



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared By:

Stephen J. Bowler

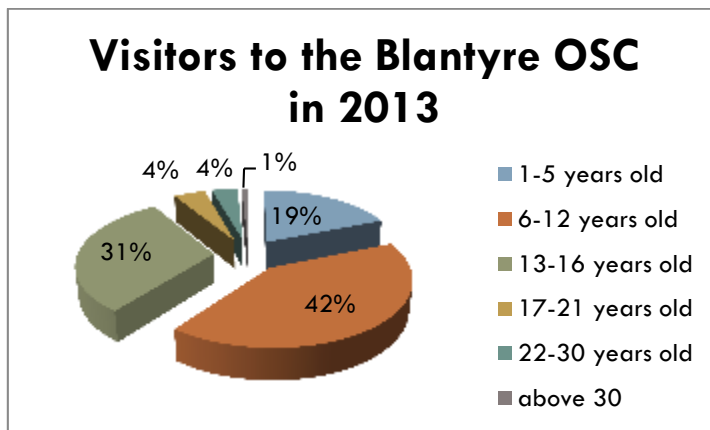
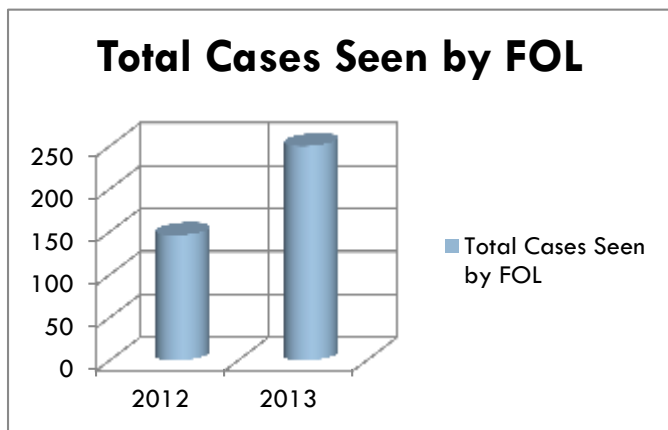
On Behalf of the Directors of Fountain of Life Ltd. (Malawi)

ONE STOP CENTRE OPEN

At the end of February of this year the President of Malawi – Joyce Banda – officially opened the first One Stop Centre (OSC) in Malawi. The OSC is based at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Blantyre and victims of all kinds of trauma can receive all the services they need in one place. Doctors and Nurses are present, the Police have assigned an officer, a Social Welfare Officer has an office, access to legal services is possible and FOL has its team of volunteer comforters/counselors working out of a room in the OSC. It is the only operational One Stop Centre in the country and is a great start to improve support services for victims of sexual assault. The Government has plans to have several other similar OSC's operational but there are many challenges to make this a reality.



The Pie Chart below shows the reality of the situation in Malawi when it comes to sexual violence. When you add up the numbers of those who came to the OSC who are 16 years old and below it is a staggering 92% of the total! It is so critical to take action to help these children recover from this trauma so they have a chance at life.



A ONE STOP CENTRE STORY.

A 12 year old girl came to the One Stop Centre who was raped when the mother went away for two weeks to visit her husband(the father) who is working outside the city. The girl was left with a neighbour. Upon her return the mother was furious that her daughter had been raped and blamed the daughter. She kicked her out of the girls bedroom and made her sleep on a mat in the living room and would shout at her and often beat her. The child went alone to the OSC to seek help as she had been rejected and abandoned by her mother.

The FOL counsellors felt it was absolutely important to not only work with the girl but also with the mother as family is so crucial to any long term recovery. At the beginning the mother said her daughter's future is doomed and there was no hope for her. After spending 75 minutes with the mother and helping her understand her issues, fears, confusion, pain and anger the mother made the following comment:

"This place is like a church, where your eyes are opened, I even believe that what happened to my daughter happened for a reason, so my attitude can change, My daughter needs my support, tonight she will sleep back in her bed....." As she left she told the receptionist, "this place is amazing, deals with all your concerns".

The young girl is no longer abandoned and rejected but has her mother fully supporting her and helping her recover from the trauma of the rape. There is hope now for the child and her family as they work through the healing process together.

