



SAVE THE CHILDREN PRESENTS  
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

# MOUNT MULANJE PORTERS RACE

9 JULY 2016

## 2016 Mount Mulanje Porters Race

# PROGRAMME

04:00am	Marshals up the mountain
05:00am	Registration and distribution of chest numbers
06:00am	Arrival of Guest of Honour
06:30am	Mount Mulanje Porters Race starts <i>Performance (Likhubula Children's Choir)</i>
07:00am	Every Last Child race starts
08:30am	Every Last Child race finishes <i>Performance (Likhubula Children's Choir)</i> <i>Displays – from Schools</i>
09:00am	Welcoming runners (Porters Race)
10:30am	Speeches <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TAMM /MMCT</li><li>• Save the Children</li><li>• Sponsor</li><li>• District Commissioner</li><li>• Guest of Honour (Minister)</li></ul>
11:00am	Prize presentation
11:30am	End of Prize presentation
01:00pm	Island in the Sky Concert <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lawi and Mango Band</li><li>• Lulu and Mathumela Band</li></ul>
05:00pm	End of programme

### 2016 Mount Mulanje Porters Race

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# Mount Mulanje Porters Race

**T**he Mt Mulanje Porters Race is Malawi's ultimate endurance run a 22km competitive race up from the Likhubula forestry station to the 2,000m high Chambe Basin, across the mountain shelf in the shadow of the highest peaks, to turn at the Lichenya Plateau edge and speedily scramble back down the rough steep track through the cheering crowds to the

finish line. At 3,000 metres above sea level, Mt Mulanje is the highest tropical African mountain between Kilimanjaro and the Drakensberg, and this striking physical platform does provide a breathtaking setting for a legendary race.

Runners have their mental dexterity, physical fitness and agile footwork seriously tasked by Mt Mulanje... starting up a very steep uphill running 3km up a 1km altitudinal increase, to then race a rugged 15km cross-country tough obstacle course, and then descend the last and fast section down slippery rocky terrain to the finish line. The entire course demands an attentive eye and a goat-like agility to avoid tumbling off the path.

This year's event, the 2016 Porter's Race, celebrates the twentieth anniversary of this endurance race – a great testimony to the commitments of the athletes, organisers and sponsors to participate together over all these years. The race started purely as a porter's event and has grown over the years to include the many other users of the mountain, local and national athletes, and today also an increasing number of international competitors.

The Porter's Race traditionally, falls on second week of July - this year its Saturday 9th July and is open to all adults at a small entrance fee. The race starts shortly after dawn to enable the runners to enjoy as much as possible





the cool early morning temperatures and avoid the overheating risks that direct sunshine can cause. Despite the tough track and physical challenge, the first aid teams in attendance have rarely had to treat any serious injuries.

Initially organized by the Mountain Club of Malawi, the Porters Race is today hosted as a cooperative effort of both local and national organisations. Mike Brady a development volunteer who was locally resident in the Likhubula Valley in the mid-1990s was the initiator of this endurance race concept and solely organised the event in its original years limited. Today, the Mulanje Mountain

Conservation Trust underwrites the organisational capacity for this great race and highlights through the publicity the need for greater conservation of the mountains unique ecology and high endemic biodiversity.

Many porters have great experience and awareness of the mountain and Mike was sure this race would enable them an opportunity to show off their physical ability and enjoy some hard-earned prowess. The Race also gives porters a chance to win great prizes and the national attention to be selected to represent the country at continental and global race events, some racing at the Commonwealth and Olympic trials.

This race continues to have remarkable best winning times with the fastest men's time achieved just 2 hours 6 minutes achieved by Charles Musowa in 2103 and the fastest woman Tereza Masters clocking just 2 hours 31 minutes in 2012. In 2015, the Porters Race saw for the first time an international runner break a seeming 3 hour barrier when Michael McCarthy become the first outsider to complete the race in 2 hours 47 minutes.

Many of the competitors train to

rigorous fitness schedules ahead of the race to have a hopeful chance at victory and the winning times show admirable physical performances. Some participants however enter only to enjoy the endurance test, a run through the beautiful surroundings and are happy to just complete the distance without injury. What a memorable achievement to have accomplished to tell a tale to many others...

The race enjoys the participation of over 300 entrants each year and a greater gender balance is steadily being seen in the interest of both men





and women. Many women are also mountain fit and familiar, as they hike up the mountain to harvest firewood, grasses, fruits and traditional medicines for household use. Today, up to 100 entrants are women and the range of prizes awarded at the Porters Race is identical for winners of both sexes.

