

# BUNGWE

## MAGAZINE

"AN NGO SECTOR-WIDE COMPILATION OF SUCCESSES"



DEC ISSUE 2025





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# Vision

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**An NGO that maximises public benefit**



# Mission

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**Delivering sustainable development through NGO sector regulation**

# Core values

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**Professionalism  
Independence  
Transparency  
Accountability  
People-centric**





# FOREWORD

I am honoured to introduce this edition of the NGORA Magazine, a publication that shines a spotlight on the vital role Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are playing in shaping Malawi's future. This magazine is not simply a record of activities; it is a statement of how civil society is helping us deliver on our national promise of transformation and progress.



Across our nation, NGOs are working side by side with the government to bring services closer to the people, to amplify voices that might otherwise go unheard, and to ensure that development reaches every corner of Malawi. Their contributions span health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, and civic advocacy. These efforts are proof that when communities are empowered, when partnerships are strengthened, and when innovation is embraced, Malawi moves forward.

As a Minister of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare, I want to reaffirm that the government values and supports the work of NGOs. Through NGORA, we are building stronger systems of accountability, coordination, and governance to ensure that the sector continues to thrive. This commitment reflects the vision of His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, the State President, who has consistently called for competence, integrity, and hard work as the pillars of rebuilding our nation. Through NGORA, government and civil society are deepening partnerships that align national priorities with global commitments, reinforcing Malawi's determination to achieve MW2063 and the SDGs through transparency, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

The stories captured in this magazine are stories of resilience and hope. They show mothers receiving better health care, children learning in inclusive classrooms, farmers producing food for their families, and citizens engaging in shaping their communities. These are not isolated successes they are part of a collective movement towards dignity, equity, and opportunity for all Malawians.

Government remains steadfast in its support for NGOs, but we also recognize that true progress requires collaboration. We call upon development partners, the private sector, and citizens to join hands with us to celebrate these achievements, to learn from them, and to invest in the future we all envision.

To NGORA, I commend your leadership in guiding the sector with vision and integrity. To all organizations featured here, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your dedication and service. May this magazine inspire dialogue, strengthen partnerships, and renew our shared commitment to building a Malawi where every citizen regardless of gender, location, or circumstance can live with dignity, opportunity, and hope.

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**Hon Mary Thom Navicha, MP**  
**Minister of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare**

# PREFACE

It is with great honour and deep appreciation that I present this edition of the NGORA Magazine, a powerful reflection of the collective efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across Malawi who are contributing meaningfully to our national development agenda.

This publication arrives at a pivotal moment in our country's journey. As we strive to build a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient Malawi, the role of civil society cannot be overstated. NGOs are not only service providers; they are catalysts for transformation, advocates for justice, and partners in progress. Their work spans critical sectors: Health, Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Agriculture, and Advocacy, touching lives in urban centers and remote villages alike.



Under the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare, we recognize the importance of fostering an enabling environment where NGOs can thrive. Through NGORA, my ministry will continue to strengthen governance, coordination, and collaboration within the sector. This magazine is a testament to that relationship. It showcases the innovation, impact, and organization that are responding to complex challenges with courage, compassion, and competence. This resonates well with the vision of Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, the State President, who champions and prizes hard work and competence in our respect quest for building Malawi again.

The stories featured here are not just reports of activities, but they are also narratives of hope. They reveal how communities are being empowered, how vulnerable populations are being protected, and how sustainable solutions are being co-created. From improving access to maternal health services to promoting inclusive education to advancing food security and civic engagement, these initiatives reflect the values we hold dear: dignity, equity, and shared responsibility.

As a Ministry, we remain committed to supporting NGOs through policy frameworks, capacity building, and strategic partnerships. We believe that when government and civil society work hand in hand, we unlock the full potential of our people and our nation. We also call upon development partners, the private sector, and citizens to engage with these stories not only to celebrate success, but to learn, collaborate, and invest in the future we all envision.

To NGORA, we commend your leadership in convening and regulating the NGO sector with integrity and vision. To all featured organizations, thank you for your dedication and for allowing us to witness your journey. Let this magazine serve as a platform for dialogue, inspiration, and renewed commitment to the values that unite us.

Together, let us continue to build a Malawi where every citizen regardless of gender, location, or circumstance can live with dignity, opportunity, and hope for a brighter future.

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**Esmie Kainja PhD**  
**Secretary for Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare**

# CEO'S STATEMENT

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that I welcome you to this special edition of NGORA Magazine, a publication that celebrates the remarkable contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across Malawi who are actively shaping our nation's development trajectory. This magazine is more than a collection of stories - it is a living archive of impact, innovation, and resilience. Within these pages, you will encounter voices from the field across the country.



These are stories and testimonies of beneficiaries of NGOs tireless efforts in Health, Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Agriculture, and Advocacy just to mention a few. These organizations are not only responding to immediate community needs but are also laying the foundation for long-term, sustainable progress. Their work reflects the spirit of service, the power of collaboration, and the unwavering belief that every Malawian deserves dignity, opportunity, and hope. This cements the mandate of maximizing public benefits through NGOs work.

As an Authority which registers and regulates operations of NGOs in Malawi, NGORA is honored to serve as a convening platform, a regulatory body, and a strategic partner to 1268 organizations (local and international) committed to public good. Our mandate goes beyond registration and compliance; we exist to amplify the voices of civil society, foster transparency and accountability, and ensure that NGOs operate in alignment with national development goals and global standards. This edition of the magazine is a tribute to the diversity and dynamism of Malawi's NGO sector. From community health workers improving maternal outcomes in rural clinics, to educators championing inclusive learning for children with disabilities, to farmers adopting climate-smart techniques, and youth-led movements advocating for policy reform, each story is a testament to what is possible when compassion meets competence. We recognize that development is not a solo endeavour. It is a collective journey that requires trust, coordination, and shared vision. NGORA remains committed to strengthening the enabling environment for NGOs to thrive through policy advocacy, capacity building, and strategic partnerships with government, donors, and the private sector. We believe that when NGOs are empowered, communities flourish.

To our member organizations: thank you for your courage, your creativity, and your commitment. Your work is the heartbeat of national progress. To our partners and stakeholders: we invite you to engage with these stories not just as readers, but as collaborators in building a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous Malawi. To our line Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare we express our profound gratitude for your usual policy guidance. Let this magazine serve as a source of inspiration, a tool for learning, and a call to action. May it remind us all that development is not defined by projects or budgets alone, but by the lives we touch, the systems we strengthen, and the futures we shape.

Together, we build Malawi.

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**Felix Lombe PhD**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# RISE ABOVE THE FLOOD WATERS:

## SAFEGUARDING RURAL WATER SUPPLY WITH ELEVATED BOREHOLES

### Background: A Nation on the Frontline of Climate Change

Over the past decade, Malawians increasingly find themselves at the frontline of the global climate crisis. Recurrent floods, prolonged droughts, and destructive cyclones not only undermine national development gains but have also deepened water insecurity for rural households. Among the disasters, Cyclone Freddy struck hard in the southern region in early March 2023 - the deadliest storm in Malawi's history.

Freddy unleashed torrential rains and powerful winds, claiming more than 490 lives, displacing 114,000 households, and damaging countless community assets. For rural people dependent on groundwater from boreholes, the impact was catastrophic. Hundreds of boreholes were submerged and left families without access to safe drinking water. The crisis underscored the urgent need for climate-resilient solutions to take communities beyond emergency repairs and build long-term plans for the next climate shock.

### BASEflow's Response: Turning Crisis into Innovation

In the aftermath of Cyclone Freddy, BASEflow stepped up. As a Malawian NGO specialised in sustainable groundwater management, the team worked in close collaboration with the community leaders, the Mulanje District Council, engineers, and development partners (notably the Segal Family and Hilton Foundations) to design and deliver a resilient water supply system to the TA Njema WASH Recovery and Resilience Project.

Innovation was at the heart of the response with development of an elevated, flood-proof borehole. The design physically raises the borehole components above flood levels to prevent contamination and submerging of the parts. Add a first-of-its-kind borehole insurance scheme and there is also a financial safety net for communities when disaster strikes again. Together, the twin innovations of engineering resilience and financial protection represent a holistic model for climate-proofing rural water systems.

### Understanding the Challenge: A Post-Disaster Assessment

BASEflow and the Mulanje District Council followed up with a comprehensive series of field visits. The TA Njema assessment covered multiple sectors – health, water supply, agriculture, infrastructure, shelter, education, and social welfare – to capture the full scale of the disaster's impact. The water sector focus was on the functionality of existing water points, the extent of submergence or damage to boreholes and water systems, and community access to safe drinking water. Many boreholes were completely submerged or contaminated by floodwaters. In some cases, the collapse of latrines close to boreholes, heightened fears of waterborne disease outbreaks like cholera. The assessment results fed into a targeted intervention that prioritised rehabilitation, elevation, and community engagement.

### Strategic Selection: Choosing Which Boreholes to Elevate

To ensure effective use of resources, the project team developed comprehensive selection criteria to identify boreholes suitable for elevation. This included: history and frequency of submergence during floods, level of past submergence (up to pedestal or fully underwater), minimum yielding rate of 0.25 litres per second to ensure adequate water supply, passing water quality tests for human consumption, and absence of latrines or contamination sources within a 50-metre radius. More than 185 boreholes across TA Njema were assessed. Of these, 42 (23%) met all technical and safety requirements. With the funding available, the first 10 were elevated as part of a pilot phase. Data-driven prioritisation ensures that projects deliver maximum impact and a model that can be replicated for future scale-up.

### Implementation: Engineering for Resilience

Construction of the elevated boreholes was done in partnership between BASEflow, Mulanje District Council, and Community Water Point Committees. Each elevated structure has a raised concrete platform (0.75 –1.2 metres high); a hand pump positioned at the center to prevent submergence; protective rails; a waterway leading to a soak pit;



and community-driven landscaping and erosion control measures at each site. The average cost for each elevated borehole was approximately MWK 5.5 million (total investment of MWK 55 million for 10 sites). Construction of all 10 elevated boreholes was completed within 2 months and demonstrated excellent efficiency in post-disaster recovery sites and communities.

### Introducing Borehole Insurance: A First for Malawi

In parallel with the physical construction of the raised boreholes, BASEflow pioneered Malawi's first Borehole Insurance Scheme. With communities struggling to recover from the cyclone, they had no money to contribute to rebuilding. This new approach introduces a key element of financial resilience for investing in rural water systems.

The insurance model is managed in collaboration with NICO Asset Managers, with an endowment fund where part of the project funds invested so that the returns can be used to pay for annual insurance premiums. In the event that an elevated borehole is damaged or destroyed during a natural disaster, the insurance finances full restoration, with no extra costs to the community members. This concept shifts rural water management from

reactive crisis response in a mad scramble for funding, to proactive risk management where communities can demonstrate how climate resilience can also be financially sustainable.

### Impact: Restoring Dignity and Reducing Vulnerability

The first wave of this pilot intervention directly benefited 2,815 people or approximately 560 households, across nine communities in TA Njema. These households now enjoy uninterrupted access to safe and clean drinking water, even during floods. This is a stark contrast to previous years when families walked long distances or resorted to unsafe water sources to meet daily needs. The results so far are visible enough and include:

- 100% functionality of elevated boreholes after subsequent heavy rains in 2024
- Zero reported cases of cholera linked to borehole contamination
- Enhanced community confidence and ownership
- Institutional learning for the Mulanje District Council who are exploring replication in other flood-prone Traditional Authorities.





## Collaboration and Governance: Building a Unified Front

A key factor behind project success is strong multi-stakeholder collaboration. BASEflow was the technical lead, with implementation relying on a consortium of partners that included the communities, water point committees, District Water Development Officer, Mulanje District Council, Department of Disaster Management Affairs, Hilton Foundation, Segal Foundation, NICO Asset Managers, and NICO General Insurance. An inclusive governance framework ensures transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability, and the model aligned with Malawi's decentralisation and resilience-building agendas.

## Challenges and How They Were Overcome

Even with project successes, there were some implementation challenges. Limited funding restricted the number of boreholes that could be elevated during this first phase. In some areas, land scarcity around existing boreholes constrained the extent to which structures could be raised. This also affected the desired levels of elevation or design options. Accessibility was a major obstacle, as implementation coincided with the rainy season when many roads in TA Njema were eroded, cut off, or destroyed by floodwater. Temporary access paths had to be created and these were often bumpy, slippery or in poor condition. Transportation of materials and equipment were extremely difficult. Challenges were mitigated through a phased implementation approach. This allowed works to progress as the road conditions improved. Community sensitisation and mobilisation also generated local support and resource contributions. Engineering designs were adapted adjusted to site-specific limitations, while still maintaining structural integrity and resilience.

## Lessons Learned: What Worked and Why

The project provided two major insights. First, engaging the private sector in climate resilience pays off. Traditionally, private insurers avoid rural water systems and view them as high-risk, low-return investments. However, by demonstrating reduced risk through engineering design and steady premium flows via community-managed endowment funds, BASEflow has shown how borehole insurance can be both financially viable and socially impactful.

Second, co-creation builds legitimacy and ownership. The success of the model stems from its participatory approach. BASEflow co-created the solution together with District Councils, community leaders, and government engineers. This ensures locally appropriate and easy to maintain solutions. The model, first piloted in Chikwawa and Nsanje in 2022, evolved into a robust design for Mulanje. It continues to be replicated in other districts and is being reviewed for inclusion in the national guidelines.

## Looking Ahead: Scaling Up and Sustaining Impact

The success in TA Njema is only the beginning. BASEflow is working with partners plan to scale the raised borehole model to other flood-prone districts, like the Lower Shire Valley and Lake Chilwa Basin. Future efforts will focus to integrate borehole insurance into district financial systems, train local artisans, and establish cross-district learning platforms. These actions will contribute to Malawi's National Resilience Strategy (2018–2030) and SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation.

## Conclusion: Hope Above the Waters

The story of elevated and insured boreholes in TA Njema is more than a tale of infrastructure, it is a testament to innovation born from adversity. The intervention demonstrates how communities, government, and the private sector can work together to rise above the challenges of climate change and weather shocks. By safeguarding water systems against floods, this initiative represents a new chapter in Malawi's journey toward resilience as access to safe water is no longer at the mercy of a storm but protected by prepared communities planning for generations to come.



# TIYAMBE!

## WHEN COMMUNITIES ACT, CHANGE BECOMES THE STAGE



*A Functional water source a community meeting in progress*

### Improving Community Perceptions Towards Gender Equality in Thyolo and Mulanje

Nestled among the rolling green hills of Thyolo and Mulanje, where EPM's tea and macadamia estates stretch endlessly, a quiet revolution has been brewing, not in factories or boardrooms, but on open village chiefs courts, under the trees, open football fields and in the hearts of people.

In 2021, Art and Global Health Center Africa (ArtGlo), with support from Eastern Produce Malawi Limited (EPM), launched the Tiyambe Project, a transformative initiative using Theatre for Development to challenge gender-based violence (GBV) and spark conversations on gender equality. Its approach was simple yet radical: let the community research, act, reflect, and lead. The process started with recruitment of youth actors, who conducted research in their areas to unearth factors that were fuelling gender based violence, and the community's understanding, beliefs and perception regarding gender equality.

Before scripts or songs were written, ArtGlo trained local youth groups to conduct human-centered research. Armed with notebooks and curiosity, they ventured into their communities around the tea and macadamia estates to ask hard questions:

- What does gender-based violence look like? feel like? smell like? And manifest like?
- Why are girls dropping out of school?
- Why do some women remain silent in the face of violence?
- How do our traditions shape our understanding of equality?

"We were not told what to do. We were just taught on how to do the research, based on what we see every day." Youth participant, actor and researcher, Mulanje.

These insights formed the backbone of powerful community theatre for development performance, with stories and experiences not written for people, but by them.

### When the Stage Became a Mirror

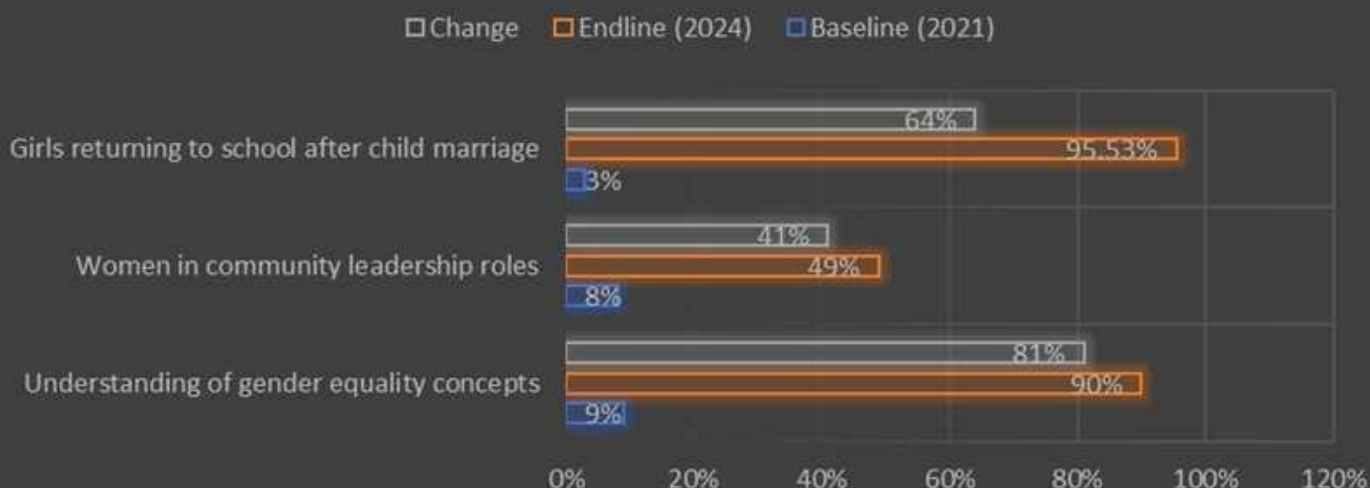
Theatre became the language of change. Through laughter, tears, and dialogue, communities saw their own lives unfold before them, stories of teenage girls pushed into early marriages, of women silenced by fear, of men trapped in traditions that demanded dominance.

