



Report of the 2019 visit to Malawi



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Deaf Care Foundation, the Netherlands

Chiara Somers en Annemiek Joosten

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1- Introduction

The Deaf Care Foundation in the Netherlands is a non-profit organization (Stichting Dovenzorg Malawi). It was set up in 2006 by former colleagues of Br. Wladimir (Henk van Heck) to enable him to continue his work in Malawi **on assisting deaf children in Mua, Mountainview and Maryview** and to assist the poorest in the Nguludi area (Home Based Care).

During a long period the Deaf Care Foundation has been working with Brother Henry as a contact person from Malawi. He was responsible for the projects carried out with financial support from the Netherlands. When Br. Wladimir passed away, his work could therefore easily be continued. After the sudden passing away of Br. Henry in December 2015, the Deaf Care Foundation continued her financial support in collaboration with the FIC Brothers, in particular brother Mark Adamah. FIC (Fratres Immaculata Conceptae) is a monastic order, based in The Netherlands.

Mrs. Esther van Onna also continued the Home Based Care project, calling it WladiCare. The Deaf Care Foundation assists Esther in finding sponsors, so she can provide basic medical care and food (likunipala and powdered baby milk) to the poorest people in the Nguludi area.

The board of the Deaf Care Foundation consists of 10 members. Every 2 to 3 years a few board members visit the brothers of FIC and the deaf schools in Malawi. On their visit, the board wants to receive an impression of the projects they financed and to determine if progress has been achieved. And to sustain a good relationship with the FIC brothers and management of the schools.

In 2019, there were other important reasons to visit Malawi. In December 2018, there had been a change in the board of FIC Malawi and as a result of that Brother Mark Adamah was assigned a new function. Because of these changes, it was necessary for the Deaf Care Foundation to get in touch with the new management and to strengthen the contact between the foundation and FIC Malawi. And to know who would be the new contact person for the Deaf Care Foundation and under what circumstances the necessary collaboration would take place. The board members in the Netherlands were worried about the continuation of the running projects and the start and supervision of possible new projects in the future.

Besides sustaining and strengthening the relationship with the brothers FIC, the board members in the Netherlands wanted to learn more about the management of the schools. With questions as : "Which responsibilities are assigned to the brothers FIC and which to the headmasters of the schools, which organizations are involved in the schools and what are they doing, etc." By visiting the schools, the board also hoped to get a better and actual view on the education and current situation of the deaf students and to get inspired to fund possible new projects.

The working visit to Malawi was carried out by Mrs. Chiara Somers and Mrs. Annemiek Chimwemwe Joosten, both board members of the Deaf Care Foundation. Both persons have visited the deaf schools before. On the basis of their visit, this report was written for the benefit of the management of the congregation in Malawi and Maastricht.

Stichting Dovenzorg Malawi

2 - FIC Malawi

On April 24th, Chiara and Chimwemwe arrived in Maryview and were welcomed by the brothers of FIC. Brother Lawrence Sitima arranged a meeting in the afternoon, in which the expectations of the Deaf Care Foundation around the collaboration with FIC were discussed, as well as how to implement these expectations. In addition, a better understanding was gained about the work of the brothers FIC, as well as a much better insight in the problems the brothers are facing in Malawi. It also seems that the brothers FIC have acquired a better image of what the Deaf Care Foundation needs in order to continue the collaboration.



From left to right and top to bottom.

Annemiek Chimwemwe Joosten, Trustful Machande, Mark Adamah, Lawrence Sitima, Chiara Somers, Ivo Heartubun, Thomas Chikoti, Lawrence Nkonde, Peter Nthulula, Andrew Makocho.

Income Generating Activities (IGA) Committee

According to previous correspondence between Mr. Piet Wientjes (chairman of the Deaf Care Foundation) and Brother Lawrence Sitima, new projects will be suggested by the Income Generating Activities (IGA) Committee. Their responsibilities are 1) Maintenance of the St. Patrick Secondary School, of Mitengo Technical College and of the deaf schools in Maryview, Mountainview and Mua and 2) Local fundraising.

