

## **GLAD TIDINGS EDUCATION JANUARY 2021 REPORT**

### **GLAD TIDINGS EDUCATION REPORT END OF YEAR REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2020**

#### **Background**

Glad Tidings Orphan Care (GTOC) is a Faith Based Organisation, supported by Starfish Malawi, in the heart of the Ngolowindo community in Malawi. Ngolowindo is a rural area suffering extensively from the challenges of living in poverty, with the local communities facing inadequate levels of income, fragile food security and a lack of education and investment. Since the programme started in 2003, we have seen many orphans and vulnerable children registered, who are then monitored and supported in education, health, psychosocial and physical wellbeing.

The Centre continues to serve the Ngolowindo zone with good health care outreach services, a Saturday children's club (motivational talks, Christian faith teaching, games, and lunch), 4 nursery schools and After School Clubs.

#### **Progress Update – COVID19 Impact**

However, COVID19 has hit all angles of life globally as we know, and it has brought a number of services and operations to a halt in Malawi. Despite this Glad Tidings have maintained the keyworkers' roles.

The home visits have mainly been focusing on making sure that the orphans and vulnerable children in their households observe precautionary measures and teaching them proper hand washing and to continue to check on their general welfare.

However, since March 2020, the Saturday Children's Club (with motivational talks, Christian faith teaching, games, and lunch), the 4 nursery schools and After School Clubs were put on hold in line with the school's closures until October when operations started to operate fully again, apart from the After School Clubs.

Therefore, during that lockdown period (March to September) only the administrative, transport, and salaries (manager, keyworkers, teachers, nursery assistants and night watchmen) were maintained in order to safeguard staff livelihoods. The meals usually provided at the nurseries, Saturday Club and After school clubs were obviously not required and therefore the usual budgeted expenditure was reduced - approximately a monthly budget of MK271,842 (£286). However, we distributed maize extensively in February and May, 2020, and are going to do so again in February 2021 to all the families.

## **Facemask Production**

Furthermore, a number of the keyworkers have continued to run the sewing group which usually produce the girl's hygiene kits but have been focused on producing a total of 6393 facemasks that were distributed in many strategic places such as markets, churches and schools to reduce the risk of contracting the COVID 19 virus for the general public.



Lenia Joseph is chairlady at GTOC sewing group, she explained that apart from sewing Starfish masks they were also booked by some schools to make them masks. So far two schools approached them with materials for masks. They made more than 500 masks and charged money on each mask. The money was distributed among the group members. She added that they are all grateful to Starfish for the skill and opportunity to develop themselves because even in this hard time of COVID-19, were still able to earn income for their families.

*Photo 1: Lenia Joseph, Chairlady GTOC sewing group.*

## **Nursery Education Impact**

A government directive introduced in March on how schools must run school affairs during the lockdown, led to classes being split into streams and extra-curricular activities were banned. This development left standards 1 to 4 with limited time to attend classes as compared to standards 5 to 8 and the GTOC nursery programme and After School Clubs put on hold.

We usually like to present an impact assessment of nursery education and early years of primary education, as we did in the 2019, however, due to the interrupted schools and nursery programmes this is difficult to assess.

However, we will be monitoring this in 2021 with the expectation and hope that the children are still progressing faster, and that the early years' learning continue to be highly advantageous. Certainly, very much missed in 2020.

## **The Outreach Clinics**

The outreach clinics (now under the management of the Hope Clinic on the GTOC grounds) continued to be run out of the GTOC Centre by local health care professional, however the Physio clinic was put on hold since April for the rest of the year. Again, reducing the budget by MK3,000 per month (just over £3).

## **Christmas Event Day**

GTOC organizes a once-a-year event to celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus in December. During this event, Starfish Malawi provides gifts in the form of humanitarian aid to support the registered orphans and vulnerable children at the Glad Tidings Centre. So, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020 we managed to organize a Christmas party for them. We had a good turn up of children since restrictions had been lifted. During the day, we provided a good meal with soft drinks and also distributed blankets, shoes and clothes along with fun games. So, this tradition has continued at GTOC, marking the end of a challenging year.



*Photo 2. Blankets distributed on Christmas day.*



*Photo 3. T-shirts distributed on Christmas day.*

## **Further Challenges of 2020**

Due to the increase of both cars and motorcycles driving carelessly and at a high speed, children attending the Glad Tidings programmes are in danger of injury or even death. There have been other child victims from local villages in recent years. We are therefore requesting the funding to erect a brick wall with a gate around the premises to ensure the safety of our children and peace of mind for the carers.

Starfish Malawi are very grateful for the generous support that continues to be appreciated by the children and families served through the Glad Tidings Centre – making a significant difference... on into 2021.

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Please note:

This impact report should not be seen as a request for further funding support for this programme. However, a new programme and budget will shortly be produced, and at this point we will be in contact seeking a further financial donation.

If this is not something that you would be in a position to consider, please let Mark Aldrich know via email [mark.aldrich63@gmail.com](mailto:mark.aldrich63@gmail.com).

Many thanks for your continued support for this project.