"I saw myself in the play, a man who thought being feared meant being respected. That day, I went home and told my wife, we must start again, as equals." Male Estate Worker, Mulanje

Each performance was followed by community discussions, vibrant circles where people voiced emotions and debated solutions. Elders, youth, men, and women all found space to speak. The stage becomes so open and highly participatory, where community members could engage anyone, including government stakeholders, their chiefs and EPM officials without fear, this is the place where real change is sparked. "Theatre opened our eyes. It's different from a meeting, it makes you feel what you didn't want to see." Girl participant, Thyolo.



## Changes Over the period



	Understanding of gender equality concepts	Women in community leadership roles	Girls returning to school after child marriage
□ Change	81%	41%	64%
■ Endline (2024)	90%	49%	95.53%
■ Baseline (2021)	9%	8%	3%

### Girls, Marriage, and School

During the participatory research, one of the most painful truths emerged: child marriage and school dropouts were normalized. Girls, fresh from initiation ceremonies, were encouraged to marry as a sign of maturity and social success. Staying in school was mocked as a failure to attract a man.

"I never thought studying was for girls. Those who stayed at school after initiation, we thought they were the ones who failed to find husbands." Elderly Women's Counsellor, Mulanje. Through Tiyaambe Project's theatre performances and reflection

dialogues, these beliefs began to crumble. Women counsellors, once the custodians of these messages became the champions of change. They learned to reframe their teachings, emphasizing health, education, and self-worth over marriage. "Now, we tell our girls: finish school first, then decide your future. That's real womanhood." Women Counsellor, Mulanje.

Through Tiyaambe Project's theatre performances and reflection dialogues, these beliefs began to crumble. Women counsellors, once the custodians of these messages became the champions of change. They learned to reframe their teachings, emphasizing health, education, and self-worth over marriage. "Now, we tell our girls: finish school first, then decide your future. That's real womanhood." Women Counsellor, Mulanje.

### Local Leadership, Lasting Change

ArtGlo's participatory model ensured communities didn't just perform change, they owned it. Village leaders, estate managers, the police and district gender officers worked hand-in-hand to develop Community Action Plans born from dialogue circles and performances. "This project came a bit late, but it came strong. We lost many girls to child marriage before—but now we have a reason to hope." Group Village Headwoman, Kasembereka, Thyolo. The collaborative nature of the Tiyaambe approach also built bridges between communities and the private



a community member participating in the dialogue

sector. Eastern Produce Malawi's estates integrated gender dialogues into workplace routines, influencing even estate supervisors and workers.

### Shifting Perceptions, Strengthening Futures

Endline assessments revealed remarkable transformations:

- 90% of community members can now articulate gender equality concepts.
- Women's participation in leadership grew from 8% to 49%.
- Community members in Mulanje showed slightly higher conceptual understanding, reflecting stronger uptake of participatory theatre methods.

Beyond numbers, however, the project shifted hearts. "We no longer see gender talks as a threat to men—it's a lesson for all of us to live better." Community Elder, Thyolo.

"Before, we thought gender equality meant women disobeying men. Now, we see it means walking together." Village Headman, Thyolo

### Beyond Awareness: Building Creative Leadership

Through its mission of harnessing the power of the arts to nurture creative leadership and ignite bold conversations and actions, ArtGlo proved that art can do more than entertain; it can heal, educate, and unite.

"The project inspired a new generation of youth leaders, who now see performance not just as art, but as an effective but also entertaining means of addressing pressing social issues, wooing community participation and achieving self sustaining change." Rodger Kumalire Phiri, ArtGlo Executive Director.

"Before, we acted for fun. Now we act for change." Brian, Youth Drama Leader, Mulanje.

These local champions continue to hold performances on new topics that include climate change, women's economic empowerment, consent, and child protection, keeping the Tiyambe spirit alive. Tiyambe simply means "Let's start." And in Thyolo and Mulanje EPM's Mecademia and tea estates, the communities have done just that, awakening to a new dawn where girls return to school, men champion equality, and women lead boldly. "Change doesn't start with big things, it starts with stories we tell ourselves." ArtGlo Facilitator, Mulanje.



Youth drama in action

# BRIDGING THE DISTANCE:

## THE CHALLENGE OF “BRIDGE THE GAP” IN MALAWI

In Balaka, in southern Malawi, life can be hard. Most families live on subsistence farming, water is often far away, and healthcare resources are limited. Women rise at dawn to work in the fields, men look for occasional jobs, and children walk long distances to reach school. Amid these difficulties, the presence of HIV and tuberculosis further burdens daily life, affecting above all the most vulnerable.

In this struggle, in 2022 a project was born that changed the perspective of many: “Bridge the Gap – Reducing Gender Disparities in the Fight against HIV/TB in Malawi”, promoted by the DREAM Program of the Community of Sant’Egidio, with the support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and in partnership with the Italian advanced school “Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna”, the Peace and Development Trust (PD Trust), and the Balaka District Health Office. The goal was ambitious: to improve access to and quality of healthcare services, strengthen the local system, and above all, reduce gender inequalities that still limited the participation of many people—particularly men and adolescents—in HIV and tuberculosis prevention and treatment programs.

The two-year project, completed in June 2024, represented a decisive step toward a fairer health system that is sensitive to the real needs of the population. Bridge the Gap operated in the Balaka district and surrounding areas, achieving tangible and lasting results. Over the course of the project, one hundred health workers—doctors, nurses, and clinical officers—were trained through refresher courses and mentorship programs focused on improving HIV management and promoting a gender-sensitive approach to care.

At the heart of the intervention was the network of fifteen ART (Antiretroviral Therapy) clinics in the district, where healthcare providers received hands-on training and continuous supervision to improve care quality. In parallel, more than 11,000 people living with HIV or HIV/TB co-infection gained access to enhanced services: more effective treatments, quicker diagnoses, and awareness campaigns in rural communities. To support the daily work of healthcare facilities, the project also provided IT equipment, computers, and support materials to ART clinics, helping improve data management and patient monitoring. This intervention strengthened service efficiency and

facilitated communication between clinics and district health authorities, thereby consolidating the local health system’s capacity to respond.

But numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Bridge the Gap was above all a project that put people at the center, recognizing that health is not only a medical matter but also a cultural and social one. In Malawi’s context, gender differences play a significant role: while women represent 57% of people living with HIV, men tend to seek medical help only in advanced stages of the disease or interrupt their treatment. The reasons are many: the distance from clinics, the need to work in the fields, but also the weight of social roles and prejudices that associate illness with weakness.

To address this issue, the project introduced an innovative approach: men’s clinic days and health education sessions led by male community health workers, able to speak to their peers and spread messages of responsibility and solidarity. Male engagement grew significantly, improving not only treatment adherence but also collective awareness of the importance of prevention. Awareness campaigns in villages and health centers helped reduce the stigma surrounding HIV and tuberculosis. Women and men began to share experiences, support each other, and view health as a common good.

Among the many stories that reflect the project’s impact, that of Thandiwe, a 20-year-old from Balaka district, best represents the change Bridge the Gap made possible.

### His life has not been easy:

“I’m an orphan. My mother died of HIV, and only after her death did I find out that my sister and I were also HIV-positive. After she passed away, my father took us to the DREAM Center. I was very weak, with skin marked by illness and no strength in my body. My sister was also sick. After the tests came the confirmation: we were both HIV-positive.”

“Thanks to DREAM, I immediately began antiretroviral therapy, but I was also diagnosed with tuberculosis. It was a tough time, but with your help, I managed to fight the disease. After being discharged, our family situation worsened and I stopped my treatment. I didn’t understand how important it was to continue. But then, thanks to



my father's new partner—who is also HIV-positive and receiving care at the center—I found support and went back to treatment. Today I'm healthy, I take my medication regularly, and I've learned that you must never stop treatment."

Today Thandiwe is a healthy, aware young man, determined to share his experience and encourage other men to face their diagnosis without fear. His story concretely shows how male involvement in HIV care can become a driver of change—not only for individuals but for entire communities. One of Bridge the Gap's strengths was its work in networking with local stakeholders. The Balaka District Health Office, the local health authority, played a key role in planning and monitoring activities, ensuring alignment with Malawi's national strategies such as the Health Sector Strategic Plan II (2017–2022).

The local partner PD Trust, with its deep knowledge of the area, ensured that the activities were community-rooted, promoting a participatory and sustainable approach. Thus, the project became a laboratory of collaboration between public institutions, universities, and civil society organizations, demonstrating that cooperation can truly strengthen health systems when based on respect and shared expertise. Naturally, there were challenges. A major one was cultural resistance: in some communities, talking about HIV and gender equality is still taboo. Thanks to the training received, health workers learned how to build trust, communicate sensitively, and promote a new culture of care—more inclusive and respectful.

Among the lessons learned, one stands out above all: sustainability is born from involvement. When local workers feel they are protagonists of change, results last over time. Mentorship and ongoing training created a network of professionals capable of transferring knowledge and best practices, ensuring that improvements continue beyond the project's funding period. Moreover, the introduction of a gender-sensitive approach proved to be an effective strategy for improving healthcare quality. Considering the specific needs of women, men, and adolescents means not only promoting equity but also increasing the effectiveness of care and trust in the health system.

Today, in Balaka's health centers, the work started by Bridge the Gap continues. The trained clinics still offer differentiated and high-quality care, and community health workers bring daily messages of prevention and solidarity to the villages.

The story of Thandiwe and many other patients has become the symbol of a collective journey combining competence, collaboration, and compassion. Bridge the Gap has left a deep mark on the Balaka district—a mark made of trust, knowledge, and renewal. Because, as Thandiwe's story reminds us, "care can truly restore life and hope to those who thought they had lost them."



# TRANSFORMING LIVES

## THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF NASTANZIO NKHATA

### Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD)

From the serene, rolling fields of Sitoko Village in Group Village Headman Mphanga, Traditional Authority Simphasi in Dowa District, emerges a story of resilience, hope and transformation. At the heart of this story is Nastanzio Nkhata, a smallholder farmer whose life has been dramatically changed by sustainable agricultural practices introduced through the Promoting Agro-ecology Transition for Enhanced Resilient Agriculture (PAET-ERA) project, implemented by Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD). Project implementation area

The PAET-ERA project was implemented in Dowa District, specifically in the areas of Traditional Authorities (T/As) Msakambewa and Mponela, covering Group Village Heads Kafanikhale and Mkudziwaduka, including Sitoko Village. These areas are prone to erratic weather patterns, soil degradation and limited access to irrigation facilities that have historically undermined food and income security.

### The story of change: Nastanzio Nkhata's journey

In 2024, Nastanzio Nkhata, like many farmers in Sitoko Village, was struggling to produce enough food for his family. His farming efforts were limited to rain-fed, traditional methods, yielding only two to three bags of maize per year from his half-acre plot barely enough to feed his family, let alone generate income.



*Mr Nastanzio happily watering his maize garden*

But through the PAET-ERA project, funded by Bread for the World Germany with a budget of 1.1 million Euros, Nastanzio was selected as one of 1,200 participants to receive training and tools to transition into agro-ecological and resilient agriculture.

"I have benefited immensely from irrigation farming. I am now food-sufficient and able to harvest four times a year. My family is healthy and we no longer worry about hunger," says Nastanzio, beaming with pride.

Thanks to training in crop rotation, soil and water conservation, and climate-smart agriculture, Nastanzio learned how to optimize the productivity of his land while caring for the environment. He was also introduced to solar-powered irrigation, which enabled year-round farming. Today, his once struggling plot yields an impressive seven 50kg bags of rice and ten 60kg bags of maize annually more than three times his previous harvest. The transformation in Nastanzio's life is both economic and social:



*Mr Nastanzio a farmer operating his solar powered water pump*

- He now pays 150,000 Malawi Kwacha in school fees each term for his child attending Nthunzi Private Secondary School, a significant investment in the next generation.
- He has purchased a cow and renovated his home, upgrading it with a durable iron sheet roof.
- Most importantly, he has achieved food and income security, ensuring year-round stability for his family.

Nastanzio's journey is a living testament to the power of sustainable agriculture and community



empowerment. His story has inspired neighboring farmers to adopt similar practices, demonstrating how change at the individual level can spark transformation across communities.



*A Bumper harvest from irrigation farming*

The success of the PAET-ERA project is rooted in strong collaboration with multiple stakeholders:

- CARD worked closely with District Agricultural Development Offices (DADOs) in Dowa to deliver relevant and context-specific training.
- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and local leaders, including Group Village Heads, were instrumental in mobilizing community participation and identifying beneficiaries.
- Collaboration with other NGOs operating in the district helped harmonize interventions and share best practices.

This multi-stakeholder approach ensured that the interventions were not only technically sound but also socially inclusive and locally owned.

Despite the success stories, the project also faced several challenges that tested its resilience and adaptability:

1. Food shortages at household level: A widespread shortage of food led some households to consume maize bran, which was originally intended as pig feed, thereby compromising livestock development.
2. Pest infestation: The rise of fall armyworms significantly affected small-scale irrigation gardens, threatening crop yields and requiring urgent pest management training and input support.
3. Fuel scarcity: A national scarcity of fuel slowed down transportation and implementation of certain activities, affecting timelines.
4. Flooding: Some parts of the project area were affected by seasonal flooding, particularly during the 2023/2024 growing season, which damaged crops and infrastructure.
5. Unstable market conditions: Despite increased production, market instability and lack of

structured markets continue to pose a challenge for farmers seeking fair prices for their produce.

## Lessons learnt

- Integrated livelihoods are key: The project's promotion of diversified livelihoods (e.g., beekeeping, organic farming, village savings and loans) helped build resilience by reducing dependency on one income stream.
- Community ownership drives Sustainability: Empowering communities through participatory planning and training leads to greater ownership and long-term adoption of best practices.
- Irrigation is a game-changer: Access to solar-powered irrigation transformed farming from a seasonal to a year-round activity, significantly boosting food security and income.
- Resilience requires flexibility: Adapting project activities in response to real-time challenges such as pest outbreaks or flooding ensured continued impact despite setbacks.

The success of farmers like Nastanzio Nkhata is not an isolated case it is one of many under the PAET-ERA initiative. As the project continues to grow and evolve, CARD remains committed to working with communities, government structures and development partners to replicate and scale this success across Malawi.

"I encourage my fellow farmers to embrace a mindset change towards continuous and resilient farming practices. Together, we can achieve a food-secure Malawi," says Nastanzio.

## About the project

- **Name:** Promoting Agro-ecology Transition for Enhanced Resilient Agriculture (PAET-ERA)
- **Funding partner:** Bread for the World – Germany
- **Budget:** 1.1 million Euros
- **Beneficiaries:** 1,200 households in Dowa District (T/A Msakambewa and T/A Mponela)
- **Key interventions:** Organic farming, conservation agriculture, small-scale irrigation, beekeeping, village savings and loans, disaster risk management.



# BRIDGING THE GAP

## NGORA'S PUSH FOR STRONGER NGO-GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION NGORA AT THE HEART OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In Malawi's development journey, civil society organizations are more than just partners they are the lifeblood of grassroots change. At the center of this ecosystem stands the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA), a statutory body tasked with registering and regulating NGOs while ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with national priorities. With district offices spread across 28 districts, NGORA has become a familiar presence, working to strengthen the bond between government structures and the civil society sector. A Billion-Kwacha Boost -NGO FUND facility

In 2024/25, NGORA secured a MK1 billion skills development fund from the Ministry of Finance, a milestone investment aimed at building capacity across the NGO sector. The fund is being used to sharpen institutional skills, improve coordination between NGOs and councils, and enhance monitoring of projects at the community level. It is a bold step toward realizing Malawi 2063 (MW2063) the country's long-term vision for inclusive wealth creation and sustainable development.

### Facing the Coordination Challenge

Despite progress, challenges remain. For years, NGOs and District Councils have struggled with weak communication, fragmented planning, and limited integration of NGO workplans into district frameworks. Many NGOs operate without formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), leaving gaps in accountability and coordination. Recognizing these hurdles, NGORA convened a series of coordination meetings between July and October 2025, bringing together council officials, NGOs, and other stakeholders to chart a new path forward.

