



# 2016 EVALUATION REPORT



**JACARANDA**  
**FOUNDATION**

*Educating Children & Transforming Communities*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Jacaranda Foundation educates and cares for the most vulnerable children in Malawi and supports their families and the surrounding community. Knowing that extended families and the community are the best support for orphans and vulnerable children, the Jacaranda Foundation also has initiatives to strengthen students' families and the surrounding community.

This report provides an overview of the methodology and findings of an evaluation conducted by an outside consultant in the spring of 2016. Evaluation highlights include:

### **Jacaranda has provided free quality education to orphans and other vulnerable children who would otherwise not have been able to receive such an education.**

- In the 2015-16 school year, 350 children attended the Jacaranda School.
- 29 students are enrolled in the university scholarships program.
- Twelve students are currently obtaining on-site vocational training.
- Through the library and literacy outreach programs, the Jacaranda Foundation reaches an additional 5,050 local public school children via two public school libraries and 420 community members via two community libraries.

### **Jacaranda School has better educational outcomes compared to a similar regional public school.**

- Jacaranda students have better English fluency, with 73% fluency in English in primary school vs. 40% at the local primary school and 82% fluency in English in secondary school vs. 55% at the local secondary school.
- Jacaranda students had a better performance on final national examinations. 64% of students at Jacaranda vs. 26% of students at the local school passed Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) and 85% of students at Jacaranda vs. 58% of students at the local school passed Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLCE).

### **Jacaranda School has better physical and teaching infrastructure compared to a similar regional public school.**

- There is a smaller student to teacher ratio at Jacaranda, with 1 teacher to 24 pupils vs. 1 to 129 at the local primary school and 1 teacher to 25 pupils at Jacaranda vs. 1 to 31 at the local secondary school.
- There are more desks per student at Jacaranda, with 2 pupils to 1 desk vs. 20 pupils to 1 desk at the local primary school.
- There is more restroom capacity, with 10 restrooms for 216 pupils at Jacaranda vs. 41 restrooms for 3066 pupils at the local primary school and 9 restrooms for 104 pupils vs. 0 restrooms for secondary students at the local secondary school.
- There are more classroom blocks per pupil, with 1 classroom block to 27 pupils at Jacaranda vs. 1 classroom block to 192 pupils at the local primary school.

### **Jacaranda has given their graduating students the skills to enable them to find employment**

- 93% of the surveyed graduating students at Jacaranda secondary school felt they had acquired enough skills to enable them succeed in life and find employment compared to 73% of the graduating students at the local public secondary school.

Jacaranda's approach to comprehensive education and care changes children's lives. It gives them the skills, support and resilience to enroll in university, vocational schools, or enter the workforce.

## **BACKGROUND**

There are over 1.8 million vulnerable children in Malawi (National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children 2015-2019). Out of those children, almost one million have lost one or both parents to AIDS. According to UNICEF, one-fifth of Malawian households care for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The majority of those families lack the means to provide basic necessities.

OVC are at greater risk for poor health and educational outcomes. OVC often lack parental care and support, have inadequate shelter and limited access to education and healthcare and are at a risk for exploitation and abuse. Additionally, orphans and other vulnerable children suffer depression, increased malnutrition, lower rates of immunizations, lower rates of schooling, homelessness, and exposure to HIV infection (Hunter and Williamson, 1997). Furthermore, having a parent with HIV/AIDS means that children experience the trauma of caring for their parents, and may need to provide support to siblings, elderly guardians or other HIV positive relatives. A comprehensive approach to orphan education and care, that includes their extended families and guardians, is needed to give them resilience, support and skills.

## **PROGRAM MODEL**

The Jacaranda Foundation operates the Jacaranda School for Orphans, a free primary and secondary school in Blantyre district, Malawi. In addition to primary and secondary education, they provide their students with: daily nutrition; medical care; HIV/AIDS awareness activities; music, arts and sports enrichment programs; school supplies, uniforms, clothes and shoes; agricultural activities; home support including construction of students' houses and monthly support to their most impoverished children; and tertiary education scholarships to selected secondary school graduates. The school enables students to live with family members or guardians in their communities to preserve family and cultural ties.

The Jacaranda Foundation also runs a library and literacy outreach program called Mr. Luc's Libraries that helps public primary and secondary schools develop and run their own libraries. The Foundation is developing a technical and vocational school that will provide training in carpentry, media, hairdressing, tailoring, baking and plumbing. Jacaranda Foundation will also build a preschool in 2016-2017.

