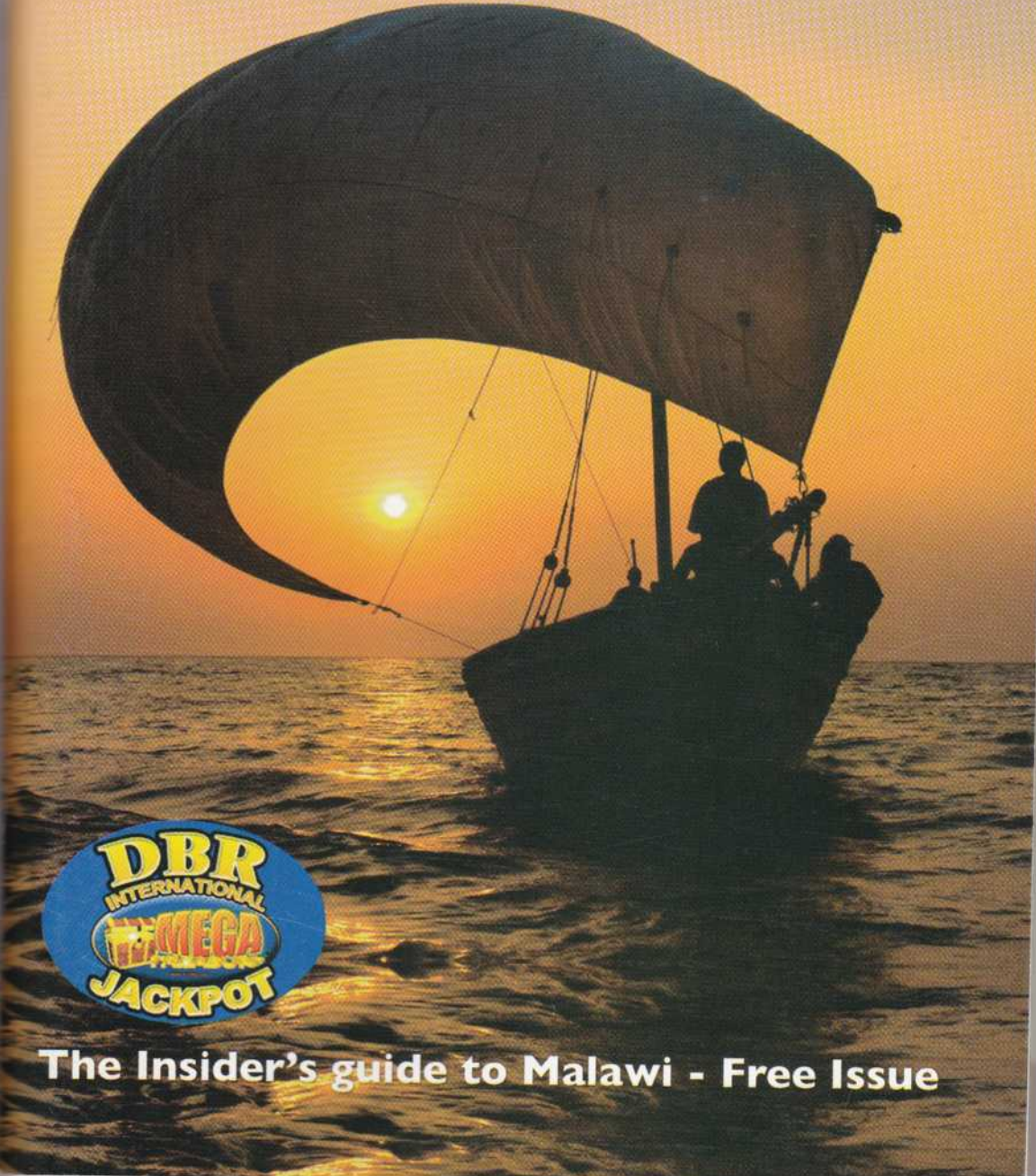


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# THE EYE



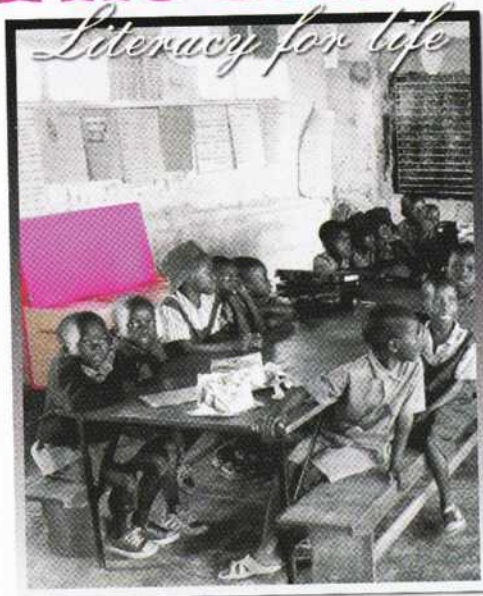
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The Insider's guide to Malawi - Free Issue



