

FEBRUARY, 2025

# ORANT CHARITIES AFRICA MONTHLY PROGRAM REPORT



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## **Acronyms & Abbreviations**

ADC	-	Area Development Committee
AM	-	Area Mechanic
AEDO	-	Agricultural Extension Development Officer
CBM	-	Community Based Management
CDSS	-	Community Day Secondary School
CONGOMA	-	Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi
FDGs	-	Focus Group Discussions
FEM	-	Financial Empowerment Microloan
JCE	-	Junior Certificate of Education
MSCE	-	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NGORA	-	Non-Governmental Organization Regulatory Authority
OCA	-	Orant Charities Africa
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	-	Traditional Authority
VSL	-	Village Savings and Loans
WASH	-	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WPC	-	Water Point Committees

## Introduction

Orant Charities Africa (OCA) is a non-governmental organization serving in rural communities of Malawi. It was registered as an NGO in Malawi in 2014. OCA is registered under the Trustees Act and also with both NGORA and CONGOMA governing institutions. OCA serves in Malawi through Healthcare and implementing other development programs such as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education, Agriculture, Business Development, Energy and Environment. This monthly report outlines milestones from the month of February, 2025 in our WASH program, Education, Agriculture, Business Development, Energy and Environmental Programs;

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Program

### Executive Summary

The WASH Program is undergoing a shift towards more sustainable practices in terms of borehole maintenance, and more notably shifting from only drilling boreholes to designing and implementing piped water projects as well. The Strategic Objectives of the Program Includes;

1. Design, construct, and maintain WASH infrastructure
2. Promote sanitation and hygiene in communities and institutions
3. Involve new sustainability and educational practices in programs

In February, 2025, the program conducted several activities aligned with these key implementation areas as follows;

### Summary of Monthly Achievements

The following milestones were achieved during the month;

- Water point maintenance (Service/preventive: 19; Reactive maintenance: 0)
- Focus Group Discussion with WASH stakeholders at Katalima
- Assessment of borehole drilling sites

- Follow-up Meeting with Kabuluzi Water Users' Association (WUA)

## **Detailed Narration of Monthly Achievements**

### **Water Point Operation and Maintenance**

The WASH program repairs boreholes in response to a breakdown, this approach is known as reactive maintenance. Similarly, the program conducts routine services for boreholes before they break down, and this approach is known as Preventive maintenance.



*Preventive maintenance sessions in Chitsulo and Nkhwichi villages respectively*

The program supported **19** preventive and no reactive reactive maintenance for water points. So far in 2024, the program has conducted 43 preventive and 3 reactive maintenances.

### **Focus Group Discussions (FDGs) with School WASH stakeholders at Katalima**

To ensure that community inputs are taken on board in proposal development, the WASH program in collaboration with Grants office organized an FDG with school WASH

stakeholders at Katalima primary school. These FDGs were organised with the aim of conducting a needs assessment for the WASH program proposal to the Reece Foundation. During the FDGs participants were categorized in groups as follows; Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), Learners, Mother Group and School Management Committee (SMC). Following the discussions it was observed that the school has insufficient number of latrines especially for boys. Furthermore, there is a need for revamping the Mother Group to facilitate Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) which is also among the priority needs at the school.



*Left: A WASH focus group discussion with members of the school management at Katalima school,*

*Right: A focus group discussion with students at Katalima school*

### **Follow up Meeting with Kabuluzi Water Users' Association**

Following the trip learning visit to Chikhoma piped water project, the WASH program organized a follow-up meeting with Kabuluzi Water Users Association (WUA). The aim of the meeting was to obtain feedback from the learning visit to Chikhoma piped water project. More importantly, the meeting was also used to consolidate lessons learnt during the learning visit. The following were some of the key lessons which were derived from the visit;

- Use of chlorine tablets to treat water supplied by the system.
- Having system operators who manage the system on a daily basis.
- Use of flow water meters to monitor water usage and system efficiency.





*A section of participants during a followup meeting with water point committees for Kabuluzi piped water project*

## **Assessment of proposed borehole drilling sites**

Prior to drilling boreholes in villages, the WASH program conducts assessment of proposed borehole drilling sites. Proposed sites for borehole drilling sites are identified by different stakeholders within the WASH program. Some of the stakeholders include; Chiefs, Teachers, Area Development Committees (ADCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), Area Mechanics, and other Government extension workers. During assessments, OCA staff collect data on the number of people, current water sources, population, and water quality issues e.t.c in the proposed villages. This information determines the feasibility of drilling a borehole in a proposed village. The WASH program visited Bweya, Nkhwichi, Makombwa, Katsuka and Mambala to conduct proposed borehole drilling sites assessments.

