

God Cares Newsletter



November, 2024



A note from the Executive Director and the God Cares Team!

Welcome to the God Cares Rights Foundation newsletter! The God Cares team embarked on some exciting projects in Malawi's Northern Region which we are thrilled to share with you.

Firstly, we would like to acknowledge our amazing donors and funders who have and continue to support our vision, making the implementation of our projects possible and impacting the lives of many women, youth and children through God Cares. Your support allows our team to operate these projects smoothly and effectively.

In this newsletter, we share our work in improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation

and hygiene, our work with orphans and vulnerable children, our project on improving the wellbeing of children living with HIV/AIDS and the empowerment of teen mothers through skills training.

We hope that this work inspires you to support us as we continue in our commitment to better the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and communities in Malawi. Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most. Thank you for your continued support!

Happy reading!

Agnes & the God Cares team

In this newsletter you will find:

Safe Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) Project

God Cares work with orphans and other vulnerable children

Improving the wellbeing of children living with HIV/AIDS

Teen Mothers Tailoring Project



SAFE DRINKING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) PROJECT

God Cares Rights Foundation in partnership with International Project Aid (IPA) is currently implementing WASH projects through drilling boreholes in four communities in Mzimba North of Zigodo Hlema, Jonas Ngoma, Chifwamsala and Chimutu 1. In 2023, we drilled one borehole in one extra community called Elias Mwale.

WHY IT MATTERS

WASH is crucial to human health and well-being. Safe WASH is not only a prerequisite to health, but it also contributes to livelihoods, improves school attendance, and ensures the dignity of individuals. It helps to create resilient communities living in healthy environments.

Clean water improves the lives of people across all age groups. It reduces child deaths, helps many girls to attend classes because of clean water and sanitation facilities at home and school. Clean water helps to reduce waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhea and others.

**MORE THAN 20
COMMUNITIES
SEEKING SUPPORT
WITH CLEAN
WATER**

This project has contributed to a healthy living environment for everyone in these five communities where clean water was a big challenge. Since its launch, God cares has received over 20 applications from across Mzimba North for clean borehole water. We are thus seeking further partnerships within WASH to improve the lives of people in these communities.



GOD CARES' WORK WITH ORPHANS & OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN



God Cares has been working with orphans and other vulnerable children in Mzuzu City and Mzimba North since 2008. We worked with street connected children in Mzuzu City from 2008 to 2023. Most of our activities were centred around child protection, running a safe transit home till 2023. The programme however came to a close due to lack of funding. God Cares continues to work with orphans and other vulnerable children in Ekwendeni, Mzimba North. We are supporting the education of 50 orphans and other vulnerable children. We do this by providing notebooks and writing materials once every term. This work is made possible with the support from the Work Party. This project is also supported financially by a Church in the USA and a Church in Holland. God Cares is truly grateful for the support.

Many orphans and children from poor households go to school without writing materials and cannot afford uniforms. This makes class less enjoyable for them when their colleagues are writing and decreases levels of engagement with the class material. This in turn affects class attendance and subsequently leads to poor performance in examinations. When we visit primary schools, we notice children in worn-out clothes outside the classrooms playing while their colleagues are learning. We also notice in the rural areas that many children are not registered in schools. God Cares shares clothes and other items from the Work Party with such children and their entire households.

Apart from providing learning materials, the Organisation also conducts counselling and guidance on the importance of education, being in class full time, writing exercises and good behavior at home and school.

Our aim is to support such children through a holistic approach so that they too become productive citizens and ably support themselves and their families in future. God Cares believes that by doing so, the cycle of poverty will be eliminated in these households.

The name of this project is **God Cares Children's Club (GCCC)**.





**SERVING
ORPHANS &
OTHER
VULNERABLE
CHILDREN
SINCE 2008**

GOD CARES CHILDREN'S CLUB ACTIVITIES

We conduct the following activities twice a Month on Saturdays whenever we meet with the children;

- Bible study,
- Counseling and guidance on the importance of education
- Teaching them the importance of good behavior at home and school
- Helping them to cultivate high self esteem
- Checking their school performance. They bring their notebooks once a month.
- They share fellowship minerals and snacks at the end.



IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND THEIR HOUSEHOLDS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS INTERVENTION PROJECT

The improving the wellbeing of children living with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable children and their households through sustainable livelihoods intervention project has three key thematic areas: Health, Food security and Education with funding from The Egmont Trust. The project works with 150 children and their families.

Food Security & Health

Food insecurity affects children's health and their overall growth and development. Children living with HIV and coming from disadvantaged and economically challenged households are significantly affected by food insecurity including in their education i.e. attendance, performance and intellectual development. Our work in this project is centered around improving food security, nutrition and income among households of children living with HIV and other vulnerabilities.

