

Wesnet Newsletter

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REMARKS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**WILLIES CHANOZGA MWANDIRA,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR- WESNET**

It is with gratitude that I welcome you to the third quarter edition of the WESNET newsletter for the year 2023. Looking back from where we are coming from and where we are now as a sector, I can testify that we have achieved great milestones and we are moving towards the right direction in providing quality WASH services.

The WASH sector in Malawi continues to face quite a number of challenges; poor funding, high vacancy rates, vandalism of public facilities, the Cholera pandemic which continues to be amidst us among others which show that a lot needs to happen if we are to have a strong WASH sector.

However, let me appeal to all our members and other WASH stakeholders in the country to stand firm, join hands and work together in our respective project implementation areas in the fight against Cholera which has resurfaced.

Let us provide all the support to the Ministry and district councils where necessary as this is our fight as a nation. So, let's unite and fight Cholera before the situation worsens since the rainy season is nearing.

Also allow me to applaud the government for continuing to recruit water monitoring assistants in various districts. This is a development that will help addressing some of the challenges facing the sector.

Let me also mention that there is progress on the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy which is currently in draft form waiting for cabinet approval. It is our hope as a sector that we will have the policy assented by the president this year, all things being equal.

I would like also to thank all of you who took part in the sweeping exercises that have been happening and it is my hope that we will continue patronising these events and render support in the upcoming Global Handwashing Day in October and World Toilet Day commemoration in November.

Enjoy the read.
Thank you.

A door of hope opens for Agatha



Community Members marvel at the works of the first ever youthful female Pump Mechanic in the Area



Waterpoint servicing in Progress

BY HERBERT CHAWINGA

Agatha Mpanyula is newly trained Area Mechanic living at Manondo village, in Dowa District.

She is only a month old in her career but already bringing remarkable impact in Repair and Maintenance of broken Waterpoints in her Area.

When Agatha lost her husband early this year, all hope for survival was gone as she lost the sole bread winner.

However, she is now back on her feet after ceasing the opportunity to be trained as an Area Mechanic by Beyond Water in collaboration with Malawi Government.

Agatha is confident that using the skills she acquired during the August-September 2023 Training, she will boost her livelihood and that of the community where most Water Points are non-functional due to lack professionalized repair and Maintenance Services. “Coming from the background of Water Point Committee Management, it has always hurt me to see bush mechanics break water points, I thought I could make a difference by becoming one of the skilled technicians who could improve the functionality of

the water points which in turn helps to reduce water related diseases.” Agatha said. “Through the training I have learnt borehole operation and maintenance, troubleshooting to find out reasons for breakdowns and problem solving.” She said.

Apart from the training, Agatha is grateful to Beyond Water for equipping her with right tools for her job. “Beyond Water has supported me with spanners, a bicycle for easy mobility, work and rain suits, bags and promises continuous coaching and mentorship sessions for me.” She said.

Though Agatha has just started her career as an Area Mechanic, she has already started engaging local structures in promotion of Direct Contracts so to ensure people from her area keep healthy by using safe and clean water always. “I have interacted with a few

Water Points, Chiefs and Area Development Committee Members, sensitizing them on the importance of entering Direct Contract with Beyond Water, and through such interactions I see my aspirations of becoming the best female mechanic ever, come true.” She concluded.

Agatha is responsible for maintenance of 32 Water Points in T/A Chakhaza

NGO target communities, institutions with WASH initiative



Mzimuwakana community members listening attentively

BY ANGELLA PHIRI

Mzimuwakana Village in Traditional Authority Chakhaza area in Dowa District, famous for its unique name, has an interesting story to share when it comes to caring for its only water source, a hand pump.

Drilled in 2020, the borehole has never been out of use and the narrative of the village has changed from a community where school dropouts were high as children were often sick due to lack of safe water accessibility to a community of hardworking learners.

“In a village setting, it is mostly women who fetch water for household usage and once a woman is sick it means the whole household suffers. In the past, this community relied on a stream which is a bit far from here and the water is not even safe.

“Women had no choice but to fetch that water thereby risking their lives and that of their family members.



Dembo explains how water borne diseases have reduced in the area

It was even harder for a sick woman to travel long distances in search for clean and safe water and drinking from swamps was the new normal,” narrated borehole committee chairperson, Chisomo Banda.

