

# Rients & Margaret in Malawi

January 2017

**Dear friends and family,**

We are currently working on a project to provide assistance to 1,000 households, with approximately 5,000 beneficiaries, in the rural district of Blantyre, Malawi. John and Hilda Van Gysse started this project in October, 2016 and handed it over to us on January 4, 2017.

Malawi is a long narrow, land-locked country sandwiched between Zambia to the west, and Mozambique to the east. Blantyre is in the southern region and our project is located close to Lunzu, approximately a half hour drive from the city. This farming community suffered a double hit with floods in January 2015 and a dry spell that started towards the end of December 2015, resulting in a lack of harvest which impacted many people. World Renew is working in partnership with Word Alive Ministries International (WAMI) and we share one of their offices when we are not in the field.

A dry, barren landscape greeted the Van Gysse's when they arrived in October, 2016 (below).



*Community members receiving maize seed in November 2016.*

In November, the beneficiaries received 10kg of maize seed per household, which they were able to plant. Currently, the maize is growing very well due to the blessing of many rains (below).



In December, the beneficiaries received 20 bundles of sweet potato vines, where were delivered in five truck loads.



At this time the ground as moist enough to support the germination of the vines. Community members were happy to carry their huge bundles home for planting.

Six agricultural workers gave the people planting instructions and will follow up by visiting the farms.

On January 26<sup>th</sup> we completed the third cash distribution. Providing the beneficiaries with money allows them to buy the food they need and saves World Renew the expenses involved in loading, transporting, and unloading countless bags of maize, as well as



Community members carrying bundles of sweet potato vines.



A local market where community members are able to spend some of the cash they receive from World Renew.

dealing with the terrible road conditions during the rainy season. At the distribution site entrepreneurs set up a market to sell to those who now have cash, so the project has a ripple effect by stimulating the local economy.

The people were interviewed and screened before their names were put on the beneficiary list. They had no harvest last year and had at least an acre of land to plant the maize seed and vines. So these people receive about \$40.00 USD per month from November, 2016 to March, 2017.

Many of the people expressed their thankfulness, either in English, Chichewa, or used sign language to display their gratitude.

**Prayer Requests**

Please pray that:

- Rains will continue and that people will have bountiful harvests
- The stalk borer, a pest that has invaded local maize crops, would be controlled before crops are destroyed. The government is providing pesticides to farmers to stop the spread.

In Gratitude,

Rients and Margaret Mazereeuw