

The Allan & Nesta Charitable Trust supported the implementation of a Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) project in 16 communities in Mchinji district, Malawi, leading to more than 1,880 people having access to safe and clean water. The communities were chosen for the project based on their critical need for safe water and demonstrated commitment to support and sustain the project. One of the communities that benefitted from the grant is **Kamoto village**, located in the area of Traditional Authority Dambe in Mchinji District.

Most of the community members of Kamoto village had experienced challenges in accessing potable water for domestic use. This project was truly a relief to the community.



Figure 1: This a common scene in many rural areas and so it was in Kamoto village

Juliana and Stefano are residents of Kamoto village.

They have been married for 17 years and have 5 children.

Their eldest child is Yeremiya and he is 16 years old whilst their youngest, Vesta, is 8 years old.

Stefano and Juliana have been living in Kamoto village as long as they can remember.

They were there when Pump Aid visited the village to implement the project:

*“When Mr. Gondwe came to our village to tell us about the water project we were still doubtful because we have been having these people promising us to end our water supply problem for so long and nothing seemed to be done. No one cared about our situation”* recalls Stefano.

According to Juliana, the water project was introduced to the community through Pump Aid with its partners from Ministry of Health which is their key implementation partner. During needs assessment, frontline staff from the Ministry of health were involved to facilitate site identification. After that, the Pump Aid team went for site verification. These project stages are crucial to ensure that standards for ground water supply are adhered to. The project aims to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders which is key for sustainability as they continuously monitor, mentor and supervise the communities involved.

Before the inception of the project, the community members were asked to contribute locally available resources such as bricks and sand, and to provide human capital (labour). This is a very important step towards the project implementation process as it ensures ownership and hence project sustainability.

*“We had to show commitment to the project so we had to fulfil our end of the bargain. When we were told that the pump installation processes will need bricks for well lining, we had no single brick here. Therefore, all community members, led by the village chief, agreed to mould bricks for the project,”* said Stefano.

The community moulded up to 2,500 bricks which were mainly used for lining of the well before the pump installation process. Stefano said that everyone was very happy when the bricks and sand were finally ready and the community was excited about the project.

*“When we finally got all the locally sourced materials together, the Pump Aid team came and assessed the materials. The team was very satisfied with the nature and quality of the materials and construction begun immediately”* explained Stefano.



The pump has been functioning properly ever since installation.

Figure 2: Stefano George demonstrating how the elephant pump works

Juliana applauded Pump Aid for making the water project a reality:

*“Oh! Life was really terrible before pump installation. We used to share the water point with dogs, goats, pigs and all sorts of animals,”*.

She said that the situation could get worse during the rainy season:

*“When it comes to a rainy season like this one then we all knew that we are in deep trouble. All the surface running water were ending up in our well since it was not lined and covered,”*.

She said that these conditions escalated the problem of diarrhea, especially amongst children under five. She said that out of her 5 children, 3 of them could get sick with diarrhoea in the space of one month. Results from the baseline survey that was conducted showed that prevalence rate for diarrhoea among under five children was 27.4%. This has been reduced to 12.2% currently, an indication that the project has had an impact and is a success in the community.

*“That means I was in and out of the hospital in seeking care for my children’s diarrhoea. This was very inconvenient since I was spending most of my time attending my sick children instead of concentrating on farming activities,”* continued Juliana.

The installation of the pump in Kamoto village has helped to reduce water woes. Juliana said that the pump is easy to use for women, it is even more convenient to use for men.

*“It’s now water with a swing and men are now even helping women in fetching water compared to the past because fetching water using a bucket was quite tedious and inappropriate for most men,”* explained Stefano.

When the pump installation was done, Pump Aid continued with monitoring and supervision of the community to mentor them on proper sanitation and hygiene behaviour. The village’s water point management committee (WPMC) members attended an Operation and maintenance (O&M) training workshop.

This training is very important because it equips WPMCs with essential knowledge and skills on the operation and maintenance of the elephant pump.



Figure 3: WPMCs undergoing through the handwashing practice concept during the O & M training

Juliana, who is also the secretary to the village’s WPMC underwent this training and summarises her learning:

*“We learnt great skills on operation and maintenance of the pump which we could have never learnt had it not been for the project. We learnt how to fix the rope and washers when they are worn out. We also learnt the essence of handwashing using soap and flowing water. You know, before the training, when it comes to meal times, because we eat together in one circle, all my family members were washing hands from the same washbasin, starting with my husband finishing with my last born daughter so you could imagine how terrible it was”.*

According to Juliana, the training gave her a lot of insights on various sanitation and hygiene issues and through the training she finally understood why her community was affected by various diarrhoeal related diseases. She said that during the training they also learnt how to fundraise and save money and resources for the maintenance of the pump whenever it breaks down.

*“We do monthly contributions and sometimes casual labour. That has helped us to raise up 13,800 Malawi Kwacha which has been saved in our maintenance fund,”* explained Juliana.

The amount of money raised is equivalent to £13.60 at current exchange rate. This amount of money is enough to buy an extra replacement rope and washers for the pump.

Life has changed ever since the pump was installed at Kamoto village, a home to more than 18 households with a population of 80 people. The community now has access to safe and clean water and diarrhoea is now a thing of the past. Stefano and Juliana George expressed great gratitude to the Allan & Nesta Charitable Trust and Pump Aid for the project.

*“The installation of the pump acted as the turning point in our lives on issues to do with water, sanitation and hygiene,”* concluded Stefano.