



NOURISHING MINDS

NOURISHING MINDS ANNUAL REPORT, 2020



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A word from the President

Dear Friends,

Oh boy... 2020 was, for the world, a year like no other!

We are all aware of the enormous impact Covid has had across the globe and Malawi was no exception. Nourishing Minds has had its challenges too as our plans for fundraising events had to be put on hold.

You have contributed so much to our success this past year and I want to share encouraging news from the work you have made possible in 2020! The most exciting news is the number of lives you have changed with just 'one cup of porridge'. In fact, Shupo our project director, has just shared with me that they have been feeding over 7,000 children throughout the pandemic, this is an increase of 40%. Of course, the more children we feed the more funds we require!

I believe that one of the strengths of our organization is the way we have built up close relationships with our partners in the north of Malawi and the communities we help daily. Our plan was to travel to Ekwendeni, Malawi last September but for obvious reasons that was not possible. Sadly, it looks like it will be 2022 before we can

visit again. We are fortunate with today's amazing technology that we can maintain the valuable contact. In fact, Shupo was able to join us for part of the last committee meeting through a WhatsApp video call! I am extremely grateful to Shupo, our voluntary project director. Without Shupo Nourishing Minds would not exist. So, I will take this opportunity to say thank you Shupo, without your compassion and dedication nobody would be receiving porridge.

A second strength is that Nourishing Minds is an organisation that is completely run by volunteers both here in Europe and Malawi. No expenses are paid out and any donations received go 100% to the project on the ground.

I would like to thank you all wholeheartedly for your continued support for our work with the children in the Ekwendeni area of Malawi. Their gratitude can be seen in their beautiful smiles and shining eyes.

We do not know what 2021 will bring but together we are transforming children's lives and their education
'One Cup at a Time'

With warmest wishes

Jane Broere

Program Director's Report

Receive warm greetings from Ekwendeni Youth Resource Centre. I on behalf of the community, parents and guardians as well as school learners in the Nourishing Minds school feeding program would like to thank you for your support throughout the year.

Ekwendeni Youth Resource Centre is a youth centre established by the CCAP Hospital in Ekwendeni and supported by the Church of Scotland, Geneva, Switzerland. The Centre among other things, works with approximately 61 youth clubs in villages with a total population of 60,000 living in about 600sqkm catchment area. The Centre is involved in many youth activities aiming at bringing children up in a safer, healthier environment. Ekwendeni Resource Centre, through the support from Nourishing Minds, assists 5 primary schools with the feeding program.

It has been proven that nutrition is an important component in the education of a child. Teachers and community members targeted by the program indicated that since the start of the program:

School attendance in supported schools improved up to 80%, while absenteeism reduced to 20%

Passing rates improved on average to 78% from 46%.

School dropout reduced by 98%

This shows that the program has greatly improved educational status of the children. The biggest difference was seen however in the hunger months of December to March. The support from the Nourishing Minds program has allowed these children realise their potentials. Nourishing Minds and Ekwendeni Resource Centre's ultimate goal is to enable communities to provide nutritional school feeding without a dependency on external funding.

Nourishing Minds feeding program currently takes place in five schools, covering 5,080 children (including 187 'guest' children below the age of 6 years). During the coronavirus outbreak feeding was decentralised into villages where the children were coming from. It was easier to reach for children and especially under aged non schooling children would visit and ask for porridge.

One challenge has been the influx of students from neighbouring schools because of the program. That made the program to have inadequate resources than planned. Guardians to pupils and parents at times escort their children following washing away of bridges in the rainy season. This makes the walk to school dangerous. They too receive porridge after dropping their children.

Nourishing Minds is seen as a remarkably successful project in Malawi as it is partially self-sustaining

and involves the youth in purposeful activity. Beside the challenges, the program scored the best in the northern region feeding programs. Plan Malawi accredited the Nourishing Minds program because of its set up and operation. Food is coming from the locally available stuff generated from the community and by the community which is sustainable. Community leaders support in production and preparation as an indication of ownership and empowerment. Timely disbursement of

resources from Nourishing Minds made everything possible and easy to implement.

The Resource Centre, would like to thank all who made contributions towards the running of the program in cash and kind. We understand that it is not just about the money but it takes commitment and passion for the program to be a success. Your support is changing the lives of these kids.

