



# SUCCESS STORIES

VOLUME 02



*A loving home for every child*

Supported by  **Norad**

 **SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
NORWAY**

# VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



## OUR VISION

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.



## OUR MISSION

We build families for children in need, we help them shape their own futures and we share in the development of their communities.



## OUR VALUES

- Courage : We take action
- Commitment : We keep our promises
- Trust : We believe in each other
- Accountability : We are reliable partners



# CONTENTS

1.	STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR .....	01
2.	A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD .....	02
3.	AN ENGINEER IN THE MAKING .....	03
4.	A DREAM COME TRUE .....	04
5.	FASTONI MAGUMBI SHARES HIS EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY.....	06
6.	CHIKONDI CHOLINGA CBO, DARING AN EXTRA MILE .....	07
7.	CHARITY THE HAIR DRESSER .....	08
8.	THE BEAUTY OF HARD WORK, MADALITSO ATTAINS SELF RELIANCE .....	09
9.	ATTAINING SELF RELIANCE THROUGH POULTRY FARMING .....	11
10.	PIGGERY AIDS BENITOS FAMILY TO SELF RELIANCE .....	12
11.	THE HOUSE THAT GAVE PAULINE AND HER CHILDREN DIGNITY .....	13
12.	TACKLING POVERTY THROUGH TAILORING .....	15
13.	VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS, A TOOL FOR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE .....	17
14.	DEFYING THE GENDER STEREOTYPES; WELDING FOR A PURPOSE .....	18
15.	NEW FACE AT MAKANDE MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE RESOURCE CENTRE .....	19
16.	MOTHER GROUPS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS .....	20
17.	MWANAMAKOKO RISES, 3 NEW CLASSROOM BLOCK, 10 TOILETS .....	21
18.	TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS EASES EDUCATION DELIVERY AT ZOZOZOLO CDSS .....	23
19.	A TIMELY DONATION FOR NAKAZIMU PRIMARY SCHOOL .....	25
20.	IMPROVING LEARNERS PERFORMANCE THROUGH LIBRARY INNOVATION .....	26
21.	FINALLY SUZEN HAS A HOME .....	27
22.	RISING IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR A GOOD CAUSE .....	28
23.	PARENTING TRAINING REDUCES CHILD ABUSE CASES .....	29
24.	UNITED IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES .....	30
25.	A PEER EDUCATOR WITH A CAUSE .....	31
26.	SOS CHILDRENS VILLAGES CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY.....	32
27.	STRONG FAMILIES FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE .....	33



# STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

**As SOS Children's Villages Malawi, our target group are children who have lost parental care and children who are at risk of losing parental care.**

## Dear Friends

*When I step back for a moment and consider all that you are doing to help children and their families by fighting the injustice of poverty, I am humbled by the scale of it. Regardless of the challenges that we are facing today, because of your untiring support, together we have managed to create the successes that we are highlighting today which are just a drop of what is happening on the ground in our programmes in Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Blantyre and Ngabu.*

*The year 2018 has been an exciting year in alternative care and we have seen a number of childcare reforms regarding the way programmes for orphaned and vulnerable children should be designed in Malawi. Government's direction is to have more children supported in their communities through kinship care or foster care and improve prevention of family separation to let children grow in their family of origin.*

*As SOS Children's Villages Malawi we are adapting our response to what is most appropriate to meet each child's particular*

*care needs, and to be in line with the current government policy shift. As such, we are exploring a range of care options as guided by the UN guidelines on alternative care of children (UNGL), which include early reintegration of children to their families of origin, foster care as well as increasing our investment in prevention of family separation through implementing the Family Strengthening Programme.*

*Where interventions directed towards children, the families and the communities such as educational support, house improvement, refurbishing school blocks support and advocacy, are implemented to ensure that children are not separated from their families.*

*We however still have a long way to go with the with over 1.5 million children in Malawi orphaned and still requiring our assistance in ensuring that they have proper care and support. However, I am optimistic that together with others we will equally play a part in reaching out to the orphaned and vulnerable children without adequate care.*

*To my fellow colleagues who are dedicated and work tirelessly and all those that support us in numerous ways, thank you for believing SOS Children's Villages cause and for turning our vision into a reality. Enjoy our second compilation of stories we hope you find these stories engaging, informative and educative. May they also demonstrate to the duty bearers the impact generated from such programmes in terms of improving the health, socio economic status as well as literacy levels of children, families and communities for a possible replica in other communities across the country.*

*Thank you and happy reading,*

**Smart Namagonya  
National Director**



# A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

Determined Andisen

Located in the rural area of Lilongwe in Traditional Authority Chadza, Mkhomo Primary School is one of the schools that broke a record in 2014 for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE). It Produced Andsen Chipangano, who excelled among other students and was selected to Likuni Boys Secondary School in 2015.

As a young boy, Andsen never gave up on himself or his education despite growing up in abject poverty. He was always determined to pursue his education by studying hard and reaped the benefits of his sweat by passing with flying colors in his Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). But the road was not all that rosy for young Andsen.

“My pursuit for education was not easy because my parents went through financial difficulties most of the times. As such, they could not manage to provide me with all necessary learning materials such as text books, pens, and a school uniform” Andsen recalled.

Despite going through that rough patch, Andsen defied the odds by achieving outstanding results in his MSCE.

The young man recounts how SOS Children's Villages Malawi, through its Family Strengthening Programme intervened with the educational support when he was at the verge of dropping out of school. “ SOS Children's Villages Malawi started supporting me with tuition fees, text books, pens and a

school uniform and other school related materials” he said.

It is every parent's dream to see his/ her child succeed in life and become independent. Andsen's mother, Matilda Chipangano, also harbored her own dream for his son.

Her toil and joy to make sure her son succeed in life and education was her everyday motivation. She could walk miles to trade her agricultural produce to see her son in school.

“I used to sell vegetables, maize, cassava and groundnuts to make sure Andsen had the few necessary materials I could afford for his primary education. But when he was selected to Likuni Boys Secondary School, it became difficult for me to support him. The proceeds from the crops were not enough to cater for his secondary education,” explains Andsen's mother.

She added that the family breathed a sigh of relief when SOS Children's Villages Malawi came in for Andsen's support.

In a community such as Chadza, it is always difficult for a primary school learner to make it to a national secondary school such as Likuni Boys in Malawi given the general lack of learning materials and facilities that often hinder the progress of most children in such schools. But Andsen made it. And his determination at secondary school also saw him soar high by scoring 15 points in 2018 Malawi School Certificate of Education.

Andsen's family and the whole of Chadza area look forward to another landmark achievement of one of their own as they await his possible selection to a public university. It will get sweeter than it currently is for the family and the community.



Andisen's mother at home

# An Engineer

## IN THE MAKING

Lufasi Kennedy of Ngala village Traditional Authority Chadza is an exceptional student. Growing up in the rural setting did not deter him to realize his ambition of achieving great milestones in the educational ladder.

Pursuing his primary school education at the famous foot of Ngala Yapakamwa Hills in TA Chadza Lilongwe was all Lufasi Kennedy knew and experienced during his childhood. Just one session of a career talk from one of the student teachers who came for teaching practice at his school was enough to open his mind and enable him decide on what he wants to do in future. From then he was determined to work hard, achieve best grades and get to best schools ever. The ever cheerful Lufasi says he always wanted to be a good role model in his area in terms of dedication to education.

There was one bottleneck though, Lufasi and five of his siblings were all raised by their mother alone. While she is so determined to

care for all her children, she has several other challenges. Her source of income is not regular as she is just a subsistence farmer whose produce is merely used to feed her children. Such a situation left Lufasi puzzled and even discouraged him a lot.

In 2016, Lufasi got the best news ever. His family was among the families chosen to be beneficiaries in the Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) of SOS Children's Villages Malawi. The organisation, apart from working with the entire family, also started providing educational support to Lufasi. This saw Lufasi receiving school fees, school materials like note books, textbooks, and other requirements at school. His motivation towards school was enhanced and his results after writing the Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) were quite exceptional.

"I have passed through hard times in childhood to get to where I am today, as you rightly know, here in the village there are very limit-

ed sources of finding money. My mother is just a subsistence farmer as such she cannot manage to pay for education for all my siblings and I, let alone feed us." Said Lufasi with mixed emotions.

With his good grades at the MSCE, Lufasi got accepted to further his education with one of the renowned and a constituent college of the University of Malawi (UNIMA) the polytechnic where he is studying for a first degree in Bachelor of Science in Geological Engineering.

"It has been a rough road for me, but here I am, a university student from a rural setting. As a way of showing my gratitude to my community and SOS Children's Villages Malawi for the educational support, I will work hard so that I make them proud. No organisation would love supporting someone who is not determined to achieve better grades. I will surely graduate and be a responsible family man." Said Kennedy Lufasi.