### Progress in Numbers

The meetings revealed encouraging progress:

- 88.2% of councils (25 out of 29) now have integrated workplans, though enforcement remains a challenge.
- 96.6% of councils (28 out of 29) conducted joint monitoring visits, improving transparency and accountability.
- All districts reported involving Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area

Development Committees (ADCs) in NGO work, with some councils like Nkhatabay going further by orienting these committees on their roles.

These figures show that coordination is no longer just an aspiration; it is becoming a reality.

### Commitments for the Future

Out of the discussions came a clear set of commitments. By the end of 2025, all NGOs are expected to sign project-specific MoUs, with NGORA facilitating the process. Councils and NGOs pledged to jointly develop integrated monitoring plans, conduct quarterly coordination meetings, and ensure biannual joint monitoring exercises with full participation from both sides. Councils promised to share Annual Investment Plans in a timely and formal manner, while NGOs committed to submitting quarterly reports and disclosing budgets more openly. There was also consensus on the need to train ADC leaders to safeguard project sustainability, enforce proper NGO entry procedures, and complete the long-delayed Lilongwe City Urban Development Plan.

### Recommendations for Stakeholders

The meetings produced clear recommendations for each stakeholder group:

- NGORA was urged to continue providing technical support, enforce compliance on MoUs and reporting, and deliberately build the capacity of local NGOs.
- District Councils were tasked with strengthening leadership and inclusivity in coordination structures, while ensuring timely communication of Annual Investment Plans.
- NGOs were reminded to align interventions with district priorities, invest in sustainability strategies, and demonstrate localization by partnering with district-based organizations.

### Way Forward: Toward Maximizing Public Benefit

By the close of the meetings, there was a palpable sense of progress. The conversations had not only tackled long-standing issues but also set in motion practical steps to bridge the coordination gaps that



*Mangochi DPD chairing the Coordination meeting in Mangochi District*

have hindered development efforts. For NGORA, the success of these engagements lies in their ability to maximize public benefit ensuring that every intervention, every kwacha, and every partnership contributes meaningfully to Malawi's vision for 2063.

This is more than regulation. It is about building trust, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that development reaches even the hardest-to-reach communities. NGORA's story is one of partnership and progress a reminder that when government and civil society walk hand in hand, the path to sustainable development becomes clearer, stronger, and more inclusive.



# CORPSAFRICA MALAWI SUCCESS STORY

## BRIDGING THE GAP IN TUNDUDZE, A COMMUNITY'S JOURNEY TO CONNECTION AND OPPORTUNITY

"For many years, our community has faced difficulties accessing essential services due to the poor condition of this path. Our hospitals and schools are located on one side of the village, while another school lies across the river." Village Headman Tunduze "For 37 years, I never thought a development like this would come to us. We've suffered for so long. Now we can farm, trade, and bury our loved ones without fear. God bless this project." Manesi Peter, Resident of Tunduze community

For years, the residents of Tundudze community in Neno District faced a frightening challenge every rainy season. The Mwangidzi River, which cuts through the village, would swell with floodwaters, transforming from a calm stream into a dangerous barrier. On one side of the river stood homes and families, on the other, schools, farms, health facilities, markets, and the community graveyard, all of which are critical to daily life for the people of the community. Without a bridge, children missed school for weeks, farmers could not access their fields, pregnant women struggled to reach clinics, and funerals became near-impossible to conduct with dignity. In one striking story, a community member once had to carry a deceased loved one on his head just to cross the river for burial. The community was, in every sense, divided by water and left behind by development. But all of that changed in October 2024, when Tundudze community celebrated the completion of the 21-meter Mwangidzi Bridge, a symbol of hardwork, unity, and the power of community-led innovation. This was due to the arrival of Sheira Kasinja, one of the Volunteers recruited and deployed to serve in Neno district by CorpsAfrica. Overall, CorpsAfrica in 2024 recruited and deployed 61 Volunteers across Malawi, for a one year service. CorpsAfrica annually recruits and deploys Volunteers, who are youth university graduates, to service, where they implement projects with the communities they serve.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AREA

The Mwangidzi Bridge Construction Project was implemented in Tundudze, a rural community of 720 people located approximately 3km from

Ligowe Trading Centre in Neno District, Southern Malawi. The area is agriculturally driven, with most residents working as smallholder farmers or traders. Despite its vibrancy, Tundudze's growth had long been stifled by its lack of infrastructure. The project was launched on 7 February 2024, after a series of community engagements facilitated by CorpsAfrica/Malawi Volunteer Sheira Kasinja. Using Human-Centered Design (HCD) tools like empathy conversations, community mapping, and Innovators' Campus, community members unanimously agreed that a bridge over the Mwangidzi River was their most urgent need. Construction began in earnest and, after 12 weeks of labor and collaboration, the bridge was officially completed on 2 October 2024.

So far the Mwangidzi Bridge has already transformed the lives of:



*A woman using A make shift bridge*

- 720 direct community members of Tundudze
- 1,500+ indirect beneficiaries from eight surrounding villages who rely on the same route
- 52 school-going children, who now attend school even during the rainy season
- 106 local traders and farmers, who can now access markets year-round
- 28 construction laborers who gained employment and income during implementation
- 68 dependents of the laborers who benefitted indirectly
- In total, the project has impacted over 2,300 people, with ripple effects expected for

generations to come.

- The bridge is not just a passage, it is a lifeline. It ensures that:
- Children can attend school without disruption
- Pregnant women and the sick can reach healthcare safely
- Families can farm, trade, and bury their loved ones with dignity
- Emergency services and resources can reach the village year-round
- BUDGET USED
- The total project cost was MWK14,382,000.00 (approx. USD 8,160), funded through a three-way partnership:
- Community Contribution: MWK2,858,000.00 (19.9%)
- MWK450,000.00 in cash
- The remainder is through in-kind contributions like stones, sand, labor, and tools
- CorpsAfrica/Malawi: MWK3,365,200.00 (23.4%)
- FOMA USA: MWK8,158,800.00 (56.7%)



*Mwangidzi bridge under construction*

Though the original plan was to construct a 12-meter bridge, field assessments revealed the river's true width required a 21-meter structure. Despite this significant increase in scope, the project team adapted the budget by using smaller culverts (600mm instead of 900mm) and increasing community contributions.

## COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The success of the Mwangidzi Bridge lies in the depth of community ownership and strong stakeholder collaboration:

- Community Project Committee: A 10-member team, including women and youth, managed the daily implementation, budgeting, and procurement
- Traditional Leaders: Three village chiefs helped mobilize resources and have committed to leading ongoing maintenance using annual household contributions
- Village Development Committee (VDC): Provided oversight and ensured

community-wide participation

- LICODO (Ligowe Community Development Organization): Supported resource mobilization
- Fellow CorpsAfrica Volunteers: Miracle Chanza and Memory Sibande provided moral and logistical support
- Volunteer Liaison (VL), Tusekile Munkhondya: Offered continuous mentorship and emotional encouragement throughout the process

This project was not simply built for the community, but with the community.

## CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND LESSONS



## LEARNED

The journey was not without obstacles, but each one brought valuable insights:

- Unexpected Bridge Extension. The river was made wider than after initial assessment, due to erosion after rainfall requiring the bridge to be extended from 12m to 21m.

**Lesson:** Flexibility and creative problem-solving (e.g., adjusting culvert size) are essential in project management.

- Inadequate and Low-Quality In-Kind Contributions. Some of the sand and stones that the community was providing were below the required standards, prompting the team to source the materials from far, requiring transportation and in some cases, purchasing additional materials.

**Lesson:** Set clearer contribution expectations upfront and verify the quality and quantity before project kickoff. Despite all this, the community remained resilient, driven by a shared desire to bring change to their village.





Mwangidzi bridge wear's new face

## SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES

Ownership and accountability from the community members will drive the sustainability of the intervention.

- **Community-Led Identification:** The bridge was the community's top priority, ensuring long-term interest
- **Financial Ownership:** 150 households contributed MK3,000 each and committed to annual in-kind maintenance
- **Custodianship:** The bridge has been handed over to the village development committee, project committee, and local chiefs, who will organize maintenance and unblock culverts as needed
- **Signpost Installed:** Enhances visibility and preserves the legacy of the project

Regular monitoring will be conducted by the local leadership using a student absenteeism tracker and community road usage reports, especially during the rainy season.



## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

"After our first community meeting, someone brought a hand-written note to my host mother with one word: Buliji (bridge). That was the moment I knew this was not just a wish, but a desperate cry for help."

— Sheira Kasinja, CorpsAfrica Volunteer

"It's like a dream come true. Our children will cross safely. We will finally be able to live, work, and travel without fear of the river."

— Rosia Ben, Trader and Mother

## CONCLUSION

The Mwangidzi Bridge is more than concrete, culverts, and stone. It is the embodiment of community resilience, youth-led innovation, and collaborative impact. It connects people not just physically, but emotionally and socially, restoring dignity, opening doors, and building hope. From carrying the dead across dangerous waters to walking across a bridge they built with their own hands, the people of Tundudze have proven one truth:

"When communities are trusted, supported, and united, they build bridges to their own future."

# ACCESS TO WATER

## 250 NEW BOREHOLES DRILLED IN KARONGA, CHITIPA, AND PARTS OF RUMPHI DISTRICTS BY LUSUBILO COMMUNITY CARE

For many families in Malawi's rural communities, the search for clean water has always been an exhausting and uncertain daily routine, especially for women and children who walk long distances to fetch water from rivers, streams, and shallow wells. These sources are not only far, but also unsafe especially for drinking water. Without a reliable water supply, basic daily tasks like cooking, cleaning, and bathing was difficult. The burden fell heavily on women and girls, who had to wake up early and miss out on school or farming just to bring water home.

To help end the water scarcity in the districts of Karonga, Chitipa, and part of Rumphi, Lusubilo Community Care, between 2023 and 2025, with financial support from the Coppel family from Mexico, and JJR Foundation from the United States of America, commissioned borehole drilling project that has transformed lives of people across all the three districts, most of whom alive in hard-to-reach areas.



*the old water source*

Under the Coppel Family support, 14 boreholes were drilled in Karonga and part of Rumphi districts. The family also supported the installation of a Gravity Fed Water System (GFWS) at Junju in Livingstonia in Rumphi district, currently benefiting around 198 households. The total number of households supported with potable water from the 14 boreholes is 788 households.

The JJR supported with 120 boreholes for Chitipa district and 130 boreholes for Karonga district. An average number of households supported per borehole was 47 in both. An estimated total number of individuals supported both in Access to potable water through the Lusubilo water

projects has had a positive impact on the daily lives of people in the communities, and the people are glad with the development. "Before this borehole was drilled, my children would wake up at 4 am to walk to the stream," recalls Agness Mwangolera, a mother from Chitipa. "Sometimes they got too tired and missed school. Now, they have time to eat, study, and play. It has changed our lives completely." Village Headman Mwankenja of TA Therere in Chitipa, put it, "We are finally able to live



*a girl drawing water from a new water source*

without the constant fear of sickness. Our children are thriving, and our community is flourishing. We are deeply grateful to Lusubilo Community Care and the JJR Foundation for this incredible gift."

To ensure sustainability, before any drilling began, Lusubilo worked with local leaders to identify and form water point committees in each village. These committee members were later trained in pre-drilling preparation including how to select a safe site considering factors such as proximity to households, and accessibility during all season, also to understand the basic technology, and organize the community for borehole care. This early engagement helped create a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members even before the first borehole was drilled. Once drilling was complete, the same committees received post-drilling training. They learned how to operate the pump, clean the area around the borehole, report faults, and carry out basic repairs. Andrew Ghambi, a trained committee member from GVH Mwambelo in Karonga said "These post drilling trainings are very important because they have made us self-reliant and given us full





ownership of our water source. We now know how to take care of and maintain our boreholes". With the new water source, life has changed for the better in these communities. Women, who had once spent entire days fetching water, now have more time to focus on other important aspects of life such as running businesses, working in the fields, and caring for their families. Children, especially girls, no longer had to miss school to help with water collection. This simple change has had profound implications for education and the future prospects of children in these communities.

The journey to improve access to water in the three districts was not without its challenges. Some drilling sites faced difficult terrain, and in some areas, water yields were initially low, requiring further technical adjustments. However, through persistence and collaboration with local leaders, driller, and the communities themselves, these issues were overcome in most cases. Each challenge provided valuable lessons that Lusubilo has used to refine its approach for future projects, ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Looking forward, Lusubilo remains committed to monitoring the functionality and sustainability of the boreholes through its officers and the government extension water services, which have always been part of the project. The organization has also encouraged the formation of local maintenance funds, which are supported by small contributions from benefiting households. This ensures that repairs and spare parts are available when needed, maintaining the functionality of the boreholes for years to come.



# DEVASTATION TO HOPE

## REBUILDING LIVES AFTER CYCLONE FREDDY

The Transformative Journey of the Nanchidwa Housing Recovery Project, Mulanje District. In March 2023, Cyclone Freddy tore through Malawi with a force the nation had never seen—one of the most powerful and longest-lasting storms in Southern Hemisphere history. Having travelled across the Indian Ocean for 37 days and battering seven countries, it left behind a trail of heartbreak. At least 2,267,458 (1,110,639 Male, 1,156,819 Female) people have been affected, of whom 659,278 (336,252 female; 323,026 male) people displaced. In Nanchidwa, under Group Village Headman Ndala in Mulanje District, the cyclone washed away homes, livestock, crops, and hope. Ninety-six families found themselves with nothing but clothes on their backs, living in tents from March 2023 until early 2024. Children slept on bare soil. Mothers prayed through the cold nights. Families wondered how they would ever begin again. Yet, even in the darkest moment, a seed of hope was planted.

### A United Response to Restore Dignity

In 2024, Habitat for Humanity Malawi and its partners launched the Nanchidwa Housing Recovery Project with a bold mission—not only to rebuild houses, but to rebuild lives, dignity, livelihoods, and resilience.

Through pooled support from generous partners including the Gale Family (through the Abwenzi Athu OVC project), FDH Bank, Portland Cement, Habitat for Humanity Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and HFHI tithe funding, 64 permanent,

disaster-resilient homes were constructed for the most vulnerable families, with more still to come. But the vision was larger than shelter. The project recognized that trauma runs deeper than lost bricks, and recovery requires more than a roof.

Through integrated support, families received:

- 17 youth trained in tailoring, carpentry & motor-cycle mechanics, and given start-up kits
- 40 caregivers trained in health & basic care
- A borehole providing safe water to 1,750 people
- 175 energy-saving stoves and briquette-making equipment to support green livelihoods
- 1,068 households trained in disaster preparedness across 15 villages
- 7,500 indigenous trees planted for slope protection
- Legal land certification and will-writing support to protect vulnerable families from property grabbing

Government leadership and community ownership were at the heart of this success. Land was identified and surveyed in partnership with Malawi's Ministry of Lands, and community leaders endorsed and guided each phase, helping transform tents of despair into a village of dignity.

### Empowering the Community to Lead Their Own Future

The recovery effort trained and equipped 61 local artisans, 50 bricklayers, eight carpenters, and three painters with professional tools and safer construction skills. Forty-nine artisans benefited from intensive PASSA (Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness) training, ensuring that resilience will continue long after the project ends. The ripple effect has been extraordinary:

- 98 safe homes built by the community using their own resources
- 138 homes repaired with build-back-better standards
- 223 households making durable bricks for future construction
- 163 families relocated from high-risk zones to safer land

Recovery did not happen to the community—it happened with them, and now continues because of them.



*an aerial view of a rebuilt community*



## A Story of Pain, Faith, and Rising Again

Among the survivors was Malita Chikafa, a mother and grandmother. Before the storm, she lived modestly but peacefully, selling sweet potatoes to support her grandchildren. When the cyclone came, her home collapsed. Her grandchildren's school books washed away. For months, every night meant standing awake in a leaking tent, cold water filling the floor around their feet.



*a happy family at their new house*

"I had lost hope and thought life was over," Malita recalls. "I felt I had nothing left."

Today, Malita stands proudly in front of her new home:

"Tears of worry have become tears of joy. This house is not just walls and a roof— it is hope restored and dignity returned. My grandchildren can dream again."

Her story echoes through the new village—each door a symbol of courage, each brick a testament to community strength.

Leadership Reflections

Traditional Authority Njema, witnessing the transformation, shared powerful words:

"Habitat Malawi and its partners have not only built houses, they have rebuilt dignity, restored faith, and strengthened our community. This is true recovery."

## A Blueprint for Climate-Resilient Recovery

The Nanchidwa project shows what is possible when compassion meets coordination, when communities lead, government guides, and partners support.

Where 96 families once huddled in makeshift tents, 64 now live in safe, dignified homes, each one a symbol of resilience and renewed hope. The remaining families continue to receive support as part of a broad recovery journey that extends

beyond shelter alone. The project demonstrates that effective disaster recovery requires holistic intervention beyond shelter provision but addressing livelihoods, health, legal security, water, environment, and psychosocial wellbeing in equal measures. At its core, it requires deep collaboration between government, NGOs, communities, and donors working hand in hand with a shared commitment to ensure that even the most vulnerable can stand strong again.