## **Theory of Change**

Jacaranda Foundation's comprehensive approach to orphan care and education improves students' educational outcomes and job readiness skills and creates self-reliant and empowered students who are leaders in their communities. Jacaranda aims to achieve these outcomes by providing a supportive learning environment, enrichment activities, health and psychosocial support, gender empowerment, and home support.

## Logic Model

The logic model describes Jacaranda’s inputs, activities and selected outputs and outcomes.

INPUTS	PROCESS	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Jacaranda faculty</li> <li>• Jacaranda staff</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• On-site nurse</li> <li>• Clinic</li> <li>• Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and enroll students and pupils</li> <li>• Construct school</li> <li>• Recruit and train faculty and staff</li> <li>• Teachers deliver lessons</li> <li>• Provide books and other learning materials</li> <li>• Conduct health talks on HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Provide arts and sports enrichment activities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Below are a selected number of outputs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students enrolled</li> <li>• Number of school blocks constructed</li> <li>• Number of faculty and staff recruited</li> <li>• Number of books</li> <li>• Number of enriched meals provided per days</li> <li>• Number of health talks on HIV/AIDS conducted</li> <li>• Number of students participating in enrichment activities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Below are a selected number of outcomes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved learning environment</li> <li>• Increased school enrollment rate</li> <li>• Increased school retention rate</li> <li>• Increased examination pass rate</li> <li>• Improved nutrition</li> <li>• Improved HIV/AIDS knowledge</li> <li>• Improved university and vocational school placement</li> <li>• Improved job placement</li> </ul>

## METHODS

This evaluation, conducted by an independent evaluation consultant, employed a quasi-experimental, mixed methods approach to evaluate the impact of Jacaranda’s programs. This involved comparing the qualitative and quantitative outputs and outcomes of pupils and students enrolled at Jacaranda School for Orphans in Chigumula area in Blantyre to pupils and students enrolled at public schools in the same geographic area.

The primary learning questions this evaluation aimed to answer are as follows:

1. How has Jacaranda Foundation impacted the lives of orphans and other vulnerable children and the communities it serves?
2. How do the academic outcomes of Jacaranda primary and secondary schools and neighboring public primary and secondary schools differ?
3. How do the job, university and vocational school prospects of Jacaranda students and neighboring public students schools differ?
4. How do the quality of services, including teaching and infrastructure, at the Jacaranda School compare to the public education offered in the region?

Ninety-one questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from respondents, refer to Table 1.

**Table 1: Study Participants and Questionnaires administered**

<b>Respondents/Participants</b>	<b>Total Number of Questionnaires administered/Interviews conducted</b>
Executive management team of Jacaranda Foundation	2
Headmasters/mistresses for Jacaranda primary and secondary Schools	2
Headmasters/mistresses for Comparable primary and secondary Schools	2
Clinic Nurse for Jacaranda primary and secondary schools	2
Parents or Guardians of children enrolled at Jacaranda primary and secondary schools	15
Pupils enrolled at Jacaranda primary school	15
Pupils enrolled at Comparable primary school	15
Students enrolled at Jacaranda secondary school	15
Students enrolled at Comparable secondary school	15
Impact stories from students enrolled at Jacaranda secondary school	4
Impact stories from graduates of Jacaranda secondary school	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>

## RESULTS

Below we document the impact of the services provided by the Jacaranda Foundation to the students at the Jacaranda School.

### Educational Outcomes

One of the largest differences between the Jacaranda students and students at the comparable secondary school is the number of students who secured tertiary (university and vocational) scholarships and the number of students enrolled in university. Jacaranda has provided 65 tertiary (university and vocational) scholarships since its inception. 39 students from Jacaranda secondary school have enrolled in the university since Jacaranda's inception while only one student from the comparable public secondary school has enrolled in the university. Refer to Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Education Outputs/Outcomes**

Output	Total	Jacaranda		Total	Comparison	
	Jacaranda	M	F	Comparison School	M	F
Number of primary school teachers, stratified by gender	9	6	3	25	3	22
Number of qualified primary school teachers, stratified by gender	7	5	2	25	3	22
Number of pupils in primary school, stratified by gender	215	91	124	3,212	1,638	1,574
Number of secondary school teachers, stratified by gender	10	9	1	14	7	7
Number of qualified secondary school teachers, stratified by gender	9	8	1	14	7	7
Number of students in secondary school, stratified by gender	104	66	38	125	75	50
<b>Number of tertiary scholarships, stratified by gender (since inception)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Proportion of students who participate in enrichment activities (drama, music, poetry, arts, dancing, sports and clubs)	100%	-	-	100%	60%	40%
<b>Number of students enrolled in a university (since inception)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Number of students enrolled in a vocational school (since inception)	27	16	11	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of students placed in jobs (since inception)	84	48	36	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Teacher to Student Ratios

There is a large difference in the teacher to student ratio at Jacaranda and the comparable primary schools. The comparable primary school has a ratio of 1 teacher to 129 students and Jacaranda has a ratio of 1 teacher to 24 students. In secondary school, Jacaranda has a teacher to student ratio of 1 teacher to 25 students, and at the comparable secondary school, the ratio



is 1 teacher to 31 students. The ratios are similar at the secondary level largely due to dropout at the comparable school.

