



MALAWI FEBRUARY 2023

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## Introduction

### H2G (Homeopaths without Borders)

Homeopaten zonder Grenzen (H2G), Homeopaths without Borders the Netherlands

H2G was founded in 1991 and has since then run multiple projects in Africa, South America, Eastern Europe, India and Central Asia. The mission of H2G is to improve the general health of people by improving the access to healthcare and by educating local residents and basic healthcare workers. H2G is a non-profit organization and is fully operating on a voluntary basis.

### Malawi

Malawi is one of the less developed countries in the world. Especially women in Malawi face a lot of gender related problems. Child marriages and teenage pregnancies are common in Malawi and there is large gap in the development between men and women. Women and children are most likely to suffer from poverty and its impacts, such as violence, poor nutrition, and a lack of access to education and employment. The preterm birth rate is with 63% one of the highest in the world and many children live in poverty.

### Mother and child project

The main goal of the H2G Mother and Child project in Malawi is to improve the health of women and children in Malawi.





## Goals of the project

In October 2022 HzG traveled to Malawi for a first exploratory mission. In March 2023 a second mission followed. During these missions the EvaDemaya center was visited. This center is based in the Rumphi District in the Northern Region of Malawi. The goals of the first mission were to investigate the local needs in this region and also to train local healthcare workers in workshops and on the job trainings (working alongside the local healthcare workers). Based on this visit we have concluded that a continuous program of training, with input from abroad is needed. Besides, the people trained in working with homeopathy need to be supported and motivated. They need continuous training to keep their knowledge on the required level and to stay alert. Also there is a shortage on remedies, first aid products and attributes like mosquito nets. It is important to continue this project for the coming years.

The main goal of this project is to improve the health of women and children in Malawi. To reach this goal HzG will follow a two-step approach.

The workshops will be closely monitored and evaluated. If possible we will develop a follow-up training to prepare women to start a small enterprise to provide basic homeopathic services to their community, allowing to generate income for themselves and their families.

A) HzG will train the local Malawian Homeopathy Assistants to treat the major health issues more effectively. As women and children are most vulnerable in Malawi, the training classes will focus on problems within this target group. The Train-the-Trainer classes for these health care workers will be offered by HzG experts in homeopathy and midwifery. The program will consist of:

- HzG experts teaching live homeopathy classes on major health issues in Malawi: health and pathology during pregnancy and birth, family planning, eye and ear infections, major skin diseases, trauma (physical and mental). These classes will include nutritional advice;
- HzG experts supervising training, consultations and advising on treatment plans, nutrition and basic health-care principles.

HzG experts will ultimately train the Homeopathic assistants on content and train the local trainers on transferring the knowledge to homeopathy health workers (After the first mission the groups of homeopathy health workers and homeopathy first aiders are evaluated. Some

people are left out of the groups and the groups have been put together to one group). The ultimate aim is that HzG supports the Homeopathic assistants to strengthen and expand their capacities, and the Homeopathy Health Workers will be trained in their own language, by the Homeopathic assistants.

B) HzG will organize workshops for local women. In these workshops the women will be trained and will develop skills regarding the following topics:

- Homeopathic treatment of simple health issues at home: diarrhea, skin problems, fever, teeth problems. Women attending the workshop will receive a homeopathic remedies kit and will be able to use the remedies for themselves and their relatives.
- Basic health-care principles, nutrition, family planning, health and illness during pregnancy and birth.

Attending the workshop will empower these women at several levels: they are better informed; feel more independent and are able to improve their health and their families' wellbeing. Whilst improving the knowledge and skills of these women they have a better opportunity to improve their overall living conditions. By doing so, the women will enhance their further development and make more conscious decisions on family planning.



## Mission Spring 2023 – 12<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

In the preparation of this visit we realized that the end of the rainy season is a period of suffering in Malawi. The rainy season starts in November and will last until April. In this period the crops grow. The country is green. However, the nutritious food like corn and potatoes will only be ready for harvest in April. The period from half February until half April is the period with most lack of nutritious food: the stock from last year is for many families finished and they are waiting for the new harvest. Especially young children and elderly people suffer from malnutrition. As foundation we have decided to allocate budget for food packages and instant milk for babies and toddlers.