BLANTYRE FOL BRANCH

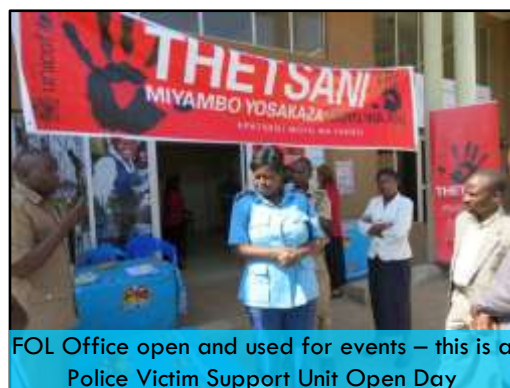
In addition to being heavily involved in the One Stop Centre at the Hospital the FOL team in Blantyre is doing much more. A full time person was hired to assist with all the activities undertaken in Blantyre and she – Thengi – is based at the OSC office. However, Thengi and Tandu – one of the FOL Directors based in Blantyre – are very busy people. Among the accomplishments achieved in 2013 are the following:

- Awareness Campaign – In partnership with three (3) different organisations, Way Ministries, BONGO Malawi and Joshua, the Blantyre FOL was able to carry out some community and school outreaches. The Community outreaches targeted guardians and parents where open talks with parents and guardians helped to increase understanding of the challenges families face whenever a child in the family is abused. It also provided the opportunity to discuss the effects of sexual abuse on children and what kind of support is necessary and needed to help an abused child and what parents/guardians can do to prevent their children from experiencing such trauma. The outreaches also included staff from the organizations receiving some trauma counseling training in order to equip them to be able to provide psychological first aid to members of their communities if need be.
- Road to Relief helped the Blantyre FOL in several ways:
 - An awareness campaign to urban and rural police stations and health centres. These sensitized the officers on what services the OSC provides and encouraged them to refer cases to the OSC.
 - Information brochures in English and Chichewa were printed and handed out to assist people in understanding what rape and sexual violence do to people as well as where to come for help – the OSC.
 - Production of an animated video clip with education message and information on the services that FOL is providing at the OSC. UNICEF is exploring the possibility of having it aired on MBC Television
- Play Therapy Sessions for children age of 4 and 10 years old held once a week for three weeks and mostly done as group sessions. The sessions help to instill hope, empower the children and have been a very great tool for following up on the children's progress.
- Established Parents/Guardians Support Group where parents are able to learn from each other but also get comfort from knowing that they are not alone in the challenges they are facing when their child is traumatised. As the same time they learn from other parents on how they are dealing with the many challenges of helping their child and how to cope in a positive way.
- Established Teen Support Groups due to the increasing numbers of teen age survivors who face a lack of support as well as being judged by family members, community members and service providers. This Support Group started towards the end of the year in order to give the teen survivors of sexual assault an opportunity to offload and share their feelings without feeling judged.
- Organised a Retreat for the volunteer Lay Counselors/Comforters after four years of hard work for some of the counselors. FOL gave the counselors a break to go on a retreat which was funded through a Church in Canada – Broadway Church. The counselors had a long weekend of relaxation, meditation and spending time together in a stress-free environment.
- There has been some movement in our volunteer counselors. At least three of them have moved to Lilongwe and this should help all that is happening in the Lilongwe area. However, there is still a stable team of around seven (7) in Blantyre at the OSC. Thanks for all your wonderful and amazing contributions.



FOL OFFICE OPEN IN LILONGWE

Thanks to Broadway Church in Vancouver, FOL now has an office open in Lilongwe. It is in a great location near to the main mini-bus zone near to Shoprite. It has a nice sized space on the lower level for the Resource Centre which will – over time – collect various resources and tools to help those involved in supporting victims of sexual violence. The upper level is the office space. The office can and will be used for meetings with various stakeholders and to host open days on different topics and areas of interest related to improving networking and coordination of support services.



FOL Office open and used for events – this is a Police Victim Support Unit Open Day

INVOLVEMENT IN TRAINING INITIATIVES

1. Basic Trauma Counseling Workshops
2. Assisted with US Peace Corps Volunteer Training
3. FOL Director invited to be part of training of OSC Teams
4. Facilitated a GIZ supported training of Victim Support Unit teams from VSU's in Lilongwe area.



