

Annual Report



**Exploring our joint
work for
2017 and 2018**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We celebrate these achievements due various supports from the wider community. We acknowledge the support from the project staff and volunteers. Staff have been investing their expertise, time at community level sharing what they know best with community volunteers who were carefully selected to address the identified challenges affecting poor people in the rural areas of Blantyre and Mulanje districts .

All these efforts have been possible with both financial, material and technical support from the wider supporters including, individual community, and business entity, national and international donors.

Below is the display of supporters who have contributed for towards our work!!



LOSKA



ENTERPRISE

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Development Organization*

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Words from CHICOSUDO Board Chair

Malawi as the poorest country in the World, poverty, hunger, epidemics and many other calamities are on the face of lowest income households. These challenges cannot be addressed by one entity, **but joint efforts can**. In this report, we have explored on how CHICOSUDO and its partner organizations have done in addressing challenges in areas we thought to be important throughout this year ending (July 2017 to June 2018).

Chitani Community Sustainable Development Organizations aims at improving the living standards of poor people in Malawi by building their capacities to enable them address issues affecting their lives. Our focus includes: Education, Food Security, Climate Change, HIV and AIDS, Human Rights, Gender and Women Empowerment.

CHICOSUDO reached the poorest people on the ground including - women, men, orphans and vulnerable children, people living with HIV and AIDS in Blantyre and Mulanje. Our approaches have brought sustainable changes in the lives of marginalized people and communities through empowerment and reinforcement of customary laws that protect women and girl's rights, reduce poverty and inequalities, addressing malnutrition and hunger.

It's the belief of CHICOSUDO that; poverty, hunger, illiteracy and injustice cannot be addressed by the outsiders since these efforts cannot be sustainable. But the promising efforts have to start by empowering marginalized people to gain self-confidence thereby enabling them take active their roles in addressing issues affecting their lives and being supported by outsider efforts. Therefore, the partnership and business community used this bottom up approach.

We appreciate the work of our staff, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders on the ground who have enabled us meet and address challenges affecting poor people on the ground in the two districts of Blantyre and Mulanje. Therefore, in this year report with our community, stakeholders made some contributions relevant, effective, sustainable, innovative, and cost effective.

These are the highlights:

Almost 1,550 Orphans and vulnerable children reported access to early childhood education, and received relief support to attain their primary and secondary school.

Almost 7,391 Parents reported the improvements in child care, sanitation and hygiene at home and at the Community Based Child Care Centers.

More than 8,311 Communities were mobilized by traditional leaders and Community Based Volunteers to modify harmful cultural practices and reinforcement of customary laws that protect women's and girls' rights.

Almost 4,013 Women and girls reported the sense of protection in their homes.

About 800 Survivors of domestic violence reported the improved economic status through village savings loans initiative.

6000 people have improved access to Water, sanitation and hygiene services and are practicing good hygiene services in their communities.

Over 6,000 small scale farmers have improved food security and nutrition status in their households through integrated crop and animal husbandry interventions.

In the southern region district, the problems are almost the same. Major challenges included: Poverty, HIV and AIDS, malnutrition, hunger, illiteracy and injustice have been on the face of poor people, where women, girls and children being much vulnerable. Though this is a burden of being bread winners of their families when their

husbands have died, divorced or immigrated to towns and neighboring countries in search for work. Therefore, that's where our core business was to change things for the better through community based approach.

It is our commitment to do all our work by uprooting the causes with the belief that to end poverty, improving people's economic status, social, addressing hunger, malnutrition, and human rights must be respected and concerned people have to be involved in the process, with a focus on women's rights. We are celebrating throughout from this report.

From the following pages, you will find the outline of how the work was done. Adding to that, we have included financial support and solidarity so generously given by our dedicated supporters that made the difference.

Therefore, we give our all heartfelt thanks to all.

MRS F. Chikwakwa

**Miss Fanny Chikwakwa
CHICOSUDO Board Chair**

AREAS OF FOCUS DURING THE YEAR 2017/2018

1. Early Childhood Development

2017 to 2019
CHICOSUDO and
FOHOP supported
387 orphans and
vulnerable children
from 3 to 5 years old
to attain early
childhood,
development and
nutrition through 5
Community Based
Child Care Centers.
At the same time,
1,391 parents
surrounding the
CBCCs were
supported to improve
child care in their
homes, at the CBCCs
and 6780 households
reported good
improvement in
sanitation and
hygiene.



CHICOSUDO supported 387 orphans and vulnerable children by providing early childhood education and nutritious food. The program targeted children of 3 to 5 years who were enrolled in 5 CBCCs which were established in Traditional Authority Kapeeni in Blantyre. These children benefited from nutritious porridge provided by parenting committee at least once a day. Through this program many children who were in poor health, improved their health since the food was nutritious. All Community Based Child Care Centers have reported the increase in attendance for children with 2 % compared to 2016 to 2017. The Children at the Community Based Child Care Centers showed good performances in languages, plays, expressive arts, life skills, mathematics and the use of sanitation facilities at the CBCC.

