



**WINDOW OF HOPE FOUNDATION
MANGOCHI MALAWI**

Field Visitation report

September 2025

Kids School Project

2024/25 school year




**Quality Centre
Malawi**

Project Partners

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Window of Hope is grateful to Quality Centre for the support provided for the 15 school learners and the visitation project which started last year. The activities is a platform for interface with children and their guardians in their natural settings. It creates an opportunity to appreciate the lived experiences and understanding of their recommendations from an inductive perspective. Despite the challenges children face from various social impacts such as impact of COVID-19, climate change effects, devaluation and high-cost living alongside poor living conditions and poor harvest for many, the supported learners find a relief with the support and motivates them to continue learning and do their examinations. We are thankful to the children for their hard work and courage to still take the examinations despite the challenges, the foundation congratulates all learners who passed their exams and encourages those who did not to improve.

We are also thankful to guardians for encouraging the children to take their lessons despite the challenges faced. a motivation to our continued support. We are thankful to Chitowa upcoming community caretaker, “Mrs Yola” for her role she has played in supervising uptake of school activities by these children in the village. We congratulate those that have been selected to secondary schools and other colleges.

We are grateful to Quality centre Malawi in a very special way for this Kids project which is making significant value addition to promoting uptake of education by the vulnerable children in our society.

Window of Hope Foundation is implementing a kid's school project with financial support through Quality Centre Malawi in the Netherlands.

The project in 2021/22 school year supported 15 students at from ECD through primary school, secondary to University leveli project.



1. INTRODUCTION OF BURSARY PROGRAM AND THE VISITATION PROJECT

The bursary program which started in 2021 was developed to assist vulnerable students with necessary assistance in form of school support aids such as; fees, uniforms, books, and other school items. The program was first introduced in 2021 with 14 students from primary and secondary school education level and 1 at university level who finished her studies in 2022 and now she supports the implementation of the beneficiary project as role model. The number of learners the program has assisted also include varies kindergarten learners in Foundation's supported Early Childhood Education (ECD) centers. In the current school year under report, we also note the good will of the upcoming Chitowa care taker who has played a motivating role as a community supervisor for the uptake of school activities in Chitowa village the visitation project started in 2024, reaching out to children in their natural environments with support and interface space in promoting uptake of education by the project supported children.

1.2 Background of the organization

WoHF is a locally founded organization. It serves vulnerable populations by providing applicable support through innovative and evidence-based approaches within the concept of community empowerment. It focuses on health, education and community development. It was initiated in 2011; its goal is to reach vulnerable populations including those in hard-to-reach areas with basic support to enable them access health services and education in order to promote rural development.

1.3 Window of Hope foundation focused areas of focus issues:

1. Social-economic empowerment
2. Low access to education & high illiteracy rate
3. Supporting maternal death orphans
4. Community empowerment
5. Infrastructure development.

1.4 Window of Hope Thematic areas(4): these include:

- Community empowerment for ownership and increased uptake of basic services of health, education and development
- Implementing and modelling applicable innovative initiatives to break the cycle of poverty, ill health and illiteracy on grounds of equity, capacity building to reach out to vulnerable populations and contribute to development
- Sustainable development of rural areas through social investing and-economic empowerment activities and entrepreneurship.
- Access to education including early childhood development (by ECD), preschool, adult literacy and basic education for marginalized and vulnerable people.

Vision: Improved lives of the vulnerable populations, realized socio-economic development and developing rural communities.

Mission statement: WoHF is a charitable organization in the development of vulnerable populations in poor resourced countries like Malawi.

It exists to be a leading organization in providing applicable support to maternal death orphans in the district and wide. Motivating parents and children to invest in education from a tender age (ECD), promoting social-economic and community empowerment.

2. LIVING CONDITION OF CHILDREN BEING SUPPORTED BY QUALITY CENTER

2.1 School calendar year: 2024/2025

Quality center (NL) through Window of Hope Foundation (MW) has been supporting students from various villages in Malawi with Mangochi being the main targeted district. Window of Hope Foundation was tasked to identify needy students at various levels of education who could be accommodated in the support program with the aim of reducing the burden faced by guardians in providing basic education necessities to the students aiming at improving education and literacy in the country.

