

Malawi Visions Monthly Newsletter April 2020



Making masks at Khwamba

Despite the unknowns created worldwide by COVID19, we were encouraged by Daniel's comments in Milca's March 2020 MV Programs Report:

"The MV Program has been a key lifeline of MoH Programs in all the six centers. which is transforming the lifestyle of children in the communities. From the libraries, irrigation, computer school, and now to the Teen Life Internship program, the initiatives are bringing forth fruits that will last by changing perspectives, and the behaviors of children. This is very empowering and fulfilling!"

And, we are excited and thankful for the finalization of Milca Kathontha becoming a full time MoH employee as our supported Projects Coordinator. We continue to seek, and depend upon, your prayers and encouragement !

Paul

COVID-19 : Update in Malawi

1. 16 cases have been reported, with 3 deaths.
2. On April 13, with 4 days notice, a nationwide 21 day “lockdown” was announced by the President: on the eve of the lockdown the Supreme Court placed a hold upon it
3. A week later the lockdown hold was renewed indefinitely.
4. There are many detected COVIS-19 cases in neighboring countries: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania
5. All commercial international flights in/out of Malawi have ceased.
6. No public gatherings of 50 or more. Including church services.
7. MoH has ceased all center operations including daily feedings.
8. Malawi Visions will not travel in September. A shipment is planned in the Fall.

Milca teaching proper hygiene



While normal, large gatherings at the MoH centers have been suspended, smaller groups of children have been encouraged to come to the libraries at each of the centers to use the books, and for the younger ones, to hear stories read by the teens.

The students and children are being sensitized on the COVID19 preventative measures at the centers. Milca has taken on this responsibility at Khwamba and Mponela, talking to the kids about the washing of hands with soap, and the use of hand sanitizer. They are being trained in the concept of “social distancing” in sitting or interacting with others. Every child entering the libraries, or computer classes, must wash their hands before and after using the facilities, “with soap for 20 seconds”. No doubt they are carrying these concepts home, teaching their extended families and friends how to avoid becoming ill.

Making Masks with Milca



A successful day making masks!



Purchased fabric and sanitizer

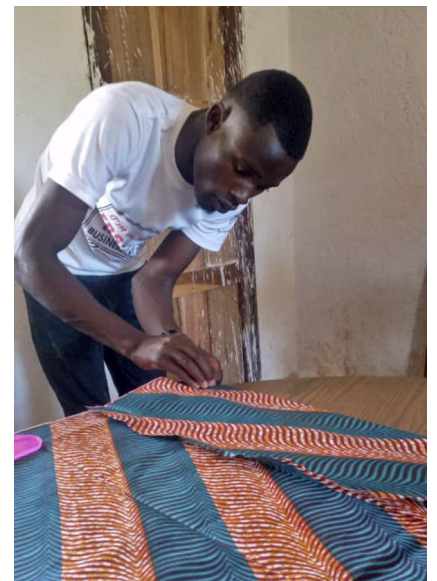


Cutting the fabric

Recognizing the need for protection from virus transmission, Milca undertook teaching the older kids how to make their own masks. With the Malawi President's lockdown

scheduled to begin within days, we wired emergency funds to allow her within that window to travel to Lilongwe to purchase fabric for masks, soap and hand sanitizer, and cleaning products for the libraries.

Shown are photos of the kids making masks. 20 very colorful masks were constructed the first day, including use of a refurbished treadle sewing machine at Khwamba. In so doing, they are also learning a potential trade! Well done, Milca!



Formula for the Babies



Shopping in Lilongwe



Daniel loaded up

When we heard the Malawi President's April 13th announcement of a countrywide "lockdown", to commence with only 4 days notice, we feared the formula shortage of the crisis nursery, of which we had just become aware, could become a life threatening crisis! In a lockdown, no one can go beyond their neighborhood to purchase food! With 15 babies in the Lilongwe nursery, and 12 more being supported in village homes, replenishment of a critically limited supply of formula, and the need of a stockpile for a lockdown when no supplies could be obtained, was urgent! We wired funds overnight to Daniel, so he could purchase 2 months supply the following day.

Subsequently we've learned that Valley Presbyterian Church, Scottsdale, AZ also provided funds that will carry the baby formula and other supplies for an additional 4 months! How terrific to see how God led the rescue of these tiny ones!



Purchased formula, foodstuffs, and cleaning supplies

Prayer Request

COVID19 brings new concerns to an already vulnerable country, one of the poorest on earth. Particularly to the children we serve. The potential impact upon health, food supply, economic welfare, and security of our installations is great. Please pray for God's protection of Malawi's children, and all we do there.

Carolyn's Book Corner



Readers at Chimwang'ombe center

Due to COVID19, in Malawi all of the schools are closed, and the normal MoH center activities have been suspended. But all 6 of our libraries are still open and operating under the direction of Milca. The libraries have become central to the lives of many children. Now acquainted with books, and suddenly with time away from school, many are flocking to the libraries! The older teens are reading to the younger children to avoid the transfer of any virus, and to keep the books as clean as possible. All children have been taught proper handwashing with soap and water, which is required before entering the libraries.