As malaria is also active in this season, we checked before the mission if there is a need for mosquito nets. We realized that many families do not have enough mosquito nets to prevent them from being bitten. In the conversations we had in Malawi during our visit, we understood that not all families do have a net and in many cases there is just one net for the whole family. Often this single net is used for the parents, with the consequence that the children do not sleep under a net. Colleagues and acquaintances gave mosquito nets to bring to Malawi.

Next to this HzG got donations to buy ointments; a donation of supplements from Vitals and homeopathic remedies from the Hahnemann Apotheek in Heiloo. We got little presents (pens and pencils and little plains to give to the children, notebooks and pens for the students, pencils and puzzles for schools).

For this mission, Jolande Velgersdijk and Merel Kolderie went to Malawi.

## Train the trainer / Training

During this mission we trained the homeopathic assistants and homeopathy health workers, both for two days. Besides, we had a meeting with the trainers of both groups to discuss training methods and the training program for the coming months.

Because of visiting the EvaDemaya Centre for the second time and because of staying for two extra days on this location, we had the possibility to train both groups for two days. The topics of the training have been adjusted to the current situation in the area. Preparing for this visit, we have been in touch with one of the trainers and with the doctor working on the centre. We have prepared training material for the Health Workers to work in first aid situations and for both groups training material on diarrhea, malaria and cholera. On location we also composed a presentation on burns, used in both groups. During the training free lunch and drinks are provided and students are paid a transportation fee. As last visit, one training per group was paid by EvaDemaya. During this visit HzG paid for the other sessions.

We had a meeting with both trainers, discussed training methods and subjects for the coming period. A program for the coming months has been shared with them. The training material on burns and on malaria is given to them so that they can work for the homeopathic assistants for the first months, for the homeopathy health workers after finishing on the subject of diarrhea. The trainers have been asked to send a more specific request on training material for eyes and ears and to share cases on issues that they encounter in their practices.

## Training for Homeopathy Health Workers on 14 and 21 March 2023

The training was held from half past nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. Eleven people attended the training. The group of Health Workers consists of ten people, five women and five men. Their trainer, who is a homeopathic assistant himself, also attended this training. This was helpful on a few moments where translation was needed.

On the first training day for this group, we started with the theory of homeopathy; the holistic approach, the difference between homeopathic treatment and main stream medicine, the impact of medicines on the body, the first and the second effect of a treatment and how to explain the patients how they should use the medicines.

We discussed the differences between incidents, acute symptoms and chronic diseases. By giving examples that they categorized, we could make more clear the differences between

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these three groups and explain what they can treat themselves and how and when to refer to a homeopathic assistant. We looked at the complete symptom, which is very important to find the correct remedy. We practiced this in role play. The students all got a bottle of Hypercal and they received information on the use of it.

We shared a document prepared by Merel Kolderie on first aid treatments for situations like sprains, cuts, wounds, food poisoning and burns and explained and trained how to work with this document. Based on this, the request was raised to have some training on burns: how to define if a burn is first, second or third degree and how to treat it. The students were asked to study the document before the next training day. The homework was not done; the most mentioned reason was that they did not have the time to look at the document.

For the second day we prepared a presentation on burns. As we also received an extra laptop as donation, we could show this presentation on three laptops and do a quiz. After some pictures with explanation on the different degrees, we showed the students pictures with wounds and they could 'vote' for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. This was very helpful to get more understanding. On this second day we also discussed the physiology and treatment of fever and underlying cause(s).

The main subject for this day was diarrhea. Profuse diarrhea and vomiting are the primary symptoms of Cholera. In this group it proved to be very important to work together on the different complaints, symptoms, duration, frequency of stool, consistency of stool, severity, concomitants, et cetera. We elaborated together a list of questions they can use when seeing a patient with diarrhea. We discussed remedies, Materia Medica and differential diagnosis. Also on this day we practiced case taking with complete symptoms. In this practice we integrated the usage of the list with questions on diarrhea.

