

Wells for Zoë

We are an Irish voluntary organisation, working mainly in Northern Malawi, focused on enabling the rural poor to access clean, safe, drinking water.

Our package also includes preschools, adult education and conservation farming.



January, 2014

2013 The headlines

Pumps

The factory manufactured over 1000 pumps.

Preschools

We support 33 rural preschools

Fruit Trees

Our farm propagated over 12,000 fruit tree seedlings 500 kg of

Teacher Training

Our Teacher Training programme impacts over 25,000 students.

The Success Story

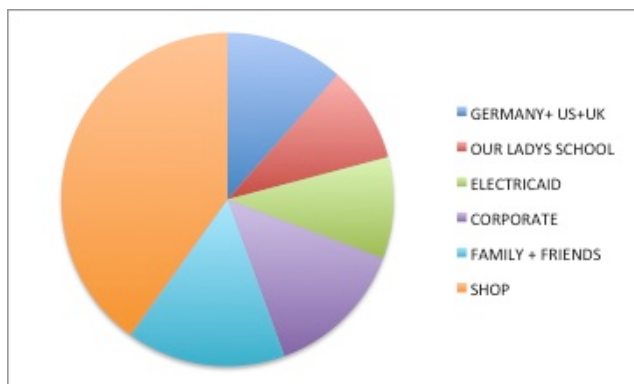
Thanks to all of you, who donated over 90,000 Euro, and thanks to the Malawian people who managed to do so much with about 60,000 Euro that we spent. The income relied on the generosity of so many of you and the achievements resulted from the newly inspired spirit of volunteerism from poor, rural Malawians

Our employees were paid 14,300 Euro, 12,100 went on vehicles, fuel, repairs and maintenance. The factory and pump making took over 24,000, while the farms took around 2800 to run. School fees, preschools buildings, farm and factory building projects, health, sanitation and hygiene programmes, seedling and seed production and teacher training make up the rest.

I suppose figures have little meaning without looking at what has been done with this very large sum, and examining the efficiency, the effectiveness and the relevance of what has been achieved.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION?

We are a fully voluntary organization. 100% of all public donations are spent on our projects in Malawi. No one gets paid, not even expenses, except our 28 employees in Malawi.



OUR DONORS

As you will see, our donors come from so many different places, both local and international. Word of mouth seems to be the usual source, where people just seem to recommend us to others, because they like, what we do, and even more, *how* we do it.

For all donations online, I send an email of thanks. For all others, Mary sends a handwritten reply, to almost all of our donors. We really value every Euro we get, because without them, so little would be possible. So take a bow!

We only work with people *on their plans*

We work mainly with women's Self Help groups. These groups (20 members) are organized, to meet once a week, by SJOG Services, to talk, discuss their issues, to save and borrow from the group fund. They start small businesses and pay interest. 10 such groups forms a cluster to discuss needs and invite us to help. Their plans focus on water, preschools, adult education, nutrition, traditional culture and practices. It is difficult to believe all that can be achieved by poor, uneducated but spirited Malawian women. Simply brilliant!

The Pumps

This year the big number was achieving the target of manufacturing 1000 Zoe pumps in the factory and realizing that when they are all installed by ourselves, and our partner organisations, about a quarter of a million very poor, subsistence farmers will have clean safe drinking water, *for life*. The problem with pumps, all over Africa is that they break down, and no one can fix them.

The most unique fact about our pump is that village women have been trained to do the maintenance and even if it needs to be replaced, at some stage, the old one is almost fully recyclable.

Most pumps are distributed free, but next year we plan to sell some, to other NGOs to lessen our dependence on begging in Ireland and elsewhere.

Figure it out?

250,000 is a lot of people with clean, safe drinking water.

4 times the capacity of Old Trafford or:

The total population of Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo and Carlow

Fruit tree propagation

This year we will exceed our target on the Lusangazi farm, by producing over 12,000 improved variety fruit tree seedlings. By early 2014, when we get final certification from the Malawian Government, anyone, including the Ministry for Agriculture can buy these certified seedlings from us, as one of maybe only two suppliers, in the whole country. The fact that we are totally organic producers gives us an edge. We produce four varieties of Orange, two types of Tangerine, Satsumas and Kumquats, Grapefruits and Limes. We have four varieties of Mango, Avocado, Apples, Peaches and White Guava. The Ministry has asked to buy 10,000 for distribution to farmers as their new push towards self-sufficiency in fruit in the country, while CADECOM and World Vision and other large NGOs have booked some as well.

