



MEL Newsletter

Autumn 2015

Dear supporters,

This is our second run of the newsletter with an updated distribution list; if you do not wish to receive these newsletters please get in touch by emailing info@MalawiEducationLink.co.uk.

Projects

Despite the absence of teams this summer MEL has initiated, funded and supported many projects.



Chivumu

Chivumu School is gaining an extra classroom block, thanks to our supporters. Some previous team members will have fond memories of the hospitality this community gave them.

Chivumu's community worked fast and had reached gable level within 4 weeks. Caroline Ward, who came out to Malawi for 3 weeks, generously donated a bicycle ambulance to Chivumu. Previously, the sick and injured were lucky if the 19km journey to Ngala Clinic was made on a stretcher or in a wheelbarrow!

Mtetezga

Thanks to Sheila & Campbell McLelland's hard work with The Big Give, and all of our supporters who pledged or donated so generously, we raised an amazing total of £3,810. Now Mtetezga, a remote community, gets a burnt brick and tin roofed classroom block.

It will replace this "classroom"!



Other school projects

We're also finishing projects in Kaweluwelu, Dwangwa, and have given advice on help needed at Ukasi School in the sugar estate. Tanja & Scott Davey are key in the fundraising for this.



As many of our supporters know; before we build anything communities must find their own sand, water and bricks (40,000 for a double classroom block - usually made by the community themselves). Occasionally, we help out: Chivumu is so remote and far from the source of good sand, we did give them K80,000 (~ £110) worth of sand. Communities that don't meet these criteria lose the materials we provide: door frames, window frames, roofing timbers, tin sheets. They go instead to schools which are keeping their side of the bargain. To keep building costs down, we're using trees

felled on Caroline's Basilis House plot, last Christmas, to provide timber for doors. This is being sawn up on site, providing employment for local sawyers.

Maize Mill

The Maize Mill was originally set up to benefit people living with AIDs and now has re-started with a new committee. We're optimistic that with the dethronement of the previous Village Headman this mill will finally achieve its objective. Among other obstacles, it's been a case of educating committee members on how to manage a business!

Ngala Clinic Borehole

Ted Crampton came out to Ngala again this summer, to complete his mission to give the clinic and workers' houses running water. A combination of sheer persistence, technical expertise and amazing generosity on his part led to success. The clinic and its workers now have safe reliable water coming out of taps. The guardians who come to care for patients also have access to this water.

Ted's feelings of elation show clearly on his birthday cake, on his return to the UK!



Sponsorship

Using funds given 'with no strings attached', MEL has started an active programme of support for albinos. This was initiated by Ted and his family who donated high SPF creams and baby hats that shield vulnerable faces. If available we also provide long-sleeved clothing. When albinos arrive we educate parents on how to look after their children to avoid solar keratosis (a type of malignant melanoma). Children and adults already showing signs of these potentially life-threatening conditions are given funds to



take them to Nkhotakota Hospital where they can receive treatment and even chemotherapy or other appropriate treatment.

This little 7 month old (left) had successful chemotherapy on the carcinoma that had already developed on his head and this mother (right) has also been able to go for treatment.



Tanja & Scott have greatly aided this aspect of our work by donating K600,000 (about £800) to fund creams and treatment at Nkhotakota hospital – a generous donation that will save many lives! Donations of old sunglasses (email me, please!) would be much appreciated, too.

Additionally we've continued with our sponsorship of children & adults with untapped potential and no opportunity to maximise it through education. Previous newsletters have mentioned Levison, Jacqueline and Lettina, whose education has been made possible by generous supporters in the UK. We keep sponsors informed of their sponsee's progress. We've now added Brainmore (he lives up to his name!) and Sekelani to our list: they're following a course at Malawi Institute of Journalism thanks to Ted, Elinor & Andy. Jess and Mphatso will re-sit their final year of secondary school to gain better grades in some subjects and take Maths that both of them were unable to sit previously because of malaria. Next year Jess plans to go on to a teacher training course. That is down to the generosity of Di, Jan & Heather.

Sponsorship has stopped at Dwasulu Secondary School since they seem unable to monitor the aspects involved. We are looking for sponsorship for Beauty a 5 year old. She was born blind, with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and only learnt to walk with input from a local (underfunded) community worker. We hope to send her to Loko School, for children with conditions like hers.

Anyone who would like to help sponsor someone's education please email me directly at c.a.hansford@gmail.com.

Fundraising

As many of you will know, fundraising in the UK has taken many forms. Gill & Terry's concert netted us about £600 and we've received other donations from events. We're also very grateful to those of you who give so generously each month: this enables us to have a more accurate idea in advance of what we can bring out here. Every little bit helps, and we're willing to tie it to any conditions you may wish to make. Feedback is provided through these newsletters as a minimum, and directly to sponsors where requested.

Sheila & Campbell will take on The Big Give again: we have submitted 'Build Mtetzga a Teacher's house' for the 2015 BG Christmas Challenge when online donations can be DOUBLED. The Challenge this year is 4th and 5th December. We'll keep you informed of progress on that front.

Any other fundraising ideas much appreciated. Sheila's been searching for trusts, funds that might support us and our work, but we've had no success to date. We plan to have another Quiz Night in Holywell in the autumn.

Trustees

We're also looking for young blood for our trustees! Currently, all but one of us is 65+years of age, and we really could do with some fresh ideas, new skills and greater stamina.... any volunteers?

It's unpaid! We meet a maximum of twice annually... free lunch...? Much of the work can be done via email, but we would really value some further dynamic input.

Many thanks for your on-going support and interest... we couldn't do all this without you!

Caroline