At the end the day we gave some of the students, based on the inventory





from the week before, the books that were given to us by colleagues. There is still a need for books, mainly Materia Medica (Boericke and Phatak, Kent) and Repertory (Synthesis version 5, 6 or 7 and Kent). The students got arnica and calendula ointment.

Although the students appreciate a lot the attention they get, we think it is not necessary and not always efficient to organize these lessons by HzG. The trainer, who is trained himself as a homeopathic assistant and trains them during the year, can train them based on the new information he got in his training.

## Training for Homeopathic Assistants on 18 and 25 February 2023

The training for the Homeopathic assistants was on Saturday. It started at nine in the morning and finished at three thirty in the afternoon. Ten people, two women and eight men, attended these training days. The participants were all homeopathic assistants.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February some of the students arrived late as there had been severe rains the evening before. The training started with a short introduction on homeopathy. We had a good discussion on first and second effect of treatment. In this group we also discussed the differences between incidents, acute symptoms and chronic complaints and the consequence on how to do the case take and the treatment.

The main topic for this day was diarrhea. We discussed the anatomy, physiology and pathology involved. We discussed the known, and also two new remedies, the Materia Medica of some of the remedies, how to use and interpret this and we discussed in depth the differential diagnosis for some remedies.

In this group we discussed and trained case taking, on their specific level, with attention for the complete symptom.

As homework the students were asked to elaborate a case on diarrhea.

On the second day, while waiting for the last students to arrive, we started with the presentation on burns. The presentation was shared afterwards with both trainers, so they can use the pictures again when relevant.

After this we discussed a number of remedies on diarrhea, differentiating them in all their aspects. The homework case on diarrhea was discussed. After this the students worked in small groups on other remedies. In the class another case of diarrhea was elaborated and discussed.

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Fever was on the agenda for this day. Also for this group the topic was very useful and gave them new insights in when to treat for the underlying factor of fever and when to give the body space and time to act by itself.

For malaria a start has been made on the pathology, the training documentation is distributed and can be read and prepared by the students. The trainer will come back on this subject in the training days in the coming months.

Also on this day, case-taking with specific attention for the complete symptom was trained.

During the day, we discussed the way to set up and continue the practice and how the homeopathic assistants can ask a contribution from their patients. As many people in the area are poor, it is not always possible to ask for a payment for the treatment. However, this does not mean that no one can pay and also, a contribution can be done in a different way.

The day was closed by a 'lottery' in which a student could win a t-shirt. And at the end the trainers expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the training and work from HzG at EvaDemaya and the outreach clinics.



## Evaluation by the students

Based on the evaluation done in 2022, a compact evaluation form was prepared for the four training days. In the first week, also an inventory of the books that the students have was made.

## Homeopathy Health Workers

They all mentioned that they understand the training, that the level of training was good for them, that they learned new things and that they are able to use the new knowledge in their practice.

After the first training day two of them asked for more information on diagnosis of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns; two people wanted to know more about how to choose the right remedy and one asked about the translation of the information to Materia Medica.

The training on case taking was appreciated a lot. This is also part of the training program for the coming months. It is important to integrate the knowledge into case-taking skills. The students also asked for training on how to welcome a patient and how to explain the instructions to take the remedy; this is also mentioned specifically in the program. It is better to train this in the local language.

Some of the students asked for more training days. They say that they need more training. We explained to them that they can study by themselves. They can study on remedies, they can read in Materia Medica and look for differences between remedies, they can practice using the repertory et cetera.

## Homeopathic Assistants

The students were very enthusiastic about the training. Their knowledge was good enough to absorb new information. They appreciated the way of training with a variety of training methods. They liked the approach of the teaching, with some information about the remedy and pictures of the remedies.

They all participated actively in discussions, brown paper sessions, quizzes, case taking, elaborating cases and the repertorizing, most of them also did the homework.

They all mentioned that they understand the training, that the level of training was good for them, that they learned new things and that they are able to use the new knowledge in their practice.

