

THE MICHAEL JACKSON LEGACY REPORT 2021

The Michael Jackson's Legacy Orchard was established to help children at Glad Tidings Orphan Care (GTOC) to supplement nutritional needs for the children at the centre. It also provides a learning environment for the neighboring Ngolowindo Primary School, enabling students to understand how things grow and the nutritional values that the fruits provide. Starfish employ a gardener to care for the orchard and welcome the children and staff.

Some fruits in Malawi are only seasonal which makes it difficult for households to find in the markets – this is reflected in the costs to purchase and become unaffordable for many. Also with the economic hardships, locals sell most of their fruits to large suppliers in Lilongwe or chop off the branches to burn brick kilns. Thus, this project freely provides a much-needed supply for the children.

Developments

The orchard has grafted mangoes that have started to bear fruits. Mangoes are seasonal in Malawi, but when grown they help families to sustain themselves and add nutritional value to their diets. This year, the guava section is likely to produce adequate fruits for the children at the GTOC nursery school.



Challenges

- Periodically, the perimeter fence has to be fixed as the bamboo can rot and breakdown. This is particularly important as there are many goats roaming around that could eat the fruits.
- In November, part of the perimeter fence caught fire due to a neighbouring field being burnt as a farming method to clear ground.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have not been educational activities, due to school closures and extra-curricular activities being banned. Children at Ngolowindo Primary were no longer able to visit. However, schools have reopened but the term has been shortened giving little room for other activities such as visiting the orchard.

Future Plans

Mr McJohnson, a teacher at Ngolowindo Primary School, recently visited the orchard to consider how he is going to continue to open up the work again with the learners, once the timetable allows.

He shared, “There has been almost an extinction of papayas locally which is worrisome. Papayas do not take many years to have fruits. They are very important fruits that we need to have in our communities. We hope to get hold of the seeds and sow them in the orchard. Last term papayas came third in terms of production, however, they all wilted from heavy rains. It was also discovered that locally there has been a disease that attacked most papaya trees. Standards 4 to 8 have lessons that are related to the activities carried out in the orchard, making it become a great learning resource field. Subjects like agriculture, primary science, life skills and expressive arts have specific areas that cover issues to do with rearing of crops, planting of fruit trees and constructing of the fence.”

There is therefore much scope for the neighbouring school to take advantage of this resource in 2022 and we also look forward to providing fruits for the children and families at GTOC to supplement their limited diets.



Garden Club

Eating Grandilla Fruit

