



## Raising Malawi

In January, 2006, Michael Berg (co-director of The Kabbalah Centre and bestselling author) and internationally-recognized entertainer, Madonna, co-founded the *Raising Malawi Orphan Care Initiative*, a humanitarian aid program designed to revitalize the lives hundreds of thousands of underprivileged and at-risk children in Malawi.

Raising Malawi has a five-point approach:

1. Provide immediate direct physical assistance for orphans and vulnerable children through effective and efficient non-governmental, grass-roots organizations;
2. Create long-term sustainability through creative methodologies and systems;
3. Support psycho-social programs designed for children traumatized by HIV/AIDS, poverty, parental loss, malnourishment and disease;
4. Manifest all projects taking into consideration the guidelines set forth by the National Plan of Action (a document co-created by the Malawian government and UNICEF);
5. Encourage dialogue with the Malawian government and Traditional Authority leaders to respect the Malawian culture and support their participation and vision for the future.

Since 2006, Philippe van den Bossche (Executive Director) has traveled to Malawi on a quarterly basis. He has worked to identify the needs of vulnerable children within the political, social, cultural, and economic frameworks of Malawi, and to determine what programs would produce viable results and bring positive change.

With the collaboration and support of Malawi's traditional authority leaders, government and non-government organizations, and experts like Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, nine projects have been identified and initiated.

### **1) Capacity building for Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and Orphan Children (NOVOC)**

NOVOC, a non-governmental organization (NGO), has been identified by the Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare of Malawi as a key component in achieving the goals of the National Plan of Action.

Raising Malawi occupies a board seat and is providing NOVOC with substantial financial aid and other resources to help NOVOC build the capacity of orphan care centers and other community based organizations (CBOs) throughout the entire country of Malawi.

As a result of our funding and participation, NOVOC has moved to larger offices, increased its workforce by adding 10 additional employees, expanded its scope of

activities, purchased a vehicle for further geographic access, and hosted a significant number of educational events for CBOs and their managers.

## 2) Support for Community Based Organizations

The preferred model for child care in Malawi is community based. This method allows orphaned children to retain a family environment by remaining in their native villages. At this time Raising Malawi provides financial support for eight community based organizations, which provide food, shelter, clothing, education and medical care to thousands of orphans. These organizations have been chosen on the basis of exemplary work with vulnerable children and a consistent history of strong leadership and accountability.

Currently, Raising Malawi provides financial resources for direct physical and urgent needs, to the following organizations:

- Somebody Cares
- Kindle Orphan Care
- Ministry of Hope
- Consol Homes
- Children of Hope and Destiny
- Chinansungwe CBO
- Save Orphans Ministry
- Foundation for Children's Rights

These community based organizations were identified by NOVOC as efficient and well-managed. NOVOC participates in the distribution and accountability of the funding.

## 3) Millennium Village

A continuing food crisis in Malawi afflicts more than 4 million people - and more than a million of them are children under age five. Nearly half of Malawi's population struggles to live on less than \$1 a day. The Millennium Village project seeks to end extreme poverty by providing affordable and science-based solutions to economic, health and agricultural challenges.

Working in conjunction with Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, former Special Advisor to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and author of *The End of Poverty*, Raising Malawi has identified the village of Gumulira (population 6,000) in the Mchinji district (on the Zambian border) as the first Millennium Village to be funded.

By applying targeted, science-based interventions and maximizing community leadership and participation in Gumulira:

- Interventions in the way of education and water contamination have taken place, producing viable results in the village.
- Local farmers have adopted new agricultural strategies. As a result, families have dramatically increased their crops for the year.
- Nearly 100% of all local households have been provided with bed nets - which will reduce the instances of malaria by 60%.

Raising Malawi has pledged \$1.5 million over 5 years to create economic, medical, educational, and social sustainability for Millennium Village residents.

*"We at Millennium Promise are overjoyed that Raising Malawi is leading the fight against extreme poverty by partnering with the Village of Gumulira, Malawi. Gumulira's 6,000 villagers now have the chance to escape from the trap of poverty, disease, and hunger and to achieve self-sustaining economic progress."*

- Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

#### **4) Raising Malawi Consol Homes Orphan Care Center**

Malawi is home to over 1 million orphans. This number is expected to grow considerably by the year 2010. Financial resources are lacking to handle this growing orphan crisis. Penston Kilembe, Malawi's Minister of Social Welfare, has noted: "Our financial output for orphans is inadequate. We need much, much more money because we are talking about survival, growth and the development of these children."

In collaboration with Consol Homes Orphan Care Center, a local NGO and well-respected CBO, Raising Malawi has created a state of the art orphan care centre to serve over 4,000 children. Currently, Consol Homes serves 12,500 orphans and vulnerable children.

The Raising Malawi Consol Homes Orphan Care Centre provides the following services:

- Preschool education
- Expanded feeding programs (with highly nutritious meals)
- Orphan affairs unit
- Support programs for "grannies" (women caring for orphan children)
- Playground
- Soccer pitch
- Demonstration garden, where children will learn to grow their own food
- Administrative office block for the overall management of Consol Homes.