To achieve this, we have undertaken multiple activities including: distribution of diversified agricultural inputs (quality and variety maize, groundnuts, soybean, vegetable seeds and fertilizer), livestock distribution for income generating activities and farmer trainings in Mbeya fertilizer production; a type of local-nature-based fertilizer. Our beneficiaries' farms performed excellently with plants such as Maize thriving.



450kgs assorted seeds & 150 packets of vegetable seeds distributed & grown

Environmental conservation and Elimination of Gender Based Violence are crucial components of the project. 1050 trees distributed and planted

Environmental Conservation

An important aspect of the project has been training the 150 targeted children and their families about the environment and how they can participate in environmental conservation. This was after a deforestation problem was noted by the God Cares team particularly in one of our project areas.

Reforestation of the forest surrounding the area was conducted by the children and their families. We procured 1050 tree seedlings and each child was given 7 of these seeds which were planted. As environmental change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups such as children, improving knowledge and ways in which they can participate in environmental issues cannot be overemphasized. We have been impressed to see the awareness for environmental conservation increase among the children.

“The environment is crying out to us to do something because of the harm we have inflicted on it by our irresponsible actions like cutting down of trees carelessly and charcoal burning... When we are maintaining the environment, it means we are carrying out responsibly the great work entrusted to us by God after the creation and as we do so, it is for our own advantage because we benefit more from it.” A poem by our grade 8 beneficiary



Community Systems Strengthening

A key component of the project has been to address drivers of new HIV/AIDS infections through community systems strengthening. We also noted that GBV cases were rampant in our target communities. We therefore integrated GBV in our programming. Our first activity was a members dialogue session which involved community traditional leaders, village health committees, health surveillance assistants and community representatives. Through this meeting, multiple drivers were identified including traditional practices such as ‘widow cleansing’ after a woman loses her husband, and the belief that if dowry is paid, the woman belongs to the man to do as he pleases. In instances where women demand HIV testing, some men denied and resorted to violence.

Together with community participants, community leaders came up with action points for reducing further spread of HIV/AIDS in their community including development of bylaws which would enable elimination of GBV and safeguard the lives of women and children.



Education

In order to ensure that the children are not affected in their education; the project supports 30 secondary school students and 150 primary school students with tuition (for secondary school students), and every school material needed for them to succeed including books and writing materials. With the projects intervention, the schools noted that attendance had improved from **65%** to **90%** compared to the previous year, performance at Junior Certificate level improved from **60%** to **75%**, while for senior secondary school classes improved from **54%** to **86%**. This shows that when students have access to basic school needs such as books, writing materials and school uniforms greatly impacts a child's overall performance in school. In addition to these improvements, the project has necessitated better relationships between parents and teachers, reduced child labor and has given hope to young girls through reduced early marriages.

MOLESI'S STORY

Molesi is an 18 year old girl from Chimbongondo. Raised by a single parent, Molesi has not always had the support required for her to succeed in school, especially for economic related reasons. Her circumstances did not improve and she resorted to dropping out of school as her parent could not afford tuition.

Molesi became pregnant at 18 and went into an informal marriage with the father of her child. She felt that this was her only option and chance at survival. Molesi became one of the project's beneficiaries and got readmitted into form one, secondary school level. She turned to be a brilliant young woman and performed well in her examinations despite being out of school. Molesi is still currently in school and is a story of a hope renewed.

TEEN MOTHERS TAILORING PROJECT

This project focuses on teen mothers who dropped out of school because their parents could not afford to pay secondary school fees due to poverty. After they dropped out, they did not have anything to do and as a result engaged in sexual relationships. This is the story of many young women in the communities God Cares operates. Some get married at a tender age while others get pregnant and the boy/man refuses to take responsibility for the child, turning them into single parents without any means to care for their child. Most of such teen mothers' children die due to lack of care as the mothers fail to find basic resources to support their nutritional needs due to poverty.

As a result of these financial constraints, the teen mothers fail to get back to school as they do not have and cannot afford anyone to take care of their children and do not have money for fees. This is where God Cares teen mothers' tailoring project comes in. By training these young women, we capacitate them with a skill which they can utilize to find jobs or start their own businesses to support themselves and their children.

We are grateful for Jimmy and the Work Party for the continued support in terms of sewing machines, thread, needles, and other materials. We are also thankful to Maria Foundation and our Church Partner in the USA who provide financial support to the project for different cohorts.



**EMPOWERING
DISADVANTAGED
TEEN MOTHERS**

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR PROJECTS



**PUMP
INSTALLATION**



**WATER BLOWING
EXERCISE**



**TEEN MOTHERS SHOW-
OFF THEIR WORK**



**ONE OF THE BENEFICIARIES
IN HER MAIZE FARM GROWN
FROM OUR MAIZE SEEDS**

Thank you for reading!



**GOD CARES RIGHTS
FOUNDATION**

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