Shupo Kumwenda



Our Aims

- To **reduce malnutrition** amongst Primary School Children in the Ekwendeni Catchment Area in the Northern Region of Malawi.
- To **increase attendance** and **pass rates** at Primary Schools in the same Catchment Area.
- To **empower the unemployed youth** by providing an opportunity for them to be involved in a project in their communities.
- To **promote community involvement** in order to create sustainability for the project.



This is Alinafe. She is one of the children who has been unable to go to secondary school due to lack of fees. Here we see her at Chisangano School where she decided to repeat Standard 8 in the hope that the fees can be found for next year

Five Schools and a pandemic

Covid

Throughout 2020 the schools in Malawi were opened and closed several times due to the pandemic. Nourishing Minds however continued to support their 5 schools with its feeding program and despite many challenges over 5,000 primary school children received porridge even when the schools were closed. This meal was much needed as, due to Covid, prices have jumped up and it was even more difficult for families to get to the market to sell their meagre harvest from their fields. This resulted in little to no income for food.

The schools continued to provide a cup of porridge for each child while taking, where possible, necessary hygiene measures to make it as risk free as possible for everyone. Some children came, in small groups at staggered times, to their schools to get their porridge while others living further away collected theirs from the Chiefs' houses in their villages. So, as you see the need for food has not gone away, only the distribution has changed a little.

When the schools were reopened the younger classes, which are the largest, were split and the children attended school part time. The days that they did not have classes they still came to school for their porridge.

In fact, the true number of children fed during 2020 rocketed to approximately 7,800. Partly because children from other schools heard that porridge was available, and they appeared at porridge time asking for some. Also, where porridge was served in the villages the children of all ages came looking for porridge and as Shupo said 'It's impossible to turn them away'. When asked some children said that when there is no school it is hard, and they are just waiting for porridge time at school.

Charles in Standard 4 wanted to thank Nourishing Minds and said, 'I feel sad on Saturdays and Sundays because I don't go to school and there is no food at home'.



Porridge at the Chief's house

Child Brides and Pregnancies

Hunger is not the only impact from Covid. Some young teenage girls have been forced to marry, often to older men, because their families cannot afford to feed all their children. Also, when they cannot go to school the parents take the opportunity to find their daughters a husband.

Shupo has helped to withdraw 13 girls under 14 years of age from marriages. Some of these girls were from Nourishing Mind schools.

Unfortunately, by the time they were rescued some were already pregnant.

Shupo told us that the pregnant girls will be highly encouraged to go back to school. He knows of 23 girls who are now pregnant, the youngest being only 13 years old. There are also more than 1000 children now doing child labour. Shupo has managed to rescue 17 boys. All these incidents have been reported to the police.

School Gardens

On a positive note, the June/July 2020 harvest went very well with schools harvesting up to 3050kg bags of maize and up to 1650kg bags of soya beans.

The harvest from the 5 schools is pooled, stored in the Resource Centre and then shared throughout the school year. Cassava (manioc in English) is an edible root which has been grown

in the schools' gardens as an income generating activity as well as to augment the crops.

In November, before the rains, everybody was busy planting the maize and soya beans. Since then, the rains have been promising and it is looking good for a healthy harvest in 2021.



Cassava



Soya Beans with maize behind

School Statistics

School	2020/2021 Academic Year											
	Enrolment		Orphans		Malnourished		Drop out		Disabled		Terminal Pass Rate	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Ekwaiweni	906	814	38	30	21	23	32	64	6	2	51.8	47.3
Kayowera	717	694	15	18	3	7	13	8	3	2	44.2	40.1
Chisangano	847	823	27	32	56	50	30	10	4	0	39.6	33.6
Zombwe	648	727	28	22	44	49	13	4	2	0	52.7	49.1
Baula	865	841	32	20	23	19	11	18	4	1	54.2	48.3

Note:

- Enrolment is from register of 2020/2021
- Malnutrition status was established using MUAC (mid-upper arm circumference)
- Dropout rate in schools was also affected by the outbreak of COVI 19
- Disability encompasses all sorts of physical impairment of a learner
- From these results we see that the feeding program has made a difference in all schools with a tremendous improvement in 3 of the schools

At Nourishing Minds we are delighted to see the success of the feeding program with the improvement in the children's health and the pass rates. Unfortunately, success seems to come with a price:

Because of the availability of porridge there has been a big influx of children from other schools into schools that are already overcrowded

Many more children are being offered places in secondary schools but unfortunately, they are unable to take up their places due to a lack of money for school fees. (primary schools are free in Malawi but secondary is not)

Fundraising

As you can all imagine we had to think out of the box this year for fundraising! Not only did we need funds for the project to continue but we also required extra income to help with a Covid prevention campaign.