This number of competitors was higher when many children also joined in. However, the entry of school age youth has had to be constrained as the Porters Race is considered too strenuous. Some still hide just up-front from the start and join in with the runners to test their ability, knowledgeable that they cannot be timed or awarded prizes!

Not to disappoint the young ones on

*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Mount Mulanje Porters' Race*

*Save the Forests of Mount Mulanje; Serve Every Last Child*

this day of local festivity, a shorter race is now held within the lower valley for them to compete in, test their skill and win prizes of their liking. Save the Children Fund appropriately sponsors these races and the enjoyment of the children themselves is satisfying to appreciate. The kids events take place after the Porters Race has started off and before any runners return to cross the finish line, giving the day's spectators additional interest on the day and chance to cheer the young ones.

To add to the stature and enjoyment to the Porters Race, the race has now added in an exciting cultural musical occasion that is hosted by the Lake of Stars crew. The first combined event was hosted in 2015 to great audience pleasure and for this year's special 20th annual celebration there are high expectations to showcase an

extraordinary festival. There is also a grand social responsibility ambition to raise a financial prize from the race sponsors and entrants to give benefit to a local charity or good cause.

The Porters Race profile is now also hosted to highlight Mt Mulanje as a tourism destination with television coverage showing off the spectacular scenery that provides the backdrop to this stage. The Government of Malawi recognises the Porters Race as a National Tourism Event and for many years the Minister has graced the start and prize giving ceremonies to give the day the prestige it richly deserves. The increasing number of outside participants and spectators that visit Mt Mulanje for the weekend also ensures that the local hospitality enjoys thriving business.





# NO CHILD Should Be Left Behind

**C**hikondi is an 11-year-old girl who lives in a small and remote village about 400 kilometers south of Malawi's capital city, Lilongwe. She is the eldest of 5 children. Her parents are struggling small scale farmers who do the best they can to take care of their family.

Chikondi is in Grade 3 and loves mathematics. However, she does not

get a chance to learn math as often as she would like.

It is very likely that she could suddenly be tasked with looking after her 9-year-old brother at home while her mother and father take her younger sisters to the nearest hospital, 35 km away. Or in another occasion, Chikondi may end up missing school to take care of her sisters who often suffer from diarrhea.

When she does manage to go to school though, Chikondi is often late and hardly makes it in time for math class. She is often late because she walks barefooted for approximately 15 kilometers to school, on top of having to help her mother fetch water from the river each morning.

During the rainy season, she and all the other children in the village have to miss school entirely. Her school only has 2 classrooms for Grade 4 students, the highest grade available, meaning that she along with other pupils have to sit under a tree to learn. At a school that doesn't go further than Grade 4, it unfortunately also means that in a year or so, Chikondi will not be learning any math at all.

Meanwhile; in the capital city, Lilongwe,



over 400 kilometers from Chikondi at the Save the Children's Malawi Country Office – all the buzz is about the launch of the Every Last Child campaign. Emails are going back and forth exponentially, and phones are ringing at a rate slightly higher than usual.

So what do these two stories have to do with each other? Well simply put, one story causes the other.

The Every Last Child campaign, Save the Children's new global campaign, is the newest opportunity and tool created to increase dialogue and action towards uplifting the lives of children often excluded or limited from reaching their full potential.

In Malawi, the campaign has been contextualized to specifically advocate for; 'children living in the remotest

areas', i.e. Children like Chikondi. It is specifically asking for 3 things:

First, by 2018 the Government of Malawi should increase budgets for educational and health infrastructure in remote areas by 30%. Second, that by 2018, Integrated Community Case Management is being implemented in 20 districts across Malawi and 90% of Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) operate from their catchment areas. And third, that by 2018, the Government of Malawi has increased budgets for Child Poverty (Child focused social protection) and Child Protection service provision in remote areas by 30%.

April 26th is a high profile event to kick start this campaign with children from Mchinji district presenting a petition to ask for a better life. It is also a platform for Save the Children's Malawi Country Office to tell about the impact it has made so far but most importantly, how this impact can be lessened if children

in the remotest areas are continuously left behind.

Personally I envision a future Malawi where no child gets left behind as a country in which fewer adults are illiterate and living below the poverty line. Do you?