The Raising Malawi Consol Homes Orphan Care Centre is working to establish a new standard of child care centers throughout Malawi.

#### **5) SFK- Malawi**

Spirituality for Kids (SFK) is a specialized psychosocial support program that provides at-risk children with the tools of resiliency & empowerment – tools that can help children change their debilitating belief systems so that they can control their destinies.

SFK-Malawi was created as a response to the urgent need for empowerment among children affected by poverty, disease, parental loss, sexual abuse, and chronic hunger.

In 2006, eight Malawian teachers were hired and brought to SFK Headquarters in Los Angeles for a comprehensive educational training program. These teachers have since returned to Malawi and have successfully co-created a specialized empowerment program, SFK-Malawi, for orphans and vulnerable children.

SFK-Malawi provides at-risk children with an innovative educational curriculum as well as personalized mentorship and care (e.g., medical care, education, transportation, lodging, and other support).

In December 2006, SFK-Malawi graduated its first class of students at Consol Homes and Home of Hope Orphanage.

SFK-Malawi has since gained the support of government and tradition authority leaders in Malawi; and as of April, 2007 SFK-Malawi has graduated over 700 children.

## **6) Meaningful Gifts & Important Items for Children**

With an average income of about \$160 per capita, and a Human Development Index ranking of 165 out of 177 countries, Malawi is among the poorest, least developed countries in the world. In addition to the struggle to provide children with their basic human needs, caregivers are without resources to provide children with gifts, such as play toys, and essential items, such as school books and shoes.

The annual Raising Malawi “gift drive” inspires dedicated volunteers all of the world to donate hundreds of thousands of meaningful gifts and essential items:

- Toys
- Bed nets
- Clothing
- Blankets
- Shoes
- Toothbrushes
- Sports & Musical Equipment
- Books
- Backpacks
- And more!

Raising Malawi has raised and distributed four, forty-foot containers with toothbrushes, toothpaste, blankets, clothing, shoes, backpacks, soccer balls, musical instruments and other items to orphans and vulnerable children under the care of our partner CBOs.

Plans to organize a second “gift drive” will be initiated during 2007.

## **7) Raising Malawi Academic Support Network**

The Raising Malawi Academic Support Network has brought 20 international researchers and scholars together to discuss solutions for the current health, social and economic issues facing Malawians.

This highly esteemed council consists of a multitude of professors and researchers in the United States and Malawi.

Serving as a global “think tank”, the Academic Support Network uses their qualifications to evaluate and critique the effectiveness of Raising Malawi, while providing meaningful insight for all future projects initiated under Raising Malawi.

## **8) Volunteer Malawi**

Raising Malawi has developed a volunteer program which utilizes the commitment of volunteers working in home-based positions.

Our volunteers dedicate their time and efforts to fundraising, research, awareness-building, student activism, and pen-pal exchanges:

- Fundraise Malawi (fundraising)
- Global Village (research)
- Raising My Voice (awareness)
- Students for Malawi (student groups)
- The L.O.V.E Project (pen-pals)
- Team Malawi (community groups)
- Malawian Support Network (native Malawian volunteers working in many areas)

Today, hundreds of volunteers are working to bring lasting solutions to Malawi’s orphans, for example:

- A Students for Malawi chapter at Lakeland College has completed a large scale book drive to benefit over 550 orphans at Home of Hope Orphanage. This Students for Malawi group is currently working a “sister” Students for Malawi chapter at DePaul University to continue the fundraising.
- A Team Malawi chapter in Denver, Colorado has committed to providing Home of Hope Orphanage with much needed computers and technological supplies.
- A FundRAISE Malawi volunteer hosted an event in Los Angeles, raising \$50,000 for our program partners in Malawi.
- A Malawian Support Network volunteer has committed over 10 acres of land in Malawi for educational purposes.
- A Students for Malawi (high school) chapter in Arizona has raised nearly \$1,000 through donation jars.
- Three inner-city public schools in Detroit, Chicago, and Oakland have sent over 200 pen-pal letters to children participating in SFK-Malawi.
- And so much more is happening!

## 9) Restoration of Home of Hope Orphanage

Raising Malawi has significantly advanced plans to recondition the Home of Hope Orphanage in Mchinji, Malawi

Home of Hope currently provides over 500 Malawian infants and children with shelter, food, and clothing.

The rehabilitation of Home of Hope will address the critical and pressing needs of the orphanage, as well as the long-term plans to elevate Home of Hope to the highest standard of operation.

Long-term plans to renovate the orphanage, which include the building of both a primary and secondary school, will be completed by November 2008.

Raising Malawi intends to provide continued support for all of these projects while continuing to seek out new opportunities for assistance.

Raising Malawi provides financial support, volunteers and technologies (i.e., solar power, clean drinking water systems, internet service, etc.) to increase the quality of life for countless children and adults.

Raising Malawi operates under The Kabbalah Centre International, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.