Table 1. List of learners

LEARNER'S NAME	SCHOOL
Daniel Luka	Chiwamba primary school
Violet Kachingwe	Chilipa II primary school
Alinafe Richard	Nansongore primary school
Samiyat Gavanala	Mweye primary school
Millika Musa	Msosa Primary school
Asiyatu Alufa	Msosa Full primary School
Yazidu Simoko	Makoka Primary School
Emmanuel Njikho	Geisha primary School
Mphatso Maleta	Chris academy primary school
Zawabu Saka	moved
John Njikho	Mchengautuwa CDSS
Agness Nkhoma	University of Livingstonia
Shaibu Doda	Mpitirira primary school
Adija Jawabu	Nikisi primary school
Shakila Lolesi	Kapile CDSS

2.2 Living conditions

An assessment conducted in 2024 revealed significant socio-economic challenges affecting children and their households in rural Mangochi which was still prevailing in 2025. Direct observations, supported by photographic evidence, and testimonies from the children themselves confirmed that living conditions were generally poor and often critically inadequate. Most households surveyed were found to be food insecure. This crisis stems from a combination of acute and chronic factors, primarily a recent poor harvest exacerbated by the prevailing and deep-rooted poverty. Housing conditions were a major concern, with many families residing in substandard dwellings. A critical issue noted was the severe lack of safe Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities; many homes had either no sanitation infrastructure or facilities that were hazardous to use. Furthermore, the task of fetching drinking water, which falls predominantly on young girls, involves travelling long distances, presenting serious safety risks and hindering educational opportunities.

Household vulnerability is compounded by fragile family structures. A common trend among older children was dependency on single parents or elderly guardians, who, despite their own poverty, consistently provided strong encouragement for school attendance. Despite these adversities, the children demonstrated a remarkable and unanimous motivation to continue their education. This motivation was directly attributed to the external support they received from quality center through Window of Hope Foundation. This support appears to be a crucial factor in sustaining hope for a better future.

The assessment also encountered limitations due to geographic isolation. Four children selected for the study could not be reached, as they lived in remote areas inaccessible to the assessment team. Communication via phone confirmed that their living conditions align with the same severe challenges identified in the reached cohort, including isolation and poor WASH facilities. The interaction with the learners underscores a stark reality of hardship but also a powerful resilience fueled by educational support. Addressing the fundamental issues of food security, WASH infrastructure, and household poverty remains critical to improving the overall well-being of children in this region.

Daniel Luka

Now 15, Daniel's situation has deteriorated. His mother's small-scale business collapsed due to hyperinflation, and agricultural piecework has vanished due to lean season and skyrocketing of fertilizer prices. The family now survives on informal labor and humanitarian food aid when available. Daniel's school attendance has become irregular as he is often required to help search for food or income. Despite the challenges Daniel's mother remains determined with Daniel's education, with the small upkeep (less than a dollar a day which is below poverty line) she manages to source some materials that help to provide food for the family.



Picture 1. Daniel Luka

Samiyat Gavanala

At aged 16, Samiyatu Gavanala a promising young female student at Mweye FP school has faced numerous challenges regarding her academic progress. With assistance from Quality center through Window of Hope Foundation, Samiyatu' guardian (Her mother) who has been struggling to provide for the family was forced to accept a marriage proposal for her. Samiyatu's mother, who used to be beneficial of social cash transfer, failed to provide adequate resources for the household and academic needs for her siblings.

El Nino season and the souring economic situation in the country have greatly affected many families in rural areas and the Gavanala's family has not been spared. According to the Headmaster at Mweye Full Primary school, Samiyatu reports increased anxiety and an inability to concentrate in school, fearing her family will not survive the "hungry season," which this year has lasted for months. The school also enrolled Samiyatu on another bursary program that was being implemented by (the community) to complement her academics needs with the assistance that quality center has been providing but this did not yield the desired outcome as Samiyatu opted for dropping out of school for an early marriage to reduce the household burden as it is higher than ever, during the time of visit we found only her grandmother and her sister as per attached photo.