The community is lucky to have benefited from the Orant Charities Africa (OCA) Wash program as aside drilling the borehole for them, they also instituted a committee which was equipped on how to sustain the development.



Mfokose has been the one repairing and servicing the borehole

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The committee which has 11 members including the village head has been strategising on how they can find money to be paying the area mechanic who helps in repairing and maintaining the water source.

Explained village head Mzimuwakana: “About 42 households are currently benefiting from this borehole and since it was drilled, the community members have been proactive in fulfilling their own responsibility of paying a little something for maintenance.

“At first we used to find piece works as a community and after getting the money we could pay the area mechanic and the remaining money was being borrowed by members randomly through our village savings and loans. This has helped to increase the money after the six months given period for people to pay back the loans.”

Area mechanic for the area Mfokose Joseph said he services the borehole every three months and when a major problem occurs he rushes to help out.

He, however, applauded the committee on how they relate with him saying this makes the work easier and helps people to easily access safe water.

“I look after 100 boreholes but this community is one great example. They call whenever there is a problem and they always pay on time. This has made our relationship run smooth without any hurdles,”

laments Mfokose.

People from Kuliyani Village also benefitted from the works of Orant Charities and as explained by the water point committee secretary Josia Dembo, they have had their borehole since 2022 and since then cases of waterborne related diseases have reduced.

He said about 40 households are benefitting directly from the borehole and one sustainability measure they followed was to buy a piece of land where they will be cultivating various crops, after selling the harvests they will be keeping the money in their bank account for repair and maintenance.

“We started with household contributions but it did not work well with some that is why we decided to just find land which can help us generate income to be used for repairing and maintaining the water point,” he explained.

According to OCA Water Program Manager Mayamiko Mwenda the overall objective of the Wash program is to improve access to WASH services in TA Chakhadza, Dowa district.

He said to achieve the overall objective, the WASH program has four key implementation areas and these include; Water supply (borehole drilling), Operation and Maintenance (O & M) of Afridev pumps, as well as promotion of community and school sanitation.

Said Mwenda: “Since 2017 the following are the highlights for the WASH program; drilled 73 boreholes completed with Afridev pumps thus serving a population of about 26, 000, constructed improved pit latrines for boys and girls in 6 primary schools and progressively supports water point repairs in 310 water points in TA Chakhadza.

“Recently OCA has trained 10 sanitation entrepreneurs who are responsible for the construction of corbelled latrines and pit latrine slabs in 10 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in TA Chakhadza.

Mwenda added that, in 2024, the OCA WASH program plans to begin implementing min piped water schemes to further improve water supply as well as reach communities who are left behind in access to potable water supply due to the presence of saline aquifers in their villages and that overall, the OCA WASH program serves a population of over 44,000 in TA Chakhadza.

Mlozi community with clean and safe water



Mlozi community members using their rehabilitated borehole

BY ANGELLA KASHITIGU

Mlozi village has been using an old handpump that was constructed decades ago, in 1972, as clear as the community members can recall. However, despite servicing and maintaining their borehole whenever it breaks down, the borehole developed a major fault which they could not afford to repair.

With the situation at hand, the people from Mlozi village started using shallow wells to source water for most of their day-to-day household use like bathing, washing clothes, and cleaning utensils.

Chrissy Bezai a resident since birth, said that since the borehole was regularly breaking down until its abandonment, they have been using open shallow wells in the nearby gardens to source water for household use except for drinking since they understand the dangers of drinking unsafe water.

“For safe drinking water we have been relying on the borehole in Chisela village which is at an estimated 2 Kilometers distances from our village,” she said.

According to the information sourced from the interaction with some of the community members, it takes a minimum of 30 minutes walking to the borehole alone and for one to return home it can even take up to 2 hours since there are always other people

fetching water from the same source. As such people from Mlozi opt for the open wells and only go to Chisela to collect water for drinking.

Since the borehole in Mlozi village broke down, the community has been facing challenges to access safe water, from the distance covered to fetch water and using unsafe water sources, women from the community added that during the rainy season, the pathway to Chisela borehole became slippery making it difficult to walk while carrying buckets and another issues being regular quarrels among people fetching water.