Kennedy outside his classroom at the Polytechnic



Kennedy in his classroom at the Polytechnic

# A DREAM COME TRUE

*“ I am thankful for the support SOS Children Villages Malawi has given me because without them I could not have achieved my dreams of being a visual artist ”*





Matiyasi with some his paintings

Like every young person, Maxson Matiyasi from Nsana Village T/A Tsabango had dreams of becoming a visual artist. He wanted to be able to create life through his artistic work and to make visual arts as his full time job to sustain himself and his family. Nevertheless, losing his parents at tender age shuttered all his dreams. He had no one to support him achieve his long time dream.

The story of Maxson Matiyasi changed when his grandmother was enrolled in the Family Strengthening Programme. Being a caregiver to Maxson and four of his siblings and without any regular income to support the children, his grandmother was deemed fit to be a beneficiary for the SOS Children's Villages Malawi Family Strengthening Programme by the Tsabango Community Task Force (CTF).

Through the Family strengthening Programme, Maxson got all the educational support regarding his secondary education. After finishing his secondary education, he passed, but his grades were not good enough for university education.

This did not deter his longtime dream of studying visual arts. After discussions with

the SOS Children Villages Field Officers, they assured him that there were other options even after failing to study in the university. He opted for job shadowing through attaching him with an arts studio so that he can get trained from there. True to the plan, he was attached at the Malabvi Arts Studio in Lilongwe in February, 2017.

Two years into his training, he has become an ardent master of his trade, his paintings are fondly loved by local and international clients who visit the arts studio. The studio manager loves his dedication and hardworking this, he has been offered a part time job at the gallery.

"I am thankful for the support SOS Children Villages Malawi has given me because without them I could not have achieved my dreams of being a visual artist", said Maxson.

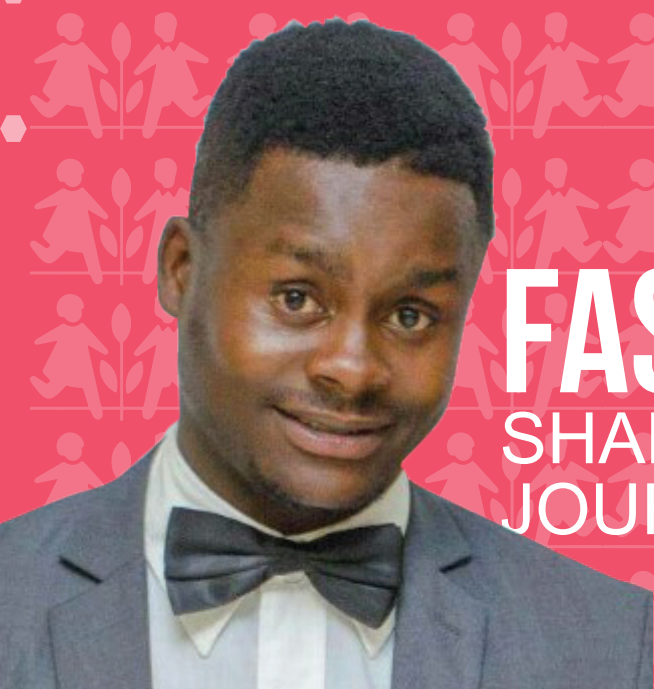
Zachariah Phiri is the teacher and owner of Malabvi Arts studio who said that Maxson is one of the students who has demonstrated great potential in visual arts. His portraits are quite outstanding. "When I am not in the Studio I make sure that he is in charge of the studio because he is the most trust worthy and humble students here", he said.

Since he started, training at Malabvi Arts Studio Maxson Matiyasi has attended more than two painting galleries and has managed to sell four of his paintings at a higher price of 70,000 (\$93). He uses his money to support his siblings and grandmother. He is mostly referred to as a role model when orienting new students that are studying at the studio.



Matiyasi finalising his painting





# FASTONI MAGUMBI SHARES HIS EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Fastoni Magumbi, of Machinjiri in Blantyre, vividly remembers how difficult his life and that of his 3 siblings were after the loss of their mother in 2006. His father, the only parental figure left then, failed to take up the responsibility of taking care of his children, and went away to a place no one knows. The only option left for him and his sister was to live with their grandfather who worked as a bookkeeper for a certain Chinese firm.

“It was not easy for my grandfather to raise us all. He was visibly trying hard to make ends meet, but you know how demanding it becomes to provide for a big extended family of over six people, three were my siblings and the other two were my nieces. I almost dropped out of school, it was disheartening to learn that despite my grandfather working hard for us, things were not surely adding up, he was struggling to provide us all with the required necessities both at home and at school,” explains Fastoni.

In September, 2008, Fastoni’s family was recommended for enrollment in the Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) which is a community based programme aimed at building capacity of families so they provide quality care to their children. By then, Faston was learning at Namilango Primary School. Starting from that time, they could receive educational, nutritional and health support from SOS Children’s Villages Malawi and this helped their family a lot.

Three years later, he sat for Primary School Leaving Certificate (PLSCE) and was selected to Chichiri Secondary School. SOS Children’s Villages Malawi continued to provide educational support throughout his secondary school. Fastoni excelled in his studies and did well during his MSCE.



Fastoni making a presentation in class at the NRC

Fastoni was later accepted to study Food and Nutrition at the Natural Resources College. He still got full educational support throughout his college studies.

His life is completely changed. His perspective to life is quite positive. He looks forward to getting employment and to support his relations from the income he will be earning. He applauds the educational support he got from SOS Children’s Villages Malawi for all the achievements he has in his career. He is so proud of his achievements.

Fastoni magumbi receiving an award for passing with good grades in one of the course



# CHIKONDI CHOLINGA CBO; DARING AN EXTRA MILE



Smiling faces of children at Chikondi Cholinga CBO

Imagine meeting 141 shiny and smiley faces of children reciting their alphabetical letters! One place that you find this happening is Chikondi Cholinga Community Based Organization (CBO). This is a deliberate programme by the CBO to support their children to know reading and writing so as to improve their performance at school.

After the CBO attended the trainings on effective parenting by SOS Children's Villages Malawi, one thing they noted as a cause for poor performance of children in school was limited involvement of parents in the education of their children in their community. The CBO engaged the traditional leaders to ensure his subjects are getting involved in the education affairs of their children.

As a way of demonstrating the need for community involvement in children's education, the CBO volunteered to offer free basic lessons to children just to support them in the area of reading and writing.

The CBO courtesy of peer educators around its catchment area brings together children to learn and play after their normal school time. The children are taught English, Mathematics and Chichewa to boost their literacy level. "We emphasize more on reading and writing as we realise that there are several benefits

associated with this for learners. From the parenting training we attended, we learnt that early reading has several benefits for children and some of the benefits are; reading opens the door for learners early academic success, imparts the love of learning and leads to higher grades in every subject, expands their knowledge as well as their vocabulary and children who learn to read at an early age have greater general knowledge which is vital for learning all disciplines.

"Before we started this programme, we engaged the traditional leader of this area and he was very happy with this programme. He is the one who supports us in terms of mobilization of the children through constant reminders to the parents to send their children to this CBO for this programme. He also introduced us to the leadership of Kameza Local Education Authority School where most of the children learn. This school supported us with several textbooks that we use to teach children reading and writing," explained Zione one of the peer educators at the CBO.

Branded as Chikondi Cholinga Remedial School, they get stationery support such as flip charts, plain papers and markers from SOS Children's Villages Malawi and the school opens on every Monday and Friday. The school has six peer educators who tend

to the children, each with her own class. They also make sure the children are given ample time for extra-curricular activities on Tuesday to Thursday. "This is to ensure that they are able to recreate and advance other creative skills that are essential for a child's development", said Loita Manjomo, Youth Coordinator at the CBO. The children play games such as football, netball, bawo and draft. They also have time for creative and expressive arts such as reciting poems.

The peer educators plan to introduce adult literacy programmes for parents who do not know to read and write. They believe if parents are able to read, write, and understand the value of education, they can ably follow the performance of their children and provide the necessary support to them. "We will start with the families we are attached to, we want them to be able to inspire and support their children at the household level, it should not start from the CBO level", said Loita.

Going forward, the peer educators are planning to engage professional teachers who can groom them on how best they can support children to know reading and writing. They feel this will help boost up effectiveness and productivity of the lessons delivered and will ignite a lot of interest in the children they reach out to.



# CHARITY

## THE HAIR DRESSER

Charity working on a customer in her hair dressing salon

Not everyone believes that passion can be turned into an economic activity, let alone make it a business to earn a living. For Charity Mpeketula, her childhood passion for hairdressing is what brings food on the table and is able to support her siblings as well. There is more to her story.

Born in 1988, Charity lost both her parents at a tender age of eleven. Life was hard. As young as she was, she became the head of the family. She needed to provide food and other necessities for three of her siblings. She was neither in any form of employment nor any established business. She needed to act fast if she was to take up the parental role. "It was very unbearable but I had to grow a thick skin, recollect myself, hold on to my hope that things would be better", she explained.