Brent Diaz in Lilongwe focusing on Trauma Counselling

It was great to have Brent Diaz come from Canada to deliver a couple workshops in Malawi. Brent is a Social Worker with a M.A. and he works in the Greater York region in Ontario. Most of his cases have to do with sexual assault and he came to provide an introduction to Trauma Counseling. FOL worked with him to organize a 2 Day Workshop in Lilongwe and a 3 Day Workshop in Blantyre. In Lilongwe we planned for 25 people and in the end we had 40 from 16 different Churches and ministries. Clearly there was great interest in this kind of training. The feedback was that it was far too short and that we needed to have many more such Workshops organized. The demand for what FOL can offer is very high and we know the task is a huge one but with support

from Churches like Broadway, other interested organisations and people like Brent, progress can be made. We need more passionate and committed people with expertise in this field to partner with us to run similar Training Events.

The other three (3) initiatives mentioned above are a sign that there is a growing recognition of what FOL offers and demonstrates the interest from different stakeholders. In 2014 FOL will continue to follow-up with these partners and explore ways that we can work more effectively together.

FOL STAFF HIRED



Lusungu



Salome



Thengi



Natalia

During the course of the year FOL was able to hire some staff thanks to support from Broadway Church in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Lusungu was with us for a while as our Coordinating,

Networking & Advocacy Officer but left to join Action Aid in one of their projects. A cleaner and general hand was hired for the Lilongwe office – Salome. Thengi works out of the OSC in Blantyre and provides stability to the team there. Natalia came on board in late November and is going to be the Communications and Public Relations

Officer. This means she will be the one doing all the work on our new website, blog, video clips, twitter, Facebook, newsletters, stories, Resource Centre Information and anything else that needs doing!

EVENTS IN 2013

1. Open Day for Police Victim Support Unit
2. Awareness Day at Primary Schools
3. GIZ Facilitated Training for VSU's in Lilongwe.



It was great to partner with the Malawi Police Service at an Open Day at the FOL office site (photo of this above). The purpose of this day was so the Police could explain their role in assisting victims of all kinds of trauma – primarily at their Victim Support Units (VSUs) across the country. The Guest of



Honor was the Director of Social Welfare, Mr. Willard Manjolo who welcomed the event and the networking opportunity it gave to his Ministry to link up with the Police. After the Police presented their strategies and plans, some tough questions were asked and they did a great job of answering. It was clear that the Police had not been asked to partner with very many local organisations at all who were willing to work with them to improve their community image so their response to FOL was overwhelmingly positive. There is a great need to host additional such Open Days with a variety of Stakeholders and to continue to use these events to build a network that will improve support services for victims of sexual assault.

The relationship with the Police continued in a training event funded by GIZ (German Aid) for the staff of four (4) different VSU's around the Lilongwe area. Our consultant psychologist – Helen – agreed to do the Basics of Trauma Counseling portion of the training and it went well. In all 20 Police Officers were trained and the hope is that the VSU's they represent will be much more welcoming to victims of sexual assault. When chatting about the scale of what they face one of the Police officers said,

