



## **Annual Report 2023-2024**

[www.nickwebbertrust.org](http://www.nickwebbertrust.org)

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The Trust was set up in 2004 in memory of Nick Webber, who died tragically in a car accident at the age of 28 while working in Malawi as a volunteer Legal Aid solicitor. Had Nick lived longer, we know that he would have done much more good in the world. Our aim is to do some of that good in his name. Following the spirit of the work he was doing, our aim is to support some of Malawi's poorest and most marginalised people by funding projects in education, healthcare and community support, and access to justice.

The Trust became recognised as a charity in England and Wales on 30 May 2005, which would have been Nick's 29th birthday.

This document contains the Trustees' financial report for the financial year 2023-2024.

## **Achievements this year**

Our chair of Trustees made two visits to Malawi during the year, visiting all our ongoing and some completed projects, and maintaining contact with our Board of Advisers.

Once again, our main fundraising event was the annual Garden Party, which was well-supported by many friends and well-wishers. We ran an online fundraiser at Christmas and sold our Christmas cards as usual. We are extremely grateful for the continued support, loyalty and understanding of our many donors and supporters, which has enabled us to persevere with our projects.

### **School support**

We continued with our project to support homeless children who could not be re-integrated into their families to go to boarding school, through the **Tikondane Centre for the Care of Street Children** in Lilongwe. Through this ongoing scheme, we pay for school fees and other expenses such as uniforms, bedding, transport, daily necessities, classroom equipment, and a small amount of pocket money.

In this year we supported seven children in primary school, five in secondary and three in tertiary education. Of the seven in primary, two passed the Primary School Leaving Certificate (taken in Standard Eight), but not well enough to be awarded places in secondary school. Tikondane is supporting them within their community while awaiting the "second selection", which will give them another opportunity of being awarded secondary places.

Of the five in secondary school, two passed well in the Junior Certificate (taken in Form Two) and will proceed. We are delighted that the one Form four student passed his MSCE so well that he has been awarded a place at Chancellor College,

University of Malawi for a B.A. in Economic History. He has been a real role model to other children in the shelter, and we will continue to support him.

Of the three in tertiary education, one completed his diploma in community development so well that he is being upgraded to a degree course, which will take two more years. The others completed Advanced Diplomas in Electrical Installation and Mechanics, both at the Don Bosco Technical college and will proceed to employment.

Last year, we agreed to an extension of our support of the Tikondane Centre, in response to an appeal to support some of the former street children who had been successfully reintegrated into their families but could not attend school because of a lack of school fees and money to pay for school materials, (uniforms, shoes, notebooks, and exams fees etc). This year we supported sixteen students under this scheme, all of whom are progressing. For the next year, we are being asked to support five of them, two girls and three boys, into boarding school, where it is felt the environment will be more beneficial to their progress.

We also continued with our project in partnership with Temwa to fund the schooling of twenty-four students from disadvantaged backgrounds who show academic potential in Nkhata Bay North. We were very pleased that, due to the support provided by the bursary scheme, no students dropped out during the year. Temwa also believe that the scheme has helped to prevent further child marriages and teenage pregnancies in the wider community, both of which had increased when the schools were closed due to the pandemic.

In addition to paying the school fees, Nick Webber Trust also provides school uniforms, stationery, and exam fees. From January 2023, waterproof school bags were purchased which ensure that the students can travel to and from school during the rainy season without any damage to their schoolbooks. Water filters were also provided to promote access to clean and safe water among bursary beneficiaries amidst the ongoing cholera outbreak. Sanitary pads were provided for all of the female bursary beneficiaries, ensuring that they do not miss school due to a lack of sanitary products while they have their periods.

This year, the Nick Webber Trust has also paid the full costs of seven boarders, and for a further seven students we provided the food costs for their free boarding school hostels. The hostels offer housing for secondary-school girls who live far away from the school. No longer having to walk long distances each day means these girls now have more time to study and participate in peer study groups. These students also tend to be less tired and hungry at school as they do not spend their energy walking or working before and after school.

We retained close links with **Kochilira, Kainsa and Kasakanya Primary schools**, all of which we had previously completed to Full Primary status, and in all of which we have now provided desks for the top three classes. We are pleased to see that the retention rate of girl students has risen to equal (and occasionally exceeds) that of the boys, which is unusual for Malawi.

We continue to maintain regular contact with **Kochilira Community Day Secondary School**, in Mchinji District, where our hostel for female students makes a significant contribution to the retention of female students. We are delighted that in this school female students now outnumber male students in the final two years, a reversal of the national trend, which senior staff attribute to the safer atmosphere our buildings have created for young women, and that results in national exams continue to improve. We have funded several projects at this school in a relationship that began in 2010 and has included the construction of a science and a computer laboratory, the construction of two more classrooms, and the construction of a teacher's house, to aid staff recruitment and retention at this much improved school.