## **Conclusion**

The month of February was another successful month in program implementation. The objective for the month was to enhance stakeholder coordination. Stakeholder coordination is key in implementation and sustainability of the WASH program initiatives.

# Agriculture and Business Development Programs

## Agriculture Program

### Executive Summary

The Mission of the Agriculture program is to sustainably bolster Malawi's agricultural capacity by providing loans, educating farmers, investing in farming equipment and infrastructure, and improving access to markets. The program has the following strategic objectives;

1. Increase focus on education, business, and entrepreneurship through an improved connection to the Business Development Program
2. Audit core programs and improve relationships with key stakeholders for more sustainable programming.
3. Invest in the development of Malawian agriculture through cooperatives, increased storage capacity, value-adding activities, machinery, and by developing Orant's own capacities.
4. Develop permaculture on campus and in the community and act as center of education and sustainability

OCA supports smallholder farmers in both irrigation and rainfed farming through the provision of farm inputs microloans and agriculture expertise. The OCA Agriculture program responds to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); SDG1- End poverty, SDG2 which is dedicated to ending hunger, improving food security and nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture, SDG 8 of Decent work and Economic growth. The activities conducted in February are presented as follows;





## **Dowa District Tree Planting Launch**

The Dowa district tree planting launch took place in Madisi Extension Panning area (EPA), at Nambamba village. This initiative is part of a broader effort to promote environmental conservation, combat deforestation and enhance community participation in sustainable land management practices. The activity featured a range of activities including the tree planting exercise where community members, local authorities and partners participated in planting a variety of tree species. The event was attended by various stakeholders including district officials, local traditional leaders and representatives from different NGOs. The Launch at Nambamba village was a significant step towards promoting environmental conservation and community resilience.



*Community leaders, community members and other stakeholders planting trees during tree planting launch*

## **Monitoring Agriculture Cooperative Farms**

During the reporting period, monitoring exercise on farms for Kasese Producers and Marketing (KPM) cooperative members was conducted to evaluate crop performance and assess the potential for loan repayment. The exercise aimed to determine the current status of crops, identify challenges affecting productivity and recommend necessary interventions to ensure successful harvests and timely loan repayment. The majority of the farms were found with crop variations based on farm location and soil condition. Certain farms showed signs of pest and disease infestations hence required urgent interventions on pest and disease control measures. Some members faced challenges due to unpredictable weather patterns leading to poor crop germination in some areas. Based on the monitoring visit and current market prices of commodities, it is estimated that more members of the cooperative will be able to meet their loan repayment deadlines. By implementing recommended strategies, the cooperative can improve productivity, improve financial sustainability and ensure successful loan recovery.



*Cooperative member standing on his Maize field during monitoring visit*

### **Top dressing fertilizer application**

To enhance soil fertility, improve crop growth and maximize yield potential, top dressing fertilizer application was conducted on maize crop at OCA farm. The appropriate fertilizer type of Urea was applied at the vegetative stage of crop growth when nutrient demand is high. The top-dressing fertilizer application will significantly contribute to improved crop performance.

### **Pest and disease control**

Fall armyworms and termites pose significant threats to agricultural productivity. Effective control measures are vital to minimize losses and ensure food security. Fall armyworms cause damage by feeding on plant leaves and burrowing into corn ears while termites feed on plant roots and stems causing plants to wither and die. Recommended pesticides were applied in the morning and late in the evening when pests were most active, to control both fall armyworms and termites.

### **Food Relief Planning Meeting with community leaders**

The OCA agriculture office convened a meeting with community leaders which include Chiefs, HAS's, AEDO, AEDIC, ADC and lead farmers to discuss the implementation of a food distribution/relief program. The purpose of this meeting was to outline the operation framework, ensure transparency and coordinate efforts to support vulnerable community members. This initiative aims to assist individuals facing food insecurity including the elderly, child-headed households, individuals with malnutrition-related health issues and those not benefiting from other food relief programs. To ensure fairness in the process of selection, it was agreed that all community members within the same catchment area will meet at a designated central location for selection of the beneficiaries. OCA representatives were present during the day of selection of

beneficiaries to oversee the process and ensure that the intended beneficiaries have been selected. The selection and verification of these beneficiaries was done in collaboration with community leaders and HSA's. By centralizing distribution, engaging community leaders and ensuring OCA oversight, it aimed at providing food assistance in a transparent and efficient manner.