*Disclaimer: The story of Chikondi has been used to illustrate hardship faced by many children living in remote areas. It is not based on one real child but a number of children who are facing destitution whilst growing up in remote villages.*



**Top:** Minister of Local Government and Rural Development Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa launches the campaign

**Centre:** Lawi and the Mango band **Bottom -right:** Save the Children Country Director Matthew Pickard delivers his speech



*Save the Forests of Mount Mulanje; Serve Every Last Child*

**T**he route is rocky and hazardous and the paths are small. Runners cover a tiring distance of about 10 hours in less than three hours! And others doing it bare foot!

The Mount Mulanje Porters' Race is here as per tradition it falls in the second week of July annually at Likhubula Valley in Mulanje.

From Likhubula runners heads up the tops of Chambe crossing to Luchenya side and trek down back at Likhubula valley at a distance of 22 Km. No wonder it is the Malawi's only extreme sport and Africa's Ultimate Challenge.

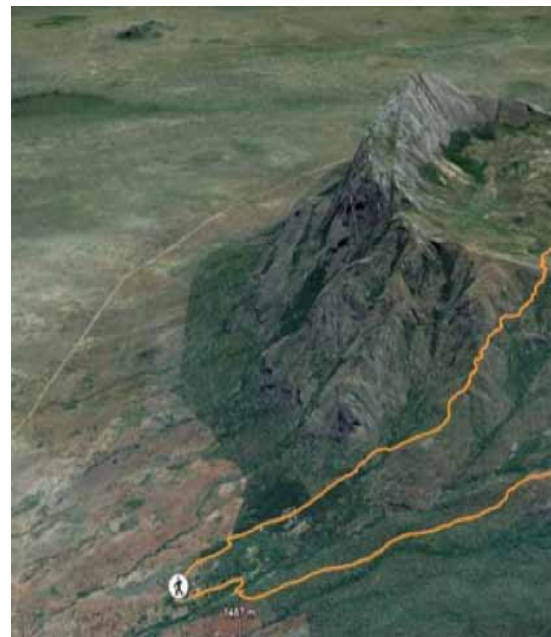
It all started with an idea of one Mike Brady from England during his stay in Mulanje as a small event among interested porters and guides willing

to do a running competition up the mountain. The first prize was a Cassette Walkman.

After Mike Brady, Population Services international (PSI) sponsored for a six consecutive years. In the evening of the racing day, PSI was beaming video shows on HIV & AIDS preventive messages (then Sammy & Chimwemwe episode).

Later, the Race was under the supervision of the Mountain Club of Malawi before being facilitated by the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT) in collaboration with the Mount Mulanje Porters and Guides Association. The Trust has used to disseminate messages on environmental management and natural resource conservation on this cloud-puller event.

NBS Bank has supported the race for seven years as principal sponsor. Over the years companies and individuals have associated themselves with the race by giving out, consolation prizes. These include; Arkay Plastics, Gift of the Givers Foundation, Rab Processors, Hapuwani Lodge, Multi Choice Malawi, Kingfisher Associates, Universal



*An aerial view of the Mount Mulanje Porters race route*



# The Joy

Industries, and Likhubula C.C.A.P House. However, there were also prizes from the Ministry of Information, Tourism and Civic Education.

*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Mount Mulanje Porters' Race*



route

# Journey

In 2015, Save the Children and Lake of stars have partnered with Mount Mulanje Porters Race to add flavor to the Africa's ultimate challenge with NBS  
*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Mount Mulanje Porters' Race*

Bank as main sponsors.

Companies and organizations have been given an opportunity to sponsor the event and take advantage of the huge gathering of spectator, mostly close to five thousand, to advertise their products or services.

Through this event, Malawi has produced reputable athletes that have competed in international events. These include; Francis Khanje, Catherine Chikwawa, Tereza Master, Mike Tebulo, Leo Chikhwaza and others. This is enough reason for the race to be recognized by the Malawi government and appears on Malawi's Tourism Calendar.

The event is meant to promote Mount Mulanje as a tourist destination and over the years it has been in the calendar of many tourists.

## Records

In the male category a non- Malawian (mzungu) has never won the top three of the race and only Maggie O'Toore won once in 2000 in the female category.

And again in the male category, Byson Willy and Charles Musowa have managed to hold on to position one for



three consecutive years each from 2003 to 2005 and 2013 to 2015 respectively.

Teleza Master is the only runner to have won to the record of nine times.

Charles Musowa is the only male Athlete to have won the race to a record four times.

The fastest runner so far is Evance Nyazule who completed the route in 2 hours 4minutes in 2011.

Today, the 20th Anniversary, we are witnessing another RECORD! You will tell a story.