In 2014, her family was identified to be a beneficiary in the Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) of SOS Children's Villages Malawi.

She appreciates a number of donations from the FSP. "The donations were good, but not good enough to sustain me and my siblings for our everyday needs, that is why I was still involved in petty trade of fresh vegetables to enable me provide for the family" said Charity.

"My life changed when I was considered for a vocational training in hairdressing and beauty which was offered by SOS Children's Villages Malawi in conjunction with Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational, Education Training Authority-TEVETA. This is something that I have loved since I was a young girl. I was filled with happiness because I knew that was an opportunity for me to bring life to my passion", she explained.

After the training that she underwent, Charity could not wait any longer nor procrastinate. After all, she had everything needed to start her business; hair dressing equipment which SOS Children's Villages Malawi gave her as a startup tool, the skill which was perfected by the training as well as the passion which she already had.

Five years after graduating from FSP, Charity is still self-reliant and managing her business very well. She is so optimistic about the

*"My life changed when I was considered for a vocational training in hairdressing and beauty which was offered by SOS Children's Villages Malawi in conjunction with Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational, Education Training Authority-TEVETA."*

growth of her business and clearly articulates her vision. "I know how to manage my business and I try as much as possible to keep myself financially stable", she said.

Going forward, she dreams of opening another lucrative saloon as an extension to the already existing one. She thinks this is the way to go as she wants to help other young people find employment and make ends meet. "If I was supported to this level, I am sure I can as well support other young people through employing them in my saloon or training them to perfect their skill. This will eventually enable them support themselves and their future families", she concluded.

On a good day, Charity makes K10, 000. "Sometimes business is bad, but I am surviving, in the business environment, not all days are Sundays, especially in the middle of the month", she observed.

To boost up her income, Charity is diversifying her trade now. She is also selling other beauty products such as hair extensions, hair oils as well as food items such as rice and cooking oil outside her saloon. Using the proceeds from her business, she is financially stable and takes care of all the needs of her family.



Madalitso fixing a bulb for a customer

# The beauty of hard work; **MADALITSO ATTAINS SELF RELIANCE**

Madalitso Singano is not your everyday average young lady. She has been through the worst, but managed to come out triumphant. Orphaned at the age of 15, life changed from what it used to be to a whole different ball game. Her uncle from her mother's side took her in, comfort at last. Alas! Things were not what she hoped would be.

Madalitso joined SOS Children's Villages Malawi as a beneficiary under the Grieg Gender Challenge Project in 2015. She was in form three

at that time. She was one of the beneficiaries of the educational support in Ngabu programme. A year later she sat for her Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), and she passed with barely average grades.

Field officer for SOS Children's Villages Malawi, Willard semion, recalls that at one time, the organisation wanted to know career aspirations for the youth they were supporting. They organized an individual session with each youth to hear their choice of courses.

This was done in the most comfortable environment ever as these youths were at a stage of making very important decisions in their life time. Officers from SOS Children's Villages Malawi provided guidance depending on one's grades at MSCE. Each youth including Madalitso Singano made a choice regarding the course they wanted to study.

Madalitso chose to study electrical installation, a relatively male dominated field of study. She went to Stephanos Foundation College

in 2016 where she studied electrical installation. She had eleven classmates with which for three years she shared knowledge and the simple joys of life. Singano describes her three years of college with support from SOS Children's Villages Malawi as insightful and eye opening.

"I learnt a lot during this time. My life has changed for the better because of this opportunity. The educational support and my previous hardships were my motivation to do better", explains Madalitso.

Madalitso started using the knowledge she gained from college way before graduating. She started with fixing fans and extension sockets for her fellow student's right at school. Then neighbors from time to time brought business to her. This was the beginning of a long journey of self-reliance for her.

A year after graduating, Madalitso was faced with the unemployment challenge which is a common problem among young people in Malawwi. As a way of perfecting her skill and to earn a living, Madalitso asked Joel Banda to host her in his electrical workshop around Misewu Four trading centre in Ngabu and assist where need be. Barely a month after her stay in the workshop, Madalitso impressed Banda with her skill in fixing electric fans. Fixing fans is the area Banda had a gap, this was just a perfect duo which saw a lot of unfixed fans in the workshop getting back to life.

"Fixing a grinding mill mortar is one of the milestones am proud of since I started my work". On average, I am able to make K35, 000 a month, this money is enough for my monthly requirements", explains Madalitso.

Madalitso feels her community also recognizes her achievements. The local leaders in her community chose her to be trained as a community champion for young girls in Malikopo Area. This is a UNICEF driven programme which identifies educated and well behaved girls to be trained as community champions through the project called Apatseni Mwayi Atsikana Aphunzire (AMAA) project.

"I went to a training with fellow girls from other villages and now I have a life skills club where I meet girls and teenagers in my village to encourage them, teach them some life skills and show them that as a girl you can actually be whatever you want to be", explains Madalitso.



# Attaining self reliance THROUGH POULTRY FARMING



Sometimes opportunities come once in a life time, but not all people make good use of them. Only a few do.

A good example of the few is Joyce Banda, a care giver under Limbikani Community Based Child Care (CBCC) Centre in Zolozolo Township in Mzuzu.

Joyce Banda was one of the vocational skills development beneficiaries who were trained in poultry farming for three months in 2015 by SOS Children's Villages Malawi in conjunction with Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational, and Education Training Authority-TEVETA. Upon successful completion of the training, Joyce was provided with 120 chicks, 8 bags of feed (starter) gum boots and all the necessary requirements to start poultry farming on their own in order to attain self reliance.

With the opportunity granted, grace did not hesitate. She raised the chicks so well. She made sure she followed all the necessary requirements regarding feeding, lighting and heating for the survival of chicks.

After six weeks, she sold the chicken and realized money amounting to K320, 000. The profit that she made transformed her life for the better. She paid her water bills amounting to MK26 000, she also used the same money

to pay her children's school fees.

"My life has greatly improved, at first it was hard to feed my family and pay my children's school fees. At one point I was contemplating of leaving town for the village. The poultry rearing training has been an eye opener, I am able to feed my family, pay school fees for my children and pay my bills. I have just bought 100 chicks. This is the only way to sustain the business", explained Joyce.

Looking forward, she hopes to be a steadfast entrepreneur who plans to utilize every product from her poultry farming. She plans to use the poultry waste as manure in her vegetable garden and would love to pass on the skill to some women who may show interest in poultry farming after gathering enough experience in this sector.

Beside the success, Joyce said that the challenge she faced was the market, being new in business, it was practically hard for her to penetrate the market and sell her products in the planned time. As such, the more time she kept waiting for suitable customers, the more cost she incurred to feed the chickens.

She hopes to overcome this through marketing in her neighborhood about her small scale poultry farming. Additionally, she intends

to consult street eateries for a possible business deal that she should be supplying chickens right in their business premises.



Joyce Banda in her poultry pen

# PIGGERY AIDES BENITOS FAMILY To Self Reliance



Benito in his pig pen

For 37 year old Benito Mkwaila, who lives in Chinseu Village in T A Machinjiri in Blantyre, each day in his life comes with a special message; to work hard and provide for his family that includes his aging mother at the village. Despite encountering different challenges in the piggery business, he is able to grow his business and at the same time provide for his family.

In 2004, Benito lost his father who by then was the sole bread winner of the family, things got really hard for them. Benito had only completed his secondary school studies with no kind of formal or informal training to prepare him for the job market. The only option available then was to be engaged in piece work. It was quite hard, he was barely a young man, but what else could he have done?

“In 2010, my family was enrolled in Family Strengthening Programme of SOS Children’s Villages Malawi. This was the recommendation of the selection committee in our community after acknowledging the need we had then. The family got a number of support from the organisation ranging from donations of food, clothes, and mosquito nets. While the family appreciates all the support and donations the family used to receive from the organisation, the support which will always be cherished is the piggery training and the piglets we received as startup” explains a proud Benito.

“Seven years after being supported on piggery production, there have been several milestones

and achievements that I am proud to share with everyone. I am now a recognized and trusted supplier of pork in this area courtesy of support from FSP. I have the knowledge and experience on how to rear pigs from birth up to when they are ready for the market. I slaughter them, pack into plastics and deliver to my customers upon order. I started with 3 customers in 2013 but now I have gone up to 30 customers that buy the pork each time I slaughter. On average, I make an amount of K90,000 from the sales of 1 pig.

This money is basically enough for me to take care of my relations, my mother and to pay school fees for my children”, says Benito.

For Benito, he takes pride at the idea of being able to sustain his family through self-employment. The training he got from SOS Children’s Villages Malawi equipped him with skills for business management as well as the practical aspects of piggery.

Benito’s story directly speaks to the aims of the family strengthening programme of SOS Children’s Villages Malawi. The work of the family strengthening programme is basically about supporting families attain self-reliance so they are able to provide quality care to their children in the long run. Benito’s family is one of such families that have achieved self-reliance and have a skill that will be handy always.

