

Highlights of Community-Based Organization (CBO) Visits, April-June, 2018

Namileme, Thyolo District, April 20

This CBO has not seen us since OSA terminated its work in Malawi in 2012. They have been without help since then except for donations of a motorcycle and computer by Doctors Without Borders. Their pig pass-on program was wiped out by swine flu, but with a small VOCA grant they chose to do irrigation. They purchased three treadle pumps, got training from our irrigation consultant, Dyson Magombo, and planted maize. Caterpillar infection in Malawi wiped out this group's hard work and the grant's farm inputs. They are planting tomatoes and vegetables with hope of some income this year.

The group involved all its village in their agricultural project and have the traditional leaders' support. Their records historically have been excellent but weren't available for this visit. Outreach to children through CBCCs (Community-Based Childcare Centres) and Children's Corners continues with villagers supplying a daily meal. Their challenges are several: they did not seek help with the infection from VOCA and the Ag Extension Worker was not interested in advising them without an "allowance". The chair has disappeared with the Doctors Without Borders donations and some records, leaving another chairperson to be chosen.

Namileme needs continued monitoring to assess their potential to attain self-sufficiency. At this point they have a long way to go but have good participation and management.

Chitungu, Ntcheu District, April 21 and June 9, Two Celebrations



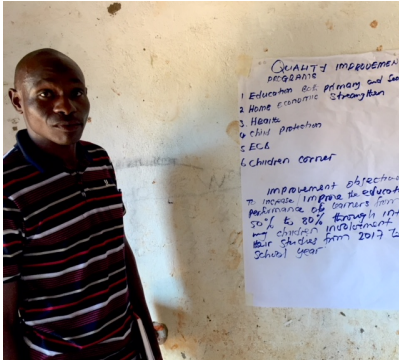
Rental home, Garry and Traz with CBO members.

The celebration of April 21st opened the last two of six rental units. Building started with a Gates grant and the last four units came with VOCA funding. Together they will provide \$180 per month for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) support and for restocking their nine piggeries, one in each village. We believe that this CBO will be one of the first to establish enough income to become self-sustaining. However, with the cold nights and not enough time to build a bank reserve, they requested direct aid of blankets. We agreed but not without some concern about diverting some funds from building IGAs (Income Generating Activities). We also

learned that the Group Village Headwoman has jurisdiction now over 18 villages, rather than the nine supported in the past by Chitungu. This will put pressure on the CBO to meet the needs of more OVC and pressure on VOCA to decide how to address this expansion in future funding cycles.

Nkata, Mangochi District, April 23

Located up the escarpment to the east of Lake Malawi, this CBO has good community participation and the GVH (Group Village Headman/woman) remains active and well informed of the group's activities. With OSA funds they constructed a well-maintained community



resource centre that houses a CBCC, the tailoring project and a meeting hall. They have targeted 623 OVC for assistance out of 1,900 registered. The tailoring project has its successes as well as major challenges. They sourced community contributions to repair their 3 broken machines, but now struggle to get enough young adults as trainees. They have a small amount in the bank, MK25,500, and a large amount in unsold stock, MK121,500. Several graduates have left for South Africa as well. VOCA funded a goat pass-on project of 34 animals. Eight died, but there are 22 babies.

It is too early to assess how the goat program will progress. The tailoring needs some advice on marketing, so the group would benefit from a visit to MCV's program which was approved by their tailoring supervisor. Leadership may get a boost from a young man, pictured above, back from South Africa who is motivated, organized and articulate (Chichewa and English). He oversees the children's programs for Nkata. It's hard to predict how this CBO will fare. They need a bit of fire in their bellies and perhaps new management officers. Another grant is not anticipated during the next several months.

Chimwala, Mangochi District, April 24

This CBO was funded by Gates grant in Yr1 and Yr2, but poor administration and an unmanageably large catchment area resulted in OSA not awarding a third grant. Their maize mill has survived and was running when Feston noticed it. He stopped and his inquiry uncovered a vague arrangement with a businessman who reconnected the mill's electricity and was recovering his investment by running the mill. BUT no one could tell us how much that debt was, how much had been paid on it or when the CBO would reclaim the mill. Feston's intervention with all parties got the operation transferred back to Chimwala and money is again benefiting the OVC. The mill produces an excellent flour and is competitive with three nearby mills. Their catchment area is now a manageable seven villages and an Oversight Committee has been appointed. Of course they would like another grant, but VOCA is unsure if they are able to resume full CBO activities. We'll wait and see. Monitoring can be done occasionally when Feston drives past it along the main road from Mangochi to Zomba.

Chidoole, Mwanza District, April 25

This group got a grant in Gates's final year before OSA "went away". Chidoole built three CBCCs and got caregiver training and school materials. There 635 OVC in six villages, with 372 children attending their CBCCs. An OVC Oversight Committee solicits contributions for meals and monitors school attendance, which is at an excellent 80%. Fifteen girls are supported in schools with 3 boarding and 12 commuting. It seems the CBO has active participation and maintained their education programs with few/no outside donations. They would like to have irrigation to expand their farming program and more caregiver training due to turnover of CBCC aides. Their potential is difficult to assess with this one visit. More will need to be learned about them before considering VOCA's next steps.