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After the first training day two students asked for more information about diarrhea. They both work at EvaDemaya which gave the possibility to discuss their more specific questions during the week at a quiet moment in the clinic. There was also a question for more information on how to weight the questions to ask on the complete symptom. This question was answered on the second training day. After the second training day, there were two students who mentioned that they wanted to know more about (treating) malaria. This will be subject for some of the training days in the coming month. Training material is provided.

After the first day they mentioned as the most interesting: practicing complete case taking and the new remedies for treating diarrhea. They appreciated the bottles they got with *Croton tiglium* and *Gambogia*. Also the explanation on incidents, acute and chronic cases was mentioned as most interesting by two students.

The by the students suggested improvements mentioned after the first training day are: more information on diarrhea, as this is an often heard complaint. This is arranged. One person mentioned that we should start the training even when not everybody has arrived yet. We solved this on the second training day.

After the second day they feel confident about treating people with diarrhea. They mentioned that they also want to continue training case taking in the classes as this helps them to improve their skills as homeopath. They all learn from each other, in seeing how to approach the patient and in how to ask questions to get the complete symptom.

At the end of the second day these students also got Hypercal and Calendula ointment.





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## Outreach clinics

For this mission, we planned to organize two days of outreach clinics. Before traveling to Malawi we already contacted Andrea Mkandawire to visit his clinic in Mphangala. The location for the visit in the second week was to be decided in cooperation with the people at the clinic at EvaDemaya. We have discussed several possibilities. A criterion was that follow up consultations could be given by one of the homeopathic assistant. An outreach clinic has as aim that we help the people in the area by giving them homeopathic advice. A derivative target is that a practice of one of the homeopathic assistants gets extra attention and is supported. Therefore areas where no homeopathic assistants are working fell out of the selection.

## Outreach clinic Mphangala

On Thursday 17 March 2023 an outreach clinic to Mphangala was set up. One of the homeopathic assistants working at the EvaDemaya centre and another homeopathic assistant were involved to translate and participate in the consultations done by Merel and Jolande. The homeopathic assistants Kenson and Moses, supported by translating and explaining the patient how to use the remedies. In the mean time they learn from the cases and the case-taking. We brought 100 food packages and 35 cans of milk to the clinic.

At 6:30h we left EvaDemaya and arrived after a bumpy ride on severely damaged roads as it rained heavily the evening before. On the way to the clinic we picked up some people that were coming for consultation.

When we arrived there were people waiting. During the day more and more people came to register. We worked until we could no longer see who was sitting on the other side of the table. Although we treated more than 60 people, at the end of the day many people were waiting for help. We decided that one of us would visit the same practice the next day supported by a homeopathic assistant



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to help the people who were still there. On the second day, the homeopath and the homeopathic assistant from the EvaDemaya center both worked for another long day in the clinic. Also Andrea did some consultations this day. Together they treated 45 people.

### Outreach clinic Kasongwe

On Saturday 18th, during the training day, we discussed with Peter Banda the possibility to set up a clinic in Kasongwe for the next week. He was happy to organize this. By announcing the clinic in the church and schools, people in the environment knew about the possibility to come for a consultation.

Consultations were hosted in a church. When we arrived we were told that the church was not yet open. A desk and chairs had to be arranged. However, with pragmatism and adaptability, we were able to start soon with the consultations. Peter and Ruth, a homeopathic assistant from the EvaDemaya clinic, worked together with us.

Kasongwe is in a different area than Mphangala and Luviri. The cases we saw here were, in average, more severe. We treated several people with malaria, people with HIV, many people who received treatment for cancer before and had complaints since the treatment. On the other hand, we did not see children or adults with kwashiorkor or marasmus. On this day we treated 53 patients. We also gave some food packages and mosquito nets to people in need.

The outreach clinics were considered to have been intense but also very useful and satisfying days.



## Working in the EvaDemaya homeopathic clinic

At the EvaDemaya clinic patients from the region are treated by three local homeopathic assistants on a daily basis. These local homeopathic assistants are trained in the past years and with this knowledge they are able to work individually. There is good cooperation between the homeopathic clinic and the conventional clinic. Patients are referred from one to the other when applicable or necessary.