Teacher to student ratio is one of the metrics tracked by the public schools to ensure quality of education, increase student achievement, and allow students to receive more individualized attention from their teacher. The higher ratio at the primary school level at Jacaranda means there is more support for each student.

### **Ability to write and speak English fluently**

82% of students at Jacaranda secondary school are able to write and speak English fluently while 55% of the students enrolled at the comparable secondary school are able to write and speak English fluently. At the primary school level, 73% of Jacaranda pupils are able to write and speak English fluently while 40% of the pupils at the comparable primary school are able to write and speak English fluently.

The ability to write and speak English fluently is an important metric. English is the official language of Malawi and is used to teach most of the subjects. It also is often used during job interviews.

### **Examinations pass rates for the past three years**

To assess performance and quality of education, data was collected on examination pass rates for Jacaranda and the comparable secondary and primary schools as presented below.

#### *Primary School*

At the primary school level, 85% of the Jacaranda pupils passed the final national examinations at primary school known as Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) in 2013, 2014 and 2015 compared to 58% at the comparable primary school (Refer to Table 3).

PSLCE examinations are taken in the final class in primary school and pupils are selected to public secondary schools if they pass with very good grades on the PSLCE examinations.

**Table 3: Examination pass rates for the past three years – Primary School**

<b>Jacaranda</b>				<b>Comparable School</b>			
Academic year	No of pupils who sat for PSLCE	No of pupils who passed PSLCE	%	Academic year	No of pupils who sat for PSLCE	No of pupils who passed PSLCE	%
2012/2013	27	22	81	2012/2013	210	150	71
2013/2014	24	21	88	2013/2014	200	110	55
2014/2015	23	20	87	2014/2015	220	104	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>58</b>

#### *Secondary School*

Examination pass rates for 2013, 2014 and 2015 indicate that out of a total of 87 students who sat for the final national secondary school examinations known as Malawi School Certificate of

Education (MSCE) examinations 64% passed the examinations at Jacaranda compared to 26% at the comparable secondary school (Refer to Table 4). Out of the 56 students who passed the MSCE examinations at Jacaranda, two students were selected to pursue studies in the public universities in Malawi and no students were selected to pursue studies in the public university from the comparable secondary school.

MSCE examinations are taken in the final class in secondary school in Malawi and students are selected for public universities if they pass with very good grades in the MSCE examinations.

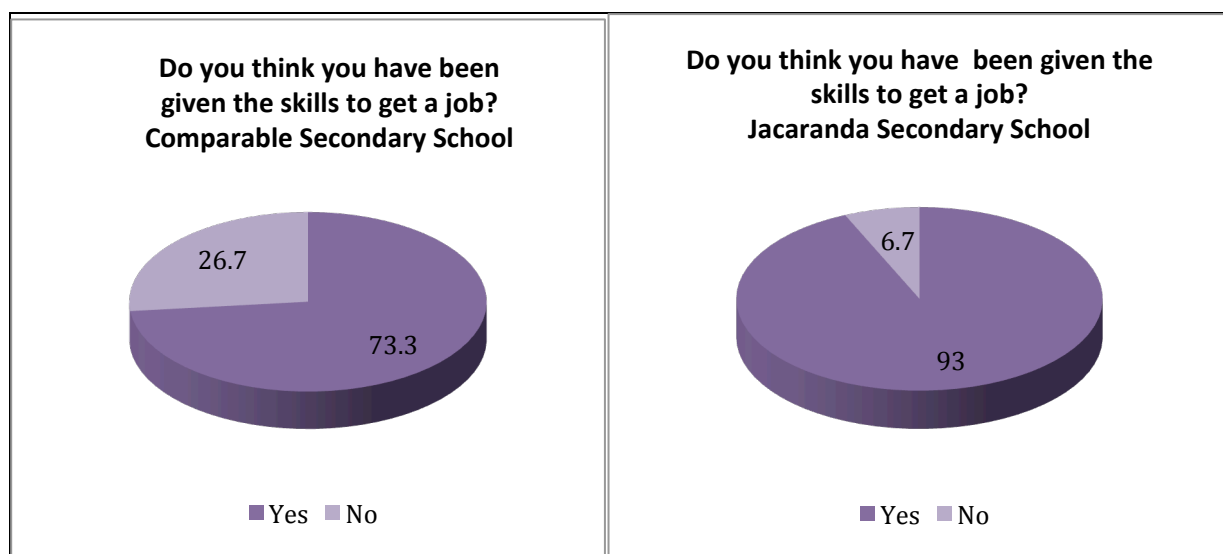
**Table 4: Examination pass rates for the past three years – Secondary School**