In May 2023, the issue of covering long distances to fetch drinking water and using unsafe water sources became history after the borehole in Mlozi village was successfully rehabilitated under the Improving Access to Sustainable WASH Services in Dedza, Malawi project being implemented by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) with financial support from charity: water.

Aiming to improve the access to safe water for over 22,000 people in Traditional Authority Kaphuka in Dedza district, the project has been constructing new boreholes and rehabilitating 18 non-functional boreholes.

Mlozi village became one of the villages to be

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supported through the project after an assessment established that a major rehabilitation was required for the borehole and people were walking longer distances to fetch water among other reasons.

In May 2023, the rehabilitation works were successfully completed and according to Chrissy Bezai their water challenges became history as they are now able to fetch water just near their homes.

“With our borehole now functional I neither cover a long distance nor waste longer time waiting in the queue to fetch water. Another thing worth mentioning is that now I use only water from the borehole at my household; I even bathe a whole bucket full of water alone since I don’t have to worry about sparing the same water for other uses,” she added.

Through working with the Dedza District Council’s Water Development Office, the project has ensured establishment of Water Point Committees (WPCs) that have been trained in the regular preventing servicing of the boreholes to ensure their sustainability.

The WPC have also been trained in the mobilization of resources from their communities to ensure availability of funds to buy spare parts for the borehole whenever necessary.

Apart from ensuring the availability and sustainability of safe water, the communities in Kaphuka are also being encouraged to have traditionally improved latrines to further improve the sanitation and hygiene status in the area. Health Surveillance Assistants from T/A Kaphuka are using the Community Led Total in engaging their communities.

Baseda impressed with Dowa PRM learning visit



A community discussion with WPC members at GVH Nyakwa, in Traditional Authority Chakhaza in Dowa district

Basic Services Development Agency (BASEDA) is supporting Dedza district council in improving rural water supply services in Dedza district, in an effort to professionalise area mechanics services. A learning visit was organized from 23rd to 25th August, 2023 to tap from what Pump Aid, Beyond Water is doing in Dowa for similar efforts (professionalised repair and maintenance) of water points. During the visit, Baseda executive director Ephraim Munyala

expressed contentment with the programme being implemented by Beyond Water and the visiting area mechanics from Dedza District also expressed joy and willingness to learn how their friends in Dowa are working under the Beyond Water PRM programme.

Baseda in collaboration with WeltHungerHilfe (WHH) and Water and Environmental Sanitation Network (WESNET) are implementing the Wash Systems Strengthening Initiative II in Dedza district.

Promoting WASH for everyone in Chiradzulu district



Mpezeni- We used to face a lot of challenges

BY ANGELLA PHIRI

Born in 1941, Eggrey Mangulama from Kanjuchi Village in the area of Traditional Authority Likoswe of Chiradzulu district has for many years toiled to access safe drinking water.

Water borne related diseases never left her household and with old age, she could not manage to walk long distances to the nearby borehole which was also always full of people in search for water.

She said: “I had to rely on my grandchildren to bring me water for household use. There is a stream nearby where water for bathing and other domestic use was being drawn. Nethertheless, it was never safe for drinking, but without any other choice, that water became my only hope when thirsty.”

Washing vegetables and even her personal hygiene including washing hands after visiting the latrine/

toilet was not a priority as any drop of water available, whether safe or not was meant to be treasured.

Lucky for her, Kanjuchi village is a beneficiary of the World Vision and Water for People Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for Everyone in Chiradzulu District project which is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6) on clean water and sanitation for all and the government of Malawi’s objective to ensure universal access to WASH services.

Other than increasing access to clean water and improved sanitation and hygiene services, the three-year project seeks to reach all communities in the district with sanitation and hygiene promotion with the aim to certify the entire district as Open Defecation Free.

Mangulama is now happy to access tap water, a



The solar system at Maravi Health Centre in Chiradzulo

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development she describes as ‘the true definition of freedom’ as she is now free to just get a cup and fetch drinking water.

“Now I am a free human being and I will enjoy my old age. Imagine having to bath daily and put on clean clothes because water is now closer to home. I am very thankful and grateful to Water for People and World Vision for this development, indeed they thought of us older people in their project designing,” smiling Mangulama said.

Conquering with Mangulama, Kanjuchi Village Development Committee member who also happens to be the chairperson for Kanjuchi Water Scheme Ivy Mpezeni said women in the area used to face a lot of challenges in accessing water.