This week we received a text message from Daniel Moyo, which best expresses the impact of the libraries!

A Letter from Daniel

You were profound visionaries in setting up these libraries and learning centers which have now become the sole life giving resources for all our college and secondary school students with all schools closed. The centers are the lifeline and no other alternative with children borrowing books and reading to keep themselves update and active and avoid unnecessary socialization in the absence of school that would make them engage in risky behaviors that would make even some pregnant. I just don't know how things would have been if it were not for these Libraries. May God bless you and keep you well and safe. Thank you on behalf of the many children.

Malawi Visions During COVID19



Completed Learning Center at Khwamba

The expansion of the Khwamba library into a 3 room learning center has been completed, with the “front porch” becoming a popular gathering spot for young and old. The NCK Teen Life Internship program *“has been long awaited by the kids, who are anxious to have it at Khwamba”* Milca, our Projects Coordinator, tells us. Plans are underway to begin training the teens in May, despite COVID, maintaining social distancing, good hygiene principles, and wearing masks. Unless prevented by government regulations, we plan to initiate the program on a smaller scale, to acknowledge “social distancing” in the rooms of the Khwamba learning center. In this way we will still gain experience in the program and continue forward, even with 6 kids per class rather than 20.

Already, Teen Internship concepts are underway under Milca’s direction, with reading, English communications, and mathematics classes. With all schools closed, this will greatly help the teens remain focused for when they sit for national exams in the Fall.



Also this year, we will accelerate our expansion building plans for one or two libraries into learning centers, likely at Matapila and Mponela, continuing forward despite our not traveling to Malawi this year. It is a great advantage that our Malawian partners can continue development and construction on their own! Finally, we plan to initiate our second computer school at Matapila later this year.

Gladys Lazaro, future nurse



Gladys and her mother

Milca recently brought to our attention this story of Gladys, a bright student and avid reader. But who lived in such poverty that she had no uniform to continue attending school.

Gladys Lazaro, 14, comes from Mawanga village close to Khwamba center, and is in grade 7 in primary school. The second born daughter in a family of 5 children, Gladys has a sister and 3 brothers. She has been raised by her widowed mother as her dad died when she was 8 years old. Her mother earns a living by small scale farming and by working in other people's gardens. Life is not easy for her to feed her 5 children as she doesn't harvest enough maize for the whole year.

Gladys and her siblings joined Ministry of Hope (MoH) after the death of their father, and have been coming for five years to the Khwamba center for the feeding program and Bible lessons. She was one of the kids who began regularly coming to the center at night to read when we introduced lights. And when the library was constructed, she loved reading the books there!

Though they benefit from the MoH programs, her mother still finds it hard to take care of her 5 children, and isn't able to provide them with school materials and uniforms. This is particularly troubling, for in Malawian schools, the children must wear school uniforms. Last year, Gladys and her older sister were forced to drop out from school, as her teachers were sending them from school every time she reported without wearing a school uniform.



Gladys is the one who looks taller than her friends in the photo

Malawi Visions came to her rescue after learning [from Milca] that she was at the verge of dropping out from school because of lack of school uniform. Considering her determination and zeal for school, and her ambition of becoming a nurse, Malawi Visions sent funds to provide her a school uniform.

Now Gladys is back to school and her hope has been restored. It is a terrible thing to live a life without hope. Gladys is now working hard in school to achieve her ambition of becoming a nurse. In an interview, Gladys shared: *"I had the desire to be in school but home conditions couldn't allow me to do so. I had no other choice but to drop out of school. Now that I have a school uniform, I will be working hard to accomplish all I want in life."*

Gladys is very grateful for what Liberty Corner Presbyterian church has done to her and she says God should continue blessing all the donors that are helping with this great work.



Thank you, Liberty Corner Church for putting a smile on my face and for restoring my hope for my future.

Footnote: As reported in our January newsletter, we funded the purchase of material and the work of a local tailor to make uniforms for four girls, including Gladys. Our plan, with treadle machines recently donated to us, is that children will learn to produce their own uniforms!

Maintenance at the Centers



Milca on the road

Milca, who in addition to running the 6 libraries monitors our Malawi Visions operations at the centers, informed us that the solar based electricity in the Khwamba library had stopped working. Armed with a voltmeter we had provided her, and discussions and photos over WhatsApp, she helped us determine that there was a break somewhere in the underground wiring we had installed between the solar panels in the main center, and the library.

Together with Frank, who drives our van each year and is our “resident electrician”, they discovered the break (which likely

happened when the ground was graded

during the library expansions). Going out one Saturday morning, Milca confirmed the break, Frank repaired the wiring, and to the children’s glee lights were restored in the library!

It is great when maintenance and emergencies can be handled by our partners!



Wiring in 2017



The break uncovered!



Our troubleshooting team!

Frank and Milca

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