

Date: July 30 2018

NEWSLETTER Q2-18

Friends of Stichting Beter Malawi,

While in the Netherlands we can't stop talking about the weather (really hot), we think back to our time in Malawi with a bit of pain in our heart. The weather at this moment in the Netherlands is in Malawi quite normally and causes Malawian problems. Erik has once again visited Malawi this quarter and visited 'our' area. In this newsletter therefore a number of his experiences and findings.

Leading Farmer Project (LFP)

The ultimate goal of this project is to improve the amount of the harvest through a new method. For those who are unable to provide artificial fertilizer and seeds, we provide a loan that can be repaid with the proceeds. Regardless of whether you use a loan, you can use the method anyway.

There are articles in the newspaper that the maize harvest is about 40% lower than last year. During the rainy season there was suddenly a period of 2-3 weeks during which it was dry, which inhibited the growth of the maize. There was also a plague with Army Worms.



Miles has a smile from ear to ear, because he has harvested 294 kilos of maize.

The results of the harvests are very different. From a low amount of 1.5 bag (75 kilos), to an amazing amount of 550 kilos of maize. It is nice to see that the participants also reply to each other on points of the new method that are not followed, which has resulted in a lower yield of maize. The big difference between the Malawian approach and new LFP technology is that with the new technique the maize cobs are larger, and therefore give more maize.

We can not get everyone excited yet to apply this new methodology. Making potholes and covering them creates a lot of extra work, and they also have more confidence in intercropping (putting maize and pigeon-beans simultaneously on the land). The chiefs believe that the interest on the loan provided is too high. For the time being, there is no Chief who participates in the LFP. We convert the interest from the loan into additional rewards for the participants, in proportion to the amount of maize. The farmers who did participate in the LFP (some for the 2nd year) are generally enthusiastic. They see that their work is rewarded.

Namilongo Primary School

This primary school provides lessons for 1702 pupils (boys and girls about the same). The school has 16 fixed classrooms and 2 temporary ones. A short calculation yields just over 90 students per class. There are 33 teachers (29 women and 4 men), who have an average of 50 pupils per person. Erik attended an English class in Standard 2 and 7 (group 2 and 7) to get an idea of the teaching method and the quality of the lessons. It is good to see that many teachers come from the city; the teachers are remarkably well dressed and have a fairly high level, for example the English language. For the group of teachers, 3 houses are available to stay during the week. But this is enough because the school is relatively close to the road, so most of them live at home and come up and down daily as we in the Netherlands are used to.

During the period that Erik visited Malawi, we would have wanted to start with the construction of the 2

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classrooms that we finance from the Beter Malawi Foundation, but we have not yet closed the budget. However, Erik has provided reading books (provided by the Read to Grow Foundation) which they can use to support teaching the English language. These have been received with great enthusiasm.

Namadidi Primary School

This primary school has 1396 pupils (boys and girls about the same) and 14 classrooms. This school is also very happy with the English children's books as support for the English lessons. For the English lessons we have also received many tips and supporting materials from the International School Eindhoven.

Of the 22 teachers, 10 are male and 12 are female, and the average number of pupils per teacher is 64. 11 houses are available for the teachers, 5 of which are in good condition. Because, among other things, the accommodation is not optimal and the houses are far away from other facilities, there is a lot of change among the teachers. The school is far from other facilities so the teachers live at the school in houses that are offered to them but some of the houses are very bad.



Standard 8 is a so-called boarding school. This means that the 76 pupils are required to stay internally for 3 months prior to the exam. The parents come to bring food and soap once a week.

One of the teachers houses at Namadidi.

Schoolfees

There are 6 students whose school fees are paid by Dutch sponsors. The contact between them runs through the Beter Malawi Foundation. Erik has spoken 5 and 2 of them now have an introduction video on facebook.

Speaking of motivation: One of those 6 students walks every day from the city of Zomba to go to school. We hope he has found a shortcut, because by road this walk takes about 2 hours one way

Bert van Rangelrooij



Since a few months I have been active in the Beter Malawi Foundation and I have also joined the board of this foundation. You naturally wonder why a 58-year-old man comes to such a decision and what drives him. In my case that is pretty simple. I'm keeping my promise that I made to my wife when she became seriously ill last year and also died shortly thereafter. That promise meant that instead of just working hard as a consultant, I wanted to focus more on the ups and downs of fellow human beings. I now do that as a volunteer in a retirement home and now also in the Beter Malawi foundation.

Dick Aantjes, with whom I had a lot of contact during a job for Rijkswaterstaat, was always enthusiastic about what he did in Malawi and what inspired him. Through him I met the Foundation. I will focus on education and especially on developing and improving the management of the English language of youth.

Because the youth has the future. That is also how it works in Malawi!



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General

There are many people who have sponsored us with money and goods. We had clothing, bandages, wheelchair, laptops, smartphones, books and many other things. We want to thank everyone personally in the summer period, but in this case they do so now in general by newsletter. THANK YOU ALL!

A number of requests from the various groups (Disabled Group, Expert Group, Youth Group, Mawa Group, via Erik came to us for support from Stichting Beter Malawi.) For your imagination just a few of the requests: new blankets for the coming winter; support in following craft courses (sowing, carpentry, electrician); repairs of furniture and homes; purchase of one-day-old chicks that can eventually be sold; soap and sugar for the elderly; funding of a monthly allowance from Caregivers at the Nursery Schools; new classrooms.

After the visit and the experiences of Erik (not all projects run equally smoothly) and the new 5-year plan we are considering what we will do with previous and new projects. More about this in our next newsletter.

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