

Report to Fondation Eagle:
Falls Community Day Secondary School IT Lab (FF 0637)

Introduction

In October 2022 Fondation Eagle kindly donated £17,383 to IT Schools Africa, for the installation of an IT lab at Falls Community Day Secondary School (CDSS), in Lilongwe, Malawi.

How we used the grant

We used the grant to renovate a classroom, install a 40-place computer lab for the Falls CDSS and provide teacher training for all 20 teachers. The school is small with 8 classrooms, a small library and an administration building, with about 380 students enrolled.



“This technological development has put Falls as a Secondary School not a Community School and it’s the best in all the schools in Lilongwe area.”

Mrs. Lois Kumtamula, Head teacher

Renovating the classroom

A significant amount of work was required to improve the integrity of the classroom walls. The interiors of the front and back walls were reconstructed using proper bricks. All the walls were then plastered; previously the walls had been washed with lime, common for builders to use as a cheap alternative to paint. The walls were finally painted in the school’s colours, white and blue.



Electrical work

Again, a considerable amount of work was carried out to ensure that the lab was safely wired. The team had to dig a trench housing the appropriate cable from the mains connection, 20 metres to the classroom, replacing the thin, low voltage cable that had been in use.

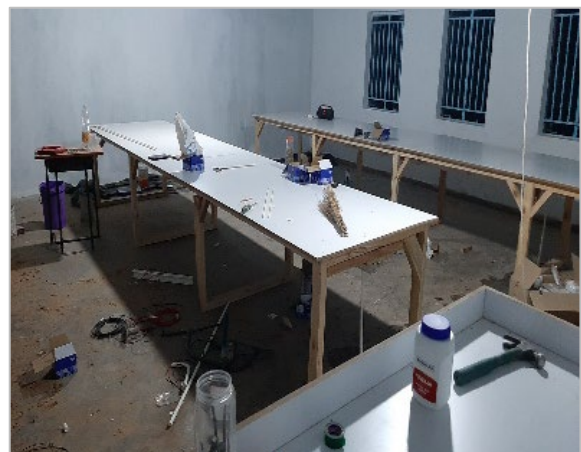
Brackets for the computers were mounted and holes for all equipment cables were drilled in the desks.



Fabrication of furniture and security

The desks were made to measure by our carpenter, as well as the teachers desk. The existing burglar bars were repaired and were also recemented around the windows and the doors. A door protector was fitted on the inside as well as completing the external protector.

The classroom is fitted with an electrical system as an added security measure to deter any potential thieves from entering the lab.



Lab installation

The following were completed to ensure the equipment is installed properly, fully networked and to a high standard:

- Wireless router configurations
- Configuration of the desktops to be able to connect to the network and be able to share files with the teacher's laptop (server)
- Configuring access privileges on all desktops
- Projector mounting, setup and testing
- Printer setup and testing

Teachers trained

All the teachers (20) were given appropriate training to enable them to utilise the equipment effectively and provide basic maintenance and repair in the event of failures. The training consisted of:

- Printer and projector operation
- Network setup, configuration and troubleshooting (for IT teachers)
- Software installations
- Hardware troubleshooting
- Lab safety measures and precautions
- Computer user accounts management
- Creating and deleting users
- Creating a password
- Computer basics
- Keyboard and mouse skills
- Microsoft packages skills



Opening Ceremony

The programme opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony by Ministry of Education, education development manager (EDM) Mr. Joseph J Nkhata and CFMS manager Mrs Sabina Kulasinghe.

The entire school students, staff members, head teacher Mrs. Lois Kumtamula (aka “The game changer”, she was given her nickname when she joined the school as she has apparently brought about a lot of positive change since she started) three Rotary members of City Club of Lilongwe City Centre consisting of director of project, deputy of project and director of youth service, trainer and technician, 10 chiefs from surrounding area, members of the PTA and parents were present. The Rotary were present to formally verify the project, as per Fondation Eagle’s request.

Words could not express to see how overwhelmed and excited everyone was to receive the donation by way of a fully-fledged computer lab for the students.

The ceremony started with a prayer and followed by poems, dancing, drama by students from different forms and head girl’s speech. Speeches were made by the head teacher, PTA members, chief, director of projects – Rotary Club of Lilongwe West, CFMS programme manager and Mr. Joseph J Nkhata (EDM).

Mrs Sabina Kulasinghe spoke of how the organization operates and explained the procedures and qualifying criteria for the schools to receive donations of this nature and other activities conducted as donations to the schools by CFMS through its principal charity, IT Schools Africa in the UK.