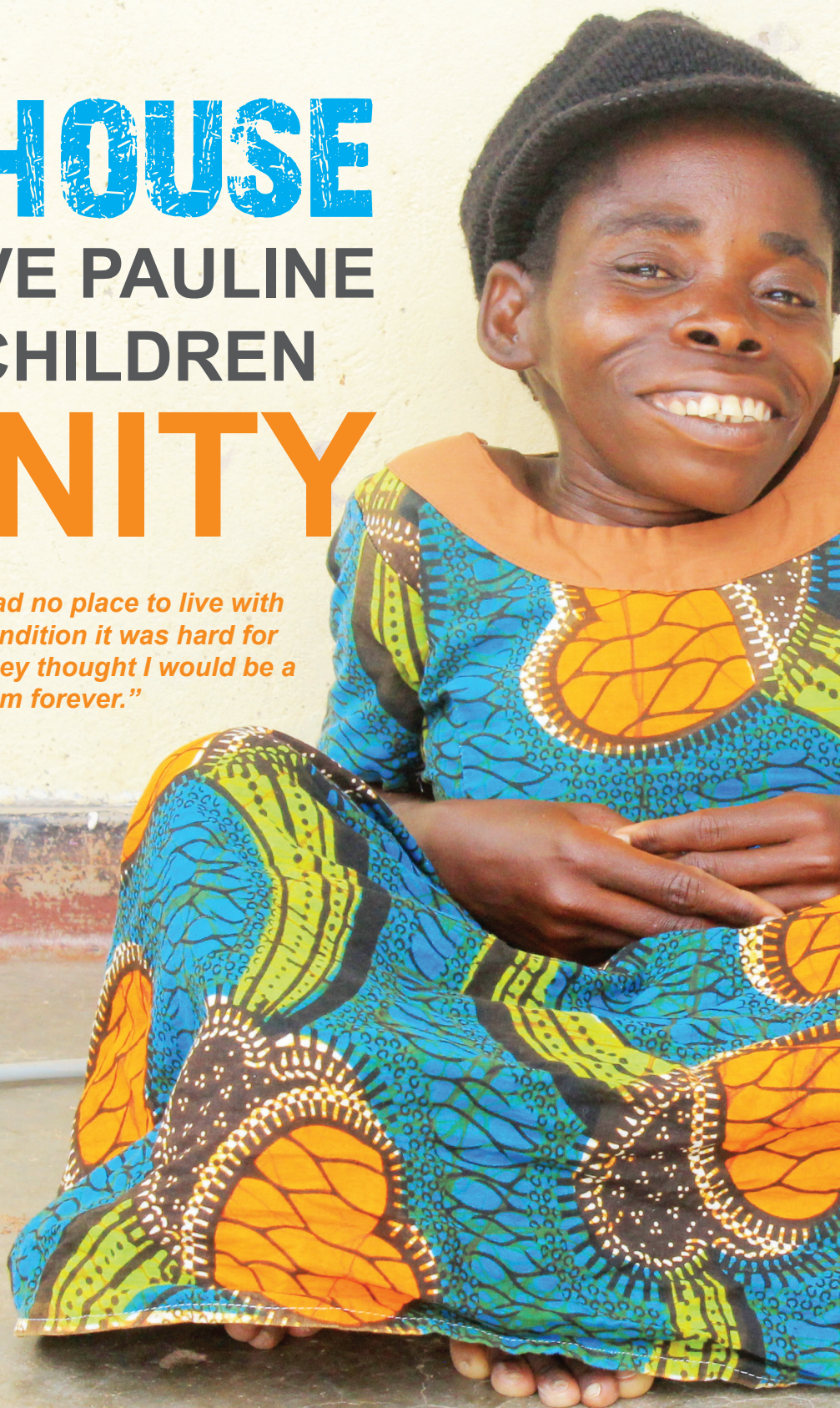


# THE HOUSE

## THAT GAVE PAULINE & HER CHILDREN

# DIGNITY

*“Life was hell for me. I had no place to live with my children. With my condition it was hard for people to accept me as they thought I would be a burden to them forever.”*







Pauline sitting outside her house

After being chased out of her sister's house by her in-law, Life was hard for Pauline Prisca Gondwe. Born with a disability, with no house to live in, no food, and three children who were looking up to her for everyday needs, life became unbearable.

Her only luck was she was living in Masasa township which happens to be a catchment area for the Mzuzu Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) of SOS Children's Villages Malawi.

When some members of Community Based Organisation (CBO) learnt of her predicament, they recommended to SOS Children's Villages Malawi if she could be enrolled in the FS programme considering her situation.

Pauline became a bonafide beneficiary of the FSP, she was indeed vulnerable and her children were at risk of losing parental care. This gave her hope, some of her problems would be reduced with the support from SOS Children's Villages Malawi.

After a series of family visits to her house by the Field Officer, it was observed that there was need for shelter for her family. Her family was recommended to benefit from the house improvement programme.

SOS Children's Villages Malawi through FSP built a new modern house for her.

Besides building the house for her, her three children are on educational support where

the organisation is paying for their tuition as well as providing them with other school related materials, the older one is in form 3 at Masasa day community secondary school and the younger ones are in primary schools.

Due to interventions by FSP, Pauline has her own house, her children are on full educational support, and everything appeared to be ok for her. She is greatly indebted to SOS Children's Villages for completely transforming her life and restoring her dignity once again.

One thing was visibly missing though, she needed to be involved into something to generate income to sustain her family considering that there are still a number of basic needs despite owning a home.

To make her self-reliant, she was trained in hair dressing, and upon finishing the training she was given the hair dressing equipment. Pauline is a trusted upcoming hairdresser loved by many for her quality work and her cheerfulness towards her customers.

"Life was hell for me. I had no place to live with my children. With my condition it was hard for people to accept me as they thought I would be a burden to them forever". Here I am, a totally transformed and productive woman who is able to take care for my children. I love what I have become. I am so happy for the help that SOS Children's Villages Malawi has rendered me", said a joyous Pauline.

# TACKLING POVERTY through tailoring



Emaurine Chiumia's tailoring business

It never rained for 46 years old Emaurine Chiumia from Zolozolo West in Mzuzu but poured for her.

In 2004, she was divorced and left with the responsibility of caring for four children. With no paid job, no regular source of income and a big responsibility to take care of the children, she had serious challenges to fulfill her parental obligation towards her children.

"Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) of SOS Children's Villages Malawi, has helped me so much. I was one of the beneficiaries who attended the vocational skills training in tailoring and textile designing. I was also trained in business management, a skill which helps me so much in my small tailoring business. Currently, my life has greatly improved. I am able to support my children with school fees and school related materials, food and

clothes single handedly. I live a peaceful and happy life", says Chiumia.

Chiumia said, she has been receiving a number of donations from various organisations and individuals to help in improving her economic muscle. The tailoring machine that she is currently using was also a donation from one faith based organisation. Unfortunately, since she had no technical knowhow of operating it, it has been staying idle for the past four years. She was even tempted to sell it one time, lucky enough, there was no one who showed interest to buy it.

Using her business management skills, Chiumia is able to calculate all business transactions like cash flow, profits made as such she is able to make viable decisions regarding how to grow her business. "The main Challenge I see is lack of markets, but of late, I am exploring

a number of strategies to penetrate new markets mostly the community and mobile markets. I can notice a big difference in terms of sales in these markets," says Chiumia.

"The support this area is getting from SOS Children's Villages Malawi is quite commendable. A number of families are now self-reliant and their capacity to care for their children has greatly improved.

Other caregivers were trained in hair dressing, bakery bricklaying.



Emaurine Chiumia and her children



# VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS; A TOOL FOR FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE



Diverson, progressing with VSL

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) has become an increasingly widespread intervention aimed at improving local financial sources and business generation in communities. In Malawi, the VSLA is concept which has changed the lives of many who operate it as a business model. Through this, people have understood the need to save, access loans and invest in small enterprises to create proceeds which they use to solve their daily needs.

SOS Children's Villages Malawi Ngabu programme introduced Village Savings And

Loan Associations (VSLAs) among its beneficiaries in 2013. Since then the groups have proved to be helpful to many people who are members of these (VSLAs).

Joyce Diverson who comes from Saopa Village in Ngabu Chikwawa District is one of the women who can now afford a smile because of VSLAs. She became a member of Tiyanjane VSLA in 2015. She says before joining the group she was facing a lot of problems financially. The money she has been saving from 2015 helped her to mold and cure bricks for a house she is planning to build.

"Before joining Tiyanjane VSLA I had a lot of financial problems, I could go a day without food, now this cannot happen since I am able to get a loan and solve my problem very easily. I am now able to give transport, pocket money and other necessities for my son who is studying at Stephanos Vocational College in Blantyre. I cannot imagine life without VSLA," says Joyce

Another thing Joyce cherishes about the VSLAs is that the loans she gets are paid back with a very reasonable amount of interest of ten percent.