Name	e-Mail	Phone
Lawrence Sitima	lawrencsitima2019@gmail.com	+265 998112100
Mark Adamah	markadamah@yahoo.com	+265 888672606
Peter Nthulula	nthululapeter@yahoo.com	+265 992224778
Ivo Heartubun	ivowatsin@gmail.com	+265 994746170
Thomas Chikoti	btrchikoti@yahoo.com	+265 882989389

Peter Nthulula is the chairman of the IGA committee and will be the contact person for the Deaf Care Foundation. Br. Adamah, Br. Nthulula and Br. Chikoti are responsible for carrying out the projects, whereas Br. Heartubun is in charge of finances. Br. Sitima will keep the overview, since he is the general manager of FIC Malawi. The IGA committee gathers every three months. Important updates will be communicated to Mrs. Chimwemwe, either through WhatsApp or e-Mail.

Educational Committee

The Deaf Care Foundation is also willing to fund projects for improving education for deaf students. For educational purposes they can turn to the Educational Committee. This Committee is responsible for the quality of education, learning materials and for example for the appointment of teachers and headmasters. The chairman of the Educational Committee is Br. Makocho, which makes him the contact person for projects within deaf education.

Name	e-Mail	Phonenumber
Peter Nthulula	nthululapeter@yahoo.com	+265 992224778
Andrew Makocho	makochoandrew@yahoo.com	+265 991508152
Thomas Chikoti	btrchikoti@yahoo.com	+265 882989389
Pascal Mtuwana	-	-

Communication between the Netherlands and Malawi

The Deaf Care Foundations wants to emphasize the importance of a good relationship between Malawi and the Netherlands, like it was before with Brother Mark Adamah. He has always been very helpful and organized and acted according to the needs of the Dutch sponsors.

The contact person from the Deaf Care Foundation is Annemiek Chimwemwe Joosten.
WhatsApp: +31649791310 e-Mail: annemiekjoosten@hotmail.com

The new contact person for projects around the maintenance and renovation of the buildings (schools and hostels) will be Peter Nthulula. For educational purposes, contact will go via Andrew Makocho. As soon as finances are involved, Chimwemwe will send a message to Ivo Heartubun in which is stated what amount of money is transferred and for what purpose. All correspondence will be copied to Br. Lawrence Sitima to create transparency, to keep the overview and to inform others about important decisions.

What is needed to continue good collaboration?

1. Frequent contact through WhatsApp or e-Mail.
2. Clear proposals for new projects, in which is stated why this project is important/necessary and an elaborate quotation from the person who is carrying out the project (if possible photos of the current situation).
3. The Deaf Care Foundation will discuss the projects and decides which project will be funded.. If a positive decision is made, DFC will try to find sponsors as soon as possible and will transfer money to FIC Malawi.
4. Frequent updates about the project through WhatsApp or e-Mail, including **photos**.
Without photos, it is impossible to get funding from the Netherlands!
5. Sometimes a thank you letter appreciated (if so, Chimwemwe will ask for it).

Difficulties in managing the deaf schools in Malawi

During the meeting, the brothers FIC explained the difficulties they face concerning the management of the deaf schools. The biggest problem is the uncertainty as to how much money the headmasters of the schools are receiving from different organizations. Are these earmarked contributions where donors demand their contribution is spent on certain things? Are all donations registered by the school management? Brothers FIC want more transparency.

Brothers FIC are the proprietors of the schools. Right now, they do not have enough knowledge about what is needed in the schools. Therefore in February 2019, the brothers FIC have gathered with the headmasters of the three schools to explain the importance of good registration of money coming in and going out. They have asked the headmasters to be transparent to the brothers and to explain which organizations are supporting the schools. Brothers FIC are making a list of all of the different organizations and income generating projects. They have agreed to send this list to the Deaf Care Foundation, to improve collaboration between FIC Malawi and the Netherlands and to improve collaboration between organizations (e.g. funding a project together).

The income generating projects that the brothers have knowledge of:

- * Maryview – maize mill and hostels for the University students
- * Mountainview – cows, pigs and chickens
- * Mua – irrigation project World Food Program, maize mill and plot in Abraham’s village.

Brother Sitima is not satisfied with the fact that nothing has been done with the pilot in Abraham’s village. The maize mill is working, but the maize mill from a neighbor is better and therefore gets most customers. The brothers FIC will find out what the school management in Mua is planning to do with the pilot to make it an income generating project and then report this to Chimwemwe in the Netherlands.

Since 2010 the school management has asked for boarding fees. Before that, all costs were paid by brothers FIC. Since the number of (Dutch) brothers decreased and less money from abroad came, it has been impossible to pay all costs.