Kapiri, Nhkotakota District, April 28

Kapiri has operated its maize mill (a Gates grant) since electric connection was completed after a long wait. VOCA gave them a grant for a battery charging station and a barber shop. They have not purchased the charger or barber instruments and again await electric hook up. The group is very transparent, presents plenty of data about programs, enjoys high community participation and has full support of the traditional leaders. Of 508 OVC in



seven villages, about 310 are targeted and supported (83 of them are positive for HIV-AIDS). The group was originally formed to provide HIV/AIDS support and continues to focus on this population, although OSA/VOCA is clear, and they understand, that our funds are to target OVC. They have 18 CBCCs although only 3-4 are operational due to lack of food for the daily meal. There are Oversight Committees for each IGA and members are in charge of monitoring the maize mill, making the deposits and approving use of funds recommended by the Executive Committee—practices that make it one the best designs we've encountered for accountability and transparency for both their community and for donors.

The CBO has not adequately researched their electric input needs for the battery charging station which should happen before purchasing the charger and finalizing the electrical connections. Overall Kapiri is exceptionally well organized and looks to be one of our brightest stars.

Chilungamo, Chiradzulu District, May 5

Feston and I met to follow-up on misuse of about \$200 for purposes not connected to the grant, i.e. registration the CBO as an NGO (Non-Government Organization). To confound the problem they could not produce receipts for the license and lawyer fees. Our displeasure, as well as the Group Village Headman's (GVH), was made clear and they know that their request for 44 goats as replacements for dead animals was in jeopardy. To their credit, no pun intended, is their prior performance with two goat pass-on programs that have distributed goats to 569 OVC. Animals sales have supported school fees, housing, food and clothing for their children. We will make this grant but with the stipulation that they must establish an Oversight Committee with a design similar to Kapiri's that would remove the Executive from handling funds to purchase or distribute goats.



Above: Sherifa, on right getting a goat at Chilungamo and now at 15 years. She will get a replacement goat for one that died so she can attend secondary school from sales of the mother's offspring.

Masangamo, Phalombe District, May 12



After an earlier piece on this CBO's pig pass-on program a friend gave me the title, "Pig Pyramid Program". Indeed from 30 to 250 pigs with 150 OVC benefiting to date. Using clever sets of five - one of whom gets the first pig and four that wait for a pass-on animal, but all are responsible for the pig's care and feeding. This program has survived floods and loss of the central piggery. The pigs are back and the piggery will be reconstructed on a smaller scale and thereby provide the CBO itself with another IGA. It also has 40 goats with 30 now pregnant and 3 babies born. An OSA funded Resource Centre holds mobile medical clinics, adult literacy classes, relief distribution, an administrative office and other community services. Community participation remains high and Traditional Leaders attend its meetings. This will be one of the first CBOs, we believe, to reach independence from donors, although at the moment they don't like how risky this sounds.

Sukamiere, Mulanje District, May 13



This CBO has a maize mill built with a Gates grant and has functioned sporadically. It has needed Feston to tell them to collect community donations to repair the drive. We intervened with the GVH about two competing chairpersons and encouraged practices that improve community awareness and participation. This IGA could be another "Phoenix", running again and providing income for OVC—we will see as Feston monitors for compliance. They have not received a VOCA grant since they have some leadership conflicts and the CBO activities remain an enigma for many in their villages.

A SUMMARY OF CBO VISITS IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS, MAY 24-27

—accompanied by Synate Ngwira, Consultant—

Six CBOs were visited, none are receiving VOCA funding. Decisions will have to be made whether the logistics of monitoring them fit into our program. Here are thumbnails on Vintukutu, Twavwane, Chitemwano, Chilerawalanda, Eehleni and Chifundo.

Vintukutu, Karonga District, May 23.

This CBO initially seemed to offer much potential. Their Gates-funded kerosene station was constructed well and quickly. The country then had major shortages of kerosene and the CBO floundered. They conduct surveys of their OVC, but appear to wait for donors to come rather

than seeking them out. Their activities appear to be few and its unlikely that VOCA will consider them for funding.

Twavwane, Chitipa District, May 24



Without phone service, the chairman was fortunately found in his nearby garden and gave us a detailed report from his notes; fortunate, too, that he spoke English as Synate, my northern consultant on this trip, did not know the local dialect. They have targeted 107 of their 500 OVC with school supplies and food from gardens for their 4 CBCCs. The CBO meets twice a month and gets community donations to support their needy constituents. Record keeping appears very good and the Chair, William Nyondo, pictured, gave specific answers to our questions. They have approached the District social welfare officer about grant opportunities, but believe he has little interest in them. They would like some help in grant writing. I gave them a “referral” to a local Peace Corps teacher who would likely be happy to assist them. This CBO is not only in the furthestmost district in Malawi, but is 45 minutes up a dirt road—a lovely trip into beautiful country with plenty of old growth trees. I was quite

impressed with their sincerity and attention to recording their activities. They have excellent community participation. The idea arises of whether Feston could monitor the group by phone (through messaging to arrange time to talk) and visit perhaps annually or semi-annually. They appear to be transparent and hard working. Is it worth the small risk of a small \$1,500 grant?