All those who spoke advised the students to use the equipment and facilities with utmost care and caution as they must appreciate the facilities to betterment of education and refrain from misuse, theft and damaging any item used within the lab. They were advised to make sure all students are benefitted equally by using the facility with proper care. Similarly, teachers who are involved and responsible for the facility being donated to the school must prioritise professional conduct and use of all equipment with due care.

Mr. Joseph J Nkhata (EDM) addressing everyone, spoke of the importance of improved methods of teaching especially of ICT subjects and making optimum use of the new lab by motivating the learners for better standards of learning to improve their grades and ICT knowledge. He also challenged the school, that in two years, he expects all students to achieve a good passing rate in all subjects.



Financial report

The exchange rate for the budget was 1,200 Mk

Budget for Falls CDSS IT Lab		
	COSTS	
	COST MALAWI KWACHA	CONVERT TO GBP
EXCHANGE RATE GBP TO MALAWI KWACHA	1,200	
Classroom refurbishment		
Re-wiring materials	1,754,444	1,462
Electrician labour	990,250	825
Builder/plasterer	116,500	97
Labour	233,000	194
Carpentry materials	1,448,083	1,207
Carpenter labour	582,500	485
Cleaner	34,950	29
Curtains	215,991	180
Signage	23,300	19
Teachers chair	104,850	87
Ceiling fans	523,901	437
Whiteboard and stationery	271,853	227
Door protector	104,850	87
Genset petrol	34,950	29
Computer equipment		
Computer blower	40,775	34
Refurbished computers x 40	5,592,000	4,660
Refurbished laptop x 1	116,500	97
Dongle	93,200	78
Projector	1,240,000	1,033
Ceiling mount	40,775	34
Printer	720,000	600
HP Toner	190,000	158
Networking		
25mtr VGA cable	34,950	29
RJ45 connectors	10,000	8
400m CAT5E cable to run from class to remote receiver	270,000	225
Router	524,250	437
Broadband subscription - 6 months	314,550	262
Technician expenses (food and accommodation x 3 days)	233,000	194
Transportation		
Hire of truck to buy materials in town transport to office	233,000	194
Hire of truck - from office to Falls CDSS	699,000	583
Hire of small car to carry 10 staff to Falls CDSS	302,900	252
Food & accommodation for x 10 staff	582,500	485
Project Management		-
Transport to Falls CDSS x 2 visits	466,000	388
Food & accommodation for x 5 days	873,750	728
6 monthly maintenance visits	466,000	388
Sub total	19,482,572	16,235
Contingency	1,377,407	1,148
TOTAL	20,859,979	17,383

Key variances

- The budget was developed prior to the devaluation of Malawi's Kwacha in May 2022, which saw it lose value by 25%. Hence the price of materials including the computers increased. We managed to save costs in some places by paying cash.
- Overall, the total overspend was £41

Conclusion

We were delighted to restart our IT Lab Programme, after a three-year hiatus, largely due to Covid, as there is still considerable need for tech facilities in schools in Malawi. The project was finished, as always in a timely manner, despite the additional work that was required to improve the infrastructure and the classroom itself.

We look forward to helping more schools improve their facilities and providing quality education for students.

Thank you Fondation Eagle for your support,

With warm regards



Lucy Pollock
General Manager
IT Schools Africa
lucy@itschoolsafrica.org

Appendix A

Letter of acknowledgement from the headteacher

FROM: The Head Teacher, Falls Community Day Secondary School, Post Office Box 1165, Lilongwe

TO: Programme Manager, Computer For Malawian Schools, Post office Box 2835, Blantyre

CC The Education Division Manager, Central West Education Division, Post Office Box 98, Lilongwe

DATE: 2nd November, 2022

RE: ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF COMPUTER LAB

I write to acknowledge that Computer for Malawian Schools handed over a computer laboratory to our school at a ceremony that took place on 28th October, 2022.

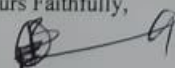
The following items/things were donated to the school:

1. Complete refurbished of the IT Computer Classroom with new, rewired room, painted and built in desks for students, built-in teacher desk and chair.
2. 40 number of 2 in one computer
3. 1 Teacher Laptop
4. New Epson Projector
5. New HP LaserJet printer and scanner
6. 3 ceilings fans
7. White board and stationery
8. Internet and networking
9. Teacher's training

On behalf of all teachers and students, allow me to register our appreciation for this timely donation. It will go a long way in advancing the education of our learners.

We look forward to continue working with you in the future endeavors and opportunities.

Yours Faithfully,


L. Kumtamula, 0995935128/0888385463
(HEAD TEACHER)