Mountainview:	Boarding fees: 10.000 MwK per term	Grant: unknown
Maryview	Boarding fees: 15.000 MwK per term	Grant: unknown
Mua:	Boarding fees: 18.000 MwK per term	Grant:400.000MwK a month

In some schools, students also need to bring packs of sugar (3) and a pail.

The brothers were also forced to start asking the teachers to pay house rent since 2014, but that was strongly opposed by many teachers. The teachers did not pay anything during years and they are not willing to pay the rent. Little by little the brothers FIC see that more teachers pay (some of the) rent. Sanctions are impossible, since there is a big shortage of teachers in deaf education.

Responsibilities FIC

Brothers FIC are responsible for the schools, hostels, convents, kitchen and compound of the schools. The headmaster/mistress is responsible for managing his or her school and does so with committees including teachers and sisters (e.g.. sports committee, food committee).

Running costs are the responsibilities of the school management. It is unclear how much these costs are per school and presumably many schools receive donations to assist them in paying these bills. Running costs are usually paid through boarding fees (determined by Parent Teacher Association) and the grant from the Malawi government. The running costs include the water and electricity bills, additional learning materials and supporting staff (watchman, sisters SBVM, cooks). The sisters therefore are working under the supervision of the brothers and do not operate on their own.

3 - Maryview

The school Maryview was visited on April 24th, while being accompanied by Brother Heartubun. Currently there are 172 students in Maryview. Mr. James Khuku has been headmaster for 13 years. He welcomed Chiara and Chimwemwe in his office and then took time to show them around.

Headmaster James Khuku: +265 888545586 en +265 997205073
jameskhuku7@gmail.com

Proposals from James Khuku

1. Vocational Training
 - James Khuku suggested already 3 years ago the start of vocational training to Yos and Monique (members of the board of Deaf Care Foundation). They asked him at the time to write a proposal, which he unfortunately never did. There are empty classrooms that could be used for vocational training and there are teachers who are willing and capable to teach carpentry and tailoring, but there is a lack of funding for materials.
 - James Khuku agreed in sending Chimwemwe a proposal for this project within 3 weeks. She reminded him in May 2019 3 weeks after the visit, but again, no response.
2. Maintenance of the school
 - Repairing and renewing the ceiling, and more important to also maintain the roof with varnish to prevent leakage.
 - Tables and chairs and horseshoe benches.
3. Water pump
 - Brother Heartubun suggests to do something about the water system, since one of the boreholes has run out of water. A submersible pump, control unit, pipes and pipe fittings are needed to provide water for all hostels. There is already a new borehole (100 meter) and a transformer.

Projects Deaf Care Foundation

The pit latrines are looking good. The doors were removed temporarily because of the holidays, since there is a high risk of theft. As soon as the students will return to school, the doors will be placed back.

General impression

- The school and compound looks clean and neat.
- Ceilings and tables and chairs in main school are necessary.
- Preschool had beautiful furniture, donated by the government.
- Hostels look good. Hostel 5 was very clean and organized: two girls per dorm and most of them had a desk and extra chair. Some mosquito nets present. The boys from hostel 6 were not cleaning their hostel, maybe due to lack of supervision?
- There is a football field, netball field and some swings. Swings might need some paint, but are overall in good condition.
- Plenty of small vegetable gardens around the compound.

Photo impression Maryview



4 - Mountainview

The school Mountainview was visited on April 24th, while accompanied by Brother Mark Adamah. Currently there are 155 students in Mountainview. Jere Modester is the headmistress and welcomed Chiara and Chimwemwe in her office. She was very eager to show them around and was well aware of all the projects that were financed by the Deaf Care Foundation.

Jere Modester +265 880212599
 modester.jere@gmail.com

Proposals from Modester Jere

1. Biogas
 - Mountainview has cattle and could therefore use the feces to transform into biogas, instead of buying and cutting firewood.
2. Happy Classrooms in main school

