Global Giving Report

August - October 2023

This report covers the commencement of a normal school year. Malawi however continues to face economic challenges. There has been a shortage of foreign currency, which among other factors has impacted on the availability of fuel throughout the country. The knock-on effects are a deterioration in the quality of life for all town and city based populations, which are more greatly affected by the unavailability of transport, and imported goods.

Our Literacy Specialist Teachers returned to school in September after a well deserved break. During the holiday period we made plans for CharChar Senior Education Officer, Andrew Mchisa, to provide additional support to the newly rolled up class of Standard 4 children. Most of these children have received teaching from CharChar trained teachers since they joined Standard Two and this will be their first time to be taught by teachers without the support of CharChar trained LSTs. Andrew is keen to ensure that these children continue to receive specialist literacy support as they move up the school and for that reason has made arrangements to co-teach English 3 times per week.

During August, Andrew and our volunteer team of technical advisors developed new schemes of work for the three classes (Standard 1, 2 & 3) supported by CharChar to include recording of regular weekly formative assessment activities so that the teachers’ capacity is built to better identify specific areas for targeted support.

Alongside the regular classroom activities Andrew and the volunteer literacy specialist teachers have now set up a library service for the whole school. This began with an orientation meeting supported by the Parent Teachers Association to address the parents and guardians on the establishment of CharChar supported Library. Parents and guardians of Standard 1 (Std1) and Std2 children agreed to come to school at specific times to help their children choose books and ensure that the books are well cared for. Parents and guardians were also helped to understand the value of reading the books to their children, and having the children read to them, and discuss the stories together. Even illiterate parents were thrilled to learn that they can help their children to develop their literacy skills by sharing books together and talking about the illustrations. The library service has been in high demand throughout the school, leading to CharChar opening the library on additional days and sourcing additional curriculum books for the older children to have better access to academic materials. We have been very impressed by how carefully the children are looking after the books and returning them in well thumbed but good condition!

CharChar’s Literacy Specialist Teachers (LSTs) have proven their dedication and commitment to improving their learners' literacy time and time again. We thought you might like to hear from Thandi (28), about some of her personal challenges in and outside of the classroom.

“*I am a Literacy Specialist Teacher for Charchar since April 2022 here at Tsokankanansi Primary School. I am currently teaching in Standard 3. One of the challenges I encounter in my work is with curriculum reading books as some stories have complex words for the children to read. As a teacher I try to find new ways of addressing such issues and help all learners achieve a smile while learning new vocabulary.*

*I stay in area 18 which is a 30 minute drive to Tsokankanasi Primary School and use public transport to get to and from school, which costs K4,000 (approximately $2) a day. I'm getting married on 2nd December 2023. It is traditional for wives to live with their husbands but my husband-to-be lives in Liwonde (about 4 hours’ drive from Lilongwe) but due to the passion I have for my work with the CharChar Literacy Programme, I plan to continue teaching phonics to help the children read and write. I enjoy working with CharChar and increasing my knowledge with new skills so that when I join the Government Teaching Service, I can become a ‘Star’ teacher.”*

Throughout September and October guided by our literacy experts (volunteer experts working remotely), Andrew conducted several continuous professional development CPD activities to refresh the LSTs on best teaching practices including:

* Oral language development skills
* Use of relevant and adequate teaching and learning resources
* Realia (real objects) to enhance learners understanding of new vocabulary
* Use of games and songs to capture learners’ attention and interest.
* Formative assessment methods and record keeping
* How to assist children with learning difficulties

The below table shows current enrollment numbers for children in the three CharChar supported classrooms.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Boys** | **Girls** | **Total** |
| Standard 1 | 30 | 43 | 73 |
| Standard 2 | 45 | 45 | 90 |
| Standard 3 | 46 | 38 | 84 |
| **Total**  | **121** | **126** | **247** |

Teachers all over Malawi face the challenge of managing large class sizes and Tsokakanansi primary school is no different. However, Andrew and the LSTs do their best to ensure that no child gets left behind, quickly identifying those who need extra support and doing their best to provide this in a challenging environment. We will share upcoming assessment results with you in our next report.

Thanks to supporters like you we are able to impact children’s lives in this fundamental and meaningful way. Please consider long-term support to a teacher, or assisting with our resources etc. shown in the shopping list on this page. At the current time the cost of literacy support to one child per year is approximately $50. Your donation transforms childrens’ lives.

Operations Director

Andrew White