell us about your background.

E: I was born in Mulanje and went to school at Gambula Primary School and Chipoka Secondary School. I lived in Blantyre after I married and in 2002 when my husband died I moved back to Mulanje to live with my mother. At that time Likhubula House was an orphanage and in 2003 I became a houseparent there. In 2004 the orphanage closed and Likhubula House became a community-based centre. When a Saturday School for orphans started there I became responsible for that and I still run the Saturday School.



D: I was educated at Kapunula School in Lilongwe and then at Kamuzu Academy where I took English GCSE and A Level exams. I studied Business Administration at Blantyre Polytechnic. Before becoming Manager at Likhubula House in 2013 I was a lecturer at Chichiru Institute of Business Studies, a management trainer with a clothing company, operations manager for the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi and lecturer in business management at Soche Technical College.

Q: Tell us about your involvement with Malawi Music Fund and the Children's Choir.

E: I have been involved with the Children's Choir since it started in 2007. When the group is at Likhubula House I look after the children day and night and I sleep in the dorm with the girls. I report any who are sick and sometimes I have to take children to the clinic. I make sure the choir uniforms are washed and ironed ready for performances and I help with art and craft activities. I visit the schools to pay school fees for those who

receive bursaries and I collect the school reports. I keep in regular contact with the children and I visit the homes of any children who are having problems at school or at home.

D: I manage the bursary finances on behalf of Malawi Music Fund. Eneles reports to me regarding the payment of school fees and I communicate with Glenys and send her regular financial reports. I advise those who have finished secondary school and I interview the students and their guardians before decisions are made by MMF trustees about the funding of higher education courses.

Q: What skills and experience do you bring to your role?

E: My work with the orphanage and Saturday School has given me good experience as a house parent. I live in the local community and I know the children and their guardians; the children are like family to me.

D: I have wide experience in the different fields of business management and education.

Q: What, in your view, are the benefits of this project to the children?



E: They are given a chance to complete their education, even to go to university. They learn skills which can benefit the community. The songs they sing about the environment can influence their guardians and they are made to feel proud and confident. I would like to thank the donors and say

that they should keep on helping because this project has changed children's lives.

D: There is a huge benefit. Most of these children would not find support to finish their education – most would be married by now. During the weeks at Likhubula their creativity and their ways of thinking are developed through music, dance and art. They make friends and they are given guidance – the project develops the whole person. It will provide long-term benefits not only to these children but to the whole local area.

*Malawi Music Fund seeks to transform the lives of some of Malawi's most needy and vulnerable orphaned children. We are supported by donations from individuals, fundraising activities and grants from trusts and foundations. If you would be interested in helping us by funding a secondary school bursary or in any other way, please contact Glenys Hughes- malawimusicfund@gmail.com: telephone. 01856 872952
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