

AFRICAN VISION MALAWI

'Creating Lasting Change'

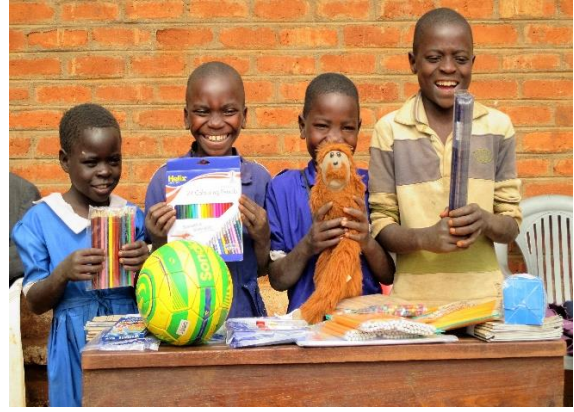
## School Partnership Visits June / July 2017



We have recently returned from a very successful trip to Malawi. In three weeks we visited nineteen schools, presenting them with packs of letters, books and information prepared by their partner school in the U.K. Without exception, at each school we visited we were greeted with genuine warmth and excitement. The theme this year is FOOD and packs contained some excellent resources that will be very useful to the Malawi teachers.



In return we were given packs of letters and drawings from our Malawi partners and I look forward to presenting these to our link schools in Assemblies early next term. Writing materials and resources in the village schools are extremely limited which makes these letters even more special and very much appreciated. You can see from the smiling faces in the photographs just how important both the giving and receiving of packs is to our Malawi schools.



As well as presenting the packs we also gave each school a selection of desperately needed stationery. I never fail to feel humbled and deeply moved when hearing the enormous cheers from the children when we hold up pencils, exercise books and rulers. A good education is really valued in Malawi as it is a chance to escape poverty when children leave school. This is so much harder to achieve if they don't have the correct tools and resources so these items that we tend to take for granted mean a lot and are so much appreciated. Many thanks to our U.K. schools who have raised funds and contributed towards these items of stationery. You have made many children and teachers very happy!



We also gave each school a football bought with money raised by Warriors Football Club in Preston, Lancashire. You can see how excited it made this teacher at Chitedze 11 Primary! The football strip was donated to M'lumbwira by Alexandra Infant School. With many thanks to them and to Warriors.



Some of our U.K. schools raided their lost property and donated unclaimed sweatshirts which we gave to orphans and vulnerable children at their link school. The smiling faces in the photographs tell it all! As well as giving these children a warm item of clothing to wear in the winter months, it forges an even stronger bond between schools. Thank you!

Although it is obvious that our Malawi schools still face massive challenges on a daily basis, we returned this year with a feeling of optimism and it was good to see positive changes in some schools. We saw evidence that children with special needs are now being encouraged to go to school and are being included in lessons. The little girl at the front of the photograph was born with no legs but she is very much included in everything at Chimphepo Primary. She is a clever girl and this has been recognised by the school who are giving her every opportunity to succeed as much as possible. We were delighted to see that she was not left out when we presented the school with a bag full of football shirts donated by Brentford Football Club who have a link with Hounslow Town Primary School. Many thanks to Brentford, and to Chimphepo for making this special young girl feel included. We very much hope that she will do well in her exams next year and will find people to sponsor her through secondary school.



We were also pleased to see that after two failed harvests, this year the rains have produced a much better harvest and some schools are beginning to run a feeding programme whereby children are given a meal two or three times a week. This encourages parents to send their children to school knowing they will be fed.

We were also pleased to see more evidence of schools trying to help themselves and only asking for a small amount of assistance which reminded us that African Vision Malawi is about helping people to help themselves, giving a 'hand up' and not a 'hand out'.

It was good to spend time with the wonderful, dedicated team working for AVM ( still known as Landirani in Malawi. ) We enjoyed working alongside Wezie Gwaluka, the new Education Manager who is doing a great job co-ordinating links between schools and running the school sponsorship scheme.

It was a great trip and as always, a real privilege to spend time with the wonderful, warm hearted people of Malawi.



**ZIKOMO KWAMBIRI**  
**(Thank you very much)**

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## Distributions - June 2017 Written by Gaynor Cook (Founder)

In general, our programmes and projects are aimed to be sustainable and we are in support of a 'hand-up' and not a 'hand-out', but our distributions are greatly needed by the orphan and vulnerable children in our area, and make a big difference to their lives.

I am often asked why we need to take knitted jumpers, blankets and hats to Malawi. The simple answer is that the Malawian winter is during June, July and August (being in the southern hemisphere) and while the days are often warm and sunny, the early mornings and evenings are very chilly. The nights can get down to 8 degrees! People living in the rural area we support sleep on mud floors so a blanket or an extra layer of clothing is invaluable. We (Sarah Parsloe, Eileen Speak and myself) were in Malawi for three weeks this year and visited some partnership schools in the early morning. Some of those schools have insufficient classrooms and many children are taught outside. We found groups of children huddled together trying to keep warm and concentrate on their lessons.



This year we visited 19 Primary schools, 8 CBCC's (pre-schools) and a maternity unit and distributed jumpers, blankets hats and warm clothing at each one. We have a wonderful team of knitters at All Saints Church in Kingston-upon-Thames and The Jolly Jumpers in Shropshire who knit all the year round to help and support the children in our area. Some of them also help to fund raise to enable us to pay the additional costs of getting the clothing out to Malawi. Three of us took 15 cases out this year which were full of warm clothing and pens, pencils, etc for the schools. Further donations were sent over by ship on 3 large pallets. If you would like to support us by holding a coffee morning or a cake stall to help us with these costs, please contact us on 0208 287 8169 or email [heather.palmer@africanvision.org.uk](mailto:heather.palmer@africanvision.org.uk)

A hand knitted blanket or jumper does not only give warmth to the children, but happiness that someone cares about them. Look how amazingly colourful they look and with very big smiles!



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