We were pleased to be kept informed of the progress of a small rural primary school in Chifupa, where the local MP had provided funding for all building materials and we provided construction costs. The building was completed last year and is now in use.

## **Community and Health**

Full use continued to be made of the hostel for female students under the auspices of **Tidzuke Orphan Care**, in Kochilira village, the construction of which we had funded previously. The hostel offers accommodation for female students, either those who have won a place at the nearby **Kochilira Community Day Secondary School**, (itself largely constructed by the Nick Webber Trust) but are unable to afford the boarding fees, or those attending the so-called "night school", run by the teaching staff after the end of the normal school day. Until recently, these students have been practising what is known locally as "self-boarding", which involves renting a space in a hut in the local villages in which to live. Fears over the safety and propriety of these arrangements led the local chiefs and counsellors to request our help in providing this new hostel, where the students still pay the same low sum but are safely housed in secure buildings which include washrooms, toilets and a kitchen area. Their "fee" provides a salary for a resident matron and a watchman. This year, in response to requests from parents, we funded the construction of a perimeter wall and gate to increase the safety of the young women.

This project is part of our ongoing relationship with this fantastic community organisation. In 2011 we funded the building of a children's centre for the project, from which they run a feeding programme for orphans and vulnerable children, a nursery school, a library, to which we are able to donate more books every year, and which is extensively used by local teachers and secondary school students. The centre also provides other facilities for use by the wider community. In 2013 we funded the construction of indoor and outdoor toilets at the centre, and in 2014 we funded the construction of a kitchen to assist with the feeding programme. In 2016, we funded the construction of the Vocational Skills Training Block in which two courses in carpentry and two in tailoring have taken place. In 2020 we funded the purchase of bunk beds to accommodate the growing demand for places in the hostel for secondary school students. In 2022, in response to anxiety about food shortages, we funded the purchase of fertiliser and seed to extend the area of maize production available to the hostel, as well as the extra labour required.



This year we repeated our **Christmas appeal** for donors to purchase menstrual health kits for female secondary school students. In addition to the one hundred kits previously purchased from the Malawian organisation, Grace Pads, in 2022, and distributed to the young women in Kochilira hostel, Tikondane Care of Street Children, and Ndimoyo Palliative Care clinic. Last year this was extended to all the female students in Kochilira

CDSS, Mzuzi Secondary School, near Namitete, and to the secondary school in Thuma Forest Reserve near Salima. In the current year we were able to distribute replacement kits to all of these, and to the new Form one students in each school.

Each kit contains five re-usable sanitary pads, three pairs of pants, soap for washing both the pads and the young people, all in a practical and distinctive bucket. Each kit is estimated to last between 15 and 18 months. Without such kits, adolescent girls very often miss one week in four of school, as they lack any kind of protection, so these vital supplies are proving to have beneficial effects on their education as well as their sense of self-worth.



Headteachers of schools whose pupils received them last year tell us how much attendance has improved, and the young women who are using them tell us they are life-changing: "we are all once again taking part in sports", "my grades have gone up because I am no longer missing school," and "I feel so much more confident now". We plan to continue the expansion of this invaluable scheme as we reach new schools through our many local contacts. We are proud to be supporting the small Malawian all-women organisation, GracePads, who manufacture the kits, and look forward to working with them for many years ahead.

We continued our support of the Malawian health care charity **Ndi Moyo** by continuing to make the house known as "Nick's Place" available rent-free for use by the Ndi Moyo clinic. It continues to be used extensively to house volunteers and trainees at the clinic, and our land is used for a model vegetable garden and to grow medicinal herbs. A training centre has also been built on our land, for use by the clinic staff.

## Access to the Law



Just before the pandemic hit and lockdown ensued, we had accepted a proposal from the Women Lawyers of Malawi Association to fund an ambitious project: the construction of a “safe house” for survivors of domestic abuse who had had recourse to the WLA drop-in clinics and needed a temporary refuge. Construction of a fine four-bedroom house has now been completed, on a plot of land purchased on the outskirts of the capital city. We have also purchased beds, and

donated bedding, and the house is now being used by vulnerable survivors of domestic abuse and their families. The centre is administered by the Women Lawyers Association, with whom we maintain close links. We are pleased to learn that they are linking up with a local psycho-social organisation which can offer counselling support to supplement the legal advice on offer. We are delighted that the ongoing running costs of this centre are being covered by the Clooney Foundation.