This is just one example of people whose lives have changed because of VSLAs. According to Field Officer for SOS Children's Villages Malawi in Ngabu, Willard Simeon, they introduced these groups basically to enhance families' financial resources.

"As you rightly know, most of the families we are working with, do not have a reliable source of income, as such, it is a tall order for them to provide basic needs like food, clothes and school requirements for their children", explains Simeon.

Worse still, almost all financial institutions providing loans have stiff conditions for loans making it very difficult for most people in our programme to access them. Through the VSLA, access to financial services like loans has been improved and members are now engaged in different forms of trade. They use the proceeds they make from their trade to support their children and families. The organization is now pleased to see the intended purpose of establishing the VSLAs being manifested through many members such as Joyce. Many of the participants are now able to pay school fees for their children, some have built houses and some have opened small scale businesses because of the VSLAs", explains Simeon.

Family Strengthening of Ngabu Programme currently has 81 VSLA groups which they established and monitor.





# DEFYING THE GENDER STEREOTYPES; WELDING FOR A PURPOSE.



Chipanda standing on her welding workshop

Life was not easy for Steveria Chipanda of Group Village Headman Malemia in Chikwawa after she lost her husband in a road accident. The tragedy left Steveria unable to take care of herself and her children. She could neither manage to pay school fees nor feed her 4 children. She was at a loss and thought life was very unfair.

During rainy seasons, Steveria's major problem was her house which was leaking heavily. She had to put all her possessions in plastic bags whenever it rained, fearing which she would find everything soaked in water.

After a period of hard times, came SOS Children's Villages Malawi with Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) in 2012. The FS program targets vulnerable families

and the community to ensure they have capacity to protect and promote the rights of their children to grow in a caring family environment.

As one way of empowering the families to effectively care for their children, the FS programme offers vocational skills training to parents caring for vulnerable children.

In 2014 Steveria was one of the people who were trained in welding and fabrication. She did well in her training and at the end was given all the necessary equipment like; a state of the art welding machine, grinder, paint brush and everything that is required for one to open a welding shop.

She opened a welding shop in 2015 thinking

that all her problems will be sorted, but alas! The business did not materialize. The shop closed due to lack of customers. She attributed this to the general male chauvinistic mindset, a woman can never be a welder, or a woman cannot make strong and durable materials. Such a mentality made the business fail. She never compromised on quality, rather, her problem was she was in a male dominated field.

After a year she re-opened the shop with the money she got from selling farm products and a loan she got from the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). She says the second time the shop was successful; the community began to recognize her as a welder.

Steveria says one of the reasons the second attempt was a success is because SOS Children's Villages Malawi supported her by giving her 11 people to train.

"After SOS children's villages Malawi saw how hard working I was, they brought 11 young people who were also in the Family Strengthening Program to be trained at my workshop, this motivated me. I thought to myself, if the whole organisation could trust me to train other people, why would I thwart my dream because of mere gender stereotypes and attitudes by people"? She says

Steveria is now very proud seeing the people she trained doing well in the society, all of them completed their training and some of them opened their shops as well.

Through her shop, Steveria has built a new house. She can now provide for her family. Her shop is doing exceptionally well in the community. She bought a new welding machine and she has employed two men who help her at the shop.

# A NEW FACE AT MAKANDE MODEL PRIMARY SCHOOL THE RESOURCE CENTRE



The newly built resource center at Makande model school

After the fire accident destroyed the entire resource centre for the visually impaired learners and learners with special needs at Makande Model Primary School, the school was in acute shortage of teaching and learning space. This situation led to combining learners with different special needs and of different levels in a small resource centre which was left. As hard as it sounds, the school had no other option other than this.

Mixing learners of different special needs and different levels had a number of challenges for both learners and teachers. Teachers could hardly deliver the lessons fitting every learner. Learners also had challenges to comprehend the lessons. Learning space was inadequate, learning was not fun and life was difficult for both learners and teachers as the room which was left was congested and contained learners of different levels and with different forms of disabilities and learning challenges.

This is now a thing of the past following the rehabilitation of the resource centre by SOS Children's Village Ngabu Programme in 2018.

According to the Family Strengthening Coordinator, Charles Mthengomwacha, SOS Children's Villages Malawi believes that every child should have access to quality education. As such bringing children of different forms of learning difficulties in one room was a difficult and an uncalled for situation and

it required immediate intervention from stakeholders in the education sector. "We felt duty bound to act on this as we cannot boast of being a child focussed organisation if we pay a blind eye to the critical issues that affect the full realisation of the rights of children in this area," explains Mthengomwacha.

The rehabilitation of the resource centre has greatly improved the performance of learners with learning difficulties at the school. "In the 2018 Primary School Leaving Certificate examination, the resource centre produced

a 100% pass and selection rate. All the four learners who sat for the examinations passed and got selected to various secondary schools. This is quite interesting and we can confidently say we are contributing to the leaving no one behind in the development agenda", says Richard Zuze who is acting in charge for the resource centre at the school.

"The school get enormous support from SOS Children's Villages Malawi through the Ngabu programme. Apart from the rehabilitation of the resource centre, we also get support with teaching and learning materials like brail papers, large print books for visually impaired learners, hearing aids and stationery for daily use in the school. These teaching and learning materials have also helped in reducing the dropout rate of learners with special needs in particular and all learners in general", said Mr Harry Chisaka the Primary Education Advisor for the Zone (PEA).

The PEA described SOS Children's Villages Malawi Ngabu Programme as one of their trusted stakeholder in as far as delivering quality education is concerned. "We are happy, because our engagement is not only on implementation, rather, we plan, implement, review and celebrate together" concludes the PEA.



Learners at Makande Resource centre.



# MOTHER GROUPS

## FOR QUALITY EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

Mother group members pausing for a picture.

Women in Mzuzu, Lilongwe Blantyre and Ngabu are working hand in hand with SOS Children's Villages Malawi Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) and SOS Hermein Gmeinner Primary school to ensure that children especially girls are going to school and at the same time getting the necessary support to advance their education.

This is where the formation of mother groups was born and introduced in both primary and secondary schools. Apart from teachers, women living in the surrounding communities take part by participating in these various mother groups found in their catchment areas.

A living example is Tsabango Mother Group Network chairlady Florence Gundasi who is not a teacher but a hard working participant who proactively narrates how income generating activities happening within some of Lilongwe mother groups are helping in provision of support to children and girls.

"Here in Lilongwe as Mother groups we are involved in commercial vegetable farming where after selling the vegetables, we use

this money to pay examination fees for needy students, mostly girls." Said Gundasi. She also said, as one way of motivating girls, they purchase text books, pens and other school materials for the best top three girls in the schools they are working with.

All mother groups within Lilongwe are providing counselling services to girls from different primary and secondary schools on topical issues like unwanted pregnancies, early marriages and HIV/AIDS. They are utilizing role models who are alumna such as teachers, doctors and entrepreneurs to encourage these girls to further their studies and be self-reliant.

Other interesting incentives these mother groups from Lilongwe and Mzuzu are doing to keep the girls in school is sewing reusable sanitary pads which are distributed to the girls to avoid absconding classes when they are having their menses.

Chairlady of Masasa Community Day Secondary School mother group from Mzuzu,

Christina Munthali elaborated that the reason for their visit in Lilongwe was to learn fabric dyeing at Tiwale mother group, apart from that they also wanted to learn and interact with their fellow mother groups in Lilongwe on what they are doing to promote girl child education.

"We came to Lilongwe to learn value addition to fabric through dyeing and also to share and learn various ways of promoting girl child education from our fellow mother groups in Lilongwe. As mothers, it is our responsibility to help the girls morally, spiritually, financially and intellectually". Said Munthali

Tsabango Mother Group Network chairlady Florence Gundasi appreciated the Mzuzu mother group visit saying that they have benefitted a lot from the stories that were shared by their fellow mother group. Promoting girls education requires concerted efforts to share best practices on a number of areas.



Mother Group members learning and sharing stories





# MWANAMAKOKO RISES

## NEW CLASSROOM BLOCKS, TEN TOILETS



Since its establishment in 2004, Mwanamakoko primary school had only 3 classroom blocks. The school was opened as a junior primary but it later grew to be a full primary school. The shortage of classrooms resulted in three quarters of the learners taking their classes under trees.

The school which is found in Ngabu Chikwawa district, had this infrastructure problem for long time. Tiyanjane Makumba Nyali, the Head Teacher for the school said the problem was one of the biggest challenges which affected the performance of both teachers and learners. Teachers could hardly complete their teaching syllabus because of the wet ground during rainy season, a condition which was not conducive for both learning and teaching.

A well-wisher from the community helped the school with temporarily shelters to be used as classes. Nyali said this lifted their burden a bit, but most classes were still conducted under the trees with portable boards.