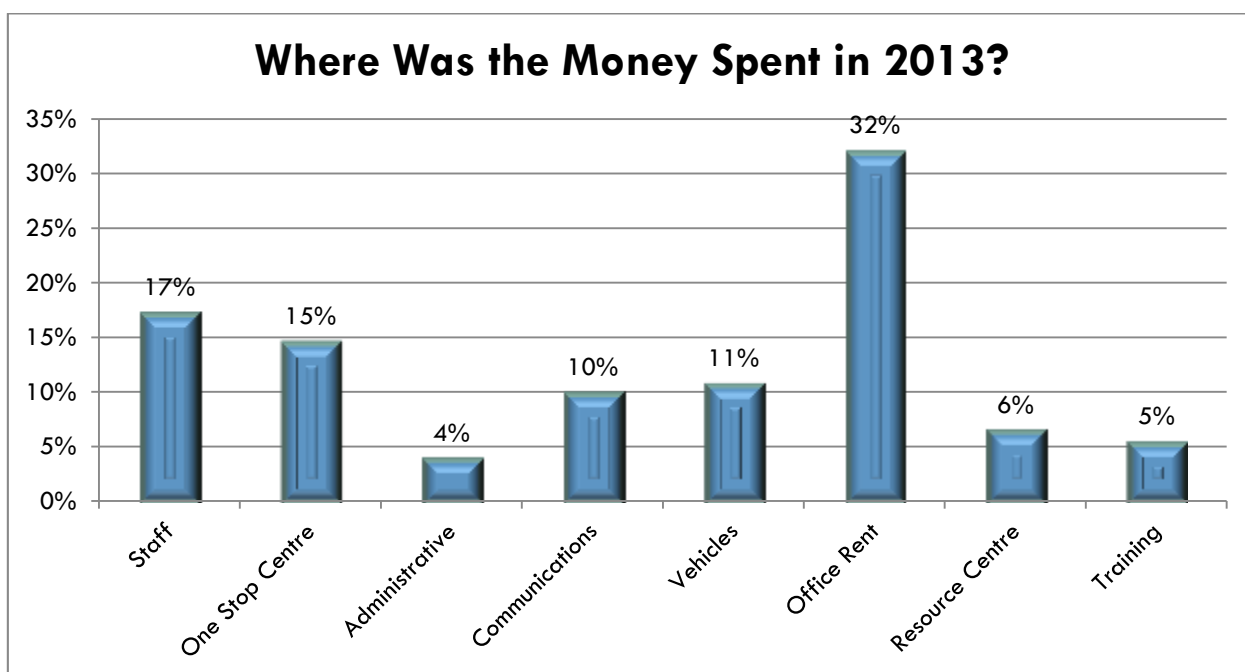
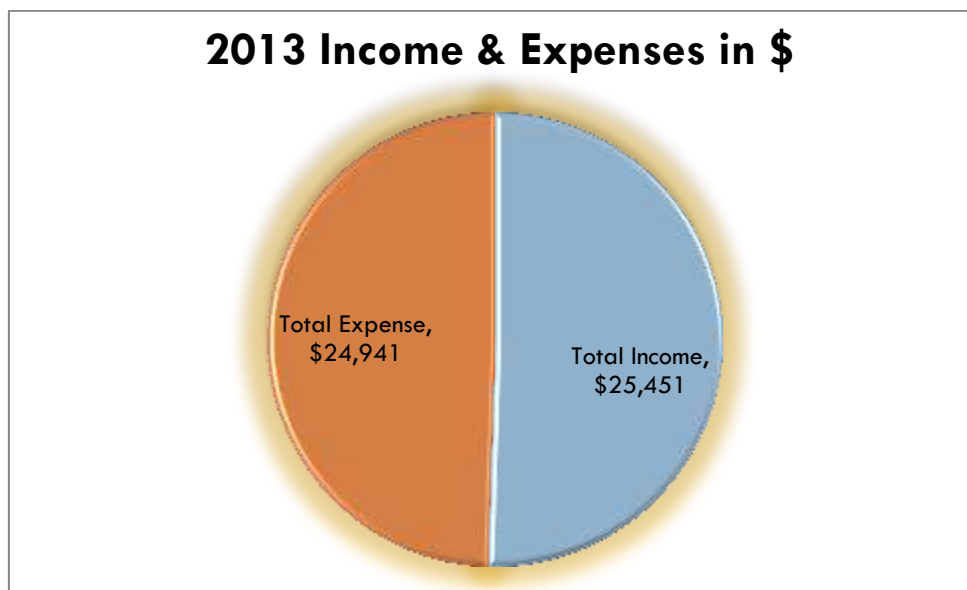
“There are more rape and sexual assault cases being reported each day - over 15 per day and growing (this is 450/month at one (1) VSU!). Given these high numbers, we feel overwhelmed”.

An Education and Awareness day was organized for some Primary Schools in the outskirts of Lilongwe and it went very well. The Police were again involved and it served to solidify our relationship with them as well as the Education officers in the area.