*Addressing the stakeholders on food relief program*

## **Distribution of Maize to the beneficiaries**

The food relief exercise entails distribution of Maize (the Malawi's staple food) to improve food security in the villages. Maize distribution process was done in communities of Kasese and Kasungu specifically targeting Bowe Parish and BOMFA cooperative catchment areas. The Maize was distributed to vulnerable households which were selected by community members. A total of 2,000 bags was allocated to these communities with the breakdown as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b># of bags per area</b>	<b>Total beneficiaries</b>
Kasese	1600	3200
Bowe parish	200	400
BOMFA Cooperative	200	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>4000</b>

A total of 25Kgs was earmarked for each household to receive. The distribution was coordinated with HSA's and local authorities to ensure transparency and accountability. There was high demand where more households than anticipated needed assistance. Both areas acknowledged the distribution as vital in sustaining food availability during



hunger period. The maize distribution initiative successfully reached the intended communities and strengthened food security.



*Food relief beneficiaries during the day of distribution*

## **Learning visit at ripple Africa**

In coordination with the Energy and Environment Program Manager, a learning visit was conducted at Ripple Africa (An NGO working in the northern Malawi) to gain insights into their various community development programs. According to the agriculture program, the fruit production project from Ripple Africa has more potential to be applied in the communities which OCA is working in. The project activities include training of farmers on best agronomic practices, establishment of fruit nurseries, distribution of seedlings to individuals with malnutrition-related health issues and training the participants on techniques of propagation, and pests and disease control to enhance productivity. The lessons learned can be applied at OCA to improve environmental conservation, food security and sustainable livelihoods. Further collaboration with Ripple Africa organization and other stakeholders is recommended to scale up these impactful interventions.



*Learning visit at Ripple Africa in Nkhata Bay*

## **Business Development Program**

### **Executive Summary**

The Business Development Program continues to offer a beacon of light to the women entrepreneurs around the Kasese catchment area by offering microloans and business management mentorship and support. The Mission of the program is *to empower local entrepreneurs, especially women by offering fair and accessible business loans, expanding financial literacy, and promoting community saving culture through VSL groups*. The Strategic Objectives of the program are;

1. Expand Business Development program educational offerings
2. Begin offering medium-sized business loans
3. Develop VSLs through collaborative programming
4. Expand FEM program and continue to offer microloans and business support
5. Expand access and education for Digital Financial Services

Women entrepreneurs in the Kasese catchment area continue to receive financial and literacy support from OCA. Financially empowered women are better equipped to make sound financial decisions that can enhance their personal well-being and contribute to the overall prosperity of the community. This report outlines the various activities that the Business Development program planned and executed in February;

### **Digital Financial Literacy (DFL) Training**

In 2021, OCA, with support from Strategic Impact Advisors, launched a digital financial literacy campaign aimed at educating communities on the use of digital financial services and bridging the digital divide. Recognizing persistent gaps in digital financial service usage, a rise in fraudulent digital scams, and challenges in financial management, it became necessary to relaunch the campaign.

The renewed campaign comes at a time when frequent physical meetings are difficult due to poor road networks and farming commitments, making it prudent to train individuals to leverage virtual meetings. To effectively implement the campaign, the business development program relied on the "Hey Sister, Show Me the Mobile Money" campaign champions. In February, OCA organized a refresher training session for these champions



before deploying them into communities. With their assistance, we successfully trained 28 clubs, reaching a total of 407 individuals.



*Digital financial literacy champions during and after the refresher training*



*Gwiritsa VSL groups after a DFL training session*

## **Stakeholder meetings**

OCA recognizes the importance of collaborating with other stakeholders in its efforts. A virtual meeting was held with Sun King, a solar energy company, to explore the potential for collaboration. The objective of the meeting was to gain a broader understanding of Sun King's operations, pricing strategies, and their approach to partnering with NGOs. Prior to the meeting, proposals were put forward to involve the women entrepreneurs in

the Business Development Program by either engaging them as solar energy distributors or having OCA purchase solar lanterns for distribution to the women entrepreneurs. The initiative aims to improve access to power within the communities.