Jacaranda				Comparable			
Academic year	No of students who sat for MSCE	No of students who passed MSCE	%	Academic year	No of students who sat for MSCE	No of students who passed MSCE	%
2012/2013	36	17	47	2012/2013	32	8	25
2013/2014	21	15	71	2013/2014	34	6	18
2014/2015	30	24	80	2014/2015	25	10	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>64</b>		<b>91</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>

### Job Readiness

To compare how students felt about their ability to succeed in life and find employment, a selected number of students at Jacaranda and the comparable secondary school (N= 15 for each school), were asked if they felt that they had been given the skills they need to succeed in life and find employment. 93% of the graduating students at Jacaranda secondary school felt they had acquired the skills to enable them succeed in life and find employment. 73% of the graduating students at the comparable secondary school felt they had acquired skills to enable them succeed in life and find employment (Refer to Chart 1).

**Chart 1: Do you think you have been given the skills to get a job?**



The skills that graduating students at Jacaranda secondary school mentioned would help them succeed in life and find employment include: English speaking, numerical skills, social skills, acting, public speaking, time management, singing, writing, poetry, gardening, computer skills, drawing and vocational skills such as carpentry. At the comparable secondary school, graduating students mentioned that they had acquired the following skills: English speaking, writing, poetry, leadership, reading, social, environmental management skills, planning skills, presentation skills and entrepreneurship. There is a wider breadth of skills that the students mention they had acquired at Jacaranda secondary school. This may give them higher perceived potential for self-employment. For instance, vocational skills such as carpentry and other skills like drawing, that were mentioned by graduating students at Jacaranda, may have enable them to create jobs for themselves and others.

## **School Infrastructure**

### **Desks by class level**

The number of desks by class level is an important indicator tracked by public schools to ensure that students sit comfortably in the classroom to enable them concentrate on lessons. At Jacaranda primary school, the ratio of pupils to desk is 2 to 1. At the comparable primary school, there 20 pupils to 1 desk. In addition, no students in standards 1 through 5 have desks.

At the secondary school level, Jacaranda has 80 desks used by 104 students and the comparable school has 110 desks used by 125 students giving a ratio of approximately 1 student to 1 desk in both schools.

### **Classroom Blocks**

The Jacaranda primary school has 8 classroom blocks for 216 pupils while the comparable primary school has 16 classroom blocks for 3066 pupils. The recommended ratio for primary school in Malawi is 1 classroom block to 60 pupils. The ratio of 1 classroom block to 27 pupils at Jacaranda primary school enables students to receive more individualized attention from teachers.

The Jacaranda secondary school has 6 classroom blocks for 104 students and the comparable secondary school has no classroom blocks as the school is operating on borrowed premises. The comparable secondary school has crowded conditions with an environment that makes learning a challenge.

### **Restrooms**

Restrooms are important particularly for girls as they may feel uncomfortable if they lack access to restrooms. Limited or inadequate restroom facilities can increase female students' absenteeism, particularly during menstruation.

The Jacaranda primary school has 10 toilets for 216 pupils at the school while the comparable primary school has 41 toilets for 3066 pupils at the school. The Jacaranda secondary school has 9 toilets that are used by 104 students while the comparable secondary school has no toilets of their own so students use restrooms at the primary school.

## **Level of Inclusiveness**

To provide an inclusive school community that meets all students' needs, including those with special needs, orphans and other vulnerable groups, Jacaranda primary and secondary schools provide: free education to all learners, two meals of nutritious porridge every day, soap and body oil, clothes and school materials such as pens, notebooks and school bags, medical care at the school clinic and they assist with finding, constructing and repairing students' homes. Additionally, the structures at Jacaranda are built to enable the physically handicapped students to access classrooms and restrooms.

## **Health Outcomes**

As a school for orphans and vulnerable children, many of whom are HIV+, we assessed health outcomes. The Jacaranda School has a clinic staffed with one nurse and provides health education programs.