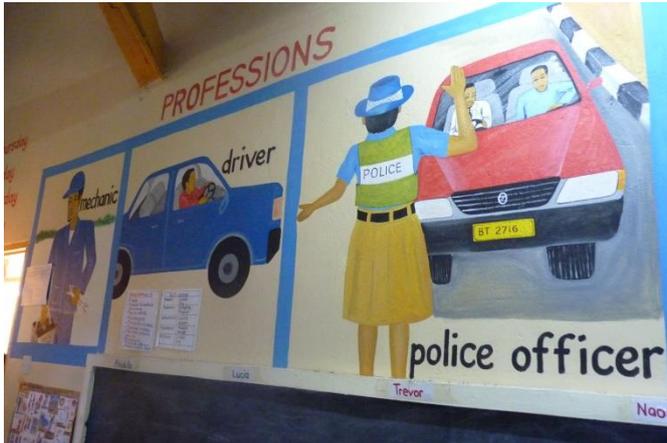
Projects Deaf Care Foundation

The finalized projects in Mountainview were visited together with the sisters, the headmistress and Br. Mark Adamah. The renovation of the convent and hostel 1 and 2 is clearly visible and the income generating project (pig stable) looks good. According to the sisters, some of the pigs died (still 10 left) due to lack of food. The sisters could not explain how they were using the pigs as an income generating project. Some of the teachers' houses were damaged due to heavy wind and rain and were renovated through funding from the Netherlands. All the houses were in great shape again. The Happy Classrooms in Preschool were beautiful and do contribute to a better learning environment.

General impression

- The school, hostels and compound look clean and neat.
- There are five active sisters taking care of the children.
- All classes in the main building have self-made educational posters.
- Vocational training is well organized and paid by a volunteer from Germany. It is clear how vocational training works as an income generating project. The school sells products, mostly in tin and carpentry, and buy new materials from the profit.
- Preschool and main school have enough tables and chairs.
- Hostels look organized. There are dining areas, enough space and the bathrooms look clean. There are also quite a few mosquito nets.
- There are small vegetable gardens around the compound.
- There is a solar system for each hostel.
- Mrs. Jere Modester is a very active headmistress with progressive ideas on to improve the situation in Mountainview. It will be a difficult job to replace her. Mountainview relies on her ability to manage everything.

Photo impression Mountainview



5 - Mua

The school Mua was visited on April 29th, while accompanied by Brother Mark Adamah. There are between 190 and 200 students in Mua. Henry Chiwaya is the headmaster and could not tell the exact amount. He was not around when Chiara and Chimwemwe arrived in Mua, despite previous contact announcing their visit. The deputy headmistress, Patricia Zangaphe, was called by the sisters to welcome us and she, together with Br. Mark, showed the projects that were financed by the Deaf Care Foundation. Two days later, Chiara and Chimwemwe met Henry Chiwaya by visiting his house. He answered a few questions in his office but was not there when school opened and when Chiara and Chimwemwe had to say goodbye.

Contactgegevens Henry Chiwaya

+265 999438898

hchiwaya22@gmail.com

Proposals from Henry Chiwaya

1. Beds

- Many children sleep on the ground (e.g. all boys from hostel 6), some of the small boys and girls share beds.

2. Tables and chairs in main school and preschool

- All classes in preschool have only a horseshoe bench, and no other furniture.
- The main school does not have enough tables and chairs. Many children share a chair or take turns sitting down.

3. Solar systems

- The water pump is using electricity, but there are often electricity problems in Mua. A water pump on solar energy might be a solution, possibly like the system in Mountainview.

Projects Deaf Care Foundation

Renovations of hostel 6 and 4 have been very successful. It has been a great improvement compared to what it was before. The toilets and showers look completely different, at the time of visiting it was only slightly smelly since there had not been any running water for weeks (lack of electricity). Brother Mark showed the new pipelines and pointed out everything that was done in Mua, which has been a lot. It was good seeing the differences, also including the Happy Classrooms in Preschool.

General impression hostels

- There are only four active sisters to take care of 200 children, which seems to be an impossible task. The sisters explain that it is a difficult job to supervise all children and that they need extra hands, preferably a man for the boys in hostel 6.
- The food for the children was really bad during the visit (e.g. bean flies).
- Hostel 1 and 2 look pretty good, except the fact that they are cramped with beds, which makes it difficult to walk in the hostel and there is no extra space, e.g. hostel 1 has room for 26 beds which need to sleep 31 children. All children in hostel 1 and 2 have mosquito nets, recently donated by another organization.
- Hostel 3 is very small and feels claustrophobic. The bunk beds are next to each other and leave no space. Toilets and showers are old and there are no mosquito nets.