Today, as children's laughter echoes through Nanchidwa, children who once slept on cold ground in flooded tents, the community stands as living proof that after the most devastating storm, with compassion, comprehensive support, genuine partnership, and community-led resilience, dignity can be restored, hope can be rebuilt, and the sun truly shines again. As climate events intensify, Nanchidwa offers Malawi and the world, a powerful lesson: Holistic recovery heals more than homes. It heals hearts, futures, and communities. With partnership, community leadership, and belief in human dignity, the sun truly rises again.



# AFES MICROGRANTS

## TRANSFORMING THE COMMUNITIES GREEN FACILITATED COLLECTIVE ACTION PROGRAM IN PHALOMBE DISTRICT

### Introduction

Action for Envorponemnatl Sutstaibility (AfES) is implementing the Green Facilitated Collective Action Program (Green FCAP) which is a community-driven development model that uses facilitated meetings, capacity building, and microgrants to help villages plan and implement projects. As a livelihood improvement and environmental conservation program Green FCAP is being implemented through the provision of microgrants for villages to be able to define their own aspiration and choose their own pathways without any external control. The program is being implemented in Phalombe District in 3 traditional authorities of T/A Mkhumba (24 villages), T/A Kaledzela (13 villages) and T/A Nyambalo (13 villages). The program has an approximate facilitation timeframe of 2 years where the villages are ushered through the planning process and later disbursement of the microgrants for them to implement and sustain their own pathways. The total microgrant disbursed per village is MWK 20,400,000 which is also given in 2 phases as microgrant 1 (MG1-60%) and microgrant 2 (MG2-40%). The program started 2023 with 12 pilot villages in T/A Mkhumba and after successful implementation, it then expanded towards 38 villages under T/A Mkhumba, T/A Kaledzela and T/A Nyambalo. The total budget for the 50 villages is MWK 1,020,000,000 (One billion and twenty million Malawi Kwacha).

### STAGES OF THE GREEN FCAP

#### Stage One: Goal Setting

During the goal setting phase, the communities come together and realize their vision statement, goals and pathways that they can implement in order to improve and develop their livelihoods and communities at large. The communities meet once or twice a week to discuss and outline how they can improve their livelihoods, and their communities based on various aspects such as climate change canvas including the resources that the communities have with a perspective of identifying lacking resources within their respective areas.

#### Stage Two: Proposal development

After completing the goal setting phase, all communities develop their proposals which are reviewed and approved by both AfES. Based on the approval of the proposals, AfES take a step to sign and enter into an agreement with the communities

to mark a milestone and set the terms and conditions which is followed during the implementation phase.

#### Stage Three: Disbursement of the Microgrants

Once the proposals are approved, microgrants are disbursed in two phases, however the communities are obligated to open bank accounts which are signed and management by the Green FCAP committees made of the community members themselves.

#### Progress Up to date

The first cohort of 12 villages in T/A Mkhumba has successfully started their implementation of their MG1 pathways. These villages have selected various livelihood projects that falls in categories of business and livestock. 743 households in T/A Mkhumba in Phalombe District have directly been involved in the program where a total of 3,885 individuals have been reached by the program through its livelihood improvement and environmental conservation interventions. Through a savings culture cultivated by the program, the 12 villages have managed to save an accumulation of MWK 848,850 through weekly savings that they utilise for other purposes within their Microgrant supported projects and/or pathways. Currently, the 12 villages are planning how to utilize their second phase microgrant (MG2) which consist of 40% of the MWK 20,400,000. The key enterprise identified include maize mill, dairy cows, goats, poultry and piggery.



a modern goat house



**Environmental Impact of the Green FCAP Program**  
The program has also embraced counteracting measured of environmental degradation and climate change as the central element of its implementation. From the implementation of the MG1 pathways/project, the 12 villages have also successfully implemented the tree planting exercise where a total of 9,197 trees have been planted in all the 12 villages with a good survival rate of over 70%, showing a continued care and dedication by the villages despite the challenges of termites, heat stress, and limited irrigation water. Mainly, these trees are planted along the riverbanks, within household areas, farm fields and degraded areas. The green element of the program aims to recover the lost forest and biodiversity of the ecosystem in Phalombe District.



*a health tree seedling nursery*

### Scaling up the Green FCAP

A total number of 38 villages have been targeted in the programme expansion, currently these villages are in the planning phase where they are expected to start receiving and utilise their first phase of the microgrants (MG1) funds in February 2026. Looking at the outlook of these 38 villages, a total of 2,356 households will directly be involved in the program, and a total of 11,780 households will be outreached by the program.



### Partnerships and collaborations

The Green FCAP is receiving funding support from Spark Micro Grants which is operating in Malawi,

Rwanda, Uganda, Ghana, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The program is also being implemented with the technical support and supervision of the Green FCAP technical committee which is comprised of Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in Malawi (Debt and Aid Management Division), Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture (department of agriculture and extension services), Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of natural resources and climate change (climate change department). At district level, the program is being implemented with a great collaboration with the Phalombe District Council and the local structures within the traditional authorities and the villages (ADC's and VDC's). It also imperative to note that based on the diversity of the selected MG pathways/projects by the villages, the program has been working with the departments of animal Health and Livestock development, department of Forestry, Environmental Affairs Department, Department of Lands, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Gender. At grassroot level and during the weekly community meetings, the extension officers or who are working as Green FCAP program technical advisors have also been deployed on the ground to facilitate the weekly meetings and providing advise to the communities planning, selection of pathways and implement their micro grants projects to ensure that they are effective and sustainable.

### Challenges of Faced during implementation

Some of the challenges identified and encountered during the implementation of the program include, lack of adequate personnel of extension officer to provide enough support as required by the program. This has been addressed through engaging the relevant departments for joint planning and development of suitable workplans for effective field staff rotations.

### Conclusion

Overall, the implementation of the program has been a success and we will continue to closely monitor and greatly involve the support of various stakeholders to ensure that the short-term and long-term goals of the program are achieved and that they are sustained as we contribute to the Malawi Vision 2063 and the global sustainable development goals such as SGD goal number 1, 2, 3, 5, 13 and 15 for instance.

# NJIRA IMPACT OUTREACH

## IMPROVING HEALTHCARE DELIVERY IN RURAL MALAWI

### The Njira Impact Outreach Clinic Model

In the quiet, scattered villages of rural Malawi, access to healthcare has long been a significant challenge. For Women, Children, and Young Adults, the nearest clinic is hours away, reachable only after crossing rivers, dirt roads, and long stretches of farmland. Illnesses that could be easily treated often go unattended, and preventable complications have, for years, claimed lives that might have been saved. Recognizing this challenge, Njira Impact stepped forward with a bold and compassionate solution: Last-mile outreach clinics. These are not just temporary tents or makeshift health posts; they are lifelines on wheels, designed to bring essential medical services right to the doorsteps of people who would otherwise be left behind.

and lactating Mothers no longer have to walk for hours under the scorching sun for antenatal and postnatal visits. Youth have confident access to sexual and reproductive health services without fear or stigma. Families receive information that helps them make healthier choices, reducing illnesses before they start. In 2024 alone, Njira Impact conducted 148 last-mile outreach clinics, reaching 369,489 people in collaboration with 34 health facilities across 4 districts. The initiative has become impactful, especially for Women, Children, and young Adults, who often face the greatest barriers to accessing healthcare. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of people reached through these last-mile outreach clinics rose from 226,231 to 369,489, a remarkable 63% increase.



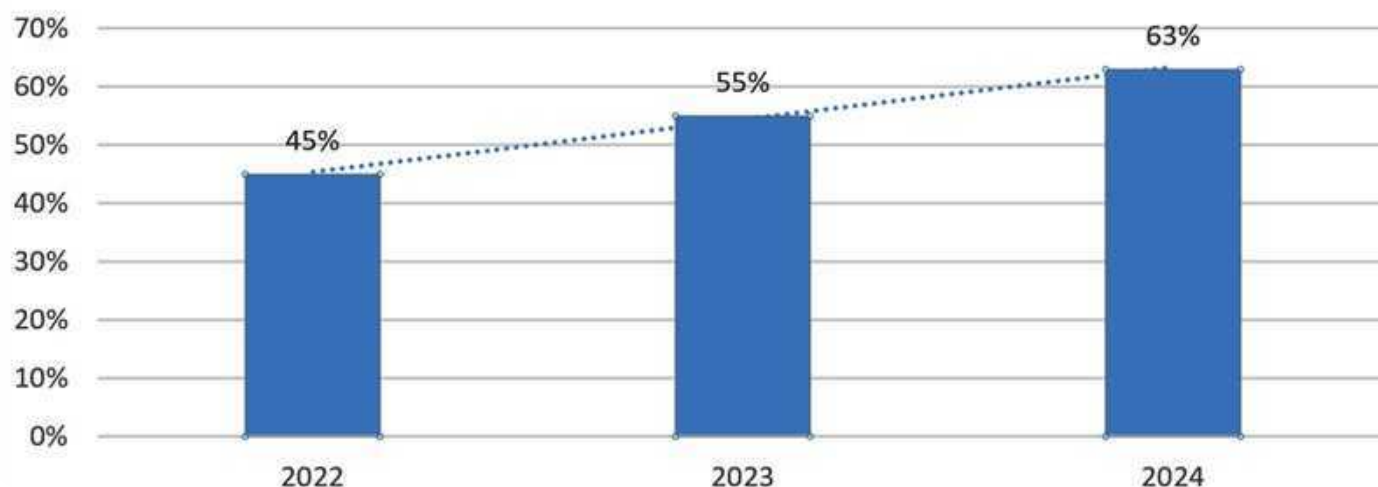
*community members accessing health services from a mobile van*

Each month, Njira Impact's outreach teams set up clinics in 34 catchment Areas of the hardest-to-reach areas of Nkhosakota, Dedza, Thyolo, and Phalombe Districts, in places where health workers rarely venture and hospitals are miles away. The clinics provide a full range of services, including general outpatient care, family planning, antenatal check-ups, HIV testing and counseling, and health education. But beyond the treatments and consultations, these clinics offer something equally vital: hope and dignity. Pregnant

This growth reflects not only improved access but also the deep trust and engagement Njira Impact has built with the communities it serves. Njira Impact's outreach clinics do more than treat illnesses; they inspire transformation. Through open discussions and counseling sessions, women are learning about family planning and maternal health. Men and youth are engaging in conversations about HIV prevention and positive lifestyle choices. These moments spark change that extends far beyond a single clinic visit.



## % of children and women who accessed MNCH services increased from 45% to 63%



Meet Beatrice, a 22-year-old pregnant woman from Katimbira Village in Nkhotakota. Beatrice, like many others in her community, struggled to access healthcare due to the prohibitive distance to the nearest clinic. The journey was not only lengthy but also fraught with challenges, especially for someone of her condition. "It was very difficult for me to travel to the health center due to the long distances. I gave birth to my first child at home because I could not manage to attend my antenatal clinic on all visits since I was making my journey on foot, which is too long and left me exhausted," Beatrice explains.

Beatrice nearly lost her first child due to the challenges she faced during her childbirth with from traditional birth attendant (TBA). Njira Impact brings in a full facility at door step through outreach clinic which ant natal clinic is one of the services offered during the last mile outreach clinic, Beatrice is one of pregnant women in Katimbira who is attending the antenatal clinic through last mile clinic and she is confidently to say she's going to have a successful child birth service this time around, Beatrice attended 3 ANC visits, she is expected to have her baby in August end. "From the experience I had during my first pregnancy, I felt that this time I should attend all my visits through the outreach after all, i access the same services which i could access at the health facility, im so grateful that these days I save MK30,000 which I could use for transportation to access ANC and definitely I will use the same money to give birth at the health facility a thing which could have not happened before". Over 1,500 pregnant women accessed antenatal care services through Njira Impact's last-mile outreach clinics in 2024, leading to a significant reduction in maternal health

risks and improved early detection of pregnancy-related complications. The impact of Njira Impact's last-mile outreach clinics can be seen and felt across the communities they serve. In Communities that once struggled to access basic healthcare, families now have clinics coming right to their doorsteps. Mothers no longer have to walk long distances for antenatal checkups, and children receive timely vaccinations and treatment for common illnesses. The burden of travel and cost has been lifted, replaced by a sense of relief and trust in the care provided close to home.

Over 31,844 women and girls accessed family planning and attended antenatal care services in 2024, leading to healthier pregnancies and safer deliveries. At the same time, community education sessions have opened conversations about HIV prevention, nutrition, and reproductive health, topics that were once avoided but are now part of everyday discussion. Beyond health outcomes, the outreach clinics have sparked a powerful wave of community involvement. Local volunteers, youth, and leaders have taken ownership of promoting healthy practices and mobilizing their neighbors during clinic days. What began as a simple effort to extend healthcare has grown into a community-driven movement, one that is not only saving lives but also transforming attitudes and restoring hope in some of Malawi's most remote areas.

The success of Njira Impact's outreach clinics is anchored in robust partnerships with the Ministry of Health, working closely through district health offices, local councils, traditional leaders and existing community structures. These collaborations have been instrumental in planning,

mobilization, and coordination of service delivery at the community level. Through joint efforts, Njira Impact and its partners have strengthened health systems, enhanced data reporting, and ensured that essential services reach even the most remote populations. This integrated approach not only promotes efficiency and accountability but also reinforces the shared commitment to ensuring equitable access to healthcare for all. With a total investment of MWK 365 million, the outreach clinic initiative has demonstrated remarkable cost-effectiveness, delivering high-quality healthcare services to 369,489 people without the expense of constructing permanent facilities. By utilizing existing community spaces, partnering with district health teams, and mobilizing local volunteers, Njira Impact has maximized the value of every kwacha spent.

This efficient model not only expands healthcare coverage but also ensures sustainability, showing that meaningful impact can be achieved even with limited resources. As Njira Impact looks to the future, its commitment to equitable healthcare access remains unwavering. The organization envisions a Malawi with healthy communities that enjoy a productive life, where every woman, man, and child, regardless of where they live, can access quality health services without facing financial or geographic barriers. By continuing to strengthen partnerships, invest in innovation, and empower communities, Njira Impact aims to build a resilient health system that leaves no one behind. When healthcare truly reaches the unreached, communities don't just survive, they grow stronger, healthier, and more self-reliant, paving the way for lasting transformation.

## Challenges and lessons learned.

- Shortage of medical supplies in the health facilities, which affected the delivery of outreach clinics. Our last-mile outreach clinics rely on supplies from government health facilities. During the year, our clients were deprived of quality health care due to frequent stock outs. Looking forward to the year ahead, we have strategically established new partnerships and developed proper roadmaps with the District Health Office for proper supply chain systems.
- Heavy rains & flooding: This affected all the program's activities as roads were impassable, which led to the cancellation of last-mile clinics. livelihood activities were also affected as HELP and FCAP villages were not able to meet during their scheduled meetings, which led to delays in implementation. Beneficiaries were also affected due to floods; as such, continuation to participate in activities was on hold. Farmers' fields were washed away, which will lead to low or no yields for the farming households, hence they will be food insecure.
- Inflation and other economic challenges: Malawi has experienced devaluation of the currency, price fluctuations, and a lack of forex, which also led to fuel scarcity. In the past year, the economic conditions were not conducive to service delivery as prices for basic commodities had tripled. Looking ahead, Njira Impact has developed strong financial and program resilience strategies for managing reserves.
- Despite the efforts to make sure every youth has access to condoms, there is still a rise in cases of STIs in all districts, where youths aged between 15 – 20 years are among the alarming figures of STIs, where 213 AGYW and their clients were treated for Challenges



# NO LONGER FORGOTTEN

## HOW OUTREACH CLINICS ARE REACHING MOTHERS IN MALAWI



*children growth monitoring session in progress*

In the quiet village of Kunthembwe, in southern Malawi, Malita Charles begins her mornings before sunrise, preparing food, tending to chores, and planning how to make ends meet through farming and piecework alongside her husband. But until recently, one task loomed large over her day: accessing health care.

"I used to leave home at 6 a.m. and arrive at the hospital around 9:30," Malita recalls. "The lines were long. I would wait the whole day just to be helped. And when I was too tired or sick to walk, I had to hire a bicycle taxi, which cost too much." With the nearest health facility over two hours away on foot, every visit meant a difficult trade-off between seeking care and securing food for her family.

That changed through the Saving Lives and Livelihoods (SLL) Project, led by Amref Health Africa with support from the Africa CDC and the Mastercard Foundation. The project introduced outreach clinics in her community, bringing essential health services directly to rural doorsteps. In its second phase in Malawi, the SLL project integrates COVID-19 vaccinations with a range of critical services, including reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health, HIV/AIDS care, TB, non-communicable diseases, malaria, and nutrition. The model promotes life-course immunisation, emphasising that vaccines are not just for children but are vital at every stage of life.

The goal: to reach over 1 million people across Malawi, with at least 96,000 adults vaccinated, while strengthening the health system for the long term. For Malita, this has been transformative.