Water sanitation and hygiene

As the learning center, WASH program was integrated where over 13,000 households surrounding CBCCs benefited from outreach activities. These empowered parents and guardians gained knowledge and adopted good behaviors towards promoting school, household's sanitation and hygiene. At least each household ensured the presence of latrines, hand washing facilities for washing hands at critical times.

School construction for early childhood development

CHICOSUDO facilitated the construction of five Community Based Child Care Centers at Pitala, Maluwa. Five classroom blocks, kitchens, 2 holed pit latrines, and hand washing facilities for sanitation and hygiene in all centers. These have enabled over 387 orphans and vulnerable children from 3 to 6 years from surrounding villages to attain early childhood development. These Centers have provided space for older orphans and vulnerable children who are in primary schools and Community Day Secondary Schools to find places for evening classes and recreation centers. Lastly, the centers have created space for village savings loans groups as the meeting place for women empowerment.

Parenting and Education

The year ending 2018 to 2019, CHICOSUDO and FOHOP supported 13,391 parents surrounding 12 CBCCs who have reported the improvement in child care, home sanitation and hygiene. Over 25% of these parents reported the reduction of cases of water borne diseases among under five children. These parents have also reached at least 4 households per parent in surrounding villages. The reached households, parents have reported the adoption of good practices where by each household has a pit latrine and hand washing facilities for sanitation and hygiene.



*Pic on the **left**: Demonstration of hand washing facility at Group village head Kumponda in Blantyre. (Household sanitation and hygiene) visitors from Save the Children –project Malawi 2*



*Pic on the **right**: Training of caregivers and parents on Child care in Dowa*

2. Traditional leaders championing in domestic violence and HIV prevention

In 2017 to 2018, CHICOSUDO empowered 180 traditional leaders and 220 community based volunteers who mobilized 8,311 communities to support the modification of harmful cultural and religious norms that promoted violence against women and girls including early and forced marriages, raised the voices of women and girls, advocate for access to legal and sexual reproductive health services.



Community dialogue in Mulanje

The program was scaled up based on the results from the pilot project in Traditional Authority Kapeni, Blantyre. Later the project was expanded into five Traditional Authorities; Kapeni in Blantyre, district southern region, Mponela in Dowa central region, empowered 80 traditional leaders after working hand in hand with community based volunteers, they reported to be champions after successfully mobilized 8,311 communities in their respective villages and supported in the reinforcement of customary laws to protect women's and girls' rights. Over 1, 031 women and girls reported the sense of protection in their respective homes.

Referral network for promoting women's and girls' rights access to legal and health service.

Referral networks were reinforced between communities with service providers such as; health, clinics, local police-victim support unit, one stop centers, HIV Testing and Counseling, ART providers joining hands in supporting the survivors of domestic violence. At least 5988 Clients referred and 5577 reported access to services.

Men as protector's campaign to protect women and girl's rights

CHICOSUDO and its partners at community level, mobilized 5000 men formed 250 clubs with 12,000 members to prevent domestic violence so that they could promote women's and girl's rights by reducing domestic violence.

Modification of harmful cultural practices and reinforcement of customary laws to protect women and girls' rights

Traditional leaders from the targeted Traditional Authorities mobilized 35,311 communities in their respective villages through community dialogues, awareness meetings, trainings, and workshops to modify cultural practices which included: **"wife exchange"** (where men were exchanging their wives without the concerts of their wives. After the realization of men on sexual reproductive health rights of women and girls, they have stopped wife exchanging), **"Early and forced marriages for young girls"**. Under these, traditional leaders reinforced customary laws where any parent or guardian forcing their young girl child getting married to older men, the family is punished and the new family abolished by traditional leaders. This has become possible with support from customary laws set by traditional leaders in conjunction with community members. **"Death cleansing"** a man was being hired to do sexual cleansing with a woman of the deceased man by doing sex intercourse with her for several days without using condoms currently they are using herbs instead of forcing the widow to have unprotected sexual intercourse with the hired man.



Pic 1 to the left:

*Man as protector
with his wife at
Mlambe Mission
Hospital in Blantyre*

Pic 2 to the right:

*Men discussing
how they can
protect women and
children from
malnutrition in
Blantyre*



Group Village Helema in Blantyre

Shares what customary Laws she has reinforced that promotes women's and girls' rights. They all agreed to modify harmful cultural practices, values and beliefs

3. Securing Livelihood and Action on Climate Change (SLACC)



The year ending 2018 CHICOSUDO supported 6,015 small scale farmers through clusters in Traditional Authority Kapeni-Blantyre district, by supporting them in their farming activities so that they should effectively, sufficiently and obtain improved food security for their families, earn extra cash by selling their products and surplus from their yield production on the government recognized markets.



