

2016 is soon coming to an end and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors and friends who have continuously supported Bloom.

Economy: We still have problems with our economy and we hope that our donors and friends will continue to help us again this coming year. We have many challenges some of which include obtaining and purchasing school materials. Just like the rest of the world, food prices keep on rising in Malawi and this has created many difficulties for the BLOOM Centre, one of which is maintaining the food budget for the feeding project. In addition, the local currency, Malawi Kwacha, is losing its value against the United States Dollar. This makes food prices unstable and difficult for us to keep the same budget month after month.

Operations: The 15 chiefs (local village leaders) are participating even more than before, and this has led to an increased activity from both the children and adults in the 15 villages that BLOOM covers. Their work is mostly concentrated on the Maize Farming project. 2016 is the second year in a row where we have planted our own maize for consumption at the BLOOM Centre, and this has significantly reduced the need for buying bags of maize at expensive prices. We have approximately 4 hectares of land. In 2016 we had big challenges as there was too much rain in the beginning which resulted in our maize field being flooded. Then the rains stopped and never came back and our maize dried out. Despite all these natural difficulties, we managed to harvest 165 bags of maize weighing 50 kg each which the Centre is using at the moment. We are hoping to harvest 250 bags of maize during the 2017 harvesting season if the weather is good. The maize field is already prepared and what remains is to plant the maize when the rains come in December. In 2016 we encouraged the Centre to cultivate its own vegetables. They have done this two times and the cost of buying vegetables at the market has since been reduced. We are pleased to inform all our donors that we also have 16 goats and soon we can use these to supplement the diet for the children.



BLOOM maize field ready for planting

Visitors: We are happy that BLOOM continues to attract visitors from Norway. In October Alf and Irene Skeime from Snartemo in West-Agder, Norway visited the Centre together with Christian Lebie, Karen Vanessa, their lovely 2 year old daughter Noelle M. Lebie, Chiletso Maggie Skeime and Stian Skeime from Oslo. Lars and Isabel Bache Nielsen were also there as usual. During this visit, we continued to distribute the remaining clothes that were sent with the container in 2014. There were still so many clothes that needed distribution. Thank you to all that donated different items when the container was sent from Norway and to those that have donated after this.



Alf is meeting the kids



Kindergarten



Welcome dance with BLOOM kids

Kaja Elise Gresko also visited the BLOOM center on the 11th of November this year. She made a donation of school books and other school materials. This gift was financed by her family and friends in Norway. The donation has come at a time when we were struggling to buy new books and other necessary materials for the school, so this was wonderful. As you can see from the pictures below, it was fun to see her at the BLOOM Centre.



Kaja meeting the local chiefs



She meet children in front of the assembly building



Together with the children in the kindergarten

Girls Education is one of the main focuses everywhere including the BLOOM Centre. In Malawi just like the rest of the world, boys get more freedom, priority and attention than girls. We are working continuously to ensure that girls are given the same opportunities as boys, for the girls to remain in school, and we also give them encouragement so that they can complete their secondary education. From puberty many girls are vulnerable to being exploited by married, elderly men, and several of the girls do not get the opportunity to complete their education because they become pregnant. We do not have boarding/housing facilities at the Centre but if we had better economy we would have loved to put all our girls in boarding school.

Our secondary school which was established in 2013 is now in full operation. Primary school education is the only free education in Malawi. We have paid secondary school fees to BLOOM pupils for many years now. We have 3 full-time teachers and one more teacher who works on half time basis as he is also the Coordinator at the Centre. We have still not managed to build enough classrooms for the pupils, and this has resulted in us having to use the Assembly building as a classroom. In addition we have simple grass thatched temporary classrooms and a kindergarten which the Centre and chiefs have built to alleviate the need for classrooms. Having our own secondary school has reduced the cost of sending the children to private secondary schools. We are pleased to report that we got good examinations results the past two years.

The kindergarten is now in full operations with over 30 children. They are currently having their lessons in one of the temporary grass thatched classrooms.

Tax exemption for gifts: We would like to remind you that personal contributions between 500 to 25,000 Norwegian kroner in 2016 can be deducted from your tax return in Norway. In order for us to be able to report this to the tax authorities, we need to know your Personal Identity number (Registration number for companies), including your name and address. If this is the first year you provide funds to BLOOM and want to be eligible for tax exemption, we kindly ask you to send us this information by e-mail to: bloom@malawi.no or by post to the following address: BLOOM, Roveveien 49, 3085 Holmestrand, Norway.

Bank account: You can send your donations directly to the BLOOM bank account: Sparebanken Øst: account: 2220.13.83947

Percentage of Lottery Winnings: If you play in the National lottery in Norway 'Norsk Tipping'. You can choose to give 5% of the amount you are playing for directly to BLOOM. In order to do this, you have to register BLOOM as a recipient, and you will need to enter Bloom's Organization/registration number: 988 369 268.

Those in living in Malawi can give their donations in Malawi Kwacha to: Bloom Trust Ltd bank account number: National Bank of Malawi, Zomba branch. Savings account number : 1000357126

The US\$ bank account at the same bank in Malawi: 1000500875

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year 2017

Greetings and many thanks from BLOOM