The Ministry has set a target of 25,000 for next year and we are working hard to achieve it. We have started work on new greenhouses and moving towards a more commercial approach. In the long term, we see this as a source of revenue to help fund our projects, which was always one of these unspoken wishes in our vision, from the beginning. This is a Malawian operation run by an amazing array of men and women, mostly without any academic education.

Water and food are the vital bare essentials for life.

Education facilitates progress

Farming

In so far as we can, we do conservation farming, which fits our model of not using Genetically Modified (GM) seeds, or Artificial fertilizer or Chemical Pesticides.

More and more we are moving towards trees like Gliricidia, Tephrosia, Sespania and Masangu to provide us with nitrogen and other nutrients for longer term sustainability, but we still rely on sunnhemp, dahlia and a range of other legumes to see us through in the short term, and of course we compost everything. We grow about 150 different crop varieties researching as we go. We continue to have increasing numbers of visitors to the farm each day for training and demonstrations. Some stay for a day and some for a month. We have about 5 acres of citrus groves as a nursery for scions, but also to produce fruit.

Preschools.

As of last week we support 33 preschools, most in remote rural locations. We train local women to become trainers, teach them to make educational equipment from local materials and work with the extended communities to support and manage their schools. Our two Malawian trainers visit these schools in clusters to observe and up-skill regularly, looking closely at attendance, on the register of children, trainers and porridge ladies. Between these and the school board, the parents committee and the chiefs, over 1000 people are involved in the movement, all volunteers of course.

All these schools are community planned and managed and are most sustainable.

Once they get a building it becomes a centre for community activity, outside preschool hours.

Adult education and health clinics are the added bonus

To start off, these institutions of learning take place in sheds, under trees, in dilapidated buildings or even churches. If they then want a permanent building, they must find a site, make bricks, dig foundations and build to roof level, before coming to W4Z. If all is well we support with metal sheets and about 3 bags of cement for the floors, which is the expensive bit.

We are finding that the enrollment of 3 to 6 year olds is increasing, as is the standard of teaching. Of the 1500 or so, enrolled, most move on to primary school



Teacher Training

Our primary teacher-training project has just completed its fourth year. Experienced and excellent practitioners (Irish teachers) have gone to Malawi, paying all their own costs, firstly to assess the needs and then to set up and deliver a training programme using the Malawi Curriculum in the area of English and now Mathematics. This works in conjunction with the District Education Managers (DEM) and the Inspectorate and has gained total acceptance. Up to now it has trialed in two districts impacting sixteen schools and over 25,000 students

This project is set to expand to more districts This year the DEM in Mzuzu, Anna Sichinga, has retired and come to work for Wells for Zoe on the project as has one other retired DEM, John Banda

and the newly retired head of probably the best primary school in the Northern region, Catherine. These three leading lights in education are now working with us on a voluntary basis and will move the programme along drawing in the best and brightest Malawian teachers as trainers.

This summer the teachers visited the Malawian teachers in their classrooms and did a follow up in-service programme on Maths, Phonics, Classroom Management and more! During our Oct/Nov visit, Mary and Denise and their Malawian counterparts Anna and Catherine visited the schools for a follow up to the summer programme and saw progress on all fronts. Plans are ongoing for the next phase in February 2014

The Charity Shop

We started on Feb 2, 2012 and with an amazing group of volunteers have managed to amass about 57,000 Euro to support the Malawi cause. During the period there has been no charge for rent or rates so this is clear profit and gets all the way to our projects in Malawi. Our amazing volunteers Bernie, Lena, Eileen, Mary, Marie, Mary and Kate have worked tirelessly on their rota. The banter and enthusiasm is mighty and they are becoming legendary in the Smithfield area for their friendly smiles, a place for a good haggle and of course bargains galore. Sometimes I think it's a social services establishment, such is the rapport with the customers: a place to get advice on an array of issues or even a recipe for porter cake and phone help when cooking!!

What people are saying

We continue to see the Hand of God guiding and directing you and Mary in your work. What a blessing it has been to watch (from afar) the steady progress that has been made toward providing clean water, education, fruit trees, etc. to the Malawian people.