Furthermore, Airtel Malawi hosted a virtual training session to assist us in creating an online profile for seamless access to the mobile money account. The training also provided guidance on utilizing various features of their online platform. With the establishment of the online business account, OCA will now be able to access account statements of mobile money transactions—something that was previously not possible. This development will enhance transparency and accountability in loan repayments while simplifying the reconciliation process.

## Monitoring Visits

Visits to businesses for women entrepreneurs continued to focus on monitoring business progress, providing encouragement and mentorship, and following up on loan repayments. The visits specifically aimed to orient the women entrepreneurs on the new mobile money payment modalities, in addition to the routine purposes of the visits. For quite some time, we faced challenges with the old payment method, as it had a daily receipt and transfer limit of MWK 750,000. With the increase in loan amounts, higher receipt limits became necessary. Consequently, we upgraded by opening a new mobile money account. This new system will not only accommodate larger transactions but also enhance mobile money usability, as it requires women entrepreneurs to make individual payments.



*Rabecca(L) from Kasese on a market day and Anastasia (R) from Sapeya kneading the dough for her scone*

## **Village Savings and Loan groups**

The VSL meetings continued as usual, with all FEM groups gathering for their weekly sessions. These meetings not only enhance group collaboration but also foster economic resilience, and ensure the sustainability of the business development initiatives. The Kasese groups (Tikondane and Tiyanjane) agreed to meet on Thursdays, using this opportunity to strategize for the group project they are jointly working on. Previously, Tiyanjane met on Fridays while Tikondane met on Thursdays. Similarly, the Takondwa FEM group from Kachigamba has rescheduled their meetings to Fridays instead of Thursdays, which was aligning with their market day.

## **Conclusion**

In Conclusion, the various initiatives undertaken by the business development this reporting month demonstrate OCA's commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs and fostering sustainable economic growth within communities. Through the Program, enhanced digital financial literacy training, and strategic collaborations with stakeholders such as Sun King and Airtel Malawi, may contribute to fostering strategic partnership, reduced mobile money financial scams/fraud in communities, and lessening inefficiencies in loan management. Furthermore, monitoring visits and the ongoing activities of the VSL groups continue to strengthen community resilience, collaboration, and the sustainability of business initiatives.

# Education Support Program

## Executive Summary

The Orant Education Program contributes to SDG 4 of Quality Education and also SDG number 5 of Gender Equality. Currently the Education Program is undergoing a gradual shift in funding towards local schools on top of the support of individual students. The Program Mission Statement is *to support and empower local underprivileged students and schools by supporting primary, secondary and tertiary*



*students with tuition, supplies, and mentoring needs, and investing in local schools and their teachers.* The following are the Strategic Objectives of the Education Program;

1. Strengthen local schools and educational institutions and prepare for Orant Library and Community Center
2. Continue secondary school sponsor program
3. Strengthen tertiary education support

The OCA education program has supported different students since the program started in 2017. The program strives to have 85% girls and 15% boys to ensure that all the genders have opportunities for education. The focus is much on girls who are usually not prioritized culturally. Activities organized by the Education program in February, 2025 are as follows;

## School Monitoring Visit & Distribution of Supplies

The effective support to students carries more weight in their education because it fosters motivation, builds confidence and promotes a growth mindset. The OCA education



program supports sponsored students with tuition, learning materials, sanitary pads (for adolescent girls) and other groceries.

The OCA education program had five visits to the sponsored students in the following secondary schools (Nkhamenya Girls, Madisi, , Natola CDSS, Chamkango CDSS & Ngala CDSS). The purpose of the visit was to monitor students' academic performances, encourage them, provision of school supplies and collect student-donor letters.

The following supplies were provided to students; sugar, bathing & washing soap, writing materials and some received school bags. Seventeen letters were collected from Nkhamenya Girls Secondary School and Natola CDSS. The letters are sent to their individual donors. The handwritten letters are a platform for easy communication between the students and the sponsors.