‘Help us spread the message, not the virus!’

This was our first appeal and **raised 1,175chf.**

Although feeding the children is our priority, Nourishing Minds are also committed to helping where needed.

Through generous donations you were able to make a difference to the children from our schools and their communities by contributing to the prevention of the transmission of Covid 19.

The children were taught about the virus and the protective measures needed to reduce the risk of being infected. In a country where the health service is very weak you can imagine that the needs are great to fight this pandemic.

Our crisis response focused on communicating public health information, good handwashing

practice and other hygiene measures, social distancing and providing the children and their families with soap. (Many people in Ekwendeni cannot afford extra soap for frequent handwashing). To do this effectively we had to pay for fuel, have masks made and print leaflets. Over 5,000 bars of soap were bought. There is such a spirit of generosity in the Nourishing Minds community that several nurses and one of the doctors offered their time to go around the schools with the campaign. Even the hospital Matron and the director of the Livingstonia Synod joined the campaign team.

The children, in turn, were able to teach their families and communities the precautions that were required to reduce transmission.



‘Put your money where your mouth is!’

This was our second appeal. We thought that some people may have had some extra money in their wallets from not dining out during the pandemic and we suggested that they may like to gift it to Nourishing Minds!

Through your generosity we raised 3,500CHF!

Your money was very well spent with 100% of the donations, as always, going to providing porridge in the schools.

In Malawi, a little goes a long way:

100CHF/€ = approximately 10,000 cups of porridge!



**SAVED MONEY ON
RESTAURANT MEALS IN THE
PAST FEW MONTHS?
WHY NOT GIFT IT TO**



NOURISHING MINDS



www.nourishingminds.org
CHANGING LIVES ONE CUP AT A TIME
Providing a cup of porridge every morning to hungry schoolchildren in the rural Northern Region of Malawi.
IBAN: CH280027927930979640K

New Stoves

Last year, having done some research, we discovered that **toxic cooking smoke kills around 4.3 million people each year worldwide**. That is more people than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined! The smoke penetrates deep into the lungs and causes permanent damage.

An hour in cooking smoke is estimated to be equivalent to smoking 400 cigarettes.

In Africa, according to the WHO, 16% of all children die prematurely from pneumonia, which is one of the most common diseases to be linked to the cooking smoke.



In Malawi, only ten percent of the population has access to a very unreliable electricity network. It is therefore not surprising that 98 percent of women in Malawi cook on charcoal burners or open 'three-stone' fires. The

children, on the backs of their mothers or close to her in the kitchen, inevitably breathe in the smoke too.

In Malawi, **pneumonia is the number one cause of death for children under five**. Malawi is among the top 20 most affected countries in the world: 98 per cent of the population relies on biomass wood fuels to cook (mostly on charcoal in the cities and firewood in rural areas).



Nearly 1 in 10 deaths in Malawi can be attributed to cooking fumes.

The massive use of firewood for cooking has also contributed to large-scale deforestation. Every year, the country loses almost three per cent of its forests.



Nourishing Minds has a duty of care to the people we are helping and to the environment. We decided that we could not allow this type of cooking to continue. In 2020 we invested in rocket stoves for all 5 schools.



Why are rockets stoves better?

1. They reduce smoke emissions and therefore contribute to overall health improvements. Short-term benefits included less coughing and burning eyes whilst long-term benefits include a reduction of respiratory and eye infections for the cooks. There is also a reduced danger to burns in both adults and children.
2. Reduced cooking times compared with an open fire. Less burning and waste of food. Better quality of food prepared in the rocket stove as compared to the open fire, as more equal heat distribution and faster cooking.
3. Less time and effort needed to prepare wood: the rocket stove can take any length of firewood, therefore there is no need to cut the wood. Less wood is required as the stoves use less 50 to 95% less firewood.
4. Reduced deforestation as a result of reduced wood consumption.



Everyone is delighted with the new stoves especially they see health improvements already. The other important fact is that it is quicker to make the porridge! - **Shupo**

Financial Report

COVID-19 pandemic brought a lot of uncertainty in 2020. Fundraising events had to be cancelled whilst at the same time more funds were needed for face masks, soap etc.

The financial year ended with a CHF 7'575 deficit.