Learners at Mwanamakoko Primary School.

In early 2018, SOS Children's Villages Malawi through its Family Strengthening Program (FSP) committed to support the school by constructing some classroom blocks and ten toilets with funding from Odd Fellows.

A few months later the school wore a new face. Three state of the art classroom blocks with two classes each and ten toilets were constructed. The head teacher said she was pleased to see every class being taught under a roof with only two classes being taught in temporary shelters.

"As the head teacher of Mwanamakoko I have to say SOS Children's Villages Malawi has done a very commendable job. They promised us classes and toilets which they have fulfilled. Before these classes, over half of the school was taking classes under the trees and on the sun. This demotivated many students, we had a higher number of dropouts. Am sure this will not be the case from now going forward." explains Nyali

Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Ngabu zone, Hary Chisaka, expressed gratitude to

SOS Children's Villages Malawi. He said the organization has played a very big role in improving education standards in the area. He says if more organizations were making such tangible developments, the problem of learners learning under the tree would be history.

"The classrooms and the toilets will play a very big role in as far as quality education is concerned. Number of learners per class will be reduced, this reduces disturbance in the classroom and gives the teacher more time to devote to each child. In addition to that, the structures has made Mwanamakoko and the whole area to look beautiful," says Chisaka in a jovial mood.

Chisaka however asked the organization for teachers houses which is also an issue on the school.

Concurring with Chisaka is the chairman for the school management committee, Alfred Jedegwa. Jedegwa said apart from the classroom blocks, the committee is thankful for the toilets which are disability friendly.

"In the past, we had toilets which were constructed without thinking of our physically challenged learners, now they will be able to make good use of the toilets since SOS children's villages Malawi has provided us with disability friendly facilities," recounts Jedegwa.

He however seconded with the Primary Education Advisor on the teachers houses issue, he added that the school also lacks the have head teachers office and a staffroom, a situation he described as critical. He said most of the teachers come from areas far from the school and they are usually late for classes. This could not have been an issue if we had some teachers' houses here.

Mwanamakoko primary school which has 14 permanent teachers and 2 assistant teachers has a population of 1124 learners (543 boys and 581 girls) which are now all learning in classes. Thanks to SOS Children's Villages Malawi through the Family Strengthening Program.





Learners at Mwanamakoko Primary School

# Teaching and Learning Materials EASES EDUCATION DELIVERY AT ZOLOZOLO CDSS.

It is a fact! When the number of students exceeds the required capacity in terms of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials the quality of education is heavily compromised. There are extremely large class sizes translated into extremely poor student performance.

Such was the case with Zolozolo Community Day Secondary School in Mzuzu city, a school with over 1000 learners against the capacity of 600 learners. With this situation, the pressure on the learning and teaching materials is always high and that affects the learners as well as the teaching process.

But when the school management shared this problem with SOS Children's Villages Malawi, the organisation intervened. As a key

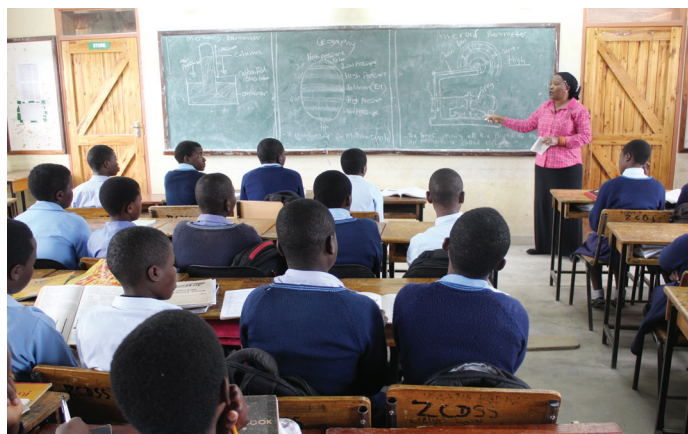
stakeholder in ensuring quality education for the learners, it felt duty bound to act on the gap to contribute to the provision of quality education.

The organization supported the school with assorted items valued at over one million. Some of the materials include writing materials, flip charts, note books, masking tapes and ream of plain papers which serve several uses in a school setup.

The school's heads teacher Mercy Kayuni expressed gratitude for the donation saying the materials had come at the right time when the school had run out of almost all crucial teaching and learning materials.

"As a school ,we are in financial difficulties and it was hard for us to provide everything to enable teachers to deliver accordingly, the government helps but what is given does not tally with our needs. The materials given have helped teachers to deliver the lessons well and has also led to improvement in the performance of children" said Kayuni.

Kayuni also added that the writing materials and notebooks which are given as a token of appreciation to the top three performers have inculcated a competitive spirit among learners in the process making them work hard.



# A TIMELY DONATION FOR NAKAZINGU PRIMARY SCHOOL



Mkaka (right) hands over learner's text books to Malunga (left).



A standard 4 class in progress

Anna Malunga is a Deputy Headmistress at Nakazingu Primary School in Machinjiri, Blantyre District. Her school along with other schools in Blantyre Rural Education Division, faces a number of challenges such as lack of textbooks, chalk boards and insufficient classroom blocks.

She said despite government's efforts in addressing some of the challenges the schools are facing, the task is huge as the schools are many hence the measures taken to address the challenges seem unproductive.

"Here at our school, we had a lot of challenges, the major one was the high ratio of learner's text books to learners. Three learners were sharing a single textbook. This was so hard for teaching as well as parental support to the learners. Often times we give out assignments to learners by simply telling them the page number on where the assignment is in their books, but this can only work when each learner has their own books. This situation greatly compromised our teaching style, parental support to learning as well as assessing learner's performances," she elaborated.

In 2017, public schools operating within Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) organized a competition for schools in its impact area as a means to identify schools to support. This was aimed at enhancing positive competition among learners in these schools.

Five primary schools Thanthwe, Nakazimu, Kameza, Chipande and Makata, enrolled into the competition. The criteria for identifying the best school of all competing schools included the school which performed well in terms of both learners' pass rate and learners' selection to secondary schools. The prize was a donation of assorted text books for all 8 classes valued at 1.5 million.

For fair and unbiased assessment of the competition, officials from the Blantyre District Education Manager's office were used to assess the results of Primary School Leaving Certificate. Three schools which emerged winners in this competition were Nakazimu, Kameza and Chipande.

For Malunga and her school, the text books

came just on time and they resolved the textbooks shortage right away. She said that now every learner has a text book and this is the normal requirement in as far as quality education is concerned. "We are hopeful for a better working relationship with SOS Children's Villages Malawi in addressing a number of challenges our learners have in our schools and at a zone level", Said Anna Malunga.

The entire school management is greatly indebted to SOS Children's Villages Malawi for the support. The school realizes that this was supposed to be the role of government, but as partners in development, it is also the role of SOS Children's Villages Malawi to reduce challenges in these schools and the community at large. The drive for quality education can only be achieved through such partnerships.

Among others, SOS Children's Villages Malawi's FSP is assisting schools with learner's textbooks, building classroom blocks, staffrooms, toilets and disability friendly structures in all the programmes.

# IMPROVING LEARNER'S PERFORMANCE THROUGH LIBRARY RENOVATION

With 3300 learners, studying without a library was hard for learners at Chiputula Primary School; this contributed to poor performance. But that is no longer the case, thanks to SOS Children's Villages Malawi through its Family Strengthening Programme (FSP) for supporting the school through renovating a building at the school premise, and turn it into a library.

Ollens Manda, the head teacher at the school is quite grateful for the support saying since its opening, the learner's performance has greatly improved, as they are now able to study at the library unlike at home where they are easily disturbed and hardly get enough time to study.

"The library has generated a lot of interest to read and write among the learners. The library has also given students extra time to study and has led to improvement in their performance. Initially, it was hard for learners to study outside because they were easily destroyed by fellow students who were loitering around" said Manda.

The head teacher also said that the coming of the library has helped inculcate a reading culture among learners at the school saying the library is always full as learners are always interested to read the available books in the library.



Choosing the best book

"The library has brought a number of interesting developments at our school. These days the number of learners who loiter around the school premises has greatly reduced.

We experience quiet times that are synonymous to a school as learners are glued to their books in the library. The library is also helping in improving learner's attention span which enhances the learning process. Learners also get exposed to information on various disciplines as the library has books on various subjects ranging from English, Wildlife, Mathematics Geography and many more fields.

The furniture in the library increases the suitability and functionality of the facility for studies. This is just the perfect place where learners can study without distractors that are found when they are studying in open spaces, there are no distractors or barriers in there", he concluded.

Besides renovating the library, the FSP also donated chairs to the new library, this makes it a full epicenter of learning and personal development for learners and the community at large.

Chiputula Primary School is within SOS Children's Village working catchment area under the Family Strengthening Program, and when the school committee approached them for help they did not hesitate knowing that a conducive learning environment is one of the prerequisite factors for the delivery of quality education for every child.