"I don't have to choose between going to the clinic and working to feed my children," she says. "Now the clinic comes here. We get the services we need, and I can still go to work."

Led by Nurse Chimwemwe Pakhale from Chabvala Health Centre, the outreach team now serves more than 3,000 people in Kunthembwe and surrounding areas. During a single recent clinic, 34 women received tetanus shots, 58 accessed family planning services, five began antenatal care, and over 200 children were vaccinated, monitored, and treated for common illnesses. 89 people were tested for HIV, and 170 adults received treatment. "Before, it was hard to travel and we missed vaccine doses," says Enelesi Lusaka, another mother. "Now, I know my child and I will get vaccinated on time. It gives me peace of mind."



The outreach clinics have become lifelines, reducing travel time, easing financial pressure, and enabling timely, dignified care. Children are healthier. Mothers are more supported. And families feel recognised. "We feel seen," Malita says, smiling. "Before, it felt like we were forgotten. Now, the health workers come to us."

Each morning in Kunthembwe now begins with a little less worry, and a lot more hope.

*By Lusayo Banda - Communications Manager,  
Amref Health Africa in Malawi*

# TRANSFORMING LIVES

## ONE ACRE FUND'S CREDIT PROGRAM EMPOWERS MALAWI'S FARMERS

One Acre Fund's credit program is boosting farming in Malawi by providing farmers with quality inputs on credit basis, training on sustainable farming practices, connecting farmers to markets, and supporting agroforestry initiatives. As of 2025, One Acre Fund is supporting 176,000 farmers through its credit program across 9 districts of Mulanje, Thyolo, Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Zomba, Machinga, Ntcheu, Dedza and Lilongwe.

For Malawian farmers, Fletcher Chinyama and Ezeleti Baison, the 2022/23 cropping season posed distinct challenges compared to prior years. They grappled with increasing prices of crop inputs, mainly fertilizer, and El Niño-induced drought, which severely impacted agricultural production across Southern Africa.

### The Challenge: High Fertilizer Costs and Land Degradation

Malawi faces challenges that contribute to high fertilizer prices, impacting agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods. Limited local production, infrastructure and distribution challenges, and global market dynamics drive up costs. Malawi relies heavily on imported fertilizers, incurring high transportation costs and import tariffs. The country's inadequate infrastructure, such as roads and storage facilities, hampers efficient fertilizer distribution, increasing transport costs and further inflating retail prices.

The livelihood of smallholder farmers in Malawi is further complicated by the country's high prevalence of soil micronutrient deficiencies. Over 40% of Malawi's soils are nutrient-poor, while 75% are degraded, resulting in crops that lack sufficient nutrients, leading to low nutritional value, decreased yields, and contributing to micronutrient deficiencies in the population.

Smallholder farmers in Malawi are trapped in a difficult situation. Without fertilizer, their already degraded soils are unlikely to produce sufficient yields, making it challenging for them to feed their families or generate income. The increasing cost of fertilizer has made it unaffordable for many, with the price of a 50 kg bag of UREA/NPK skyrocketing from just MWK17,000-K22,000 in 2020 to over MWK150,000 in 2025.

### Championing Farmers' Prosperity Through Innovative Interventions and Information

At the core of One Acre Fund's approach to supporting smallholder farmers lies the belief that farmers are the engine of prosperity and that smallholder farmers hold the key to ending hunger and poverty in our lifetime. One Acre Fund's model for supporting smallholder farmers is entrenched in the delivery of inputs on time and closer to where farmers are, innovative advisory services provided by a network of field officers, and proven agricultural methods and strategies that have transformed the lives of farmers like Ezeleti and Fletcher.

### Ezeleti's Journey: From Small Harvests to Realizing Her Dreams

In Makanya Village, T/A Kalumbu, Lilongwe District, Ezeleti had spent more than four seasons harvesting meager yields, only managing to get 200 kg as the highest harvest she ever had. After enrolling with One Acre Fund at the beginning of the 2024 cropping season, Ezeleti received training on sustainable farming and inputs, including drought-resistant seeds and fertilizer. She managed to harvest 1000 kg, significantly increasing her yield. In addition, Ezeleti harvested a further 400 kg of soya. Building on this success, Ezeleti sold the soya through One Acre Fund's market initiative program, earning over MWK700,000. She has reinvested part of the proceeds from selling the soya into a hair barbing business whilst also diversifying into pig farming as she seeks to build her resilience against shocks.

"Farming with One Acre Fund has truly been valuable," she said. "I got my inputs in October way before the first rains and had a flexible repayment plan that suited me as a smallholder farmer. I'm looking forward to the 2025-26 season, during which I plan to expand my field by cultivating two acres of land. With the profits, I aim to make future investments in farming and save money to build a modern house for my family and support the education of my children."

### One Acre Fund's Support Helping Redefine Young People's Role in Farming: Fletcher's Story

For too long, agriculture in Malawi has been viewed as a last resort — a sector for those without better options. This outdated perception has discouraged young people from exploring the tremendous potential that lies within our soils. But that is changing. With the right support, more youths are



engaging in farming, and are witnessing an exciting transformation — in both returns and attitude.

Inspired by his parents' success, Fletcher, 25, of Kwirambo Village, in Zomba District decided to carve a career in farming. "I grew up watching my parents reap the benefits of farming, and I was determined to follow in their footsteps," he says. One Acre Fund's programs further cemented his decision, providing support that boosted his confidence.

"One of the most pressing challenges that youths are facing is the exorbitant pricing of inputs, mainly fertilizers. The prevailing high prices are a turn off for most young smallholders who are just starting up. This is what drove me to enroll with One Acre Fund's credit program as it meant that I would get inputs on credit and repay flexibly, depending on my income flow," shared Fletcher. With the harvests that Fletcher has been having, he has also seen an improvement in his income. When he harvests surplus, he sells it to earn money, which he directs towards a few things to improve his home and has even set up a mobile money business, as a new income stream for his young family. Fletcher's passion for farming isn't deterred by what other people think about farming; instead, he is proud to be part of an industry that feeds communities and sustains the environment.

"I don't feel ashamed saying I'm a farmer," Fletcher declares. "In fact, I think it's something to be proud of. Without farmers, people would not have food on their tables." Fletcher said.

## A Brighter Future

By empowering young farmers like Fletcher and Ezeleti, One Acre Fund's credit program is contributing to Malawi's economic growth and development. Agriculture is the backbone of Malawi's economy, and by supporting young farmers, we can increase food security, reduce poverty, and create new economic opportunities for the country's young population.

## Scaling Impact

With over 176,000 smallholder farmers being supported through the credit program during the 2025-26 season, One Acre Fund is not only improving yields but also empowering young people, building resilience, and igniting a wave of agricultural emancipation in Malawi. The ripple effect of these interventions is clear. Beyond feeding their families, smallholder farmers are also paving the way for a more secure and sustainable future and contributing to the economic development of Malawi.

## Shared Success

The success registered by One Acre Fund highlights the power of collaboration with different stakeholders for a common goal. One Acre Fund works with various government entities, including district councils and relevant committees, to achieve its objectives. By working together, we can create a brighter future for Malawi's smallholder farmers and the country as a whole.

## Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

As One Acre Fund works to support smallholder farmers in Malawi, we face several challenges that impact our efforts. Climate change poses a major threat to farmers' progress, with increasing frequency and severity of weather-related events, such as Cyclones Freddy and prolonged dry spells, affecting crops. Limited access to finance and soil fertility challenges also hinder farmers' ability to adopt sustainable farming practices and improve their livelihoods.

Despite these challenges, our experience in Malawi has taught us valuable lessons. We've learned that innovative safety nets, such as insurance coverage, can be a game-changer for farmers. By providing a safety net, we can help farmers take risks and invest in their farms, knowing that they have a backup plan in case of crop failures or other shocks. This approach enables farmers to build their resilience and adapt to changing circumstances, ultimately improving their livelihoods and food security.



*farm inputs ready for distribution*

Ezeleti Baisoni, proudly stands in her soyabean field where she harvested a bumper harvest that earned her over 700,000 MWK.



Fruit of her labor! Ezeleti Baisoni, a Makanya Village farmer, proudly displays her bountiful harvest, thanks to One Acre Fund's support with inputs on credit and training to boost yields and resilience.

Ezeleti Baisoni, a farmer from Makanya Village, smiles in her maize field



A brighter future for the next generation! Farmer Ezeleti Baisoni from Makanya Village beams with pride as she holds her baby, Daniel. Through farming, Ezeleti is working towards a brighter, more secure future for her children.

From harvest to opportunity! Ezeleti Baisoni, a Makanya Village farmer, showcases assets purchased from her farming success with One Acre Fund. She's now set to launch a hair cutting business, diversifying her income streams.







Fletcher Chinyama, one of the young farmers farming with One Acre Fund in Zomba District.

Nourishing the soil for a brighter future!  
Fletcher Chinyama, a young farmer from Zomba District, inspects his compost manure, a sustainable farming practice he learned through One Acre Fund. This technique helps mitigate soil degradation and boost crop yields.



Empowering himself and his community!  
Fletcher Chinyama, a young farmer from Zomba District, serves a customer at his mobile money business, a venture he launched after a successful harvest with One Acre Fund. The business is now providing him a steady income stream.



# SANITATION FACILITY

## INTEGRATED WITH WATER ACCESS RESTORES DIGNITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN GIRLS AT LUFU PRIMARY SCHOOL

In many Malawian communities, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) has remained a hidden topic, stigmatized and ignored despite its critical links to health, education and empowerment. MHM forms a critical component of ensuring access to adequate and equitable sanitation for all, as outlined in SDG 6.2. Despite its importance, many schools in Dowa district still face significant challenges in ensuring they have adequate facilities available for girls that are also constructed in a fashion that offers privacy, cleanliness and safety.



*mercy walking out from a modern menstrual hygien toilet*

For a long time, thirteen-year-old Mercy Msodoka, a candidate of the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) and other girls of her age from Group Village Head Chidothi, Traditional Authority Chiwere, has had to miss school to protect herself from embarrassment associated with Menstruation. The absence of Washrooms at her school made the whole idea of going to school during her time of the month unattractive and a haunting experience as she has had to endure taunts and stigma.

Amid lack of sanitation facilities at her school, Mercy faced challenges to access clean water, an essential resource that is often overlooked when it comes to MHM. Mercy has been travelling long distances just to access water in unsafe places for drinking and general hygiene, causing her difficulty and stress to manage her day-to-day life. To address these gaps and promote an inclusive and gender-sensitive environment for learners, Self-Help Africa, under Dowa Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene (DIWASH) project with support from Charity Water, constructed two improved latrines for boys and girls at Lufu primary school. The girls' latrine includes a separate room

fitted with a tapped bucket for managing menstruation, and a disability friendly room to make it more inclusive for physically challenged learners.

"I am now enjoying the secrecy and cleanliness of the changing room. My friends and I are now able to walk around normally, full of confidence than before when we feared being made fun of by the boys," she said.

Mercy is also a proud beneficiary of a Solar Powered Water Supply System that has been constructed alongside the sanitation facilities, supplying water to her school and a yard away from her home, and the surrounding 122 households. The integration of water into the aspect of sanitation and hygiene has enhanced the wellbeing of girls like Mercy, leading to increased attendance and in the long run, improved health outcomes. Mercy adds, "In the recent past, I was walking a long distance to access water at the river to take care of myself and sometimes I didn't have the morale to go to school as I often got tired from fetching water. I am now able to attend school regularly. Just like many of my friends, I don't have to miss school during my periods."

The sanitation facility and access to safe water has empowered young girls like Mercy, enhancing their dignity and well-being. For the 2024 Charity water grant, the initiative has become a powerful safeguarding tool to 1,318 learners (Girls:749; Boys:569) from Lufu and Kabulungo primary schools, where specifically, young girls like Mercy do not have to coil in shame giving in to the weight of traditional taboos surrounding menstruation and further suffering long, unsafe distances in search of clean water for drinking and body hygiene.



*mercy washes her hands with soap*



# SMALL GRANT POWER

## A TALE OF A CATALYST FUND AND THE CBNRM

The premise of the Catalyst Fund window of the Shifting the Power Programme that the Tilitonse Foundation is currently implementing was simple, provide a small amount of short-term funding for grassroots organizations to set up basic structures that could lead to their sustainability. In theory, the logic was straightforward - grassroots organizations often come into being as passion undertakings. These passion undertakings are led by people who feel inclined to do something about a prevailing undesirable situation, rather than people who have an understanding or the training necessary to govern, lead or successfully carry out the work. Yet lots of great work is done by such groupings of passionate people.


It follows then, practically, that if those organizations have their capacity developed so they could be governed better, and set up systems and structures that helped them implement their activities better, then their impact would be greater. Even better, they would become more sustainable and resilient to carry out their mandates. And so, 23 organizations were offered a grant of £5,000 each from the Catalyst Fund window of the Shifting the Power programme which Tilitonse Foundation is implementing in partnership with Comic Relief and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. The mission was simple; they were to use the funds to carry out basic activities they had identified themselves as necessary for them to move from a grassroots organization to a stable organization - with what all that entails.

For most of those organizations, these activities included getting their organization formally registered with the NGO Regulatory Authority, some for the first time. They entailed setting up governance structures such as Boards of Directors and development of policies that provided direction for how the organization was to operate. It entailed setting up systems for managing finances, onboarding crucial staff, providing trainings for staff members that otherwise were operating without a proper understanding of the requirements of the job they had been given. To this extent, the Catalyst Fund of the Shifting the Power Programme was operating as per expectation. What had not been anticipated was the doors of opportunity that the grant would afford the organizations that benefited from it, no one would have anticipated what came next.

For the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Forum (CBNRM), they were the definition of a prime candidate for this type of funding. The CBNRM Forum is a network of seven community associations established under the National Wildlife Act as the enabling legal framework that puts local communities at the centre of wildlife and ecosystem conservation. These community associations have been established among communities living around seven protected areas; Kasungu National Park, Nyika National Park, Nkhota-kota Game Reserve, Lake Malawi National Park, Liwonde National Park, Lengwe National Park, and Majete Game Reserve. Within the CBNRM was Dr. Malidadi Langa, Executive Director for the Forum, who dreamt of setting up a secretariat that would coordinate all the work that had to be done more efficiently and effectively. He saw the opportunity that the Catalyst Fund presented and submitted a proposal that saw them awarded the grant that would change their lives forever.

Prior to the Catalyst Fund, according to Dr. Langa, the CBNRM had faced serious challenges which threatened the success of their endeavor. "Starting a brand-new national network from scratch without any financial support and legal recognition has been our biggest challenge since even volunteers from the member associations also require financial support both for their upkeep and operations. The Forum has had to rely on the personal support and networks of the founding Executive Director to secure financial support from July 2021 until we got our own grant funding from Catalyst Fund in July 2023."

Dr. Langa and the CBNRM went to work with the catalytic funding. They legally registered their organization and testify that this action alone stands out as the most significant capacity building activity that they undertook as it laid the foundation for subsequent capacity building activities. After getting legal registration, CBNRM realized that they needed skilled professional staff, and program funding to really take off but lacked capacity in fundraising and proposal writing. They realized that they needed to gain the trust of donors and member associations and for this they needed to keep adequate and accurate financial records and reports. Yet they did not have an accountant and had to rely on the goodwill of voluntary qualified accountants.



CBNRM promptly attacked their capacity gaps by undertaking resource mobilization trainings and ensuring availability of accounting staff by providing a stipend. Unlike other organizations, CBNRM only applied for £3,000 of the £5,000 an organization could apply for. Even this was enough for them to see magic happen.

Shortly before they boarded onto the Catalyst Fund window, CBNRM had been having serious conversations with two potential donors who had agreed in principle to give them some grants on condition that the Forum got legally registered. As soon as they got the registration certificate, they convened a Zoom call with the Global Greengrants Fund who right there and then agreed to give a capacity building grant of \$25,000. This grant was received and is being applied to office rent, basic office furniture, and payment of stipends to two voluntary secretariat staff. They say luck comes in twos, the CBNRM further managed to attract an additional grant of USD154,000 from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in April 2024, their biggest grant achievement so far.

In essence, something unimaginable happened. From the strategic utilization and investment of £3,000 (US\$4,000), CBNRM cumulatively raised US\$179,000 of multiyear funding for their work! The expected result of their capacity development under this funding window took a seismic shift, from merely seeking to develop their capacity, systems and structures to on top of it also having the funds to implement activities for some time. There are many similar kinds of stories across the Catalyst Fund of the Shifting the Power Programme which ended in March 2024. Experiences of the CBNRM Forum and other organizations that benefitted from the fund show that every organization can be successful if strategically invested in, and that the investment that can see an organization change and flourish does not necessarily need to be very great. It is a testament of the value and potential of small grants to effect change in organizations as much as the communities they work in.

The success of the CBNRM and Shifting the Power Programme continues to resound until now, the CBNRM has in 2025 secured grants worth US\$50,000 from a donor from California in the United States of America that prefers to remain anonymous, USD\$15,000 from the Community Leaders Network, and US\$5,000 from Resource Africa/Jamma.



