

DISABILITY TRANSPORT FUND ANNUAL REPORT

FOR 2022

The Disability Transport Fund is a programme Starfish rolls-out in partnership with The Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA) which is a Government agency dealing with people who have various disabilities. Each and every one of these people undergo an assessment to diagnose their condition in order to be referred for surgery, if needed. Starfish co-ordinate the Disability Transport Fund for such disabled children (up to 18 years) to attend hospitals for their surgery – many of whom would not be able to access this due to the parents having very limited funds.

The programme started in the year 2019 whereby MACOHA identify children Starfish can assist. There is a local MACOHA office in Salima so communication is on-going whereby the field officer discusses details about the children, their guardians, trips and any transport issues.

UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Since Starfish has run this fund, the number of children who have been able to visit the hospitals have greatly increased because MACOHA itself has limited funding. Children who have received surgery have fewer mobility issues and are often then able to attend school – often feeling more confident with their peers.

CHALLENGES IN 2022

The first challenge was that some guardians were coming direct to the Starfish office, rather than being referred through MACOHA. There was a risk of misuse of funds and lack of follow-up.

To tackle this challenge we agreed with MACOHA officials that everyone should go through their office and it should be them who provide the names of those to be given help.

Another challenge has been that guardians escorting the children to the initial assessment did not wait for instruction from the hospital staff to instruct on the actual date of surgery and would go to the hospital expecting to be seen immediately. We now advise the guardians to carefully follow instructions for the initial and any follow-up appointments.

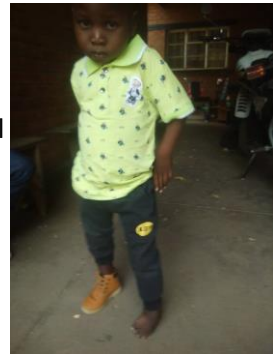
THE DIFFERENCE THAT WE ARE MAKING

Since we started this programme in 2019 we have assisted over 50 children. However in the period 2020/2021 there was a break in referrals due to the COVID pandemic. Also guardians are feeling confident to come forward for surgical help as they see the difference it is having with other children – previously many believed that children will die at the hospital during the process.

In 2022 a total of MK1,746,000 (approx £1,400) was provided through this fund, assisting 11 children to receive surgery. Here are some stories to testify how the fund has played an important role in transforming children's lives.

FREDRICK EMMANUEL

Emmanuel is a boy 4 years old from Chenyama village TA Kalonga in Salima District. He was assisted with transport money to visit Beit Cure Hospital in Blantyre because he had a condition called Club Foot. He underwent a procedure called Posteromedial Release to correct the position of the left foot. Previously he used to walk using the sides of the foot but now he is able to begin to place his foot down in the right position. His father said that he has noticed the difference and is thankful to Starfish and those who are donating the funds for such assistance.



Fredrick Emmanuel before he went to the Hospital



Fredrick after surgery – he said he will be going to school now because his feet are better!

AISHA SUBELI.

Aisha Subeli is a girl aged 12 from Simaewa Village in TA Kalonga Salima District. She received transport money from Starfish to attend surgery to correct a deformity in her wrist which caused pain when she used her hand. They did an internal fixation and now she is able to use the hand freely.

The other good thing is that she was not going to school in the past because of the condition but now the parents share proudly that she has now started. Aisha will be reviewed by the surgeons on 10th September this year to consider if they can give further surgery as she was too young to have all procedures completed in one time. The mother shared that she didn't have hope for her child before she received the help but she thanks God and also the donors for the assistance to get help for her daughter.



Aisha before surgery



Aisha after surgery