Learners getting busy with their books

# Finally! SUZEN HAS A HOME



Suzen with her children on the veranda of her house.

***“My greatest treasure of all the support I have been getting from SOS Children’s Villages Malawi, is this house. I call it “nyumba ya mwai” meaning (a fortune house). It has restored my sense of dignity as a human being.”***

For Suzen Hadge of Kandeya Village in Machinjiri, February 2015 evokes sad memories of a nightmare in which she experienced a chain of mishaps. Suzen feels if events in one’s life were happening in a specific order, she wished what happened in 2015 had waited, but that was only her wish.

“I was grieving my husband who had died the previous year and was the sole breadwinner of our family. I had just relocated from Nsanje where my husband was working to Machinjiri in Blantyre, my home district. My new home here was quite small and made of uncured bricks. I never cared about that, I was rather happy I had a shelter I called home for my family. The February rains of 2015, changed the narrative altogether. In a space of one night my family became homeless. My house got so soaked with the heavy rains till one wet night it collapsed completely. I was so

disturbed with several unanswered questions. Where will I stay with my children? What will become of us? Why all these mishaps on me? Why my house and not all others in this area”? This was Suzen narrating her ordeal with tears piling up in her eyes.

Her life and that of her kids, Bridget, Alex, Grace and Dorothy was so pathetic. In the morning of that fateful day, she sought refuge from a distant relation in the nearby village.

By this time, she was not doing anything to earn a living yet. she needed to think fast

regarding how she would be earning a living and supporting her children with basic needs. At least she had found shelter, but she did not want to burden the family that kept her to be fending for her children as well, that would be too much on them. Other people in the area were into scavenging from the waste center. She had no option than to join the trade. She started collecting plastic papers and bottles, clean them up in a nearby stream and resell them in Limbe.

A year later, Suzen was chosen by the community task force (CTF) to be a beneficiary of the Family Strengthening Programme of the SOS Children’s Villages Malawi. She started benefiting from a number of donations which were earmarked for those families hit by the natural disaster. “I remember in early 2017, I received maize, beans and cooking oil from SOS children’s Villages Malawi, this helped my family so much”, said Suzen as she recounts her experiences.

“My greatest treasure of all the support I have been getting from SOS Children’s Villages Malawi, is this house. I call it “nyumba ya mwai” meaning (a fortune house). It has restored my sense of dignity as a human being. Imagine as old as I am with my four children in someone’s house. That type of life demeaned me very much. I am so grateful for this indelible gesture”, said Suzen.

Suzen’s life has changed so much. She says staying in a decent house has given her the inner power that cannot be fully explained.



Where it all begun, one bedroomed house that sheltered Suzen and her 4 children



Suzen’s new House

# Rising

## IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

*Under his leadership, he has initiated the building of a community hall, a mortuary at the Ngabu Rural Hospital and an office for the Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU)*

William Khuleya joined Nthandizi Community Based Organization (CBO) in 2008 as a member. He had seen a gap in the community and wanted to be part of the solution. He became treasurer for the CBO in 2013. He had no experience of any kind then. This however was a first step for a long journey in leadership that he had not seen coming.

SOS Children's Villages Malawi began its operations in Ngabu, Chikwawa in 2011; it was until 2013 that it became fully operational in the capacity of its Family Strengthening Programme (FSP). There was a task of identifying children who had lost or were on the verge of losing parental care. The Community Task Force (CTF) was thus created to serve the purpose of identifying these children. The CTF is made of different stakeholders who are found in the community. These include chiefs, religious leaders, medical practitioners and others. William Khuleya became the first chair for the CTF then.

To enhance their leadership skills, there was need to build their capacity in different leadership and management fields. SOS Children's Villages Malawi through Ngabu programme sponsored Khuleya and other participants to attend a training in project and financial management, risk management and proposal development at Mpemba Staff Development Institute. This enriched Khuleya and set him further on the path to leadership. "I had to lead different people, some who had high positions in their offices.

I was entrusted by members of my community so I took it upon myself to do my best. When I work with people I follow all my principles,

honesty, hard work and diligence". Said Khuleya with an authoritative voice.

In 2014 Khuleya had gained trust of people and had created an image of a good leader. To attest to this, he was also elected as Village Development Committee (VDC) chairperson. In this capacity he was able to work with the community in curbing early marriages and following up on defilement cases with the police. He takes pride in the fact that he has helped his community in identifying rightful vulnerable families to become programme participants in FSP.

As of 2018, he became chair for Area Development Committee (ADC). This puts Khuleya in charge of the entire area. Under his leadership, he has initiated the building of a community hall, a mortuary at the Ngabu

Rural Hospital and an office for the Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU).

"I am almost done with my term as the ADC chair person, I will be leaving the office a happy person. I needed to contribute to the structural development of the area as it was in dire need and I have delivered", said Khuleya.

What is most exciting about this leadership journey is the desire to contribute to the positive change in one's community voluntarily.

Khuleya has demonstrated that with passion, one can be the driver of the desired change in communities through building strong and resilient social support systems. He is a true patriot of Ngabu and a defender of children and a promoter of rights of children.



Determined Khuleya

# PARENTING TRAINING REDUCES CHILD ABUSE CASES



Lead parents teaching other parents on the good parenting skills

Family Strengthening programme (FSP) of SOS Children's Villages Malawi in Mzuzu has trained 543 parents in effective parenting as part of the parenting programme which was launched in 2018. The trainings are aimed at equipping peer educators with parenting skills so that they are able to educate other parents around their community to enable them provide quality care for their children.

While parenting was believed to be an inherent skill for every parent, the increased cases of child abuse by parents and relatives suggest that there are informational and attitudinal gaps regarding effective parenting as well as positive disciplining of children.

According to SOS Children's Villages Malawi Field Officer Youngson Nyasulu, the programme has greatly changed parenting perceptions of a number of caregiver. Most parents are now aware of children's rights, parental responsibilities on their children and positive disciplining of children.

"Before the parenting programme was launched, there were alarming cases of child abuse more especially physical and emotional abuse. Issues of child rights never mattered to most parents, as such, promotion of child rights including parental responsibility was not a serious issue at all. There have been a remarkable reduction of child abuse cases and better ways of disciplining children these days", said Nyasulu.

One of the peer educators, Emaurine Chiumia, who is also a member of Limbikani Community Based Organization (CBO) in Zolozolo Township, acknowledged in an interview that the parenting programme has so far built capacity of many families in her community in the area of parenting in general. Families have also learnt to involve children in making some decisions affecting their day to day lives as a way of promoting child participation. This is an important principle in the discourse of child rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) hence its application in our everyday life.

"One interesting area we have also learnt from the parenting programme is the availability

of laws and policies that guide the work we are doing, and the availability of reporting system for the child abuse cases, since we have launched this programme, we will not sit down till we make Zolozolo free of child abuses", Said chiumia.

SOS Children's Villages Malawi believes that the family, with a stable and caring parents is the best place for every child to grow. This is why it takes pride to work with parents and build their capacity on diverse ways to assist them take an active role in the care and protection of their children.





# UNITED IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



Members of the support group sharing notes

As one way of ensuring that children living with disabilities are given the much needed support to ensure they live fulfilling lives and have access to education, parents from Mthunzi wa Kachere Community Based Organisation (CBO) in Machinjiri Blantyre founded a support group called Mwayi Disability Parent Support Group. The support group among others discuss several topical issues including viable economic activities they can engage in to sustain their families and vocational skills

they can engage in to generate income for their daily use.

The idea of forming a support group emerged after the training they had on how best they can take care of children with disabilities in February, 2018. "We thought it was important to come together and start a support group which would be a trusted source of information and sharing knowledge and experiences among us", said one of the members.

The training was conducted with support from SOS Children's Villages Malawi in conjunction with Malawi Council for the Handicapped MACOHA and Federation for Disability Organizations in Malawi-FEDOMA.

Children with disabilities are exposed to various forms of abuse ranging from verbal, emotional to physical abuse. Such children also suffer from stigma and other sorts of exploitation from their parents or relations.

This is why SOS Children's Villages Malawi intervened to ensure that all children regardless of their physical or mental condition deserve parental care, support and protection so that they live a fulfilling life.

"Before the training, cases of abusing children with disabilities were quite common in our community. In the first place, it is hard for some parents to fully accept children with disabilities and embrace them the way they do with other children. It is from this denial that parents even fail to take full responsibility over their children let alone provide basic needs and quality care for them. I am one of the parents who used to verbally abuse my disabled son, without considering the dreadful impact the conduct could have on his development.

I sometimes could yell at him to walk upright and call him all sorts of names," explains Rose Subiri, a member of Mwayi Disability Parent Support Group.

After the training, Rose noticed that it was not too late to turn over a new leaf and show him love. Chrissy Jailosi also shared a similar story. She said it was not easy to care for a



child with disability and foster mental health on the child. "Being with others in a group has been an eye opener than before when I was supposed to bear all the burden of raising my child all alone," she said.