This can be explained by a few one-off expenses in 2020. We paid for 4 school terms, to take advantage of lower Maize prices in June. Plus, we bought 10 new rocket stoves and pots.

These 2 items amount to approximately CHF 5'000 which means in reality the deficit is around CHF 2'500.

With the increased generosity of our members and donors we have closed 2020 with a fairly healthy financial situation.

The outlook for 2021 remains challenging. The effect of the pandemic is only slowly diminishing and it is still uncertain when we will be able to hold fundraising events again.

Nourishing Minds is grateful for your continuing support.

Han Broere

Treasurer



STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

INCOME	Note	Swiss Francs
Donations		5,537
Membership		350
Fund Raising Events		0
1st Covid Appeal		1,175
2nd Covid Appeal		4,209
<u>Total income</u>		<u>11,271</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Sent to Ekwendeni	1	18,701
Office Supplies		0
Postage etc.		0
Bank Charges		146
Other expenses		0
<u>Total expenditure</u>		<u>18,846</u>
<u>BALANCE</u>		<u>-7,575</u>

note 1 Sent to Ekwendeni in 2020

Contribution lost food Hurricane	1,000
Corona virus campaign	1,988
School terms 1,2,3 and 4th term	11,227
Rocket stoves and pots (10)	2,162
Fertilizer and seeds	1,784
Agriculture chemicals	270
Communications costs	270

Total **18,701**



BALANCE SHEET **FOR THE PERIOD 1ST JANUARY - 31ST DECEMBER 2020**

31/12/2020

note

ASSETS

CHF

U.B.S. current account	12,408.09
Accounts receivable	409.79

Net assets	<u>12,817.88</u>
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01.01.2020	General Fund at 01.01.2020	20,392.99
	Surplus / deficit 2020 1	-7,575.11
31.12.2020	General Fund at 31.12.2020	<u>12,817.88</u>

Note 1 In 2020 4 school terms were paid instead of 3, plus 10 Cooking Stoves were bought. The total amount concerned was MKW 3,884,000 (appr. USD 5,284, -)



BUDGET 1ST JANUARY 2021 - 31 DECEMBER 2021

	Budget	Budget
	MWK	CHF
INCOME		
Donations		6,000
Membership		2,000
Fund raising events		6,000
Total Income		<u>14,000</u>
EXPENDITURE:		
Malawi school feeding program (5 schools)		
1st School term	1,617,000	2,185
2nd School term	2,284,000	3,086
3rd School term	2,284,000	3,086
Fertilizer and seed	1,320,000	1,784
Transport costs (fuel)	200,000	270
Vehicle maintenance	400,000	541
Agriculture chemicals	200,000	270
Communication costs	200,000	270
Bags for storing harvest	50,000	68
Sub total expenditure in Malawi	8,555,000	<u>11,561</u>
SWITZERLAND		
Miscellaneous		1,000
Office supplies		500
Administrative costs		100
Postal charges		200
Sub total expenditure in Switzerland		<u>1,800</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>13,361</u>
BALANCE		<u>639</u>
Budget in Malawian Kwacha	1 CHF	740
10/05/2021	info@noursihingminds.org	

Executive Committee



Jane Broere
President and Founder



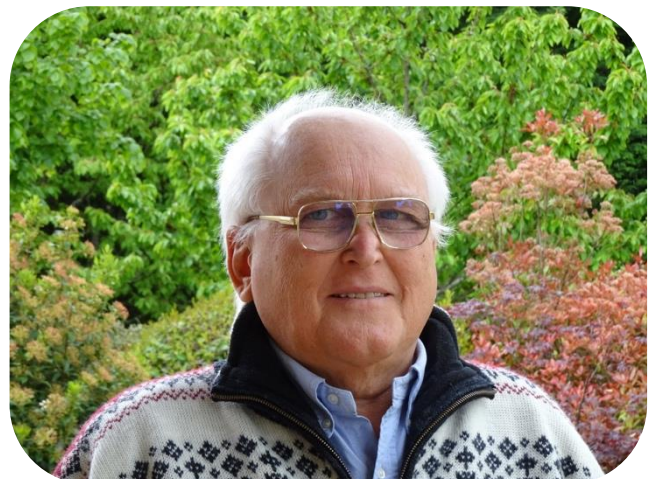
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Vice President



Lindy Twaddle
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Sherree Atkinson-Bret
Committee Member



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