Picture 2. Samiyatu Gavanala' sister at their household

Violet Kachingwe

Now 15, the risks for Violet have grown. Fetching for water from a distant borehole remains a daily, dangerous and tedious chore, with reported cases of gender-based violence remaining high in her area. The economic crisis means her grandmother finds even less work. Violet academic performance is directly linked to her exhaustion and the constant stress of her household's food insecurity. The lack of electricity also means she has no light to study by after dark. We found her gone to fetch water and we did not meet with her.

Milika Musa

Now 9, Milika's great potential is under severe threat. Her elderly grandmother is less able to compete for the scarce piecework available. Lack of proper sanitation facilities continues to affect her health and dignity, making consistent school attendance a challenge.

Her long walk to Msosa Primary School is now a daily test of endurance, undertaken without the sustenance of a morning meal. The absence of the school feeding program means there is no promised meal to power her through the lessons, turning the school day into a battle against hunger and exhaustion rather than a focus on learning.



Picture 3. We gave her items including a torch for light

School year, the rising cost of necessities like food and clothing means Milika's school uniform is in tatters (as it is the frequently worn dress), and maintaining personal hygiene is a constant struggle. This lack of proper clothing and access to clean, functional sanitation facilities at school continues to compromise her health and, critically, her dignity, leading to embarrassing absences that further disrupt her fragile education. However, with the encouragement and supervisory role by the community upcoming volunteer violet passed her exams.



Picture 4. Our upcoming community volunteer we work with in Chitowa with the kids being supported and supplies given



Picture 5. Kids on waiting list for support in Chitowa

Asiyatu Alufa

Asiyatu Alufa, now 12 years old and struggling to advance beyond Standard 2 at Msosa Primary School, embodies the profound impact of Malawi's ongoing economic crisis on rural education. Residing with her elderly grandmother in Msosa Village, TA Mponda, her household's survival hinges on irregular and poorly paid *ganyu* (piecework), the value of which has been decimated by rampant inflation. The price of a single basin of maize now exceeds what her grandmother can earn in days, turning a simple meal into a daily uncertainty.

The long walk to school, undertaken without breakfast, is a battle against fatigue before lessons even begin. Her academic performance, once promising, is now stagnating as hunger pangs drown out the teacher's voice.



Picture 6. Asiyatu Alufa; We gave her the supplies and a torch

Furthermore, the dream of education is being suffocated by indirect costs, Asiyatu often shares or goes without, forcing her to memorize lessons she cannot practice. The school's crumbling infrastructure compounds these issues; leaking roofs render classrooms muddy and unusable after a storm, while the lack of clean water and safe latrines perpetuates a cycle of waterborne illnesses, leading to extended absences that she can ill-afford.



Picture 7. Msosa primary school

These conditions directly translate into profound academic challenges for the students. The inadequate infrastructure creates a learning environment that is fundamentally unconducive to education. During intense heat, the iron roofs make classrooms unbearably stuffy, while in the cool season or during rains, the open and degraded walls offer little insulation, leading to discomfort and distraction. The potential for flooding and leaks means that classrooms can become unusable, leading to frequent lesson cancellations and a disrupted academic calendar. The lack of formal windows and doors also poses security issues for storing any learning materials and fails to shield lessons from external noise and interruptions. Msosa primary school where Asiyatu Alufa and Milika Mussah learn.

Shaibu Doda

At 16, Shaibu Doda has achieved a remarkable academic feat, finishing 5th out of 87 students in his Standard 7 examinations at Mpitilila Primary School. This success, however, is a bittersweet victory. This testament to academic potential is being swiftly overtaken by a harsh economic reality. The persistent economic collapse in Malawi has tightened its grip on his family. Shaibu's grandmother, now increasingly frail, can no longer contribute to the household, and the responsibility of being the sole breadwinner falls entirely on his young shoulders. The *ganyu* (informal piecework) he once did has become scarcer and even more exploitative. To put food on the table, Shaibu has been forced into riskier informal work, including laboring in agricultural fields where conditions are harsh and pay is often



Picture 8. Shaibu's household and sanitation facility (bathroom)

withheld, and sometimes venturing into fishing in dams within Mpitilira fishing community. Shaibu lives in the similar poor housing structures and sanitation facilities.

