

REPORT ON THE JUNE 2026 MISSION TEAM

Andy Jones and Dan Pennington traveled to Malawi from June 1 to June 16. Our time was split between preparations for the Girls Center, reviewing progress of the production at the farm, and the work at the Orphan Project, including with Westwood Community Church as they hosted a medical clinic.

We ran into some trouble at customs entering Malawi, with an official demanding an importation declaration form. We were going to hold the boxes until cleared, but acquiesced and let us take them. So glad Shadreck was there.

We carried \$40,000 to pay for the construction of the first building at the Alinafe Girls Center. This currency was reported by each to Customs and Border Patrol before travel, having completed the on-line form before travel. There were no problems with its transportation, either leaving the US or entering Malawi.

The money was exchanged at the Golden Exchange Bureau in the Gateway Mall, at MWK3,650 per dollar. The bank rate of exchange was MWK1,740 per dollar. MWK146,000,000. This amount equals \$83,908. This permitted the dollars of support to go twice as far in value. In conversation with Shadreck after the fact, we learned that the rate that was received was the (black) 'market' value of dollars. The Chikotis wonder if MOCP can take advantage of this differential in the future for education and feeding dollars. I told them that it is not possible during this year's cycle, but perhaps something we might consider in the future. Forex of any currency is so hard to come by that it is not possible to sell Kwacha for Dollars (or any currency) in the event that you have excess Kwacha at the conclusion of the trip.

We met with Issac and Etta Malunga, an engineer and architect couple who had developed a site plan for the Center. They do many projects for the Malawian Government. We met for 2 hours on our first full day, talked through the plan and the changes they will be making. They had a positive project outline, including values of water harvesting and efficiency. They were open to exploring biogas generating wastewater systems, including the bladder-based system used at Kuwala Girls School outside Lilongwe. A visit to their facility will be helpful in our development. We visited several suppliers in Lilongwe and Mchinji to get a feel for the market prices for materials.

The next day we met Isaac and Etta at the Center site. After much conversation, and walking the land, it was decided that a detailed topographic survey will be helpful in the site design. This will permit shaping the site plan to the land, rather than imposing the plan upon the land. They have mostly worked in urban design, where limited land space is adjusted to the plan. It took a while for them to grasp the idea of allowing the land to influence the design, since more area is available at the Center. Etta will redesign the center's campus layout keeping in mind the land forms and flow. It was said this will be complete by the end of June. (The survey was completed by June 30.

This will permit Etta to draw a new site plan with real information.) The topographic survey will cost about 2 million Kwacha. This equals \$1,100.

Shadreck and Yami stated that they plan to 'sit with' Isaac to set costs and timetable, with the hope to be framed and roofed by September. The topographic survey was completed before the end of June. I am waiting for a site plan using that survey. The building supplies will be purchased as they are needed, rather than all at once. They are not certain the \$40,000 will be enough. The watchman for the property will be paid MWK150,000 per month, from the KM general fund.

We investigated possible lodging near the Center site for future use during construction. A promising facility was found in Kapiri (Kakungwa), very close to the Center site. No food service. Much more economical than MMK Lodge in Mchinji, which is where we stayed for our one night in Mchinji. The Alida Guesthouse charges MWK20,000 per night. A cook will need to be hired, and food purchased.

The farm is slowly progressing. The Blue gum trees are growing. What were seedlings 5 years ago are up to 20 feet tall (or more)! The banana trees are still a disappointment. They are starving for water, even though much rain lessened the Soya yield. The irrigation scheme is ready for the distribution system of movable piping. Shadreck said it will be complete by September or October.

As was previously reported, the Soya yield was disappointing. This is attributed to too much rain and too little fertilizer. They apparently didn't sell enough of last season's maize to cover the inflated costs of inputs for the beans. They are once again behind the input/yield curve. There are 50 acres in two parcels not yet used at the farm. They don't have the money to have them cleared. Government ag loans are 20% interest. Dan P. wonders if it would be possible to ask private funders to 'loan' at a lower rate.

At the Orphan Project, interesting things are happening in the community. The Maize Mill continues to provide good service to the project and the community. Three microbusinesses have popped up on the east side of the road, opposite the mill – two snack stands and a small retail shop. The mill is drawing enough traffic that a small commercial district is forming. The retail shop is run by a former cook at the project.

Two varieties of hybrid fryer chickens are being raised. They are larger than 'local' chickens, but still lay eggs and breed. There is one rooster in each enclosure with 15 to 20 hens.

Each day at the project we distributed the crosses with names on them to children and taught Bible lessons using translated and acted skits led by Hastings. We sent Symon on his way to begin Nursing School in Blantyre.

We worked with the Westwood team for their first day of clinic. Sharon runs a tight ship. We packaged over the counter meds in dosage bags the night before. She ran the

clinic for the women volunteers, the older boys and older girls on Saturday. Was going to be open to the 'public' on Monday.

They have not yet talked with ESCOM – the electric utility – about power at either the Orphan Project or the Girls Center. They acknowledge that this is something that needs to happen ASAP.

Each Sunday one of us was invited to preach at a Central Church of Africa Presbyterian congregation. (Multiple vocal ensemble presentations at each service were amazing, often with contextual dance included.)

I performed a Financial Review with Shadreck and Yami. All reported transfers were verified against deposit receipts. All expenses for August and December 2025 were verified against expenditure receipts. These two months look valid.

I asked them questions from last year's review. Answers are as follows.

- They did not know the Chicken business cash flow, and will get the information from the committee.
- They have explored connection to the grid power that now runs within 20ft of the skills center. Switches and sockets have been installed previously for the solar system, and will serve with grid power. Their experience with solar is that the batteries 'do not last long.' The Escom installers suggested the project use an illegal connection. They refused. They need to make an application with Escom in Salima. That will hopefully happen 'soon.'
- The farm is a total of 49 hectares. The usage is as follows:
 - Bananas – 4 hectares
 - Casava – 2 hectares
 - Blue Gum Trees – 1 hectare
 - Maize or Soy, depending upon the year – 29 hectares
 - The remaining hectares have not been used.
- We explored the possibility of clearing the not-yet used land for maize in the growing season, and repeating Soy or Ground Nuts on the 29 hectares. They will need additional funds to make this happen.
- The Irrigation System is waiting for the distribution system. They hope for September.
- The income projection from the next harvest is poor. The reality of El Nino is projected to reduce needed rainfall across the country. They are in a deficit position regarding funds for inputs.
- They will gather data from the committee about the income status of the Maize Mill.