



## TOGETHER WE RISE! THE STORY OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI



In March 2023 SGS Consulting (SGS) in partnership with World Connect Malawi (now rebranded as Mudzi Connect), held a Community Foundation Development training workshop involving nine Community Based Organisations (CBO's) that aspired to evolve into Community Foundations. The workshop introduced the concept of community philanthropy, and the roles and value offerings of community foundations in unlocking local community assets and facilitating community-led development. The workshop also covered resource mobilization strategies, embedding the asset-based development approach that reinforced the notion that by recognizing and using their existing resources, communities can take charge of their own development. The intent of SGS was also to support Mudzi Connect to assume the role of a Community Foundation Support Organisation (CFSO) in the country. One additional CBO was trained later as it could not attend the workshop due

to travel challenges caused by Cyclone Freddy. After the workshop Mudzi Connect helped to register the ten prospective Community Foundations with government, affording them legal recognition.



Nine months later...

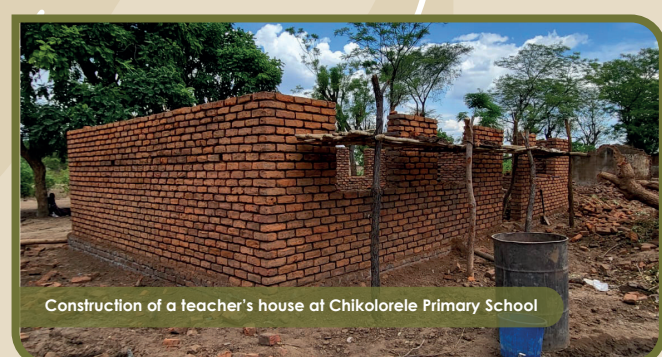
## A COMMUNITY WORKING TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE

The SGS team, together with Mudzi Connect, traveled to Chikolorele, a village in Dedza district, to appreciate the work of one of the emerging Community Foundations, Grassroots Action Support Organisation (GASO)

GASO, operated as a key advocate for health promotion in the early 2000s, and has expanded its mission to become a Community Foundation. With the support of Mudzi Connect, GASO now empowers communities to mobilize their own resources to address local challenges, in addition to its ongoing health advocacy work.



GASO engaged with Board members, traditional leaders, and community members to identify and address their most pressing challenges. One recent project was the construction of an additional teacher's house at Chikolorele primary school as teachers commute long distances on a daily basis to school. This project was made possible by household contributions of more than K1,200,000.00 (\$1,025). In addition, some members donated timber, bricks, and sand. Builders charged half the actual cost of constructing the house. GASO also held a football bonanza as a fundraiser, raising over K600 000. These financial and non-financial contributions demonstrate community support for GASO's work, and their commitment to local giving.



Daniel Chsoni, Mudzi Connect's Program Communications and Outreach Coordinator, interviewed the Group Village Headman (GVH) Chikolorele of Dedza District who is also a board member of GASO. As the GVH explains, his community, led by GASO, has made strides in catalyzing community philanthropy.

### MEETING THE COMMUNITY

Warm hearts and beautiful smiles greeted our team as we met the local leadership at Chikolorele primary school. In attendance were the school management committee, local chiefs, Village Development committee representatives and other Community leaders. The women were dressed in traditional Malawian chitenje fabric, exuding warmth and tradition. Sunlight glinted off the freshly laid bricks of the soon-to-be teachers' compound, a vision of progress taking shape before our eyes. We took time to appreciate the ambitious project, nearly complete by the first quarter of 2024. It became clear that the project has brought joy and promises a safe and comfortable haven for educators, boosting morale and ultimately benefiting the learners. The leaders' beaming faces conveyed their pride in the project and their hope for a brighter future for their children.

*"The community warmly welcomed this development. We first heard about the community philanthropy concept at a meeting that GASO had convened, involving us the chiefs and the Area Development Committee. We were very excited about the concept because it seeks to put community members at the center of their own development. After that meeting, I summoned all my subordinate village heads and briefed them on this development". said GVH Chikolorele'.*



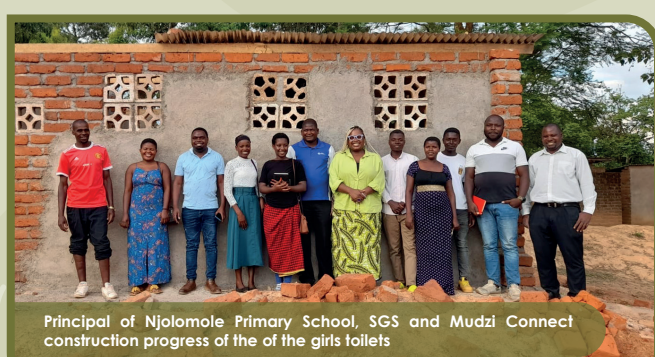
*"I realize that community philanthropy enables us as a community to come together, identify critical issues, brainstorm solutions, and rally local assets and resources. We want to be at the forefront of our own development. If we will be getting any external help, it should come to support what we have already started. That way, we have ownership and sustainability of the development projects". said GVH Chikolorele'.*



## EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS IN MALAWI

Our next stop was Chamanza Community Foundation for Development which started as a youth club in 2005. In 2020, the foundation rebranded and transitioned to a youth-led organization, with young leaders occupying periodic cohorts.

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In our conversation, Chamanza Community Foundation for Development Executive Director, Enock Chaitaika explained that they have mobilized funds for two projects: the construction of an under-five clinic, and the construction of girls' toilets at Njolomole Primary. At the time of our visit, the construction of eight girls toilets including a change room at the school was almost complete. *"We understand that the government alone cannot solve each challenge affecting our communities, as such, we want to deal with some of these challenges on our own by making sure that our communities have access to healthcare facilities near them. We also want to ensure that children are using toilets that are good and are learning in a conducive environment". said Enock Chaitaika'.*

Community philanthropy is not a foreign concept to Chamanza, given that they had previously mobilised local resources, in partnership with local traditional leaders, and constructed a child based care centre. They are grateful for the Community foundation training that was conducted in March 2023 where they had the opportunity to align the concept and the community foundation model as the drivers of development.

For the girls' ablution facility, fundraising has been so well coordinated that it is now financially supported through remittances – amounting to 3000 USD. A fee-charging gospel show, featuring a Malawian gospel star group 'Marvelous Deeds' was held to raise funds.



## MUDZI CONNECT STRATEGY REFRESH AND REBRAND

The renewed focus on supporting communities to use indigenous resources, assets and knowledge to support their own development along with the rebrand to Mudzi Connect, necessitated the drafting of a refreshed strategic plan.



## LOCAL GIVING FOR DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The 2023-year ended with the first ever Local Giving for Development Conference where the emerging community foundations shared their progress on their journey toward becoming community foundations, and showcased their works.

by community members setting clear projects when mobilizing resources. The conference also served as an effective platform for forging networks and collaborations.



They made excellent presentations, participated in a panel discussion, and facilitated side chats which extended awareness about local philanthropy in Malawi.

There was a strong call to grow more community foundations and build vibrant communities that can complement government development efforts. As a symbol of growing partnerships and commitment to local philanthropy, the National Bank of Malawi made a symbolic cheque presentation of 17.8 million kwacha (\$15,750), as a donation towards two community led projects. This was clearly an excellent example of how the private sector can play a significant role in local philanthropy.



With 63 participants in attendance from various regions of Malawi, the conference was marked by its high levels of engagement. Insights from various Stakeholders in Malawi included centering Chiefs in CFs leadership, increased participation, and engagement

## BUILDING SELF RELIANT COMMUNITIES! ZIKOMO!



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