She said so far the scheme has about 35 taps that serves a community of 315 households with safe water in the villages of Kanjuchi, Malika and Lupinga.

“Every tap has a sub-committee to make sure that there is sustainability of the project. Every household is also expected to be contributing K500 monthly which we believe will be aiding us in maintaining the scheme,” said Mpezeni.

The project has also targeted institutions like hospitals and schools by installing the solar water articulated systems as one way of promoting institutional wash.

Maravi Health Centre senior health surveillance

assistant Thomas Banda said patients at the facility now no longer have challenges in accessing water for their medication and that cleanliness has also improved.

The facility which has a catchment of about 34 781 serves about 200 people on a daily basis and having readily available and safe drinking water was a must for such an institution.

He said: “It was hard for a patient to start medication on the spot when we didn’t have the water at the facility. We relied on a community borehole and it was really hard. But now things have changed with the water system within the facility premises.”

Group Village Head Mzembere applauded the project citing not only is the facility benefiting from the development but also members of her community.

The project has also intensified efforts in promoting sanitation and hygiene by building toilets and wash rooms for girls in schools.

Mzati primary school head teacher Margret Mdala said the school has maintained and increased its enrolment with the coming in of more modern toilets at the school.

“Most girls are now confident to come to school because the toilets have privacy as they have doors and that there is a change room which has made it easier for girls who are menstruating when it comes to their personal hygiene,” she said.

“Make Sanitation a Habit” - Director of Sanitation, Kanjaye.



SANITATION SMILES-Country Director for Pump Aid Beyond Water, Simon Msukwa (in white shirt) with Chief Sanitation Officer in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation Alexander Mwangonde (to his right) at Chinsapo Secondary School, prior to the cleaning exercise. {Down Inset: Kanjaye}

BY HERBERT CHAWINGA

Director of the Department of Sanitation and Hygiene in the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, Modester Kanjaye has appealed to Government and Non-governmental Organisations to be role models of the National Clean-Up Day initiative.

Kanjaye made the call during a government-initiated Clean-Up exercise that took place at Chinsapo Secondary School in Lilongwe on Friday. “Please save every Friday of the second week of a month for the clean-up works, instead of conducting office meetings. Most institutions have relaxed in terms of observing proper hygiene and sanitation measures following the reduction in cases of Covid 19 and Cholera in Malawi, but that is a big mistake,” She observed. “We have multiple annual recurrences of retrogressive diarrheal and more illnesses resulting from poor Hygiene and sanitation that require us to make Sanitation a habit beyond a single monthly event, if at all we have to develop as a nation.” She said.

Kanjaye pleaded with different organizations to donate assorted equipment to the Department of Sanitation



to effectively impact the clean-up exercise across the country.

Pump Aid Beyond Water donated brooms, face masks and gloves to students of Chinsapo Secondary School that were used during the exercise.

Country Director for Pump Aid Beyond Water Simon Msukwa said as a WASH organization, they were proud to honour the call from the Ministry and will keep supporting the noble clean-up cause as championed by the Government.” Sanitation is dignity and money, because the waste can be used in organic fertilizer production, enhancing economic growth of the country’ Msukwa said. He encouraged segregation of waste matter that could be key to creation of recycling-related jobs among the youths in Malawi.

The National Clean Up Campaign was launched by the State President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera at Chinsapo on 11 November 2020, and it is observed every second Friday of a month.

A clean path to wellness: Tales from Waliwali Ukhondo Campaign



James Chamera, from Ngilengile Village in Zomba, teaching his son how to use Mpondagiya handwashing station.

BY ULEMU MBENGWANI

In the districts of Zomba and Mangochi, an extraordinary force known as the Waliwali Hygiene Campaign, operating under the expansive umbrella of the Titukulane program, is weaving a compelling narrative of improved health and enriched well-being. This pioneering initiative seamlessly intertwines the realms of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) with the vital elements of nutrition and overall community health.

Through the unwavering dedication of individuals like Samson Stephano, a dedicated hygiene promoter and James Chimera, an empowered community member, the Waliwali Hygiene Campaign is crafting a future defined by holistic wellness.

Samson Stephano, a volunteer hygiene promoter in Zomba, wears his commitment on his sleeve. He passionately educates his community about the significance of optimal hygiene practices, emphasizing their profound impact on health.