Agnes Nkhoma

Agnes Nkhoma, a third-year student at Livingstonia University, stands as a crucial beacon of hope, demonstrating that sustained long-term investment can yield extraordinary results even in the most difficult times. Her success story, however, is not one of easy triumph but of navigating a perfect storm of economic pressures that define higher education in Malawi today.

As the only daughter in a family dependent on her retired truck driver father, Agnes's journey has always been perilous. Devaluation of the Kwacha has severely affected her father's means of financing the family, pushing the family's financial security to the brink. To bridge the gap, Agnes continues to undertake demanding piecework jobs during holidays, but the money earned is increasingly swallowed by rampant inflation. The cost of essential academic materials from textbooks to internet data for research has skyrocketed, turning every semester into a financial obstacle. However, with the support of fees she gets, she is motivated and works hard. Interestingly she is doing very well since she started her university education she always passes. This is stimulant to fellow students in this cohort and to the foundation a pride. WoHF has sourced her a second-hand laptop for her studies



Picture 9. Agenes composed and thankful

The assistance from the Quality Centre has been transformative, allowing her to focus on her studies rather than pure survival. Yet, the broader economic challenges facing university students are unavoidable. Campus life is marked by frequent, over soaring accommodation fees and meal costs. Furthermore, the very environment for innovation that university should foster is stifled. While Agnes has ideas leveraging her degree implementing them seems a distant dream. Access to funding, reliable internet for academic and market research, and mentorship on scaling ideas is scarce. Innovative thought is often forced to take a backseat to the immediate, overwhelming pressure of academic fees and personal sustenance.

Agnes's academic journey, which once seemed impossible, is now a testament to her resilience. Yet her story also highlights a critical reality: for Malawi's youth, achieving a degree is only half the battle. The greater challenge lies in an economy that struggles to absorb their talents and where the spark of innovation is too often extinguished by the daily struggle for basic needs. Her success is a powerful reminder that supporting a student means not just paying their fees but also nurturing the ecosystem that allows their ideas to flourish after graduation. Agnes is innovative and on tract.



Agnes I am University scholar! Like I am dreaming!! I am very grateful

Emmanuel Njikho,

Emmanuel Njikho's success in passing the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) examinations is a powerful testament to his dedication and, crucially, the life-changing impact of consistent support through the Window of Hope program from Quality Centre. In the face of a severely strained national education system, where overcrowded classrooms and teacher shortages are the norm, his achievement shines even brighter.

Emmanuel's journey to this point was fraught with obstacles common to many. The economic pressures of the 2024/2025 period meant that the simple necessities for exam preparation, extra

exercise books, pens, and a reliable place to study after dark, were far from guaranteed for his family. However, the comprehensive support from the Quality Centre provided a vital buffer against these pressures. The provision of learning materials, a safe space for study (solar lamps), and academic guidance created a stable foundation upon which his hard work could yield results. His pass is not just a personal victory; it is a clear showcase of how strategic, external investment in a child's education can counteract the destabilizing effects of poverty and create a tangible window of hope for a brighter future. As Emmanuel prepares to transition to secondary school, his success stands as a compelling argument for the necessity of continued investment, ensuring that this critical milestone becomes a steppingstone, rather than the end, of his educational journey.



"Thank you my sponsors, I have passed my primary education and I am going to secondary school , thank you for supporting"

Mphatso Maleta,

Mphatso Maleta now 9 years old and in std 5. He is doing fine his inspiration to becoming a doctor keep growing. During this visit we had a good discussion with him on his dream to becoming a doctor relating to his performance in school. "I work hard and I have started doing well in science subjects because I will become a doctor" he said. I passed well I was position 5

His parents expressed that, because he is on the support they have no fees challenges, they are only looking into food, and sanatory costs. They expressed their gratefulness for the Quality centre support. Mphatso is working hard and he is at a good with the support, we could not manage by ourselves. He speaks good English.