# TheCharCharTrust



Through a simple belief that basic literacy and education are key to ending destructive cycles of poverty and pain in Africa, the CharChar Trust is transforming lives. Today, thousands of primary school children in Malawi are benefitting from the creative approaches and support of the CharChar Trust.

The CharChar Trust has been operating in Malawi since 2008. A British registered charity, the CharChar Trust believes in micro-level development initiatives, ones that prepare young generations of Africans to find their own solutions to development challenges. The CharChar Trust does this through the promotion of literacy, writing, and communication skills.

The CharChar Trust is working in South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Uganda and was established in the memory of Charlotte Parker. Charlotte was ten years old when she and her mother lost their lives in an elephant attack in Zimbabwe in 2007. This Trust helps their memory live on and brings hope to thousands of children.

The CharChar Trust has an innovative approach to education development. One of the major strengths of the program is that there are virtually no overhead or administrative costs. Local teachers and volunteers at private schools (such as Saint Andrew's International Schools in Blantyre and Bishop Mackenzie International School in Lilongwe) act as coordinators on the ground, working with lower income schools and students. This means that 100% of all donations are used to directly fund programming. The coordinating school works with the lower income school to create a wish list, which is sent to the Trust. The Trust then puts together a kit for the low income school and assumes all costs of transport. The

Trust agrees to work with that school for a period of five years. It is then up to the coordinating school to ensure that the materials are distributed and used effectively.

In 2011, the Trust has focused on three major priorities: Books, Chests, and Buildings. The CharChar Trust built eight classrooms for two schools in Malawi in 2010 and four more classrooms and two teacher homes in 2011. As part of a programme to improve general educational standards and improving literacy, the Trust has begun soliciting donated original primary school stories and has had them published. This includes a new primary school book that focuses on the life and achievements of Malawian netballer Mary Wawa. There are currently 45 colorful and entertaining primary school books published by the Trust, 7 written in Chichewa and 38 in English. Because the stories and illustrations are donated and the books are printed in Hong Kong, the publishing costs are down to less than \$.50 per book.

In addition to book publishing and distribution, the Trust has introduced the exciting new CharChar Chest concept. A CharChar Chest is a low-cost all-weather chest that can be secured to the wall or floor and padlocked for additional security. According to Trust Chairman, Kelvin Parker, the Chest was custom designed to meet the security and environmental conditions of rural African schools and ensure that the Trust's books and materials were easily accessible to the learners and not stored away unseen in a head-teacher's office, which is often the only secure room in a rural school. "We saw so many books lying unused in head's offices," Parker says, "and most of them rather tedious textbooks, we decided that if we really wanted to make an impact on literacy, we had to produce our own books, make them colourful, exciting and intriguing, and find a way of putting them in the classroom on a permanent basis, which is what the Chest does. It's also very colourful itself and the kids love it. I've even been asked if we can paint whole schools the same colour!"

The chests contains a rich array of books, pencils, pencil sharpeners, rulers, erasers, exercise books, posters, jigsaw puzzles, crayons, and brightly colored educational posters. These chests allow Malawian teachers to be more creative in their teaching styles and students to take pride in their learning materials. Children feel the value of their education and feel the support of well wishers from around the world. In addition to the classroom Chests, there are Library Chests which include books for all primary school level readers. There have already been 220 CharChar Chests donated to Malawi, 57 of which are in schools in the greater Blantyre area. This means that students in Malawi are now enjoying learning with 118,000 books, 1,540 educational posters, 5,800 jigsaw puzzles, 120,000 pencils and 34,000 crayon packs.

There are many ways to contribute to this effective and worthwhile cause. It is only £200 to sponsor a CharChar Chest or £100 to sponsor its contents. You can make the donation in someone's name (the donor's name appears on the chest) and you also get a photo of the chest once it's in place at the school. To learn more, visit the Trust's website: [www.thecharchartrust.org](http://www.thecharchartrust.org), or see more about the CharChar Chest at [www.thecharchest.com](http://www.thecharchest.com).