# Serve the Every Last Child to Save Our Forests

**D**own the eastern base of Mount Mulanje lies Mbewa village. A rocky land has seven small rivers and one big Likhubula which feeds its natural waters to hundreds of people in Mulanje and beyond.

There is one school, Nansato primary. A health centre, Secondary School, community day secondary and police unit are situated over 5km away. There is no source of employment in the area except farming and attending to tourists. The biggest resource to sustain people's livelihood is Mount Mulanje Forest Reserve.

Nineteen year old Elias Makwata comes from this village. He is a standard six drop out.

"I could not afford a school uniform and I was going to school empty stomach, the small scale farming that my parents were doing could not support our family enough," recalled Elias.

Elias had a 16 by 4 feet cedar log on his head, 6 hours walk up the mountain at Luchenya plateau. When he saw our crew, he dropped the log and started running away, he is an illegal resource harvester.

He sells the log at K6500. The next day he goes up again to illegally harvest more.

"Honestly, the cedar is gone. We are getting this very far and at this rate there will be no single cedar even small ones by next year," confessed Elias.

"But I don't have the way out, look; I failed school because of lack of basic needs. I wish I could be employed somewhere," laments Elias.

There are hundreds of Elias' caliber in and around Mount Mulanje Forest Reserve and most of them failed to proceed

with education due to many reason. As a result, they could not afford any fair or decent job but pile more pressure on natural resources. They are all involved in illegal activities in the reserve for the sake of earning money.

The rampant destruction of the reserve will bring detrimental consequences to thousands of people living in Mulanje and beyond.

At this level, it is imperative to address challenges faced by children to ensure a bright future.

Barriers such as poor and/or lack of health, education and child protection infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and staff houses and poor road network are crucial in child development. A responsible citizen is nurtured at this stage.



# Women and the Porters Race

**T**wenty years of Porters Races! Women first ran in significant numbers in the race in 2001 when I was persuaded to take part along with 34 women from Likhubula. I felt quite a fraud at the start line realising that my fellow runners had already done a days work of cutting firewood, fetching water and feeding the family before they could participate in the race! I guess, as we were all first timers, none of us had any

idea whether we would make it around the gruelling route ... I'm pleased to say that we all did!

It was a couple of years later when a girl in a green and white shiny dress really gave an indication of what women were capable of. Storming home in well under 3 hours this was Tereza Masters. It wasn't long before the dress was replaced by running shorts, vest and running shoes and Tereza was representing Malawi in international cross country and marathons. But she returns to the Porters Race most years to reassert her prowess on her home turf. In 2008 Tereza was one of 3 Mulanje runners who were sponsored by a friend of MCM to take part in the Austin, US marathon – an amazing experience for them and their hosts!

These days the top Malawi women participants in the race take their training very seriously, there is a good turn out of azungu women each year, and of course the Likhubula women still



# Meet the Winners!

When he made it to the first position of Africa's Ultimate Challenges; the Mount Mulanje Porters' Race on July 11, 2015, Charles Musowa was welcomed by uproar and joyful noise from supporters.

It was one of his most amazing moments of the year! But the most unforgettable came from one commentator.

"Musowa has failed to break his own record set in 2014!"

According to the six times Porters' Race top winner, the words hurt him.

"Those words killed me, but also motivated me, now my mission for this year is nothing else than reducing the last year winner's running time," he said.

But according to another athlete Evance Nyazule who scooped second position for three consecutive times since 2013, as long as he is contesting this year the mission to reduce the time is his and no one else's.

"My only two priorities for this year's race are to snatch the first position and to make a new record of the running time. I can

assure you that I will deliver this because I have trained enough, I am feeding myself a necessary diet and I have a positive mind on this," Nyazule said.

On challenges they meet in the 22km run, Doris Fischer, a female runner who has been in the race for 12 years said;

"Apart from that, the road up and down the mountain is full of rocks that hurt badly sometimes, and if you're not careful you can sustain serious injuries when you fall down or step on a sharp rock," said Fischer

On the other hand, a Form 3 student at Chambe Secondary School, Dorothy Gawani says Porters' race has made her

life easy as she has been able to stand on her own with the earnings she makes from the competition.

"Porters' race prize money may seem not much when we win it but to be honest, the money is still changing our lives. Some of us like Dines Allan has built a house, I have built mine too and I pay for my education with it, Teleza Master has done a lot with it too that we can't mention for her, so it really helps us," she said.

Through the past years, a lot of athletes have had personal experiences on the mountain, of which some might be great and others not really good, but one thing remains a fact: that athletes from Mulanje – Malawi and across the World look up to Mount Mulanje Porters' Race as one way of developing athletic talent and grooming new professionals in the sport.