“I am honored to serve as a volunteer hygiene promoter here in Zomba. My strong commitment to this role arises from the numerous advantages it offers, benefiting not only myself but also the broader community. My dedication stems from a sincere wish to share knowledge about effective hygiene practices, empowering families to protect their well-being. Seeing individuals adopt these practices and subsequently experience improved health serves as a continuous source of motivation for me”.

Samson envisions a future where the specter of diseases like diarrhea is eradicated, replaced by a landscape of good health. He draws strength from the community’s resilience, particularly during challenging times like the time their area was hit by Cyclone Freddy.

“Tangible evidence of our efforts emerged in the aftermath of Cyclone Freddy when our nation was grappling with a cholera outbreak. The tempest struck while the specter of cholera loomed over temporary camps. Contrary to expectations, meticulously observed hygiene practices, including thorough



Fabiano Black, a hygiene promoter and chairperson of Domasi Youth Empowerment Centre, reciting the Ukhondo Waliwali Campaign slogan during a hygiene training session.

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handwashing, prevented even a single cholera case from arising in the surrounding camps,” added Stephano.

James Chimera, a community member, encapsulates the impact of the Titukulane program through his family’s transformative journey. Recognizing the direct link between WASH and health, James took decisive steps to implement recommended measures.

In collaborating with his family, they constructed a covered toilet and established a Mpondagiya handwashing station. Their commitment to meticulous handwashing after using the restroom, using soap to eliminate germs, is a testament to their dedication.

According to Chimera, their collective effort revolves around shielding themselves from potential infections and ailments like cholera and stomach issues that can be spread by flies. He understands that children are particularly vulnerable to infections, leading them to prioritize hygiene education for their three children.

“Due to the increased vulnerability of children to infections, we are particularly vigilant in reminding them to practice proper hand hygiene after using the restroom. Additionally, when it comes to water consumption, we’ve implemented a specific protocol, which involves using two distinct cups: one

for transferring water from the bucket and another

exclusively for drinking. These precautions are implemented to ensure the safety and well-being of both ourselves and our children,” Chimera explained. Reflecting on their past struggles with unexplained episodes of diarrhea, James’s family identified hygiene deficiencies as the root cause. By aligning with the principles of the Waliwali Ukhondo campaign, they have successfully brought about a significant change in their lives.

No longer plagued by recurrent bouts of illness, they have embraced a newfound sense of well-being. Their story stands as a testament to the effectiveness of the Titukulane program in not only raising awareness but also empowering individuals to take charge of their health and the health of their community.

It is essential to note that at the heart of the Waliwali Hygiene Campaign’s triumphs lie the maintained and newly installed boreholes, gushing forth with clean water. These boreholes, the result of the Titukulane program’s visionary approach, are not mere water sources; they are lifelines to healthier lives.

Titukulane is being implemented by CARE and consortium partners: Save the Children (SC), Emmanuel International (EI), WaterAid, the National Smallholders Farmers’ Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with funding from USAID’s Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

Minister of water and sanitation's visit to Dowa Beyond Water programme area

Beyond Water, a social enterprise dedicated to improving access to safe and reliable water to rural communities through innovative repair and maintenance solutions for waterpoints, was honoured to host the Right Honourable Abida Sidik Mia, the Minister for Water and Sanitation, during her recent visit in Dowa District



Minister of Water and Sanitation, Hon. Abida Sidik Mia appreciates Beyond Water's Professionalized Repair and Maintenance of Water Pumps (PRM) at T/A Kayembe, Dowa.



T/A Kayembe (left) accompanies Minister of Water and Sanitation Hon. Mia during the visit to Waterpoints in the Chiefs area.



Beyond Water's Area Mechanic Steven Nyembere, briefs Mia on PRM Water Point Maintenance process.



Water Point Committee member explains the Benefits of Direct Contracts with Beyond Water in the PRM Model.



Dowa West MP Hon. Dr. Abel Kayembe applauds Beyond Water for raising Pump functionality rate to above 90% in his constituency.



Pump Aid Beyond Water's Country Director Simon Msukwa (middle) and the organization's Programmes Manager Chikondi Kaomba (right) interact with Personal Assistant to the Minister of Water and Sanitation Priscilla Ndelezina.