

Rare Charity welcomes nine Secondary School Scholars

Friday 30 July, 2021

With the start of a new school year in Malawi, Rare Charity has successfully implemented its “Back to School Project”, an initiative undertaken to support girls to continue their education in the face of early marriage and economic pressures asserted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media:



London, UK— In the midst of an unprecedented global education emergency, Rare Charity nearly doubled the number of scholars which the charity supports. In line with their mission of awarding educational scholarships (to provide ambitious young people the agency to uplift themselves and improve their communities). Rare Charity recently welcomed nine young girls to a scholarship programme specifically for girls who are vulnerable to early marriage. All of the new Rare Charity scholars are from the agricultural tea region of Satemwa, the catchment area Rare Charity concentrates its Malawi-based scholarship activities.

“Satemwa is one of the communities where the majority of girls do not go further with education,” explains Wongani Jambo, a Rare Charity Scholar who successfully graduated from the University of Malawi’s Chancellor College in 2019. “Most of them resort to early marriages.”

Malawian girls face many deep-rooted challenges to complete their secondary education. Malawi is home to one of the highest rates of childhood marriage in the world - according to UNICEF, 46% of girls marry before the age of 18 and. Fees charged for attending secondary school often serve as an obstacle to a girl obtaining a secondary education because tuition costs compete with the prospect of a girl’s family receiving a ‘lobola’, or dowry, from a bridegroom. School closures and the economic repercussions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic continue to exacerbate the situation.

“Just over a year ago, we prioritised fundraising for this secondary school programme, to respond to an urgent and increasing need in the Satemwa community,” explains Henrietta Lovell, the founder and Chair of Trustees for Rare Charity. “We are very excited to have the opportunity to assist these 9 young girls through our secondary school scholars project.”

The estimated cost for sponsoring a secondary scholar over three years, at a secondary boarding school, is £1700. In December 2020, a £15,000 grant from The Fore Trust provided enough funding for the 9 scholarships. Going forward, Rare Charity is seeking sponsorship that would enable the charity to support 10 girls each year for (at least) three-consecutive years.

By providing educational scholarships and sponsorship, Rare Charity now supports 23 scholars from the Satemwa area; 14 are currently attending University or other institutions of higher learning, such as nursing school. Additionally, we are thrilled to announce that three Rare Charity Scholars, Osman Karimu, Enelys Black, and the aforementioned Ms. Jambo, have graduated.

For more information:

Back to School Project Background

In late 2019, Rare Charity launched their “Back to School Project” to support girls’ education in the Satemwa area of Malawi. Soon after, Rare Charity began to employ a grant application strategy to fund the project.

In December 2020, the Fore Trust awarded Rare Charity a £15,000 grant to fund scholarships for up to 10 young girls wishing to attend secondary school.

Prompting the closure of schools in March 2020, the pandemic meant girls faced even greater pressure to abandon their education. Rare Charity works with two secondary boarding schools to better mitigate the risk of a girl’s homelife interfering with her studies. Also, the schools provide regular meals. Food security can also be an issue for families who live in the Satemwa area.

Following three years of successfully supporting 17 tertiary scholars; in 2019, Rare Charity conducted a pilot programme for the secondary school project. Olivia Zuze, the first Rare Charity secondary school scholar, is now in Year 2 at the Thyolo Secondary School and joined by Catherine Stephano, Rebecca

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Mpita, Prisca Frank Sabuyani and Fagess Kearson. Mebo Chipwita, Naomi Tabwali, Agnes Samson, Tamandani Oweni and Ireen Lama are currently attending the Luchenza School.

All of the new scholars performed well on the nation's Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education exams and received a placement (from the government) at either the Thyolo or Luchenza School. Unfortunately, support from the government ended there and for these young girls the school fees served as an obstacle to their continuing their education.

The people from the Satemwa area that advised Henrietta Lovell to dedicate the charity's resources to providing educational opportunities understand first-hand that education provides a path out of poverty. For example, job prospects improve substantially for a young woman who completes secondary school. Additionally, the opportunity to pursue a university degree also becomes a prospect for these students.

Going forward, Rare Charity will seek continuous sponsorship to support the project at a cost of £18,000 per year. Continuous funding for a duration of 3 to 5 years would enable the charity to enrol 10 girls each year and optimise the positive impact these educational opportunities promise to have on the Satemwa Tea community.

About Rare Charity

Rare Charity offers talented young people, within tea producing communities, access to education. Its ambition is to equip individuals with the agency to implement long-term and sustainable social change. Rare Charity successfully funds university scholarships in the Satemwa Tea Estate community in Malawi, Southern Africa. Inherent to Rare Charity's values is advocating gender equality by promoting female students. At least half its tertiary scholarships are set aside for female students.

Rare Charity is unlike many charities which operate in the UK to make changes abroad. This is a considered and deliberate decision. It disrupts established thinking about aid, charitable giving and sustainable development in three crucial ways:

People, Not Statistics

Rare Charity understands that its scholars are people, not statistics. It never imposes a foreign agenda upon them, nor does it export prescriptive ideals. Instead Rare Charity listens to its scholars' individual ambitions, and then works on their terms to fulfil them.

Low Cost, High Impact

Fundamental to Rare Charity are the individual scholars. Its core costs are unusually low, which means that donations go more directly towards the education of those who deserve it most. And, Rare Charity stays in touch. It is in regular contact with all its students, hearing about their progress and successes.

Education Runs Two Ways

Rare Charity offers educational opportunities, not just to its scholars, but also to its donors. People in the UK drink an average of 6 cups of tea per day, but how much do we really know about the people who have produced that tea? Rare Charity seeks to educate the public about the communities to which tea has already connected them: it provides a platform on which producers, donors and consumers can enjoy the benefits of education - as part of a more informed, connected and egalitarian community. For more information on the important work of Rare Charity, please see www.rarecharity.com.

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