## How we work

The Trust makes no expenditure for travel, communication, staffing, office overheads, or other running costs. The costs incurred are met by the Trustees personally. This enables us to ensure that every penny donated is spent directly on our projects in Malawi.

## Structure, Governance, and Management

Six Trustees continued in post: Pauline Webber (chair), Timothy Webber (vice-chair), Jane Abood, Timothy de Souza-Ingle, Mary Marvel, and Judith Scott.

Trustees are appointed by a resolution of existing Trustees of which there cannot be fewer than three. There is a Board of Advisers, to which appointments are made by the Trustees. There are three active members, all Malawian lawyers who are friends of the Trust, and whose advice is highly valued.

Decisions are made by a majority of Trustees, with the Chair of Trustees having the casting vote in the case of an even split. Decisions are usually made at meetings, which may also be attended by members of our Board of Advisers. There were two meetings in this financial year. Minutes of all meetings are circulated to all Trustees and Advisers.

No project is adopted without first being thoroughly researched by Trustees and Advisers.

The operation of the Trust is governed by the Trust Deed, (to which two Supplementals have been made), an ethos document, a policy on the selection of partner organisations, and a policy governing the adoption of education projects. These can all be downloaded from the Trust website, along with our annual reports.

## **Fundraising**

Most of the funds this year were raised through personal donations, with one organised event.

We sold our own Christmas cards again, with the initial outlay covered and recouped from sales by one of the Trustees, and all profits going to the Trust.

This year we repeated a "Give a life-changing gift" scheme, which was very successful in raising funds for the menstrual health kits.

We successfully claimed Gift Aid for two years.

Payment of our annual subscription to the Malawian register of charitable organisations was deferred to the following year for logistical reasons. Town rates were paid up-to-date on Nick's Place in the clinic in Salima.

The Trust would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere appreciation of all who have supported it by making donations or by using their time and talents to help us.

## **Risk Management**

The Nick Webber Trust is aware that aid and development projects can have inadvertent negative side effects. To minimise this risk in the area of our education projects, we have adopted a policy on sourcing and assessing such projects, which must derive from the democratic structure of Malawi or have beneficiaries within the government of Malawi's stated priority groups, and will be assessed along our general project selection guidelines of democratic accountability, community contribution, demonstrable impact, and long-term sustainability. This policy operates alongside our existing policy on the selection of partner organisations.

Our strategy of retaining sufficient reserves to ensure that projects can be completed means that we are able to absorb cost increases resulting from currency fluctuation. To protect against any future such alterations in the financial landscape, we cost all of our projects, both new and existing, directly in Malawi Kwacha and make all agreements in that currency. We also ensure that our reserves can cover all of our commitments for three years into the future before making any new commitments, taking account of our basic income from standing orders on the assumption that this will not decrease by more than 10% per year, and that our other income will not decrease by more than 25% per year.

Representatives of the Trust kept in regular contact with NdiMoyo clinic, Tidzuke Orphan Care, Tikondane Care for Street Children and the Women Lawyers

Association of Malawi, as well as other contacts able to keep us up to date with the situation in Malawi. The Chair of the Trustees also regularly met with the Malawian members of the Board of Advisers .

## **Financial Review (01/04/23-31/03/24)**

**The Trust started the year with a balance of £17,519**

**Total income for the year was £35,419, of which:**

<b>Raised by supporters and regular donations</b>	<b>£21,521</b>
<b>Gift Aid</b>	<b>£8108</b>
<b>Garden Party</b>	<b>£4195</b>
<b>Christmas Appeal</b>	<b>£1200</b>
<b>Christmas cards</b>	<b>£255</b>
<b>Bank interest</b>	<b>£140</b>

**Payments for the year were £21,025, of which:**

<b>Tikondane Care of Street Children</b>	<b>£7019</b>
<b>Temwa School Support</b>	<b>£5530</b>
<b>GracePads</b>	<b>£3438</b>
<b>Tidzuke Orphan Care</b>	<b>£2738</b>
<b>WLA Safe House</b>	<b>£2219</b>
<b>Rates on Nick's Place</b>	<b>£81</b>

**The trust ended the year with £31,913 in hand**

The currency fluctuations of the Malawi Kwacha make it difficult to know for sure the future cost of our commitments for the next three years, but we currently estimate them to be in the region of £60,000. Assuming a decline year on year of 10% on our regular Standing Order donations and a decline year on year of 25% on our other income, we expect to receive a further £80,000 in the next three years.

## **Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the report set out above.  
Signed on their behalf



Tambri C. Weber.