## ...and 2015 Race!

The 2015 Mount Mulanje Porters Race benefited a lot from partnerships and sponsorships.

Save the Children partnered with the Porter's Race this year and staged a relay race branded race for survival, for children to champion issues of child survival to the people of Mulanje and the nation as a whole. Nansato Primary, Pasani Primary and Nkanda Primary participated in the race and also performed traditional dances and recited poem focusing on child survival.

Lake of Stars team and Mibawa Studios produced a brand new finish line concert in Mulanje town to celebrate the mountain race. The 'Island in the Sky' concert featured DJ Toby2shoes from South Africa, Bucci Music, George Kalukusha Music, Trumel, and the Jacalanda Foundation and School in Malawi's collective Jacapella, the Floor Steppers, Jacaranda Steppers, and Queen Steppers. The combination of sport, music and culture made Porters race an event to remember!

Sponsors came in and proudly did a wonderful job. The main sponsors NBS Bank provided funds for the organization of the race as well as major prizes.

Arkay Plastics Limited gave out consolation prizes (drums, plastic chairs, buckets and basin).

### *Countries Represented*

Denmark, France, UK, The Netherlands, Canada, Japan, Ireland, South Africa, Colombia, Australia, USA, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

*Save the Forests of Mount Mulanje; Serve Every Last Child*

## Every Last Child Campaign

Save the Children's global campaign – Every Last Child – aims to tackle some of the key causes of exclusion in order to help set the world on the path to end preventable child deaths and achieve learning for every child within a generation. In Malawi we are campaigning for children living in the remotest areas.

These children face a lot of challenges. Barriers include poor and/or lack of health, education and child protection infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and staff houses and poor road network. As a result these areas are often underserved in both the provision of health, education and child protection supplies and services as well as requisite staff to deliver the services. Where staff is available, it is often inadequate, ill-resourced, poorly motivated and highly burdened—compromising the service delivery itself further.

Save the Children Malawi will work with the government, NGOs, CSOs and other development partners to ensure that children living in the remotest areas survive, learn and are protected.

# About Mount Mulanje

**T**he attractive Mount Mulanje with its Sapitwa Peak standing over 3,000 meters above sea level is the highest mountain in Malawi and the third largest mountain in Africa. It is also the most impressive massif in the south-eastern African region. It is also known as *Malawi's Island in the Sky!*

## Conservation

Close to a million people have their livelihood dependent on resources from the Mountain and the Forest Reserve that include firewood, grass (for thatching); water, timber, animals, and fruits. To underscore the importance on this resource, the government of Malawi gazetted Mulanje Mountain Forest Reserve as a protected area in 1927. Mount Mulanje has attracted attention

of researchers, media and tourists from different parts of the world. The mountain and its forest reserve ranks high in terms of terrestrial biodiversity richness in Malawi. Globally it is an ecological site. It is also a home to Malawi's national tree, Mulanje Cedar (*Widdringtonia Whytei*).

## Location

Situated in the border with Mozambique, about 80 km from the commercial city Blantyre, past the green beautiful tea field of the Thyolo Highlands, the attractive Mulanje with its evergreen forests, woodlands and montane grasslands, is much more than a barren rock with a forest reserve thus made up of a range of ecological habitats from rain forest to alpine, woodland to grassland. Bounded by precipitous slopes and a series of discontinuous marginal plateaus, the massif, is also vital for watershed protection.

## Activities

For the really adventurous, there are



**MALAWI'S NATIONAL TREE**

also zip wires over rivers and serious rock climbing - the west face of Chambe peak provides the chance to undertake 1,700 metres of technical climbing and is the highest rock climb in Africa.

## Trade

Mulanje is the home of high quality tea on its estates under the imposing Mount Mulanje. The Mulanje tea companies' commitment to consistent quality and reliability of supply has secured for it customers who blend tea in the UK Western Europe the USA and Eastern Europe.

Travelling the tea plantations of southern Malawi, you will enjoy some of the best highland birding in Africa, some its greenest and most breathtaking views.

*20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Mount Mulanje Porters' Race*



*Save the Forests of Mount Mulanje; Serve Every Last Child*

**2016 Mount Mulanje  
Porters Race  
Organising Team**

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Hector Nkawihe  
Tanvi Lad**

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**Special Thanks**  
Sosten Lingwalanya  
Christine Chimangeni  
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**LAKE STARS**  
MALAWI ARTS FESTIVAL



**Save the Children**

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