*OCA Country Director and Grants Officer mentoring students from Nkhamenya Girls Secondary School (Left) & the students after receiving supplies from OCA (Right)*





*OCA motivating and supporting a student from Chamkango CDSS (Left) & Madisi Sec school(Right)*



*Ngala CDSS students receiving their supplies from OCA*

## School Library Visits

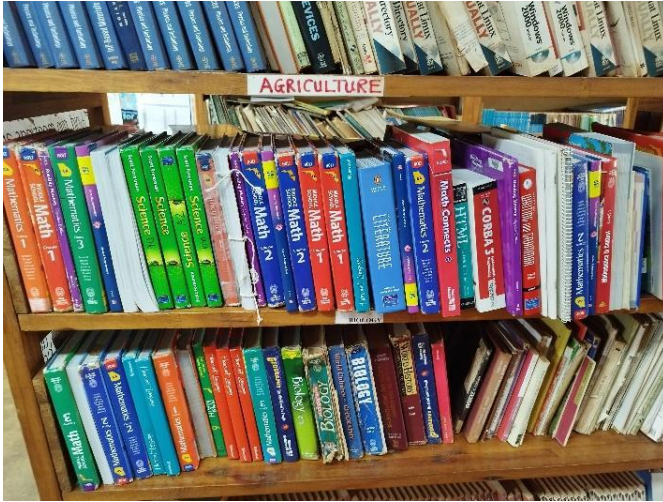
The Orant Education program visited libraries at Madisi Sec. School and Ngala CDSS.



The aim was to monitor the donated books (non-curriculum) which were provided to both schools. This entailed checking how books were stored. The donated books are being used by students in subject referencing as well as gaining more knowledge. At Ngala CDSS, the visit was to check-up on the progress

of the library system and we also had a discussion with the teacher librarian on the issue

of improving the library to be in a good state so as to attract more students to visit the library. We found out that all the books were well taken care of in both schools and all the books are kept in book shelves for easy tracking and safety.



*Donated books kept in bookshelf (Left) at Madisi Sec. school & OCA monitoring donated books at Ngala cdss(Right)*



*OCA personnel with teacher librarian at Ngala CDSS library*



## Monitoring School Block Renovations

Orant Education program has been renovating a school block at Kabuluzy primary school which it started in November,2024. In February,2025, the Education program continued to monitor the school block renovations to ensure that the work is going on well. The purpose of renovating the school block was to promote good education to many students and for the school to be in a good standard. Previously, the education program supported other schools with lab materials, books and braille machine for better development of education.



*School block renovations at Kabuluzy primary school(Interior)*



*Exterior view*

## Energy and Environment Program



### Executive Summary

Energy and Environment program is one of the programs at Orant Charities Africa with an aim of limiting the risk of climate change by introducing renewable energy and environmental conservation activities around Kasese catchment area, TA Chakhaza in Dowa. The Program Mission Statement is *to mitigate the effects of climate change and promote an environmentally-friendly, sustainable, and independent Malawi by investing in renewable energy, conducting local research, advocating for the environment, educating communities, and developing partnerships*. The Strategic Objectives of the program includes;

1. Develop program leadership
2. Oversee expansion of solar infrastructure in Malawi
3. Ensure protection and representation of the environment
4. Research and educate on sustainable alternative methods of agriculture and water Management

The activities done in the Energy and Environmental program in the month of February are as follows;

## Learning Visit to Ripple Africa

We had a learning visit to Ripple Africa in Nkhata Bay district. Discussed below are the outcomes of the visited activities in the month;

### Changu Changu Moto Project

The project started in 2008 in Nkhata Bay district with an aim of reducing pressure on trees by providing an initiative that would help to reduce the amount of firewood to be used. This project is skewing away from the use of a three stone stove. With this in mind Orant Charities Africa visited Kapeska village, TA Malengamzoma where a number of houses were visited with the escort of Ripple Africa team in order to learn from beneficiaries. The beneficiaries are happy with the project and they cited the following benefits out of the project:

- Use a small amount of firewood to cook.
- No fire accidents.
- Reduced amount of smoke.



*A beneficiary at Kapeska village using fuel efficient cookstove*



*One of the fuel efficient cookstoves at Kapeska village*



## **Tree Planting Project**

Ripple Africa started tree planting projects in 2018 in Nkhata-Bay and later extended it to Mzimba north in 2015. Orant Charities Africa team visited Mzimba north tree planting project to learn on how the project is being implemented. The Ripple Africa team led the visit by narrating the approach and the progress of the project. Later, the team visited Mr. Finius, one of the beneficiaries with 500 pine trees which he started planting in 2019 to narrate his tree planting story.

### **Benefits**

- Access to firewood.
- Learned new tree planting skills.
- Source of household income.

