

SPONSORSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2022

BACKGROUND

Since the time the Sponsorship programme was introduced in 2005 in Salima and Kasungu, it has helped many girls and boys, who are orphans or whose parents are living in extreme poverty and cannot afford to pay fees for their children. Many have been helped through secondary education, others through universities, colleges and technical schools. The Starfish sponsorships have increased in the number of sponsored students both in secondary schools and colleges. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to all our sponsors for their steadfast support and generosity.

UPDATE ON PROGRESS

In the year 2022, we had 152 students in different secondary schools and 34 of our former students are now at University, College or in Vocational Training throughout the country. Each year we are pleased to see some of our students graduate from college. In the year 2022, we had 6 students who completed their studies in different universities, colleges and technical schools, others are pending graduation. Many of our past sponsored students are working in government departments and NGOs.

Students in secondary schools are given pens, notebooks pocket money and transport to school at the beginning of every term. They are also provided with a mosquito net, a torch, a scientific calculator, and an English dictionary, just to mention a few. Girls are also given washable sanitary pads and underwear in order to reduce absenteeism.

During the last term holiday of the 2022 academic year, Starfish organised the annual students meeting from 21st to 23rd September 2022 at Salima LEA for all our secondary school students. Also in attendance were some students who recently got selected for different universities.

Students were advised on good conduct, encouraged and motivated to work hard in school in order to achieve their goals. Among the speakers were the Starfish Director and some staff members, a nurse, a soldier, two Starfish-sponsored students who recently got selected to university and a Member of Parliament (MP) for Salima Central constituency.

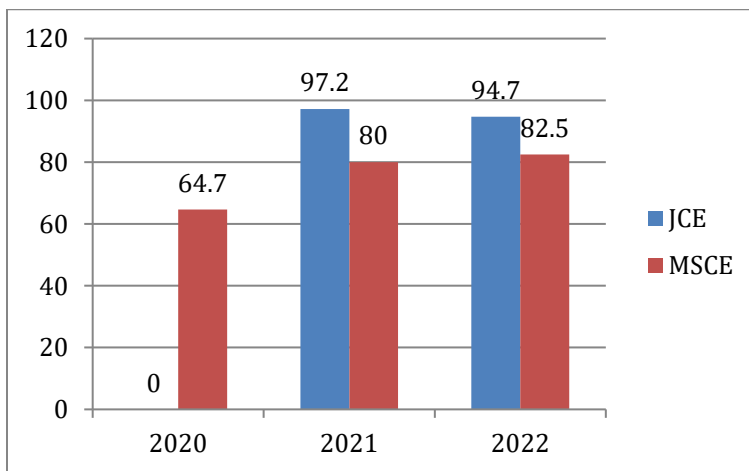
One common story that was shared by many of these speakers was that they started from a humble background. For example, the MP shared his story that he was once a sponsored student, his father died and he lived with his mother who found it difficult to provide for the family. They lacked many things including food and he started begging for food in the streets. However a well-wisher took him in and supported him. Despite all the challenges, he worked hard and still achieved his dreams. The story inspired the students that if someone with a similar background as them managed to achieve a lot in life, they can do the same by working hard and staying focused despite the many challenges they face.



Students at the annual students' meeting

During the meeting, students were given shoes, clothes, pens, notebooks, soaps, toothpaste and other things. The best-performing students were given presents for their hard work.

The chart below shows how our students have performed at national exams from the year 2020 to 2022



In the year 2021 the total number of students who sat for JCE was 36, 35 of them passed and 1 failed to represent a 97.2% pass rate. In the year 2022, 38 students sat for JCE, 36 passed and 2 failed representing a 94.7% pass rate. The government of Malawi abolished JCE exams in 2015 and reintroduced them in 2021, that's why we don't have figures for JCE in 2020. In the year 2020, 34 of our students sat for MSCE, 22 passed and 12 failed the exam representing a 64.7% pass rate. In 2021, 35 students sat for MSCE, 28 passed and 7 failed representing an 80% pass rate. In 2022, 40 students sat for MSCE, 33 passed and 7 failed representing 82.5% pass rate.

