

Date: Januari 8 2018

## NEWSLETTER Q4-17

Friends of Stichting Beter Malawi,

First of all, the best wishes for 2018! We hope for many beautiful Malawian experiences and adventures that we can share with you. It may not always be mentioned, but we are very happy with every input. Thinking along with our projects and making suggestions, and the donations. And a small amount of money can have big (positive) consequences. More about it in this newsletter.

There have been big problems with electricity in Malawi in the past months. There were a lot of blackouts, which sometimes lasted for 24 hours. Luckily, the Malawians can manage well without electricity. In the Netherlands we are discouraged without electricity, only because we are more dependent, think about electric cooking, hot water off the boiler or making coffee. The electricity grid in Malawi is better at the moment, so we also have an update on the current projects in Malawi.

### Leading Farmer Project (LFP)

This is the second year that we are facilitating the LFP. The rainy season has started again, which means that the new harvest will be prepared. The rainy season has 2 parts. The first part is actually a kind of exercise. After that the rainy season really starts. It is important for the crop that the Malawians wait for the first rainy period and only start sowing after that period.

Seed and fertilizer have been purchased and distributed among the farmers. We are a bit disappointed that no more farmers have signed up this year, but for the moment 26 farmers have enthusiastically started preparing for the land; fertilising, sowing and weeding.

The Expert Team, which was established last year, advises the farmers by the method using fertilizer and the interim removal of weeds, so that as many nutrients as possible can reach the maize plants. A new challenge is the discovery of worms in a part of the crop. We have to think about what we can do about this.



Here the fertilizer is dispensed.



A woman walks with bags of corn seed on her head.



Working on the land. According to the new method, the maize stalks from the previous harvest remain on the land.

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### Nursery School

In Malawi, children still regularly skip school. It is not always seen and appreciated that children develop by playing together and that they can also learn the English language by playing. A way to make school more valuable, and thereby stimulate the parents to let their children go to school, is to hand out porridge. From the harvest of the LFP last year, a part of the maize has been reserved for making this porridge at 2 nursery schools. At this moment, porridge is being given to the children, as you can see on the picture. In this way, the children get at least one meal a day. We are very pleased with this development.



### New volunteers

We are pleased that we have been able to attract new volunteers for the Foundation. Kim van Happen is committed to link sponsors and Malawian high school students and Wim Smulders takes care of the accounting. We are very happy with their time and commitment. Below they represent:



#### Kim van Happen

My name is Kim van Happen and I am 28 years old. I am the daughter of Erik van Happen (Board of the Beter Malawi Foundation). From the first moment I supported the foundation monthly. Still, I wanted to do something more. From now on I am responsible for the project: Schoolfees. That means that I am going to recruit sponsors for children who want to go to school but can not afford it. I will also keep track of how the children are doing at school and pass this information to the sponsors. For only € 5, - a month a child can go to school. For more information see the website <http://www.betermalawi.nl/index.php/projecten/school-fees>. I am really excited and hope that together with you, I can ensure that many children can go to school.



#### Wim Smulders

Years ago I heard the enthusiastic stories from Erik van Happen after his visit to Malawi. I had read his blog and I found it interesting. The real stories sounded even better. Actually, it was therefore not a real surprise when he later told about the founding of the Beter Malawi foundation. Because of our friendship, I gladly helped him at that time with the structure of the administration. My accountancy training came in handy. Although I have since started doing something completely different, Program Management Information Provision, that "accounting" remains an old love. Recently Erik asked me to take over his financial task in the foundation. I immediately said yes. I would like to support the good work he is doing together with board members Dick and Manon and the help of sponsors and others. The finances of the foundation have interesting challenges because of the new exotic character for me. I leave the management of the foundation to the trio. My goal is to continue to provide the foundation with a solid account and accountability.



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### **Expedition Malawi**

And then there was a call on a Friday afternoon if you want to give a presentation about the Beter Malawi Foundation next Tuesday. Then you have the chance to get sponsored by a group of high school students from the Netherlands. A nice extra for us both was to go tot Malawi together in April 2018 and do some good work. From 4 different foundations the Beter Malawi Foundation was chosen as number 1 and to raise money for, we were extremely proud! The enthusiasm of the both of us was great, the contacts were nice, but the messages from Malawi worried us. As a result of stories about vampirism and little riots about this in 'our' area, we have done some further investigation. After contact with the embassy of Zimbabwe (Malawi has none) and research of the safety officer of the school, it was finally decided that the Dutch students would not be able to go. At the moment, the embassy of Zimbabwe indicates that it is not safe. We can not predict what it looks like in April, but one of the goals of the students is to do good work at the project. It would be a shame if some of their goals could not be achieved. It does hurt a bit, we would have liked to show them the beautiful Malawi and we had such beautiful plans to spend their time usefual and unforgettable. Hopefully in the future we will get another chance for a similar project.

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