2013 FINANCIAL REPORT

The bulk of our financial support in 2013 came from one source – Broadway Church in Vancouver, BC, Canada. We are extremely grateful to them and all that has been accomplished to date can go to their credit. This means that the financial report here is a record of their donation and how the funds were utilized. The focus areas for the funds were as per the agreement with Broadway. This agreement largely focused on getting the FOL Office open in Lilongwe, key staff hire, supporting the One Stop Centre FOL team, building the Resource Centre, supporting training and some logistics and administrative support.

In 2014 these costs need to continue to be sustained while we expect additional funds to come to assist the implementation of the much needed initiatives that will enhance support services for victims of sexual violence.



FUTURE PLANS & HOPES & DREAMS

Broadway Keeping On & Other Churches & Supporters to Join

2013 has seen FOL take some great steps forward. We are hoping that the journey continues. Broadway Church in Vancouver has said they have made FOL their main mission focus for a 1 year period and this has had amazing impact on what we are able to begin. We cannot express our thanks to Broadway enough and pray that they will be able to support FOL for the year and perhaps beyond. It would also be great for more Churches to get involved as well as other interested individuals and organisations.

Charis Foundation Proposal

A proposal was submitted to the Charis Foundation which is a Canadian Christian Foundation. The concept presented to them is to develop a Church "Tool Kit" to create a safe place for victims of sexual assault. This Tool Kit will include a number of resources and information and the goal is to disseminate this to many churches across Malawi. The prayer is that it will help Church Leaders understand their role in taking action to make their

Fountain of life

Churches a safe place – including the novel idea that they should not be the perpetrators! It will also have information on the Biblical mandate related to the issue and ideas and suggestions for how to engage the congregations in helping those traumatised by sexual violence. It will also have links and information related to connecting with Clinics, the Police, legal aid, and other resource persons and organisations.

Charis did approve funds to support this project and it will be a key area of focus in 2014.

New FOL Website to Launch

A company in New York City that specializes in on-line social media, marketing and fund-raising has taken on FOL as their Charity of choice and is working on our behalf pro-bono. Currently they are redesigning our logo, re-doing the website and working with Natalia on how to effectively utilize all social media elements such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the many others that are out there. On the site will be “buckets” of funding that will allow on-line donations and this could have a tremendous result and support for FOL. Once we know the launch date for the whole plan, this information will be sent out. This company is so passionate and committed to what FOL is trying to achieve in Malawi and we are enormously grateful for their support, interest, expertise and willingness to donate so much of their time to us.

Blantyre International University

Another exiting potential partnership is with a University in Blantyre that offers a 4 year B.A in Counseling & Psychology. We did not know this kind of course was possible or available in Malawi and this is great news. We will explore how we can work together and if we can get sponsorships for Malawians to take this course. We will also be able to help find placements for the practical that the students will have to do as part of the course. There are already some students placed at the One Stop Centre in Blantyre so this is a very positive indication that we can go far together. Think of us as we have further discussions with the University and Ministry of Education to develop a truly complementary and positive relationship.

Continued Focus on Training

We are already in discussions with Brent Diaz for him to come and deliver additional training to build on what was done in 2013. The hope is he can unpack the information in a bit more detail over a few more days.

FOL continues to follow up with GIZ as they are working on a much larger proposal to work with the Police and the VSUs. This may be an initiative that FOL, as a local NGO, can provide long-term sustainability.

A FINAL POINT TO PONDER ON THE ROLE OF THE FOL IN MALAWI.

The police station is usually the first place where a rape or sexual assault victim goes to get help, along with many others suffering from other kinds of violence and trauma. As a result, the VSU is always congested and there are never enough resources. The environment of the police station itself makes it difficult for victims to get counseling, as such, a lot of the victims opt to just give a statement and leave the station. VSU's play an absolutely critical role as an entry point for those seeking help after sexual assault but a victim needs much more.

FOL is working to complement the VSU's & other entry points in ways that will result in places wrapped in an environment that makes it easier for victims to get appropriate and proper long term counseling.

It is a massive task but a goal well worth striving for. Please continue to support the work of FOL in Malawi and transform lives of children and women who have been so deeply traumatised.