### *Porridge meals provided per day*

Students at Jacaranda primary and secondary school receive two meals of nutritious porridge per day compared to one meal of porridge per day at the local primary and secondary schools. Respondents who included teachers, students, parents and guardians, all mentioned that one impact of the porridge is that it makes them healthy and are not sick as often.

When asked about the advantages of have two healthy porridge meals every day at school, one respondent said: *"My daughter is very healthy because of the nutritious porridge she eats at Jacaranda every day, sometimes she leaves home in the morning without eating and she eats at Jacaranda school," (Guardian to one of the pupils at Jacaranda primary school).*

Another respondent said, *"The porridge meals have contributed to boosting the immunity of some children, you can't know that some children are HIV positive because of the nutritious porridge meals they eat at Jacaranda," (Guardian to one of the pupils at Jacaranda primary school).*

In addition to making children healthy, respondents mentioned that attendance at school has increased as children come to school in large numbers because they know they will eat porridge at school.

### *Health talks on HIV/AIDS prevention*

Health talks on HIV/AIDS prevention have become an integral part of the curriculum at Jacaranda. Fourteen health talks on HIV/AIDS prevention are given to primary school pupils and another 14 health talks are given to secondary school students at Jacaranda per term, which lasts for fifteen weeks. Respondents mentioned that the most meaningful parts of the HIV/AIDS talks is the openness during presentations on how people contract HIV. Students are also counseled on how to say no to sex.

### *Lessons on Life Skills per term*

The Jacaranda secondary school gives 28 life skills lessons per term. These give students an opportunity to learn about pregnancy prevention, how to say no to boys and how to say no to sex. At the primary school level, 70 life skills lessons are provided.

Life skills lessons enable students to: find new ways of thinking and problem solving; recognize the impact of their actions and teach them to take responsibility for their actions; build confidence; analyze options, make decisions and understand why they make certain choices outside the classroom; and develop a greater sense of awareness and appreciation for others.

### **Pregnancy and Early Marriage**

Data on pregnancy and early marriage outcomes was collected using a questionnaire that was answered by a nurse at Jacaranda. The health outcomes that were assessed included:

1. Number of girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy in the past year
2. Number of girls who dropped out of school due to early marriages in the past year
3. Number of early marriages avoided due to enrolment at Jacaranda in the past year

**Table 11: Health Outcomes at Jacaranda Primary and Secondary Schools**

Jacaranda Primary School		Jacaranda Secondary School	
Outcome	Number	Outcome	Number
Girls drop out of school due to pregnancy	2	Girls drop out of school due to pregnancy	1
Girls drop out of school due to early marriages	0	Girls drop out of school due to early marriages	1
Early marriages avoided due to enrollment at Jacaranda	1	Early marriages avoided due to enrollment at Jacaranda	1

The Jacaranda school nurse provided the information on early marriages that were avoided due to enrollment at Jacaranda based on reports about girls who were being advised to get married, but did not because they were offered enrollment at Jacaranda. The girls opted to stay in school because they wanted to get quality education at Jacaranda.

## DISCUSSION

The Jacaranda Primary and Secondary School for Orphans provides a comprehensive model of education and care. **The results of this evaluation indicate the infrastructure and the educational outcomes of Jacaranda are superior to the comparable local primary and secondary school.** The teacher to pupil ratio is smaller in the primary school, there are more desks per student, more classroom blocks, and more restrooms for students. All components are essential to creating a positive learning environment.

The differences in the educational outcomes include greater English fluency, a higher national examination pass rate in the primary and secondary level, a larger number of students who advance to university and vocational schools, and a greater percentage of students who felt they had the skills to succeed in life and find employment. **This data indicates that Jacaranda students are given the education to excel in national exams, the financial and infrastructural support to advance to vocational school or universities, and the skills to obtain jobs.**

By enabling children to live with their families and a supportive community, and providing them with the educational and psychosocial resources they need, Jacaranda gives their students the best opportunity to thrive. Nutrition, arts and sports enrichment, and HIV/AIDS education and life skills trainings also play a key role. **Nutritious meals encourage students to attend school and focus on their studies. Enrichment activities provide vocational skills and a rounded education. HIV/AIDS education and life skills help students navigate the challenges they will encounter throughout their lives.**

The one topic insufficiently explored by this evaluation was alumni outcomes. Future evaluation efforts should include an analysis of alumni to understand the impact of Jacaranda on their lives and determine if and how they have been able to give back to the Jacaranda community. The ability of alumni to provide support would demonstrate further impact of Jacaranda's comprehensive model.

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