One of the students had an accident when she traveled home after the training at the EvaDemaya Centre. She hired a motor taxi, together with another student. They got hit by another motor and fell. The second student had some scratches and bruises but could go home after wound treatment. The one with more severe injuries was at the hospital when we came back after a walk. In cooperation with the nurse, the shock, pain, wounds and bruises were treated with homeopathic medicines. After treatment and staying one night at the hospital, she felt much better and she could go home (not on a motor).

As already mentioned based on the October 2022 visit, it was clear that the knowledge and skills of case-taking needed to be refreshed. We are working on this by training and supervision.

The HzG representatives worked for several days at the EvaDemaya clinic together with the homeopathic assistants. In this way supervision could take place and overall case-taking skills could be improved. When working as a supervisor at the EvaDemaya clinic, the HzG representatives focused on the following topics: Gathering information; Taking the complete symptom; Repertorizing (finding symptoms in a systematic way) and Materia Medica (elaborated description of homeopathic remedies). In the report from the previous visit (October 2022), more details can be found.

In the homeopathic clinic patients are treated for several physical and





mental problems. Common problems in Malawi in this period are:

1. Skin problems, like rashes, eczema, boils, eruptions
2. Wounds from burns and/or traffic accidents
3. Acute problems like (high) fever, measles, tonsillitis, cystitis
4. Chronic problems like high blood pressure, diabetes, rheumatism
5. Palpitations in teenagers
6. Mental and physical retardation
7. Anxiety
8. Depression after loss/ grief
9. Malnutrition and related consequences
10. HIV
11. Malaria, acute or recurring flare ups
12. Diarrhea





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Working together with social work and mother groups in the area

As this HzG project focuses on the Mother and Child situation Malawi and wants to improve the health of women we approached a women working in social care, focused on gender equality and domestic violence.

During this visit we set up a meeting to see how we can support activities in this environment. The first idea they put forward was to organize a celebration day and invite all people in the area. They organize presentations, drinks, lunch, music, a public speaker etc. When we asked what would be the follow-up of the day, they had no idea. It is important to manage expectations regarding activities and their outcomes. We have asked the local social workers to start with a small group, build up experience, see what goes well and what can be improved and extend from this on.

Based on this, they suggested to organize a weekly meeting with the pupils of standard 7 and 8 (the last two classes from primary school) accompanied by women from the local mothers' group. In these meetings, they will discuss items like education, gender equality, violence, teenage pregnancy and other subjects.

The kick off of these meetings took place on Friday 24 February. We have discussed to evaluate the activity during our next visit and see if and how this model can be copied to other schools and to other workshops, e.g. workshops for young mothers.

Based on a plan, drawn up by the social workers, we can see at HzG if we can release a budget for some support. At the moment of writing this report, the plan has not yet been received.



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## Financial report

The project schedule differs from the original plan as the first visit was postponed from February to October 2022.

In February 2023 the second visit took place. For the follow-up mission we created a budget in 2021.

In the original project plan two missions were planned for 2022 and two missions for 2023. The costs for a mission were budgeted as follows:

Period	Step	Costs	Euro
<b>February 2023</b>		Prepare training and workshop, training material	250,-
Second mission	4	Travel to Malawi (flight) 2x 1250	2.500,-
	5	Visa costs 2 persons	100,-
	5	Overnight stay in Lilongwe 2 persons	150,-
	5	Local transport from airport to Centre 2x 200 2 persons	400,-
	5	Accommodation fee EvaDemaya Clinic for 2 persons	1200,-
	5	Remedies, remedy kits, bandage, self-care products	500,-
<b>Total costs second mission</b>			<b>5.100,-</b>