- Hostel 4 is beautifully renovated and is more spacious than the other hostels. Most of the beds are broken and there is no place to put luggage or clothes. No mosquito nets.
- Hostel 5 is well organized and cleaned by the girls. There are 2 or 3 girls per dorm, which means there's one bunkbed and one girl sleeps on the floor. No mosquito nets.
- Hostel 6 is beautifully renovated. The hostel looks a lot bigger due to removing some walls. This is the only hostel that has a dining place. There are no beds and no mosquito nets.
- The children in Mua eat outside on the floor. There are no tables and chairs and there is no room for a dining. The old dining is too close to the river and therefore too dangerous since the buildings might collapse in the future.
- The kitchen has two broken cooking systems. The cooks therefore use a wooden fire in a fairly closed area, which is not good for their health since the smoke can hardly leave the room.
- The television room is too small for 200 children and most of the windows are broken, probably because children try to watch from outside.
- There's a minibus donated by Schols Foundations, which can only be used by the sisters. None of the sisters now working in Mua has a driving license.
- The renovations of the chapel into a hostel have started, funded by an organization from San Marino. It is unclear which students will move to the former chapel.

General impression school

- There is a significant shortage of tables and chairs in the main school and preschool.
- There is also a lack of desks for the teachers and the chalkboards are in very bad condition.
- Most of the Louvre-windows are broken.
- Ceilings in preschool and in some hostels need to be renovated.
- There is a beautiful computer room, which is managed by Maurice Manda (teacher STD7) and a Japanese student who voluntarily teaches IT.
- There are two hardly used, empty classrooms and there are several small rooms that are not used (for example because the key was lost).
- Vocational Training is well organized. Mr. Collins is teaching carpentry and Mrs Chrissy Siwinda is teaching tailoring. Both are deaf and are role models for the children. They are paid by an organization from Texas, USA. A different organization, Friends of Mua, will soon provide extra materials for tailoring.
- Mua has a beautiful irrigation project, sponsored by the World Food Program. The employees working in the garden are paid by WFP.
- The headmaster mr. Chiwaya does not seem really interested in the problems and possible solutions of Mua.

Photo impression Mua



6 - Conclusion

In general, the delegation has had a good time in Malawi. Besides the kind hospitality and good conversations, we enjoyed to see the changes that the new general management of FIC is trying to achieve. We have heard their ideas and actions about how to improve the current situation. They are showing eagerness to move forward and make a difference. However, without funding from abroad it is difficult for FIC Malawi to maintain the buildings and to improve the quality of education and the living standard for the deaf students.

The ongoing project that the Deaf Care Foundation was worried about (furniture for Mountainview) has been restarted and is almost finished. Brother Peter showed Chiara and Chimwemwe around in the FIC workshop and pictures of the furniture were sent by the headmistress of Mountainview shortly after our stay. We were happy to receive the pictures, but it is also important that we receive pictures from the brothers FIC, since they are in charge of the project.

The delegation was surprised by the differences between the deaf schools. Compared to Maryview and Mountainview, Mua school for the Deaf was far behind in terms of facilities for the students. There had been little improvement in spite of the financial support of the Deaf Care Foundation, and a lot still needs to be done. We were very disappointed seeing the children sleeping on the floor, cramped into hostels with not enough room for beds, having no tables and chairs in their hostels and sitting on the floor during lessons in school. The lack of electricity and water made the situation even worse, and we hope this is temporary.

We know the previous headmaster was not a good administrator, so we were happy to meet the new headmaster. Unfortunately, the headmaster of the school did not seem to be very active during our stay. The deputy headmistress and some teachers answered most of our questions. Mua school for the deaf accepts too many students, but is incapable of providing them a bed or good quality of food. Even though the boarding fees are much higher compared to the other schools and there is a beautiful irrigation project funded by WFP. The sisters cannot take care of this big quantity of children. Extra (deaf) caretakers are necessary to teach the children how to maintain the hostels and the compound and how to take good care of themselves and the buildings. With good supervision, buildings will last longer and renovation costs will be less.

We do not understand why the differences are this big and we strongly advise the brothers FIC to spend more time in Mua. Without supervision from the brothers FIC, Mua cannot change. The Deaf Care Foundation will put first priority in improving the living standard for deaf children in Mua and recommend the brothers FIC to shift their focus to Mua school for the deaf.

In conclusion, The Deaf Care Foundation is looking forward to work together with FIC again, which means Chimwemwe will stay in regular contact with (mostly) Br. Peter Nthulula. Without this contact, proposals and frequent updates with photos, it will unfortunately not be possible to continue our collaboration.

Stichting Dovenzorg Malawi – Deaf Care Foundation

Annemiek Joosten and Chiara Somers, *June 2019*