# NGO DAY 2025

## MZUZU STADIUM BURSTS WITH THE POWER OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Mzuzu Stadium came alive with color, rhythm, and purpose as civil society converged for the 2025 NGO Day, hosted by NGORA in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender. From the very first moment, the atmosphere was charged with energy. A solidarity walk set the tone, drawing NGO leaders, government officials, faith representatives, and community members into a vibrant procession that wound its way through the city streets. By the time the crowd reached the stadium, anticipation had built into a palpable sense of unity and pride. Inside, the stadium was transformed into a dazzling showcase of innovation. 72 (Seventy-two) NGOs had set up branded gazebos, each one bursting with stories of impact. Together, they created a sea of color and identity a living tapestry of Malawi's civil society. Visitors moved from one pavilion to another, encountering projects that spoke of resilience and transformation: climate-smart agriculture in rural villages, youth empowerment initiatives giving young people a voice, health interventions saving lives, and education programs opening doors of opportunity. Every booth was a story, every conversation a spark of possibility.

The exhibitions weren't just about display; they were about dialogue. Stakeholders leaned in to hear about grassroots innovations, donors asked probing questions about sustainability, and community members shared testimonies of how these interventions had touched their lives. The stadium became a marketplace of ideas, where accountability met inspiration and collaboration was born in real time.



One of the pavilions displaying what Emerging Public Leaders is doing in the country

The 2025 theme, "Harnessing Local Resources for Sustainable Development – Advancing the Impact of the NGO Sector Towards Malawi 2063," was highlighted as both timely and strategic, urging all stakeholders to reduce aid dependency and invest in homegrown solutions. The Authority shared key

updates from the 2025 NGO Sector Report, including the operationalization of the NGO Fund, which disbursed MWK 300 million to 25 NGOs, 2 networks and MWK 52 million to 28 District Councils to strengthen governance, systems, and local coordination.

Beyond the stadium walls, the reach of NGO Day stretched across the nation. Live broadcasts on MBC TV and Zodiak Broadcasting Station, coupled with NGORA's Facebook livestream, carried the energy of Mzuzu into homes and communities far and wide. Diaspora audiences tuned in, reinforcing the sense that this was not just a local gathering but a national moment of pride. And then came one of the most anticipated highlights of the day, the awards ceremony. In a moment that electrified the crowd, the best-performing NGOs were recognized for their outstanding contributions across key thematic areas. The applause was thunderous as names were read out, each award a testament to dedication, innovation, and impact.

Category	International NGO	Local NGO
Compliance	Self Help Africa	Njira Impact
Transparency	World Vision Malawi	CRECCOM
Policy Alignment	Habitat for Humanity	CARD
Hard-to-Reach Areas	World Vision Malawi	Lusubilo Community Care
Community Empowerment	World Vision Malawi	WORLEC
Girl Education	CAMFED	CRECCOM
Health	EGPAF	Family Health Services
Food Security	One Acre Fund	Farmers Union of Malawi
Localization	Save the Children International	Tilitonse Foundation

Each award was more than a trophy, it was a story of perseverance and impact. From organizations reaching the hardest-to-reach communities, to those championing transparency and compliance, the recognition underscored the diversity and strength of Malawi's NGO sector. Of course, the journey to NGO Day 2025 was not without challenges. The event had projected participation from 100 NGOs, but only 72 mounted pavilions after some organizations scaled down their involvement. Yet, these hurdles became part of the story a testament to the sector's resilience and ability to adapt. Program adjustments ensured quality exhibitions, vibrant dialogue sessions, and a seamless flow of activities that kept the spirit of the day intact.





A pavilion for one of the NGOs during the NGO Day

Feedback from participating NGOs painted a vivid picture of success. Most rated the experience as excellent or good, with pavilion interactions and peer learning topping the list of highlights. The solidarity walk was celebrated as a powerful symbol of unity, while the exhibitions themselves were praised for their vibrancy and professionalism. At the same time, participants offered constructive suggestions from extending pavilion hours to increasing local sensitization,

ensuring that future editions will be even stronger. Encouragingly, many organizations expressed interest in co-hosting or contributing to next year's planning, signalling strong ownership and momentum for continuous improvement.

As the sun dipped over Mzuzu and the gazebos were dismantled, one truth lingered in the air: NGO Day 2025 had been more than an event. It was a story of resilience, visibility, and collective impact. It reminded Malawi that NGOs are not just service providers but vital partners in national development, innovators shaping futures, and catalysts for change.

The energy of the day carried a promise that civil society will continue to push forward, together, with creativity, accountability, and determination. And as Malawi marches toward MW2063, NGO Day stands as a beacon of what is possible when collaboration, culture, and conviction come together in one powerful celebration.



NGO Leaders participate in a solidarity walk





## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: Who are NGORA's stakeholders?**

- Government, Public, Donors, Local & International NGOs

**Q: Which NGOs must register?**

- All non-profit organizations soliciting public funds

**Q: Can registration be denied or suspended?**

- Yes, for non-compliance. NGORA must allow the NGO to be heard first.

**Q: Can an NGO appeal a denied registration?**

- Yes, appeal to the High Court within 30 days of notification.

**Q: How to close/de-register an NGO?**

Submit a formal letter:

- Board resolution for closure
- Annual report
- Asset disposal plan

**NGORA will issue a Certificate of Closure**

**Q: What if two NGOs want to merge?**

- Deregister one, and submit new application with:  
New NGO name  
List of Trustees

**Where to Find NGORA**

Head Office: Behind Lingadzi Inn, Next to MASM Clinic, Lilongwe  
District Offices: Visit your District Council Office for directions

For more information  
+265 987 74 98 80

 [www.ngora.mw](http://www.ngora.mw)  
[www.myngo.ngora.mw](http://www.myngo.ngora.mw)  
[registrar@ngora.mw](mailto:registrar@ngora.mw)



## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

### Fees Payable to NGORA

#### REGISTRATION

One time  
**MK 250,000.00**

#### REPLACEMENT

Certificate /License  
**MK 50,000.00**

#### ANNUAL LICENSE FEE

Below 100m	<b>MK 100,000.00</b>
100m-500m	<b>MK 250,000.00</b>
500m - 2bn	<b>MK 1,000,000.00</b>
Above 2bn	<b>MK 2,000,000.00</b>

#### Bank Info for Registration Fee

National Bank

Name: NGO Regulatory Authority

Acct No: 459728 | Branch: Capital City, Lilongwe

 For more information  
+265 987 74 98 80

 [www.ngora.mw](http://www.ngora.mw)  
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## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

### What is NGORA?

The Non-Governmental Organizations Regulatory Authority (NGORA) is a statutory body established under Section 6 of the **NGO (Amendment) Act, Cap 5:05** of the Laws of Malawi. It is mandated to register and regulate all NGOs operating in Malawi, ensuring compliance, transparency, and alignment with national development goals.

NGORA manages NGO registration, licensing, renewals, reporting, appeals, closures, and mergers: all done online through the **MyNGO** platform.

### Why Register with NGORA ?

- ✓ Required by law (**NGO Act Cap 5:05**)
- ✓ Builds credibility and public trust
- ✓ Grants access to tax exemptions
- ✓ Promotes transparency and accountability
- ✓ Encourages donor confidence
- ✓ Enables international collaboration and partnerships

Please note that registration is strictly online on **MyNGO**

For more information  
+265 987 74 98 80

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## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

### NGO REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Certified copy of the organization's **Constitution**
2. Details of all Trustees/Board Members
  - International NGOs must provide **sworn affidavits** of at least two Malawian Directors (Section 20(2))
3. Certified copy of the **Certificate of Incorporation**
4. A clear Activity Plan
5. Letter of approval or MoU from the relevant Government Ministry
6. Proof of payment of **MK250,000** registration fee

**NOTE:** Registration is strictly online at **MyNGO**

#### Bank Info for Registration Fee

**National Bank**

Name: NGO Regulatory Authority

Acct No: 459728 | Branch: Capital City, Lilongwe

Replacement for lost or damaged certificates : **MK 50,000.00**

For more information  
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# STEPPING UP THE INFLUENCE OF CSOS

## CHIKOMWE CBO GETS MTAPWA BRIDGE OFF THE GROUND

Located in the area of Senior Group Village Headman Maliro under Traditional Authority Chowe in Mangochi district, Chikomwe CBO is one of the five community-based organizations in Malawi that have benefited from the Milimo Local Capacity Building Activity, which was implemented by Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM) from 2021 – 2025 with 1.7 million USD funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Milimo Activity aimed at strengthening the capacity of local institutions to deliver on their mandates by helping them in designing and implementing impactful development interventions, using local resources whilst increasing financial independence and self-reliance.

For decades during rainy seasons, the people from villages under Senior Group Village Headman Maliro had been struggling to access health services, schools, and markets, most of which are located around Chimbende, an area separated from Maliro by Mtapwa wetland. The earth road across Mtapwa wetland connects Mwasa villages and areas around Chimbende Trading Centre via Balamaliro. With the absence of a concrete bridge, the Mtapwa wetland area was impassable for the earth-road users from the Maliro villages, as it gets heavily flooded. “One of the challenges that I faced in my business as a Motorcycle hire operator was that this Mtapwa area gets so flooded when it rains, hence, I ended up taking the longer routes to cycle my customers from Maliro to Chimbende, which was time-consuming, especially when I’m carrying patients.” Explained John Mkhize, who is one of the Mtapwa road users.

Echoing Mkhize, another road user, Mercy Hassan, who is a farmer, said that the Mtapwa wetland area really gets so flooded, hence affecting her agro-business. “I am a rice and sweetpotatoes farmer, so Chimbende Trading Center is where I usually sell my farm produce. As such, farming gets affected when this road gets heavily flooded, as the market becomes hardly accessible. Hassan asserted. According to Chikomwe CBO Director Rabson Suman, the absence of a concrete bridge at Mtapwa wetland also affected access to health services and education in the area. “Women, especially those who are pregnant, failed to cross this area when going to the clinic during the rainy season. Learners and even teachers who reside at Chimbende also failed to cross this area, hence jeopardizing the quality of education in our community.” Suman added.

However, such a huge socioeconomic challenge will now be just history, thanks to the collaboration and networking efforts by Chikomwe CBO with other stakeholders, following the capacity-building intervention by Milimo Activity. “As community members, we never knew that a development project as big as bridge construction could be fueled by us. All we could do was to wait for the government or organizations to act for us,” explained Suman. “But when CRECCOM under Milimo Activity came to our CBO with capacity building activities, we learnt how we can collaborate and network with other development stakeholders like the ward councilor, Member of Parliament, Area Development Committee, and other organizations to collectively bring about development in our area,” Suman added.



community members participating in bridge construction

In September 2022, Chikomwe CBO organized an interface meeting with the ADC, chiefs, and the Ward Councilor to discuss the way forward on the need for a bridge at Mtapwa. The meeting produced the needed fruit as it triggered the processes that led to the construction of a concrete bridge at Mtapwa. “Together with the chiefs, we presented our request to the ADC, who presented the same to the MP. The MP responded well by helping us make the required arrangements and paperwork... The Councilor presented the issue to the District Council, and eventually the construction of the bridge started,” Suman narrated.





Jafali Kabichi, an ADC member, said that Milimo Activity has not only built the capacity of the CBO alone but also the ADC members as well. "Through Chikomwe CBO, we have learnt how to properly interface with fellow key development stakeholders and through that, the construction of Mtapwa bridge was discussed and materialized," Kabichi explained.

The construction of the bridge is now completed, and people in the community have started using the bridge even during the 2023 – 2024 rainy season. According to McDonald Njolo, who is the Village Headman (VH) Ligonje, the bridge will help the people in his village to access food markets. "We buy maize at Chimbende, so with this bridge, it is easier for a person to use a bicycle and buy a bag of

maize at the trading center," Njolo commented gladly. "During rainy sessions, we used to spend MK5000 just to get to the trading center using the longer alternative route to Chimbende, yet this Mtapwa route normally costs MK1000 only for transport," – VH Ligonje added.

The road users, most of whom run small-scale businesses to bring food to the table in their families, see the Mtapwa bridge construction as a great relief. John Mkhezi said that his motorcycle hire business will now be smoother as he will be using the shorter route to take his customers to town via Chimbende. According to Mercy Hassan, the bridge brings a sigh of relief to her as a farmer. "I am so happy that we now have this bridge because it will be easier to take farm produce to the market," said Hassan.

According to the Chikomwe CBO Director, the Milimo Activity approach, which focused on capacity building, rather than material handouts, has built strong foundations for sustainable development in the community. "Even Milimo Activity has been postponed, but the skills which we have acquired from the project will remain with us," Suman challenged. "Community members here have a sense of ownership now for their own development projects and participation therein has greatly increased with the coming of Milimo Activity," Suman concluded.



*a motor cyclist happy using the new constructed bridge*

# ROOTED IN THE SOIL OF SUCCESS

## THE STORY OF NYAMBWANI FARMS

Around 2014 in Malawi's Mzimba South, a seed of transformation was planted. That seed was Nyambwani Farms, a cooperative born not just to raise pigs or farm fish, but to uplift an entire community through agricultural innovation and solidarity. Today, that seed has grown into a thriving ecosystem of prosperity, proving that when people work together, success takes root. As a piggery cooperative established to revolutionize pig production and raise the economic standing of its members, behind its visible growth lies the quiet but powerful support from We Effect, channelled through the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), a partnership that has fueled its evolution from a small initiative into a model of rural resilience. The cooperative's strength lies not just in numbers, but in knowledge. With help from FUM and the District Farmers Union (DFU), Nyambwani's members have received targeted training in pig management, breeding techniques, and extension services. These skills have not only improved productivity but also translated into higher household incomes and better livelihoods.

Leman Mvula, the cooperative's Chairperson, is quick to point out that success is never a solo effort. "We grow stronger through partnerships," he says. Indeed, alliances with other local groups, such as the Vitumbuko Farming Group and the Favour Women's Farming Group, have created a circular economy that benefits everyone. These groups supply maize bran for pig feed, and in return, receive protein-rich pork and Mbeya manure to boost their nutrition and crop yields. It's a shining example of interdependence at its finest. For Catherine Shawa, a member of the Favour Women's Farming Group, the journey began with a single pig. After joining the group in 2023 and securing a small loan from her Village Savings and Loan (VSL) group, she took a chance on livestock.

"The pig gave birth to seven piglets the first time, and three the second time," she recalls with a smile. "Now I have eleven pigs." But her success did not stop there, as she has expanded into maize, tomato, and onion farming, creating multiple streams of income that allow her to support her family with dignity. "I want to tell other women; do not be afraid to dream big. If I did it, you can too." Founded in 2022, Favour Women's Farming Group now boasts 28 members and is steadily turning ambition into action. Under the leadership of its

vice chairperson, Eluby Mwase, the group has not only earned profits from their beans and vegetables but also acquired new skills in environmental conservation and manure-making. Still, the path is not without obstacles. "Our biggest challenge is market access," Eluby explains. "We are producing more, but we need better ways to sell." Nyambwani Farms and its allied groups have benefited from a wide range of initiatives. With bean seedlings supplied by Good Nature Agro and We Effect through FUM, members are now venturing into legume farming, creating even more opportunities for growth and diversification. What started as a cooperative for pig farming has become a symbol of what rural communities can achieve when equipped with the right tools, support, and vision. Nyambwani Farms is no longer just a farm, it is a movement and proof that true success is not just harvested. It is cultivated together.



Healthy pigs

## AGAINST ALL ODDS: TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE AND FEEDING COMMUNITIES

A quiet transformation is taking root in Mzimba South, driven not by large-scale infrastructure or industrial agriculture, but by the resilience and ingenuity of smallholder farmers. Formed in 2023, the Vitumbuko Farming Group is emerging as a local force for sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation, rewriting the narrative for rural livelihoods in Malawi.

What began as a grassroots initiative to combat food and income insecurity has quickly evolved into a model of innovation. The group, now with 25 active members, set out to supply staple and nutritious crops such as beans, maize, and garlic, to local schools, hospitals, and even international institutions like the World Food Programme (WFP).



But early on, the group faced the stark reality of climate change. Erratic rainfall and shifting seasons made traditional farming increasingly unreliable. Recognizing that survival alone was not enough, Vitumbiko set its sights on evolution. With technical support from the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) and guidance from the Kazomba Extension Planning Area (EPA), the group diversified its crop portfolio to include groundnuts and soybeans. Still, the challenge of climate variability demanded a more resilient solution.

Enter garlic! A bold pivot into garlic farming, an increasingly in-demand crop less susceptible to climatic stress, has proven to be a promising move. Today, Vitumbiko boasts 70 kilograms of garlic in stock, aimed at both local markets and institutional buyers. While modest in scale, the venture signals a readiness to embrace climate-smart agriculture as a pathway to both sustainability and profit. Among the faces driving this transformation is Ruth Tracy Bilima, a local teacher who joined the group in 2024. Like many in the area, Bilima struggled to make ends meet on her teaching salary. Farming, bolstered by the collective strength of the group, changed that. This year alone, Bilima has harvested 50 bags of maize from her small plot, managed to support her child through university, and purchased a refrigerator – an unthinkable luxury just a few years ago.