Mphatso said “Viva Window of Hope! Viva Quality Centre! I can communicate in English. I thank you for supporting me”



“I am very happy with the support I will be a doctor soon”

John Njikho, Zawabu Saka

These beneficiaries face the same universal challenges of acute food insecurity, lack of necessities, and immense pressure to abandon their education for immediate survival activities. Their specific circumstances will be detailed in a follow-up report as we work to assess the full impact of the crisis on each household. These were not found during the visit, Zawanda moved out of our study site.

2.3 Challenges

2.3.1 The Compound Crisis: Food Insecurity & Climate Shocks

The defining challenge of 2025 is no longer chronic poverty but acute crisis. The failed rains have led to a national food emergency. For our beneficiaries, this means:

- **Severe Hunger:** Most families are surviving on one meal a day, often lacking nutritional value. This directly impacts a child's cognitive ability and concentration.
- **Livelihood Collapse:** The usual safety net of agricultural piecework has disappeared, pushing families into desperate survival strategies.
- **Secondary Dropouts:** Increased pressure on children to contribute to household income or food procurement, leading to absenteeism and drop-outs.

2.3.2 The Collapse of Basic Services

Economic pressures have strained public services, exacerbating existing problems:

- **WASH Crisis:** Intermittent piped water and broken boreholes have increased the time burden, primarily on girls, fetch water, exposing them to greater risks. Cholera outbreaks remain a persistent threat. Poorly constructed latrines continue to be a major health hazard.
- **Health Access:** The cost of healthcare and transportation to clinics is now prohibitive for most families, meaning mild illnesses often go untreated, with serious conditions! no choice but to still go to hospital though in a most challenging way and at times coming back with no treat because they had no money to buy the recommended treatment
- **Educational Value:** In the face of immediate hunger, the long-term value of education is harder for families to prioritize, threatening the gains made by the bursary program.
- **Poor Housing:** Overcrowded, grass-thatched houses (like that of Samiyatu Gavanala's family of 6) or Shaibu which are the same for almost all of these children offer poor protection from the elements and contribute to the spread of disease. An enemy to health and wellbeing as lamented by one guardian and the Chitowa community volunteer.

3.0 CONCLUSION & 2025 STRATEGIC SHIFT

This year's visitation revealed a stark new reality. The support for school fees, while still essential, is not sufficient to keep a child in school. Issues such as; crises of hunger, climate shock and poor sanitation significantly contribute to children uptake of education, at times they become primary barriers to education, children spent more time sourcing resources to providing for the family through piece work, and girls providing water for households or having stressful nights from the poor housing facilities. These result in going to school late or absenting themselves from school.

The 1-to-1 dialogues with the learners and their guardians were filled with both resilience and a palpable sense of anxiety about the future. While the support has undoubtedly kept these students enrolled, the challenges have escalated faster than our current model can address. The approach creates a space/platform for us to learn the real-life live experiences that will be used to improve our model "Kids school project".

Therefore, our conclusion and recommendation for the way forward is a **strategic shift to integrated programming**. We recommend safeguarding our educational investment through integration of humanitarian needs investments. Seemingly an education-evidence need-based humanitarian solutions of the recruited children and their households. This necessitates exploring the feasibility of:

1. **Emergency School Feeding:** Providing a daily meal at school to incentivize attendance and improve concentration.
2. **Voucher Systems:** For guardians, providing access to essential food and non-food items to reduce the pressure on the child to work.
3. **Climate-Smart Agriculture Training:** Supporting guardian groups with seeds and techniques for drought-resistant crops to build future resilience.
4. **Targeted WASH Interventions:** Repairing boreholes and constructing improved, safer latrine facilities at schools and in key communities.
5. **House hold for school:** improving the living environment with supplies such as light applies like solar lighting, simple bed with beddings and roofing improvements

The partnership with Quality Centre has always been more vital in addressing the needs with applicable approaches in a participatory approach "engaging the beneficiaries in solving problems they face. By adapting to these harsh new challenges, we can ensure that our shared goal of educating Malawi's most vulnerable children remains achievable. We think of acting now to prevent a lost generation and building in our alumni. The Radio jingles is a step towards building

On the voices of the learners *Refer version 1. Radio jingles*. Here attached.

Visiting team pictures



The visit was facilitated by Emmanuel Kumwanje, Mary Ngulube Linda Pasowantha and