Chitemwano, Karonga District, May 24

A long discussion could happen re: this CBO. Suffice it to say they have built four classrooms, support 10 secondary school students and have 840 OVC in their 7 villages. Our history with them began with a Fulton sponsored Resource Centre was only partial completed. It now has walls, roofing and cement floor in the main hall, but remains incomplete. Yet it is clear they found funds for completion of the Centre and for three more classroom blocks with donors funds. It is hard to believe the funds came from sales of maize and soy as they claim. The school failed financially after the community demanded free education for their OVC. It's not a group VOCA can support due to their failed OSA projects, but I sent Willie Fulton, Director of The Mango Tree Foundation who has a program in nearby southern Tanzania, an honest review of their work and history. He indicated an interest in visiting them. Their emphasis on education is consistent with The Mango Tree's goals. (TMT may be expanding to Malawi). With close supervision by TMT, it might be a good fit.

Chilerawalanda, Mzimba District, May 26

Although expecting us, few were available for our meeting due to an induction of a GVH. The group has not been active, appears to be aging out with few youth participating and had no records to show us. They report that they are still meeting and current target 110 of 270 registered OVC. It does not appear to be an active CBO.

Ehehleni, Mzimba District, May 26

Somewhat of a paradox. They are large with 72 villages with 585 OVC and 74(!) CBCCs and 6 Children's Corners with 3,578 children being served. They have vibrant committees with

targeted activities for each and the community is contributing money for needy OVC. They replaced a damaged roof on their Resource Centre with local donations. Contrast this fine presentation with the failure of their vocational skills—carpentry and tailor—when equipment was lost or broken. They made no attempt to resolve this problem and stated that they had other priorities. Since vocational training was a major OSA contribution, their cavalier response to these failures makes us ponder whether to make further grants, but they bear watching.

Chifundo, Karonga District, May 27

Mersey Kaphaizi, the chairperson, came to meet us even though we had no phone number to tell her we were coming. A small group gathered on this Sunday and supplied good information on their 119 OVC in 16 villages. They support 214 children (not just OVC) in their CBCCs and run four Children's Corners. They had paid fees for 12 students, with four dropping out, and for three in secondary school. A two acre community garden gives some food for the CBCCs. Youth dramas on HIV prevention are also supported by local contributions. However, it is the executive committee members (10 women, 5 men) that donate money for on-going needs. Their pig project, funded by a Gates Yr 3 grant, failed due to swine flu and the last piglets were sold per advice of the District Social Worker. They wish to start an IGA using agricultural sales although they have no water source to support irrigation. They also want CBCC caregiver training and supplies. This CBO impressed me with their sustained efforts for their children without any outside funding. They still seemed in shock that OSA did not return after their single Gates grant. It would be a CBO worth considering if they come up with a viable IGA. I liked their effort despite the lack of any donors.

[End of review for northern CBOs]

TOOA, NSANJE DISTRICT, JUNE 2

A maize mill has been providing an income for longer than any other CBO mill funded by OSA. It has good financial records and careful oversight. We were somewhat surprised, therefore, when the Oversight Committee chair could not tell us what the current profit was. VOCA granted funds for 55 goats (53 surviving). A separate Oversight Committee was appointed with three women and four men. They are closely monitoring the animals for sickness, avoidance of early sales and administering the pass-on process, which has not begun since its early in the reproductive cycle.

They would like their IGA is to get a sheller so the mill can compete with two others in the area. They have not done a marketing study, but point at the customers waiting at the other mills. They also point out that electric blackouts every 2-3 days per week has reduced their profits. More time will be needed to evaluate the success of the goat program before considering another grant. They must also think carefully about chances for success of any future IGA.

GASO, DEDZA DISTRICT, JUNE 9

The butchery project is temporarily suspended by government order to halt killing of animals (possible diseased) but to date has earned MK4,000 per day, an average of MK80,000/month. They have MK351,000 in the bank in a separate account and there is an Oversight Committee with one member from each village. A VOCA grant for purchase of 50 goats has been completed and two goats were distributed to each village. This data came from one Executive Committee member but the other attendees, about 40, were quiet. When pressed, members of the two Oversight Committees could not give much information. They reported meeting regularly however. Feston and I spent some time in emphasizing the need for participation so that members feel they had a role in the committees. The CBO has not held community meetings, instead relying on the committee members to report to their VH's and villages.

GASO has strong leadership and we often find executive staff on computers when visiting. Today suggests that community participation may be a problem and a potential threat that could isolate the leadership. The leaders appeared to agree although that does not mean compliance. Further visits are needed. Their task in VOCA's view can be said in three words; Empower the Committees. GASO has made no request per this meeting for additional funding since their goat pass-so process is just beginning.