[William Hatcher \(www.sifat.org\)](http://www.sifat.org)

...I have decided that perhaps my priority should be to help provide funds to help villagers to obtain clean water - all progress is dependent on clean water. For some weeks I have been searching the internet for suitable charities - so many, -swallow up large chunks of their moneys in paying for fat salaries etc before any funds left even reach Africa. Its been quite a difficult search Hence I finally discovered "Wells for Zoe" [Theo \(UK\) one of our best supporters](#).

I hope all is well with both of you and hope you are continuing to have success in serving God in Zoe. To help you continue in that success in providing wells for Zoe I would like to nominate you for the CNN Heroes award. [Mel, Hope United Church of Christ Fremont, WI, USA](#)

In December, at Aol, we invited employees from across the globe to submit their favorite non-profit for a chance to win a \$5,000 grant to be donated to that organization Rosanne Dolan one of employees in Dublin, was one of the three winners with her chosen charity Wells for Zoe. Roseanne is a Board member with a passion for what they do.

[Aol Inc, New York City](#)

Volunteering

Everyone tells us that AID works, but if that were true, then presumably the poor should be much better off than when AID first began more than half a century ago. So 'aid's job should by now be nearly over and it ought to be possible to begin gradual, phased withdrawal without hurting anyone. Right?

Of course, the truth and unmentioned reality is that poorest people in the poorest countries never receive or even have contact with 'aid' in any tangible way: whether it's present or absent, increased or decreased, makes little difference to the poorest, who we try to serve.

Malawi has had multi million dollar inflows managed by thousands of highly paid experts, together managing to change, a country which was, sixty years ago, self sufficient in food, into a nation of dependent beggars. It appears that in Malawi's case, AID corrupts. A back door in their computer software has meant, that recently, 260 million dollars went missing, out this escape route, and even though the current regime, with the help of Scotland Yard may trace it, they will probably find it in offshore accounts of bureaucrats, in places like the Isle of Man.

So don't put all the blame on the Malawians, who just pick up some of the loose change, which no one *is minding*.

The recent talk of top-ups and misappropriation would suggest that there was no-one minding the money here either. The disturbing thing about fallout is that all charitable organisations become a little tarnished.

Wells for Zoe is a fully voluntary organization. No one gets any pay or any expenses, except our Malawian employees. Everyone who travels to Malawi pays their own way, including ourselves who also pay all the overheads. This means that 100% of public donations go to projects in Malawi

This Year Wells for Zoe, spent just over 60,000 Euro in Malawi.

It is surprising what can be achieved with a personal, voluntary approach, where the help goes to where the donors intended: to the poorest

Our link with DIT, the largest third level college in Ireland continued as usual in 2013. 12 students spent two weeks with us in Malawi over Easter. Two of the students, Craig and Stephen, stayed on a further month for their placement. They made a large contribution to all the activities of the projects, especially supporting students, teachers and Wells for Zoe staff members with IT training. Resulting from the ongoing training delivered by DIT students and other volunteer students, Zolo Zolo secondary school has been upgraded by the Education Ministry. A new school building, student accommodation and teachers houses are being provided by the Japanese Government as a result.

This is part of what has become our forte. We call it joining the dots. It's a simple kids game, bureaucrats can't or won't do it. Mary has perfected it.

Initially they taught students how to work on writing skills, then DIT, IT people came on board, later DIT students built a Library, then we sent in our nurse Alipher to work on HIV and AIDS teaching, Mary gave seminars to staff and Ministry inspectors on School Organization and Management and more of the dots were joined up.

Mary and Casca also kept up the pressure on teaching and reports by acting as careful guardians of the girls we pay fees for. Parent-teacher meetings were organized and a clear signal went out, about what standards were expected.

The Japanese (JICA) had funding for school building projects, the inspectorate had seen the transformation in Zola Zola and wow there were more tower cranes on the school site than most Malawians could count.

The Ministry give Mary all the credit, but most people don't see all the dots in the completed picture. Last dot joined up will be a fully equipped, state of the art Secondary school with a hostel for girls.

We see our link with DIT as one of providing opportunities, for the students and the Malawians they journey with. Mary works closely with Dr Catherine Bates in the area of Students Learning with Communities and is on their consultation board.

She will co- present a paper, with Dr Catherine Bates to the 6th Living Knowledge Conference in Copenhagen, *seeking to explore experiences with research and innovation for, with and by civil society, and develop policy recommendations and articulate research needs within community-based research and research focusing on societal challenges.*