“Salary alone is not enough,” she reflects. “It is just a matter of time management. Nothing is impossible for someone who has a head, both hands, and legs.” Her story is emblematic of what Vitumbiko represents: resilience, determination, and the power of community. Yet, the journey has not been without setbacks. A lack of storage infrastructure remains a pressing issue. The absence of a proper warehouse limits their capacity to preserve surplus harvests and scale operations. A recent application for funding through the Agricultural Commercialization Project (AGCOM) was unsuccessful, leaving the group in urgent need of alternative support.



garlic ready for sale

Still, their resolve remains unshaken. A recent win – a supply tender awarded by WFP through the district agriculture office – has brought renewed energy and market certainty. Continuous training and technical support from the District Farmers Union (DFU) and the agriculture office have further reinforced their approach to farming smarter and more sustainably. As Malawi grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, the Vitumbiko Farming Group offers a powerful lesson: when empowered, smallholder farmers can be at the forefront of climate resilience and economic progress.

## FROM STRUGGLE TO SUSTAINABILITY

Chipurikano cooperative finds new life through SeedCo partnership. After years of grappling with low yields and unreliable local seed varieties, a new chapter is unfolding for Chipurikano Cooperative in Mzimba South. A transformative partnership with SeedCo Malawi Limited, a leading producer of certified hybrid seeds, is offering renewed hope to the cooperative's 65 members ahead of the 2025/2026 farming season. The collaboration marks a major turning point. For the first time, members will gain access to certified hybrid seeds for maize, soya, groundnuts, and beans, ushering in a new era of productivity, profitability, and resilience in the face of climate uncertainty. Founded in 2016 with just 17 farmers, Chipurikano has come a long way. But for much of its existence, the journey has been one of hard work with limited returns.

“We have always worked hard, but the returns were minimal,” says Noveria Kumwenda, the cooperative's Chairperson. “Still, even with the limitations, many of our members managed to improve their households, pay school fees, build homes, buy iron sheets, or even start livestock projects.” Now, Kumwenda sees real transformation on the horizon.

“This partnership is our turning point,” she says. “We are no longer just trying to survive, but we are now aiming to thrive.” SeedCo's hybrid varieties, prized for their high yields, drought tolerance, and early maturity, offer much-needed relief for smallholder farmers increasingly vulnerable to erratic weather and shorter growing seasons. But agricultural success takes more than improved inputs. It takes knowledge and support. That is where the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) plays a critical role. Through training and technical assistance, FUM has helped Chipurikano members adopt sustainable practices and build alternative

income streams. One of the most impactful interventions has been the introduction of Village Savings and Loans (VSL) schemes.

"I am so grateful for the VSL scheme," says Hancy Chabvula, a member of the cooperative. "With a small loan, I started poultry farming. I now sell eggs, and with that income, I built a house. I have even learned how to make contour ridges to stop soil erosion, something I never knew before. Now my family does not struggle for basic needs, and we even enjoy chicken or eggs from time to time."

Another member, Grace Kanyasko, echoes this spirit of transformation. "From my earnings through the cooperative, I bought a solar panel, built a house, and now grow a variety of crops; maize, sweet potatoes, vegetables, and tomatoes, which I sell to support my family," she says. "Even though the original project support has ended, we are still applying what we have learned. That is lasting change."



*benefits of hardwork (a house built from farming)*

Founded in 2000, SeedCo Malawi has evolved from a seed supplier into a pillar of agricultural advancement across the continent. Since 2005, the company has been at the forefront of hybrid seed development especially for maize and soybeans, collaborating with governments and researchers in over 15 African countries. In Malawi, SeedCo has become a household name among farmers, known for quality, accessibility, and a farmer-first approach, values that align closely with the aspirations of grassroots cooperatives like Chipurikano. This partnership goes beyond boosting crop yields. It is about restoring dignity, empowering rural households, and future-proofing communities against the worsening threats of climate change. With SeedCo's innovative seeds, FUM's hands-on support, and the unwavering determination of Chipurikano's farmers, Mzimba South is not just hoping for a better future, it is cultivating it.

## SOWING KNOWLEDGE, REAPING CHANGE

How FUM is transforming lives in Ntchisi. Agriculture has long been the backbone of life in Malomo, Ntchisi District, in Malawi's central region. But today, within the Malomo Extension Planning Area (EPA), farming is being reimagined. Far from the influence of megaprojects or foreign investors, a quiet revolution is unfolding, driven by smallholder farmers with big ambitions. At the center of this transformation is the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), whose targeted support is reshaping rural agriculture and empowering communities from the ground up.

Nowhere is this more evident than at Kazanga Cooperative, where soybean farmers are not only harvesting crops, but cultivating confidence, self-reliance, and sustainable livelihoods. Formed in August 2011 and officially registered in June 2022, Kazanga Cooperative began with just 65 members. Today, it boasts 233 farmers, including 98 men, 135 women, and 65 youths, a reflection of inclusive growth and community commitment. But the turning point came with FUM's intervention, working alongside the Agricultural Commercialization (AGCOM) Project. Through training, infrastructure support, and strategic planning, the cooperative began its shift from subsistence to sustainability. For Kampulusha Chisale, the change was life-defining. In 2020, Chisale was a young man with potential, but few opportunities. He joined the cooperative unsure of what lay ahead. What he found was guidance. "Through FUM, I learned about crop diversification, sustainable farming, and market access," he says. "More importantly, I learned to believe in myself." With new knowledge, Chisale began intercropping sweet potatoes and soybeans. The results were immediate and encouraging. In 2024, he bought his first bicycle, then a solar panel, and eventually started rabbit farming, a venture he once thought was beyond him. "I used to think livestock farming was too hard," he admits. "Now I am doing it. Before, I just roamed around. Now, I am building something."

Chisale's story reflects a broader message: empower the youth, and communities will rise. "The youth must think ahead," he says. "Learn, join groups, take chances. That is how we become self-reliant." With AGCOM's 70% funding, matched by the cooperative's 30% contribution, Kazanga built a warehouse, a crucial asset for post-harvest storage and price negotiation. "No more losses due to poor storage," says Joseph Oswell Office, the cooperative's secretary. "Now we can hold our





produce and sell when prices are favorable." The cooperative has also invested in a soybean processing machine, available to members at affordable rates. Non-members pay more, generating income to maintain operations and fund future projects. "Before, we farmed without guidance or vision," Office reflects. "Now, we are organized, we follow expert advice, and we think like businesspeople." The results speak for themselves. Food security has improved. Climate-smart farming is being practiced, and rural entrepreneurship is on the rise. What began as a modest collective is now a beacon of rural development. Kazanga Cooperative stands as proof that when farmers are trained, organized, and supported, they not only grow crops, but grow communities. The story of Kazanga is not just about agriculture. It is about transformation, ownership, and the power of seeing rural people not as beneficiaries, but as leaders in their own right.

## POWERING THE FUTURE

How Nambamba Cooperative is cultivating a prosperous Malawi. Hope does not arrive with fanfare in Ntchisi. It is being built, acre by acre, by farmers who refuse to settle for survival. Among them is Nambamba Cooperative, a once-small group of determined growers who have turned adversity into ambition, and ambition into action. More than just planting seeds, they are planting possibility, crafting a future that mirrors the bold vision of Malawi 2063: one of inclusivity, industry, and self-reliance, led not by policy alone but by the people themselves. This is not a story of handouts or hype. It is the story of farmers becoming entrepreneurs, of women turning profits into livestock, of machines waiting to roar to life, not for lack of effort, but for lack of power. Literally. Today, standing at the edge of transformation, Nambamba is ready, not just to grow, but to lead. What began as a modest effort to overcome local farming challenges has evolved into a thriving

engine of rural development, economic empowerment, and community-led innovation.

## From Struggle to Strategy

Established in 2011, Nambamba Cooperative was born from necessity. Faced with poor access to certified seed, limited markets, and little financial capital, local farmers chose to organize, not to wait. Through partnerships with organizations like the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), they gained access to improved seed, credit facilities, and stronger market linkages, building a foundation that once seemed out of reach.

"We have come from far," says Bright Nthala, the cooperative's secretary. "Today, our members can afford to send their children to school, build decent homes, and even venture into livestock farming. That is real progress."

## A game-changing investment on hold

In a landmark achievement, the cooperative secured a significant grant through the Agricultural Commercialization (AGCOM) Project, enabling the purchase of critical infrastructure: a delivery truck, seed-treatment pallets, and a cooking oil processing machine with a capacity of over 1,000 litres per day. This machine was more than equipment. It was a strategic investment to create jobs, and add value to their core crop, groundnuts, and to combat local malnutrition by producing nutritious, affordable cooking oil. But four years later, the machine sits idle. The delay? A lack of connection to three-phase electricity, stalled by unresolved issues with ESCOM, Malawi's power utility. "We are ready. We have the raw materials, the market, and the vision," says Nthala. "All we need is power. Every year that passes, we worry the machine may be damaged before we even use it." Resilience in the face of roadblocks. Despite this major setback, Nambamba's momentum has not faltered. While AGCOM support was largely infrastructural, the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) stepped in with capacity building, training farmers in gross margin analysis, yield projections, and climate-smart agricultural techniques. These trainings have helped farmers make smarter, data-driven decisions about their production and marketing.

One such farmer is Mary Banda, a woman whose journey exemplifies what is possible when smallholders are equipped and empowered. "I used to think maize was just for home consumption," she says. "Now I grow it for food and income. From my profits, I bought two cattle, now I have seven, and four goats, now thirteen. I can pay school fees for my children using loans from the cooperative."

## Growth fueled by vision

Nambamba Cooperative began with just 53 farmers, mostly trading maize and groundnuts. By the time it was formally registered in February 2017, membership had nearly tripled. Today, it is home to 489 active members, each with a stake in a shared vision of progress, and they are thinking beyond Ntchisi. With ambitions to become a regional seed supplier, Nambamba is positioning itself as a key player in Malawi's agricultural future. Its mission aligns with Malawi 2063's vision of an inclusive, industrialized, self-reliant nation, built not by outsiders, but by empowered citizens.



*a cooperative member showing oil extracting machine*

Nambamba's story is not one of charity. It is one of leadership, resilience, and unrealized potential. Their path forward is clear; their systems are in place. What remains is a final push – strategic partnerships that can remove lingering barriers like power access and unlock full operational capacity. "We have done our part," says Nthala. "With just a little more support, we can transform not just this cooperative, but our entire community." And with that, Nambamba Cooperative continues to grow, not just crops, but a model of rural transformation for Malawi and beyond.

## FROM SHADOWS TO SUCCESS

How Phazi Dairy Cooperative rose through indirect support. Members of Phazi Cooperative stand in front of their bulking center, currently under construction. Tucked away from headlines and highways, a quiet revolution is stirring in Mzimba South. Here, amid the green highlands where farming feeds both stomachs and spirits, a small dairy cooperative is proving that you do not need the spotlight to lead meaningful change. With determination as their capital and cows as their collaborators, these farmers are rewriting what is possible.


Phazi Dairy Cattle Cooperative may not have been a direct beneficiary of the Sustainable Agriculture Project by the Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), but that did not stop them from transforming their fortunes. Instead of lamenting what they did not receive, they leaned in, listened, learned and today, they are milking success. Learning by watching: The power of indirect impact. Over the past two and a half years, FUM worked directly with 33 cooperatives across Malawi through the Sustainable Agriculture Project. Phazi was not one of them at least, not officially. But as Victor Themba Jere, the cooperative's Chairperson, explains, their members made a powerful choice: to absorb and apply the knowledge shared with neighboring cooperatives. "We watched closely, adopted best practices, and took action," Jere said. "Now, we produce and sell milk every day. That is a big step for us." Their transformation shows that true empowerment does not always require direct investment, it requires exposure, openness, and a willingness to act.

## Savings, strength, and small victories

One of the key pillars of Phazi's growth has been their Village Savings and Loan (VSL) group, a grassroots financial model that has helped sustain not only the cooperative's operations but also the daily needs of its members. "Through the VSL, we are now able to buy fertilizer, pay school fees, and support our families," Jere shared. "Before, these things were out of reach. Now, they are part of our everyday life." These small victories, once unimaginable, are now milestones of resilience and self-reliance. Construction of a milk bulking center, a critical piece of infrastructure will allow them to store, cool, and market their milk more efficiently. Currently, they produce about 8 litres of milk per day, a modest figure, but one they see as just the beginning.







Despite their gains, Phazi is grappling with a challenge many rural farmers face: climate change. Natural bush pasture is disappearing, making it harder to feed cattle. As milk production depends heavily on nutrition, this has limited their daily output. Juliet Phiri, the cooperative's Data Management Treasurer, believes the solution lies in hybrid cattle breeds. "Local breeds give too little. We need hybrid cows that produce more milk, grow faster, and bring better returns," she explains. "With the right support, we can grow our impact and income quickly."

Founded in 2016 with 51 members, including just 10 women and five youths, Phazi has since grown to 66 members, now boasting a much more balanced and inclusive membership: 24 men, 25 women and 17 youths. This shift reflects the cooperative's commitment to gender inclusion and youth engagement, aligning with broader national and global goals for sustainable agriculture and inclusive rural development.

Phazi Dairy Cattle Cooperative proves something essential: you do not need to be in the front row to hear the lesson or to rise from it. By learning from others, embracing financial literacy, and partnering where possible, they have moved from near invisibility to daily milk production, infrastructure development, and improved household incomes. Their journey is a blueprint for how rural cooperatives can thrive through initiative, adaptation, and the power of indirect support. "We might not have been chosen," Jere reflects, "but we chose ourselves."





## WORK ONLY WITH TRUSTED AND VETTED PARTNERS OR CONTRACTORS

Conduct due diligence before engaging with third parties to avoid being linked with organizations or individuals that may be involved in illegal activities.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## AVOID ACCEPTING ANONYMOUS OR SUSPICIOUS DONATIONS.

Do not accept donations where the donor refuses to disclose their identity or where the source of funds cannot be explained. Suspicious donations should be declined and flagged for review



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## SCREEN DONORS AND BENEFICIARIES AGAINST NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS LISTS.

Regularly check the names of donors, beneficiaries, and partners against updated sanction lists to avoid engaging prohibited individuals or groups.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## USE OFFICIAL BANKING CHANNELS FOR ALL TRANSFERS, AVOID CASH WHERE POSSIBLE.

Bank transfers create an audit trail that makes funds easier to track, while cash transactions increase the risk of misuse and lack of transparency.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



# WOLREC AMPLIFIES WOMEN'S VOICE

When the Women's Manifesto Movement (WMM) launched its first edition in 2019, critics questioned whether a document could truly shift the deep-rooted gender inequalities that have long shaped Malawian society. Today, the answer is yes, not because every target has been met, but because the movement has transformed promises into measurable progress, introduced accountability mechanisms, and built a coalition that keeps women's rights firmly on Malawi's policy agenda.

Originated by the Women's Legal Resources Centre (WOLREC) Executive Director, Maggie Kathewera Banda, the Women's Manifesto brings together women from diverse cycles who discuss and put together challenges affecting them to be collectively presented to duty-bearers for action. It combines grassroots mobilisation, policy advocacy, monitoring of public commitments, and leadership training.



WOLREC Executive director Maggie Kathewera Banda

Kathewera Banda explains that the Manifesto blueprint serves as a powerful advocacy tool, outlining key demands and priorities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Malawi. Initially, the Manifesto had 11 thematic areas, but now has fifteen, highlighting issues such as women's political participation, economic empowerment, gender-based violence, access to quality education and healthcare, land and property rights, and the need for inclusive governance.

"These are issues that directly affect the lives of women and girls in Malawi," says Kathewera Banda, adding that the second edition of the manifesto now incorporates emerging concerns that have reshaped the gender landscape over the

years. The revised manifesto launched in June 2025 covers additional issues such as Digital Justice, addressing cyberbullying, and ensuring women's empowerment in digital transformation. Other new themes include women and the fight against corruption, access to information, and climate change.

"All this has been made possible through collaboration with various organisations and financial assistance from the UK government's Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), European Union and UN Women," she shares.

The Originator further outlines notable progress made since the launch of the first edition of the Women's Manifesto in 2019. She says: "On the political front, that's where there is some progress. At that time, we were advocating for a gender-balanced Cabinet and there was an improvement. Even Parliament chose a woman as a Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker. We also saw this in public appointments. 'We had a female Secretary to the President and Cabinet and also a female Inspector General of Police. All these appointments came out of the lobbying we had, and we look forward to more in the new administration.'"

But Kathewera Banda, who is also chairperson of the NGO-Gender Coordination Network, said progress has stalled in other areas, including continued cases of violence against women and girls and poor access to justice for women. "This is why we presented the Manifesto to Presidential candidates before the September 16 General Elections to secure their political commitment to the Women's Manifesto and promote gender-responsive governance," says Kathewera Banda.