## Proposed budget versus actual realization for the second mission

Period	Budget in euro	Realization in euro
Prepare training and workshop, training material	250	75
Travel to Malawi (flight) 2x 1.250	2.500	3170
Transport NL		108
Travel test		60
Visa costs 2 persons	100	95
Overnight stay in Lilongwe 2 persons – 2 nights	150	327
Local transport to and from airport 2x 200 2 persons	400	505
Accommodation fee EvaDemaya Centre for 2 persons	1200	880
Remedies, remedy kits, bandage, self-care products	500	680
Training days		385
Outreaches		100
Food packages and instant milk		770
Daily allowance		750
<b>Total costs mission Feb 2023</b>	<b>5.100</b>	<b>7.905</b>

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Funding of the project is done by a yearly contribution from HzG, a yearly contribution from Familie fonds Wiarda-Baas of 2.000 euro for two years, an overall funding for the activities in Malawi from Stichting Zorg voor Malawi of 9.000 euro and many smaller donations.

Project Information is shared via Instagram and Facebook, mainly in preparation for and during the visits, and on the HzG website. On the website general information and project documentation is shared.



## Summary and next steps

### Summary of the exploratory mission to Malawi in 2022

The main goal of the Mother and child project is to improve the health situation of women and children in Malawi. Treating health problems with homeopathy is the core activity of HzG. At the EvaDemaya Centre and at the outreach clinics the HzG representatives again treated a wide variety of cases. Working with, supervising and training the local homeopathic assistants provided a good insight in the main problems the people from North Malawi are facing. As the rainy season bring other health issues and because of working at Kasongwe, the complaints people came with, were slightly different than in October 2022.

It is important to keep supporting the homeopathic assistants by training and providing them with remedies. For the homeopathy health workers it is also import that they are trained. We can provide the trainer with training material. Besides, by keeping the stock in the clinic at EvaDemaya in order, they can be provided with remedies too, using stock bottles.

### Next steps

We will keep on training Homeopathic assistants on a regular basis (twice a year). Making sure there is continuity in the training days will help to extend the knowledge of the local homeopathic assistants and help them to embed the information they learn during the training days. During each mission we will organize training days for the existing local homeopathic assistants. This will also be input for the person training the homeopathy health workers. There will be a variety of subjects covered during the trainings.

#### 1. Third visit autumn 2023.

Two representatives of HzG will go to Malawi for two weeks. For this visit, Kristel Winters will be one of the representatives. As she is a midwife, a meeting with the pre- and postnatal clinic can be set up. For this third mission the following activities can be organized:

- Bring homeopathic remedies, ointments, tinctures and bandages
- Training program for homeopathic assistants
- Have a meeting on possibilities to set up workshops for young mothers with the doctor and midwife on the EvaDemaya Centre
- Evaluate the project with weekly sessions at school as set up per February 2023.
- Organize outreach clinics
- Work with and supervise local homeopathic assistants at the EvaDemaya clinic



## 2. Fourth visit to Malawi February 2024

After the third mission the content of the fourth stay will be defined.

## 3. Next steps along with the missions

We are working on specific sponsoring for the project in Malawi, next to a specific link to donate money allocated to this project, we are creating small profiles about the homeopathy health workers and put these online.

The project is important in itself, it is also a good way to promote HzG. A presentation will be composed, which will be used to promote HzG and the Malawi Mother and Child project at homeopathic schools and the professional association of homeopaths in the Netherlands. We will also look for other opportunities to promote the project and the foundation.

The situation of the EvaDemaya Centre is changing. The management of the centre will be handed over to a local MD. This MD is a local doctor, highly internationally educated. He has expressed his positive ideas on homeopathy. We will see in the coming period how the cooperation will be. It might be an opportunity to create a broader homeopathic base in Malawi.




The homeopathy health workers asked for repertory books. Although for some of them the language will be a problem, some others will be able to profit from learning to use the repertory. We will investigate possibilities to find repertories (Synthesis version 7) for the homeopathy health workers. The distributor of Radar is approached for this.

Merlijn Boekhandel, who had been approached for a donation, has offered to support the project by an in kind donation. We will discuss this in more detail in the coming months.

After a period of three years in total, an overall evaluation will be done to see how successful the project is and how we will continue to support the people in Malawi.

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