From the support group they created, the parents discuss several ways of improving their economic lives as well as their children's lives.



The group is fast growing in numbers and influence and currently has a total of 35 members.

As a form of income generation, the group is involved in production of doormats using small pieces of cloth and small bags where they can store their children's school materials. "We started with the school bags which our children will be using to carry their school notebooks, we feel this is one way of supporting their education", said Happiness Kachale who is the patron for the group and the School's teacher.

Mwayi Disability Parent Support Group is grateful for the training which has completely changed their perspective regarding provision of care to children with disabilities.



Patron of the support group supporting the members



Tchuzi taking notes

# A PEER EDUCATOR WITH A CAUSE

*“My main focus is to make sure that all children from my community have access to education.”*

The duties of a peer educator in SOS Children's Villages Malawi programmes in 7 targeted communities of Chadza, Tsabango, Zolozolo - Chiputula and Masasa in Mzuzu, Mzedi and Machinjiri in Blantyre and Ngabu include teaching families about child development. They also ensure that children to go to school and conduct visits with programme participating families to discuss day to day life as well as facilitate meetings among the families that are within the programme for support visits.

Ollen Tchuzi is a peer educator from Group Village Headman Malikopo's area. One might wonder why they are reading about Mr. Tchuzi? As a peer educator, he goes beyond the expectations of his community. He is very passionate about education and he is eager to send all children in his village to school.

“My main focus is to make sure that all children from my community have access to education. Education opens up several opportunities in one's life. Presidents are retiring, ministers are retiring, and there will be a need to fill those positions. It is the very same children that will occupy these positions. To make

this possible, I deal with all families exclusively.

On one of his regular visits through the area he was dismayed to find some children from his village gambling (kuvina zimpaka) This is a game of cards where the winner walks away with cash. This illegal activity keeps most youth busy in the village and to some they think it is an easy and readily available source of income.

“I was very angry when I saw this, it demeans all my efforts. I work hard to help them make a better future for themselves, I did not have the same opportunities as they do, yet they are not utilizing their chances. They do not want to go to school and they do not do any work even in their homes. The proceeds from the game also leads to alcohol indulgence and abuse.” Laments Tchuzi

Tchuzi dispersed the gathering of about eighteen (18) youth and went to Ngabu Police to report the parents for child negligence and not ensuring access to education as well as the children for playing illegal games. The

police through the chief summoned the parents as well as the children in response to the complaint. The parents responded well by sending the children to school.

“The parents came together to assure me that they will enforce the policies and make sure their children are in school and stay out of illegal gambling. I went to the school and found all children in school”, explains Tchuzi.

Asking the peer educator if he is seeing change from several interventions he is doing. He smiles and says. “I walked through the village today, and I liked the sound that I heard. The sound of nothing but total silence. To me, this is a sign that all children are where they are supposed to be at the particular time.

# SOS CHILDRENS VILLAGES CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY



Gender Coordinator for Chikwawa District giving her remarks.

There was excitement and joy as Chikwawa celebrated International Day of Women (IDW) at a district level. SOS Children's Villages Malawi joined other stakeholders to commemorate the event which was hosted under the theme 'think equal, build smart, innovate for change, advancing the status of women and girls'.

Field officer for SOS Children's Villages Malawi, Ngabu Programme, Angelina Potani said the main aim of participating in the event was to appreciate efforts of women in the development sector as well as in the work of child and family development.

"As SOS Children's Villages Malawi, we work with families here in Chikwawa and other districts of Blantyre, Mzuzu and Lilongwe. While we work with different families to improve their capacity in protecting their children, we also work with women considering their vital role

in child development. We have a lot of female headed families in our communities that are doing tremendous work hence the need to celebrate and appreciate their efforts. Not only their efforts when it comes to working with children but their tremendous contribution in all sectors of development such as agriculture, health, education and trade equally calls for a celebration and a recognition of their efforts," said Potani.

The guest of honour at the event was District health Officer for Chikwawa district Stallin Zinkanda. In his speech at the function, he came with a message of togetherness, men and women working hand in hand to promote rights of women and girls.

"There is need to minimize and curb gender based discrimination to make sure that we empower women and girls. This can not only

be achieved by women alone. It's a common challenge, which needs a common solution," stressed Zinkanda

Zinkanda also said that as government they are working tirelessly to make sure that the children that are in camps like Namicheni Primary School where the event was held are safe and have access to basic needs.

Gender coordinator for Chikwawa District, Rita Sukasuka also said that they are making arrangements to make sure that community Based Child Care Centers CBCCs are closer to the camp.

International Day of Women was celebrated on 8th march internationally. In Chikwawa the event was held at Namicheni Primary School in Nchalo, Chikwawa.

# STRONG FAMILIES FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE



Thought leaders in child development explaining the importance of families.

SOS Children's Villages Malawi in partnerships with its community based stakeholders from Lilongwe organized a community dialogue in celebration of the International Day of Families which falls on 15th May every year.

The 2018 International Day of Families, under a theme, families and inclusive societies focusses on Sustainable Development Goal 16 relating to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Families play an important role in creating and sustaining peaceful and inclusive societies vital for sustainable and inclusive development.

The community dialogue which was held on 23rd May in Nthenje, created a platform where stakeholders from different sectors like the government, civil society and community leaders appraised the family and the contribution it has in general development as well as on provision of quality care to children. The event was broadcasted live on Zodiak Radio Station and allowed listeners from across the country to participate through their cellular phones.

Leading the dialogue were Traditional Authority Chadza, the Director for Child Affairs, Mr.

Mcknight Kalanda, the Executive Director for Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre, Emma Kaliya and the National Director for SOS Children's Villages Malawi Mr. Smart Namagonya.

A number of important issues regarding the importance of the family, challenges affecting the family, and what can be done to strengthen the family came out from this dialogue.

Some key issues from the dialogue include but not limited to;

## LEGAL

- The Republican Constitution of Malawi on section 22(1-2) recognizes the family as “the natural and fundamental group or unit of society that is entitled to protection by the society and the State and each member of the family shall enjoy full and equal respect and shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty or exploitation
- Section 23 of Republican Constitution of Malawi imposes a number of duties and responsibilities of parents towards the care of their children in a family environment. These duties and responsibilities are;
  - I. All children shall have the right to a given name and a family name and a right to a nationality
  - II. Children have the right to know and to be raised by their parents
  - III. Children are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation or any treatment, work, or punishment that is likely to be hazardous, interfere with their education or be harmful to their health or to their physical, mental or spiritual or social development
- The 2010 Child Care Protection and Justice Act on part 11, Division 1- under the child care and protection by the family , also imposes duties on parents and guardians in a family setup to offer protection from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation exposure to physical, mental, social and moral hazards and oppression to children.



A member of the audience making her contribution on some challenges affecting the families in Chadza

## SOCIAL- CULTURAL

- Family is a perfect place for the growth and nurturing of children if they are to become responsible citizens.
- Stable families are a source of secure and trusted attachments for children for resilient building.
- Families are a hub for both transmission and acquisition of values and children growing up in stable and supportive families develop positive cognitive, emotional and social characters thus becoming stable and peaceful adults.
- Some families fail to provide adequate care to their children because of poverty.
- In some cultures men easily shun the responsibilities of caring for their children and totally leave the responsibility of child care to women.
- Awareness should be raised in terms of manageable number of children people can have according to their capacity.



TA Chadza emphasizing a point at the community dialogue as Diirector for child Affairs looks on.

## KEY ASKS

- We call upon the government to promote policies that will enhance strengthening of families in the country for the benefit of all children.
- We call upon the government to scale up social protection interventions for the most vulnerable families for the benefit of children in these families.
- We call upon the civil society organisations to continue raising awareness around issues of family empowerment and the role of family on development in general and on quality child care specifically.
- We call upon all parents and traditional leaders to take up their role in upholding and promoting children’s rights including the right to a family.



National Director for SOS Childrens Villages Malawi interacting with the media after the community dialogue.



# STRATEGY 2030

# NO CHILD SHOULD GROW UP ALONE



## OUR VISION

Every child belongs to a family and grows with love, respect and security.

Over the next 14 years we want to become an even more successful, thriving organisation. We build on our values and Vision. Our 2030 goals are the heart of our strategy. By implementing our seven strategic initiatives, these goals will come alive

SOS Children's Villages Malawi, P.O. Box 2359, Lilongwe. Area 9/159

Tel: +265 (0) 1 758 495 / 756 667 • Fax: +265 (0) 1 751 298

E-mail: [info@SOSChildren'sVillagesMalawi-malawi.org](mailto:info@SOSChildren'sVillagesMalawi-malawi.org) • Twitter: @SOS Children's Villages Malawi

Facebook: SOS Children's Villages Malawi

[www.sos-malawi.org](http://www.sos-malawi.org)