Dorothy Chiumia, a member of the Women's Manifesto Movement from Mbawemi Women's Organisation in Mzuzu, hints that the Movement has empowered women to speak up when their rights are infringed. "Through this movement, we have gained the confidence to voice out our concerns. In the past, we suffered in silence," she shares. The movement also received accolades from former British High Commissioner to Malawi Fiona Ritchie, who described it as a bold declaration that women's rights are human rights. "This Manifesto is not just a document—it is a call

to action, a tool for accountability, and a blueprint for systemic reforms. When women are empowered, economies grow. When women are included, communities thrive. Gender equality is a catalyst for innovation, productivity, and prosperity, time for change is now," she says.

Dr Grace Mandisa Naledi Pandor, former South African Minister of International Relations and current Chairperson of the Nelson Mandela Foundation hails the Movement, saying it was deeply encouraging to witness women uniting with a shared purpose to advance a common agenda for gender equality and social justice.

During the launch of the manifesto in June, then European Union (EU) Ambassador Rune Skinnnebæk urged Malawi's political parties to study the Women's Manifesto and integrate women's rights and concerns into their policies.

He emphasized the need for a political will and commitment to ensure the manifesto's effectiveness.

In this vein, WOLREC launched the Gender Observatory and Gender Tracker, platforms that aim to monitor, analyse, and report on gender equality and the advancement of women's rights in Malawi. This is a central hub for data, knowledge, and analysis related to gender issues, facilitating evidence-based policymaking and interventions.

According to Kathewera Banda this is a vital milestone in the continued pursuit of gender equality, accountability, and the realisation of the Women's Manifesto in Malawi. The platform will respond to critical questions in line with the 15 thematic areas of the second edition of the Women's Manifesto. All this aligns with WOLREC's vision for a society where women's rights are recognized, protected, and fulfilled.





# TAMBALA CVA

## BAILS OUT LEARNERS AT SAGAWA SCHOOL

Sagawa Primary School, located in the area of Senior Chief Sultan Tambala in Dedza, has faced numerous challenges since its establishment in 2010 as a junior primary school. For years, learners at the school were forced to study under tree shades, making learning nearly impossible during the rainy season. Although World Vision supported the school by constructing some buildings, many learners continued to attend classes outdoors due to limited classroom space. “Frankly speaking, World Vision has been very helpful in supporting this school. The organization constructed a classroom block around 2019, which improved the learning environment for some learners. However, others still had to learn under trees,” said Stanley Mtama, Deputy Head Teacher at Sagawa School. The introduction of the Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) group in the area brought new hope to the school. Chaired by Ayami Soda, the CVA recently facilitated the completion of a classroom block that had been abandoned under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

Mtama confirmed the construction of the block but noted that the project had stalled due to misunderstandings with the area’s Member of Parliament. “That block was our ultimate hope to ensure no pupil would have to learn under a tree at

Sagawa School. We were dismayed when the project came to a halt due to disagreements,” Mtama explained. Through an interface meeting, the CVA committee engaged duty bearers to resolve the conflict. Today, the block is complete and now accommodates Grade 6 learners. Thirteen-year-old Mariam, a Grade 6 student and aspiring medical doctor, expressed her joy at finally learning in a proper classroom.

“I used to learn in a shack built by our school committee. It would collapse during heavy rains, and I dreaded coming to school during the rainy season. But now that the classroom is finished, I’m happy because I can learn in a safe and proper structure,” said Mariam. Mtama praised the CVA’s advocacy efforts, describing them as a lasting legacy that will continue to benefit the community even after World Vision phases out its support in Chitundu. “We are grateful that World Vision is a strong development partner in this community, but they won’t be here forever. With CVA, we are hopeful that things won’t be so difficult, as they have a strong advocacy model that can bring much-needed change,” he added. In the 2024/2025 academic year, Sagawa Primary School has a total enrollment of 605 learners—331 girls and 274 boys.



*Mariam in class with her friends*

# RAISING THE BAR

## MALAWI'S 2025 NGO GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE SUMMIT

The shores of Lake Malawi shimmered under the December sun as Sunbird Nkopola Lodge in Mangochi became the stage for one of the most defining gatherings in Malawi's civil society calendar. The 2025 NGO Governance and Compliance Leadership Summit, organized under the theme "Strengthening NGO Leadership for Compliance, Sustainability, and National Impact," was no ordinary meeting. It was a moment of reckoning, a chance for NGOs to confront their governance challenges and chart a new course toward accountability, sustainability, and national impact. Over the one and half days, 149 participants representing 94 NGOs filled the conference hall, their conversations weaving together stories of struggle, resilience, and hope. The atmosphere was charged with urgency: only 61% of registered NGOs had complied with reporting requirements, and fewer than 60% held valid licenses. The numbers told a sobering story, but the summit promised solutions.

Principal Secretary- Administration in the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, all were hosted by the NGORA CEO. Their attendance underscored the summit's national importance, signalling that the government was not just watching but walking alongside NGOs in this journey.



*Summit participants following the presenters with keen interest*



*A cross-section of participants attentively following the summit proceedings.*

### The Opening That Set the Tone

The summit was officially opened by the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Hon. Mary Navitcha, MP. Standing before the delegates, she painted a vivid picture: "An NGO without strong governance is like a canoe without a paddle it may float, but it cannot move forward." Her metaphor, delivered against the backdrop of Lake Malawi itself, resonated deeply. It was a reminder that governance is not paperwork; it is the force that propels organizations toward impact. Her words were echoed and reinforced by the presence of the Solicitor General PS for Justice Ms Getrude Hiwa, SC, the Principal Secretary in the OPC responsible for good Governance, and the

### Voices of Wisdom

The summit's intellectual depth came from seasoned voices. Dr. Clifford Kuyokwa, who spoke on effective board management and also challenged participants to rethink leadership ethics and succession planning, warned that without deliberate strategies, NGOs risked stagnation. Dr. Magolowondo spoke passionately about Governance structures and compliance, financial governance and transparency as well as managing governance risks in a changing operating environment he further urged NGOs to embrace community ownership and indigenous knowledge as the bedrock of sustainability. Together, their insights pushed the conversation beyond compliance into the realm of transformation.

### Learning, Sharing, and Reimagining

The program unfolded like a tapestry of ideas. Plenary sessions and breakout workshops addressed a range of topics, including financial stewardship, foreign exchange compliance, legal obligations under the NGO Act, taxation, and duty exemptions. Regulators like the Malawi Revenue Authority, the Reserve Bank of Malawi, and the Financial Intelligence Authority joined hands with NGOs, creating a rare space where rules met





NGORA CEO Dr Felix Lombe receives a dummy cheque from Centenary Bank officers

reality. There were sessions on resource mobilization, exploring innovative pathways such as social enterprise and impact investment. Dialogues on MW2063 alignment reminded participants that NGOs are not parallel actors but partners in Malawi's national vision. And in the corridors, over coffee and lakeside walks, new alliances were born, government officials, donors, and NGO leaders finding common ground.

## The Promise of Change

By the close of the summit, the mood had shifted from concern to commitment. Delegates left with clearer strategies: stronger boards, better compliance, improved resource mobilization, and deeper alignment with MW2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More importantly, there was renewed trust between regulators and implementers, a recognition that both sides must paddle the canoe together if Malawi is to move forward.

## A Defining Moment

The 2025 NGO Summit was not just another conference. It was a story of awakening, told through figures that revealed the gaps, and personalities whose voices carried the weight of change. With 149 participants, 94 NGOs, and the presence of leaders like the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare, Hon. Mary Navitcha MP, Principal Secretaries for Justice, Gender, and OPC, including key speakers Dr. Clifford Kuyokwa, and Dr. Magolowondo, the summit became a landmark in Malawi's civil society journey. As the sun set over Lake Malawi, one thing was clear: the canoe had found its paddle. And with it, Malawi's NGOs were ready to steer toward a future of credibility, transparency, and impact.

## Corporate partners support the summit

The summit was fully supported through participants' fees; however, we were honored to receive additional contributions from two esteemed corporate partners. NBS Bank generously provided K10 million, while Centenary Bank contributed K3 million. These commitments reflect their dedication to strengthening accountability and fostering collaboration with the NGO sector. NGORA extends its sincere gratitude to these valued partners for their unwavering support.



Ngora Staff ready to serve delegates with diligence and professionalism



### Regulations by the Minister The Minister may issue rules on:

- International NGO operations
- Registration fees and forms
- Reporting procedures
- Enforcement and penalties

### NGORA Act Summary

- NGOs must be non-profit, public-serving, and non-political
- Registration with NGORA is mandatory
- CONGOMA is the officially designated coordinating body
- Annual reporting is required
- Non-compliance leads to penalties, deregistration, or imprisonment
- The Act empowers NGORA to regulate, support, and guide NGO operations



<https://myngo.ngora.mw/>

### Know the Law, Protect Your Work!

This guide is just a simplified summary. For full appreciation of your duties and rights under the **NGO Act**, please take time to read the full policy. It contains more detailed guidance that every NGO should know. When in doubt, don't hesitate to reach out to the **NGO Regulatory Authority, CONGOMA**, or your **local District Council office**.

**Let's build a stronger, more transparent  
NGO sector in Malawi together.**



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## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

## Understanding the NGO Legal Framework in Malawi

### What is the NGO Act?

The Non-Governmental Organizations Act was enacted in 2001 and revised in 2017 and 2022. It regulates the formation, registration, operation, and monitoring of NGOs in Malawi. The law is administered by the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA).

### Purpose of the Act

- Promote accountability, transparency, and public benefit
- Facilitate collaboration between NGOs and government
- Prevent misuse of NGO resources
- Encourage NGOs to uphold human rights and integrity

### Who Can Register as an NGO?

#### An eligible NGO must:

- Have a clear written constitution
- Operate independently of government control
- Be non-profit and focused on public interest
- Be non-political, non-religious, and not act as a club, trade union, or political party
- Be inclusive, treating all people fairly
- Be governed by a board or committee

### Registration Process

#### To register with NGORA, submit:

- Certified copy of the constitution
- Certificate of Incorporation
- Names and positions of trustees/directors (minimum two must be Malawians)
- Activity plan
- Approval or MoU from the relevant government ministry
- Proof of payment of registration fees
- Declaration of non-involvement in politics
- Information on funding sources, physical/postal address, contact info
- Auditor's name and address
- Latest audited financials and annual report (if available)

### Certificate of Registration

Issued upon approval. Confirms the NGO is a legal entity, free to operate and raise funds throughout Malawi.

### Reporting Requirements

#### All registered NGOs must:

- Submit audited financial statements and activity reports annually
  - Notify NGORA of changes in:
    - o Trustees/directors/auditors
    - o Constitution (within 60 days)
  - Disclose funding sources
  - Provide additional information upon request
- Failure to report may lead to penalties or deregistration.**

### Designation of Bodies

The Minister officially designates **CONGOMA** (Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi) as the coordinating body for NGOs. **CONGOMA** represents and promotes the collective interests of NGOs in Malawi and advocates for a favorable working environment.

### Deregistration and Suspension

#### NGORA may cancel/suspend registration if:

- NGO stops operating or deviates from its stated purpose
- NGO engages in political activities or violates the Act
- NGOs must be given 30 days' notice with a chance to respond before action is taken.

### Offences and Penalties

- Fine: Up to **K5,000,000** or the value of illegal gain (whichever is higher)
- Individuals may face up to **2 years in prison**, unless they prove:
  - Lack of knowledge
  - Non-negligence
  - Preventive actions taken



# STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY:

## World Vision Malawi Hosts NGORA and Chitipa District Council in Kameme

In a bold stride toward deepening transparency and accountability in community development, World Vision Malawi (WVM) recently convened a strategic engagement in Kameme Area Program, Chitipa District. The initiative brought together various stakeholders from the Chitipa District Council, including officers from Water, Education, Agriculture, Gender and Social Welfare, Disability, and civil society networks to witness firsthand the impact of WVM's multifaceted interventions. Among those who were invited was the Regulator of NGOs in Malawi, the NGO Regulatory Authority which was represented by the Registration and Reporting Manager, Mr Thokozani Chibwana and the Senior Monitoring and Analysis Officer, Miss Pilirani Munkha. As the regulator, NGORA plays a pivotal role in ensuring that NGOs register and report their activities and uphold the principle that every donor dollar must translate into tangible public benefit.



### A Tour of Duty: From Theory to Tangible Impact

World Vision Malawi led the delegation on an immersive tour of its flagship projects in education, food security, child sponsorship, improved livelihood and economic empowerment and advocacy. The visit was more than ceremonial; it was a living classroom. Community members proudly showcased the fruits of their collaboration with WVM, presenting a vibrant array of agricultural products, including tomatoes, onions, rice, meat and meat products, and natural honey. Their articulate testimonies reflected a deep understanding of development processes and a strong sense of ownership. This grassroots demonstration underscored the power of participatory development. It was a moment of affirmation that when communities are engaged

meaningfully, they become custodians of progress, ready to sustain gains long after project transitions.

### NGORA's Compliance Call: Building a Culture of Responsibility

Seizing the opportunity, NGORA addressed council members and civil society leaders on critical compliance matters. The regulator emphasized the legal requirement for NGOs to register before commencing operations and the importance of filing regular reports. These measures, NGORA stressed, are not bureaucratic hurdles but essential safeguards to ensure transparency, coordination, and optimal use of donor resources. Moreover, NGORA encouraged community members to actively participate in development initiatives and embrace them as their own. This call to action resonated with the spirit of sustainability and local stewardship.

### Learning from the Ground

For NGORA, the field visit was a valuable learning experience. It provided a rare opportunity to correlate the contents of NGO reports with the realities on the ground. This alignment between documentation and lived impact is crucial for effective regulation and sector-wide learning.

### A Model Worth Emulating

World Vision Malawi's approach, grounded in openness, collaboration, and community empowerment, sets a commendable precedent. It demonstrates how NGOs can foster trust and accountability by inviting regulators and stakeholders into their operational spaces. This model enhances transparency and builds a shared understanding of development work. As Malawi continues to champion inclusive and accountable development, initiatives like this offer a blueprint for balancing theory with practice, policy with people, and regulation with results.



*Ngora official addressing the community members*



## BE CAUTIOUS WITH FOREIGN DONATIONS, ESPECIALLY FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES.

Verify the origin and legitimacy of foreign contributions to avoid risks tied to cross-border money laundering or terrorist financing.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## DOCUMENT THE SOURCE AND USE OF ALL FUNDS RECEIVED

Maintain records showing where funds came from and how they were spent. This strengthens accountability to donors, regulators, and the public.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## ENGAGE EXTERNAL AUDITORS TO REVIEW YOUR ACCOUNTS ANNUALLY.

Independent audits build trust, improve governance, and help identify potential gaps in financial management systems.



#Anti Money Laundering  
#Combating Financing of Terrorism



## ENSURE TRANSPARENCY IN PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAINS

Use competitive and fair procurement processes, document supplier vetting, and monitor contracts to prevent fraud or collusion.



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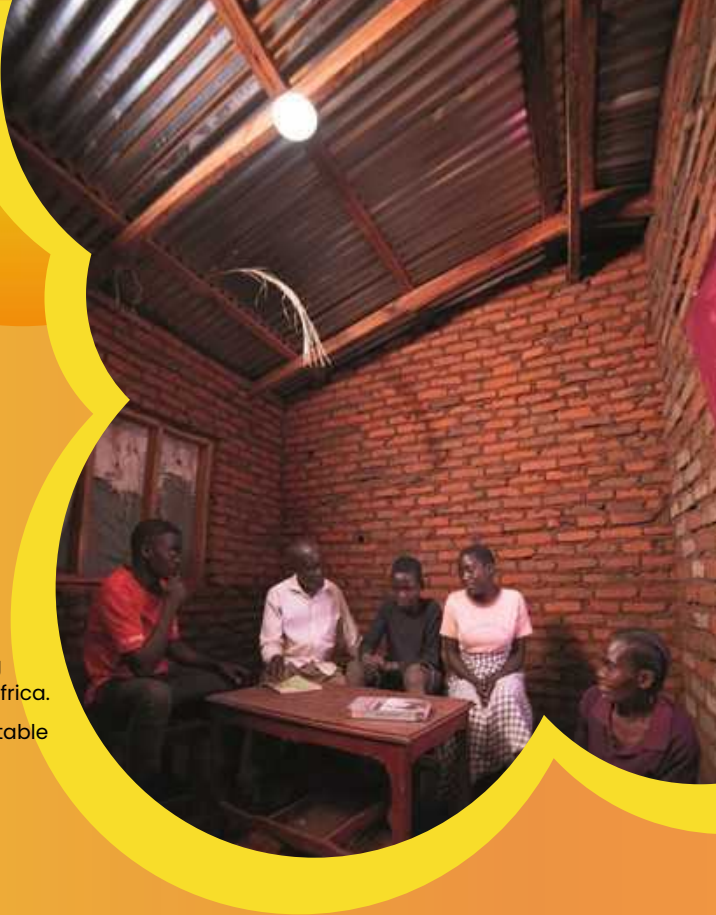


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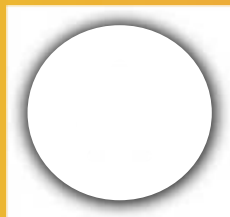
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