Almost 6,015 small scale farmers were empowered by offering them access to an organized Cluster Life including elements of training sessions, model farming, field visits, low cost technical solutions, technical assistance, and exchange of collectively gained experiences. 75% of small scale farmers were able to write crop budget which assisted them envisioning about what to grow, how to grow, how much to invest, how much is expected and any challenging focuses; unlike before the training when farmers were just growing their crops without knowing whether they would make profit or loss.

Through the clusters, farmers were provided the spaces for forums to discuss socio economic issues affecting their lives thereby promoting securing of common livelihoods. 45% of women were empowered to take leading roles in community development processes.

Introduction of firewood saving stove construction has brought a good effect to the environment because since 70% of farmers who adopted, use few firewood as fuel compared to normal cooking structures which demanded double the quantity of firewood. Not only that, but also less labor and time of fetching firewood by women have been positively affected since apart from little used firewood, other materials like saw dust, maize and rice husks are being used.



Almost 90% of farmers gained knowledge of practicing environmentally friendly farming methods, which have a positive impact on the environment. The project has also resulted into making stake holders understand more and more about how the small scale farmers' lives can be transformed better by the farmers themselves.

The result was that 85% of the farmers acquired skills to carry out a sustainable and varied agricultural production, thus being able to improve their economy, better their livelihoods and gain knowledge to break new ground for themselves and their families. Almost 55% of the targeted farmers were diversifying their crops, as the result, they reported less vulnerable to variations in weather and market

Lessons Learnt



- Community Based Child Care Centers have greater roles in strengthening community capacity in supporting orphans and vulnerable children.
- Early Childhood programs have potential in reducing malnutrition among orphans and vulnerable children of under five years including their mothers, lactating mothers and pregnant women.
- CBCCS programs help in transforming the community since it brings water sanitation and hygiene.
- CBCC creates job opportunities among the caregivers who went to schools but they don't have access to job.
- CBCC structures provides space for the older children for after school study, recreation center and community development.

- Building the capacity of traditional leaders, CBOs, FBOs and other influential leaders to take the lead in DV and HIV prevention at the community level is the key for project success.
- Community dialogues have power to make differences, opportunities to strengthen the capacity of implementing organization.
- Training farmers in firewood saving stove construction has brought a good effect to the environment because there is always reduction of firewood to be used as fuel compared to normal cooking structures which demand double the quantity of firewood. Not only that, but also less labor and time of fetching firewood by women has been positively affected since apart from little used firewood, other materials like saw dust, maize and rice husks are being used.
- Mobilization of community members into farmers' clusters has proved to be vital in poverty reduction and empowerment of marginalized groups at community level.
- Training and demonstration of conservation agriculture provided farmers with new technologies and became very much interested in practicing it after they had learnt and they have also grown in knowledge of practicing environmentally friendly farming methods, which have a positive impact on the environment.

CHALLENGES

- Drop out of caregivers and community based volunteers due to low motivation. It was solved by intensive meetings with caregivers and local leaders where they understood their role and became satisfactory.
- Poor learning environment for children in the CBCCs (they learn under trees, lack of food, poor sanitation facilities). Motivation events like songs and games enabled the children to focus on the lesson.
- Low involvement of community health service providers.
- The project conducted stakeholders' meetings lobbying for support of the project activities which became fruitful later on.
- Resistance in modification of cultural and religious practices by other traditional and religious leaders. Sensitization meetings were carried out at village levels where beneficiaries understood the concept and supported.
- There were many community members who were interested to be direct beneficiaries of the program but were restricted due to resources.
- These were encouraged to support the project and some would be included in the following project interventions.
- Some trainings took more time than expected due to the level of strangeness of the topics. This was solved by changing of training periods.
- Climate change that affected crop production. Garden farming was introduced to for beneficiaries to produce food during the dry season.

PLANS FOR NEXT THREE YEARS

According to our progress, lessons learnt and challenges encountered, we have taken these as our basis for the way forward. We have developed the following as our strategies to address the challenges and build our capacities to continue doing our best in addressing challenges affecting poor people on the ground. The following are the plans of action in the next three years 2016 to 2019.

- Youth empowerment through vocational skill training.
- Women empowerment through capacity building.
- Implement projects aimed at improving food security and Nutrition.
- Promote and protect the rights of girls.
- Implement projects aimed at improving access to clean water, Sanitation and hygiene
- Preventing the deterioration of services delivered by 4 Community-based Childcare Centers (CBCCs) in meeting the critical needs of the most vulnerable children of 3 to 6 years' infants, children under 5 and people living with HIV and AIDS in Malawi.
- To influence the communities around local hills in Mulanje, to manage their natural resources through mobilizing and building the capacity of the community in tree planting, soil and water conservation thereby reducing climate change, land degradation and conservation and biodiversity.