From the data presented above, it is encouraging that there is a significant increase in the MSCE pass rate of our students and many of them will be able to apply for university.

STORIES FROM STUDENTS

Zione Mwale from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

“My name is **Zione Mwale**, I was selected to Chayamba Secondary School in 2014. Everyone at home was happy that I had passed and got selected for secondary, but we all were worried about school fees. Everyone at home knew that no one could pay my school fees. We visited so many places seeking support but to no avail. At this point I lost hope, I thought my education had come to an end. Fortunately, I met a certain teacher who advised me to try applying for sponsorship at Starfish. We met the Coordinator at Boma Primary School who helped me with the application and fortunately I was successful.



I was very happy and grateful that my secondary education would go smoothly with no worries about school fees. My Sponsor, through Starfish, paid my school fees for all 4 years of my secondary school. It was a nice journey in that I had to communicate with my sponsor through letters. She encouraged me to work hard to achieve my dreams. I completed my secondary school in 2017 and passed the Exams with 28 points.

I applied for a course in Irrigation Technology at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and I was successful. The cost of University education was far more than my secondary school fees and I am grateful that a second sponsor was able to help me and added to my sponsorship and encouraged me. I was able to continue with my Diploma course because of the kindness and support that I received from my sponsors. It was a 3-year course and in November 2022 I graduated with a Diploma in Irrigation Technology. My family and I are grateful to Starfish, and to my wonderful sponsors for their support all through my education journey.”

Eliza Heneck and her Mother

Meet **Eliza Heneck**, she is in form 2 at Chipoka secondary school. Eliza was born with a condition of dwarfism and has difficulty in walking. She normally moves around with a wheelchair. She also has a problem with hearing loss. Eliza said it was difficult growing up, realising that she was born differently and she never dreamt of going to secondary school.



All she wanted was just to learn how to read and write, nothing more. She was surprised to learn that she got selected for Chipoka Secondary School. At first, she and her parents did not want her to go, but many people encouraged them and they agreed to try.

Upon hearing of the challenges that Eliza faces a lovely lady from the North of England offered to sponsor her. She and Eliza exchange letters and are enjoying a great relationship. Eliza is now in form 2 and she is pleased to be one of the students that Starfish sponsors.

Eliza complained to Starfish that it is difficult for her to hear what the teachers are teaching in class because of her problem of hearing loss. Starfish decided to help Eliza by taking her to ABC Audiology Clinic in Lilongwe. She is now on treatment for an ear infection and we are waiting to go back to the hospital for a check-up after a month where she will be assessed whether she needs hearing aids or not.

This is what Eliza's mother had to say, "I am grateful for all that Starfish has done to my daughter Eliza. People from my village were mocking me that I was just wasting my time taking Eliza to school. They said Eliza had been destined to just stay in the house, but I did not let their negative words get to me, rather I continued bringing Eliza and her sister to school. Now they have been proven wrong, I believe Eliza and her sister have a bright future. Eliza has an elder sister who was born with the same conditions as Eliza. Her sister is still in primary school. Eliza used to stay indoors the whole day, but now she participates in some games and interacts well with her peers. Thank you, Starfish, for all the help and support you give to Eliza."

Salima Secondary School Headteacher

"I am **Saulos Mdalamba**, the head teacher for Salima Secondary School. I want to appreciate Starfish for the great work of sponsoring students in our school. So far Starfish is the biggest benefactor of all the bursaries in our school. Many of these students are needy and they need much help, so we are grateful to organisations like yours that give a helping hand to these students who could have dropped out of school. We have seen Starfish students doing well in the recently released Junior Certificate and Malawi School Certificate of Education examinations. I urge Starfish to continue helping needy students.



CONCLUSION

Starfish Sponsorship is making a difference in the lives of young people who are unable to complete their education in different secondary schools, universities and colleges in Malawi because they have no one to pay for their school fees and other needs. The testimonies of students, parents and teachers confirm the significant difference sponsorship has made in 2022. Sponsors also confirm that sponsorship has made a difference in their lives too. We at Starfish give them our heartfelt thanks. They are truly making a difference.