

Still Here, Just!

2012 has been another successful year for W4Z in Malawi. We visited in March-April-May, July and September-October. The arrival of grandchildren Róisín and Jack shortened our visits a bit!! But they are well worth it.

DIT students joined us at Easter for their fifth Annual trip. The journalists and film makers visited our various projects and were part of our daily activities. A school library in Zola Zola secondary school was undertaken and completed with 5 placements from Social Care in Mountjoy Sq., who were with us for 6 weeks. Cassie (journalism) and Sinead (engineering) were with us for the third time and did workshops on writing skills with teachers and students in Zola Zola.

Summer time saw the return of our teachers for the, now, annual In-service programme. Fiona and Noreen were, back again and joined by Katie and Elaine. With the District Education Manager and Primary Ed. Examiners, we worked with Head Teachers and selected teachers to train the trainers for Continuous Professional Development programmes within the eleven participating schools. On my visit in Sept/Oct, I visited each school and the results were most encouraging. The 2013 Programme is on the planning board with a few new teachers already signed up!

I suppose it's not surprising that someone may think of our early demise, because many organisations like us do a bit and vanish. We now spend a little less than half our lives in Mzuzu, we make no great fuss about what we do when we're here and our fundraising is low key and almost underground.

Early this year we revamped our board to a more formal setting and now we have Dr Ann Burnell, Professor Emeritus in Biology NUIM, as Chair, Pierce Maher, Dr Maria Corrigan, Ciarán O'Leary acting head of the School of Computing, DIT, Kevin St, Liam Stuart, Caitriona Coyne, John Waters, Irish Times, Elaine Bolger, Mary and Myself. Since we are a 100% voluntary organisation we have found that this arrangement eases the load on us a bit.

Voluntary in W4Z always means no pay, everyone pays for travel, accommodation and all costs involved. There are no expenses of any kind or allowances paid by the charity, to anyone except our Malawi employees. We, as the founders, also pay all other expenses so that 100% of all public donations gets all the way to our projects in Malawi and Zambia.

Our gathering on Friday Nov 19 was a bit like our seventh Birthday, since it is seven years since we headed into the unknown, to a dot in the hills of Northern Malawi to meet an amazing man Br Aidan Clohessy, Head of St John of God Services in Mzuzu, to stay with him for two weeks and now 25 visits later we have the hospitality, wisdom, experience, advice and sound solid good sense of a Tipperary man who started from scratch and has built up a first World Service, including a Health Science University. In typical fashion, he attributes it all to the Grace of God. In his interview with John Waters he relates; that success in Malawi began by his piggybacking on the Diocese and St John's Hospital and that W4Z have succeeded as a result of doing the same with SJOG. "It's a good way to ensure success" he said. When asked further he said that you must have determination and heart and W4Z is built on those virtues.

We are so happy that he came, with provincial Br Lawrence, to cut the Birthday cake. Of course he got a great welcome from all our volunteers who know him and all he has achieved in Malawi. The various displays showed some of what we are now doing in Malawi and generated much surprise and delight, particularly for those who came in the earlier years. This little exhibition is now showing beside the Charity shop (72- 76) Queen St, Smithfield

News Update for 2012

WATER: Our factory has manufactured over 450 pumps and between Malawi and Zambia, we estimate that well over **100,000 villagers have got clean, safe drinking** water. We have also introduced a more formal training programme, in pump maintenance, for women who are burdened with the task of locating and hauling water on their heads, for long distances. We are doing trials on a modification of the pump to enable it to pump up-hill and for filling tanks and are also doing trials on a manual drilling rig.

PRIMARY EDUCATION: In our fourth year of teacher mentoring/in-service, a programme which now impacts almost 25,000 students in two zones, in the Northern region, working with the District Education Manager (DEM) and the inspectors. It's designed and implemented by excellent practitioners from Ireland using the Malawi Curriculum and is set for rapid expansion as some excellent Malawian teachers are being trained to be trainers. They've got a little lift

and they are ON-IT. For the future, the DEM and some excellent school heads are retiring age and coming to work for us.

PRESCHOOLS We now support 21 rural schools, mainly by training caregivers, and showing them how to use locally-made teaching aids. In terms of building schools, the community must make and build bricks and do all the labour, where W4Z supply only the roofing material and 3 bags of cement for the floor, an arrangement which ensures community ownership. Julie, who was with us last year and had just graduated in Early Childhood Education, in DIT, returned with boyfriend Allan (an expert on simple teaching aids), and enabled the standards in MICA, our model preschool to soar. Her training and expertise was a huge benefit to carers, parents and all those she met and worked with

FARMING

We now have four farms:

Farm 1: Here we do research and demonstration with about 100 plants, using OP seeds, no artificial, fertilizer of chemical pesticide. We save seeds and produced over 10,000 fruit and other trees.

Farm 2: This we use to produce seeds of four tree types, all nitrogen fixing, one for nutrient extraction (Musango), one used for pest control (Tephrosia), and two fast growing for forage (Sespania and Glircidia). This will enable us to supply seeds to over 250 local farmers and sell some to a seed company in Lilongwe

Farm 3: This is a citrus grove, but also for herb growing and researching forgotten African plants.

Farm 4: This is a depleted wilderness for research. A 20 year old man Kondgwani, with his wife and child will live here, improve the soil with agro-forestry, green manure, pigs, a cow, long crop rotation and sustainable tillage in a planned eight year ad(venture) to see what can be achieved with Monsanto, DuPont, Syngenta and the rest. We hope this will become a model for the future

OTHER

We also have a rural birthing centre, which doubles as a health and community centre
We support clubs for grandparents rearing grandchildren and home based care for HIV/AIDS sufferers, in areas where we work.

We have a fund for Hospital medicines and baby clothes for maternity wards in Mzuzu

We work with secondary schools and the two third level institutions.

We have project enabling girls to go to Secondary Schools, a few school libraries and one on the farm.

We have Adult education programmes and one for school gardens.

We work with women's Self Help clusters and also have a 23 acre co-operative model farm for women where we have made links with the Ministry of Agriculture, Agro-forestry and the Traditional Authorities. We bought this plot in April 2012, and already 25% of the loan has been repaid. This is an unheard-of concept of shares and women's ownership, in rural Malawi and is attracting much interest.

We have a bee keeping project with almost 100 hives and a market for the honey.

We supported a young nursing student, who will graduate in December and come to work with us.

We have a Charity shop in Smithfield run by another, unique crew of volunteers and friends of Zoë: Eileen, Bernie, Mary W, Lena, Mary G and Maria.

Happy Christmas to you all and a huge *Thank You* to all our *Wellies*, Board Members, Volunteers, Friends and especially to our family who continually encourage and mind us.

Mary + John xxxx

If you would like to tell your friends about two mad people you know:

Tell them that **1 Euro gives someone clean water for life in Malawi.**

They won't miss the Euro. The recipient's life will change completely, forever