### **Challenges**

- Some farmers sell trees before maturity.
- Sole working in the farm makes management difficult.
- Other farmers do not comply with the requirements of the project.

### **Solutions**

- Farmers are supervised at every stage by Ripple Africa field officers.
- Tree planting training is conducted for every farmer.



*OCA and Ripple Africa officers posing after a tree planting project site visit*



*Ripple Africa's tree planting Program Manager addressing OCA officers*

## **Fruit Production Project**

Ripple Africa is implementing fruit production with 100 plus clubs. Chigwira club of Traditional Authority Zilakoma, Nkhata-bay is one of the participants of the project. Outlined below are some of the activities at Chigwira club:

- Project participants were advised to construct a shade for the nursery.
- Ripple Africa supports beneficiaries with capacity building on fruit production.
- Fruit and vegetable seedlings are also provided by Ripple Africa.
- Vegetables growing is done in the six waiting months for the seedlings to grow.
- Seedlings are being shared amongst members to plant at their homes and schools.
- The group also does poultry farming (broilers).
- It is connected to chicken sellers through Ripple Africa.
- Tukombo trading center is the main market for chicken.
- Beneficiaries are trained on Mbeya and bio-char fertilizer.

## **Benefits**

- Improved household income after selling the produce.
- Learning other new fruit production skills.

## **Challenges**

- Livestock were grazing on the seedlings at the nursery.

- Running out of water.

## **Solutions**

- Livestock owners took control of their livestock after the advice from traditional leaders.



*Fruit tree production club posing with OCA and Ripple Africa officers*



*Ripple Africa Field Officer explaining about fruit production at Chigwira club.*

## **Fishing For Tomorrow Project**

- Ripple Africa started the project in 2014 along Makuzi/Kamwala lake side, TA Malenganzoma as a fish breeding site.
- Elections are conducted every four years to elect committee members from the community to hold the office.

## Benefits

- Fishers are harvesting more fish than before.
- Reduced fishing effort.
- Fisheries institutions buy fingerlings from the committee.
- Recent research shows that there are 35 plus species breeding at the site.

## Challenges

- Difficult to reallocate fishermen from fishing around the breeding area.
- Some fishermen tend to fish during nights around the breeding area.
- It was difficult to ban the use of small fishing gears.

## Solutions

- Ripple Africa ordered special fishing gears (band #12) to reduce harvesting of small fish.
- The fish committee works with all other committees in the community for support.
- Community plays a pivotal role to guard the breeding area by reporting any misconduct.



*BVC members, OCA and Ripple Africa officers at a fish breeding site.*





*BVC chair briefing about the project*

## **Orant Nkhuni Pang'ono Moto Cookstove**

Energy-efficient cookstove is an example of climate protection activity which also brings environmental and social benefits at the same time. This activity focuses much on reducing the amount of firewood being used when cooking which helps in preserving forests. Not only do they reduce carbon emissions, but they also improve the living conditions of many people involved as the time spent on fetching firewood regularly is skewed on other development activities with the reduced amount of firewood required when cooking. With this regard, in February, 2025, the Energy and Environment program implemented “Nkhuni Pang’ono Moto,” cookstove at Group Village Headman M’biya, Traditional Authority Chakhaza in Dowa. Outlined below are activities conducted on implementation:

- Briefing traditional leaders.
- Selecting lead community volunteers.
- Training lead community volunteers.
- Constructing Nkhuni Pang’ono Moto cookstoves.
- Monitoring the progress of construction.





*EEPM briefing traditional leaders at GVH M'biya's residence.*



*EEPM training community volunteers on construction of Nkhuni Pang'ono Moto cookstove*



*A locally three stone cookstove at M'biya village*



*Nkhuni Pang'ono Moto cookstove constructed at Kaondo village.*



*Nkhuni Pang'ono Moto cookstove being used at GVH M'biya*

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The program of Energy and Environment in February implemented some of the activities identified in the January assessment. Therefore, the Energy and Environment program had introduced a “Nkhuni Pang’ono Moto” cookstove at GVH M’biya to cover for the existing cooking energy-fuel efficient gap which is applying pressure on the existing forests. The activity had good administrative support as the learning visit to Ripple Africa was supported with all the requirements to achieve our goal. Since, villages around GVH M’biya had been used as a pilot, the program will still need more support to implement the activity in other villages within the catchment.

In conclusion, February, 2025 had been a successful month with regard to the support from both administration and other program managers on implementing the planned activities.