

Connecting Lives

Eagles Relief & Development Program

www.eaglesmalawi.org



Eagles' work continues, deepens and extends over the long-term. It does not fade away like traditional development programmes. This is because the people who need the help are also the ones who lead the transformation with their churches and communities.

This issue shares stories of how Eagles is doing this.

Rapid response to devastating storm

Tropical Storm Ana followed by Cyclone Gombe battered southern Malawi at the start of 2022. Chikwawa district again suffered the worst - completely cut off as the floods destroyed roads and bridges. Whole villages were under water. People spent the night in trees. Others had to live in local school buildings.

It took time for any aid to reach these areas, but local churches trained by Eagles responded rapidly, even in the midst of their own needs. They identified the people who were most vulnerable and mobilised their communities to provide food, clothes and soap. City churches in Blantyre and Zomba donated goods.

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I am so happy to be part of this training. We have been ignorant about these things and have watched our children being abused without doing anything about it.

Now we will teach our children to recognise, avoid and report any form of abuse. I will teach my peers in our church and the entire church so that we protect our children.

**Nasoweka, Women's Leader,
Assemblies of God Church, Kachira**



Rape survivor wins justice after 3 years of silence

Martha (not her real name), is 12 and has a mental disability. She survived a brutal rape that would have never been discovered without Eagles' work with her local church.

Eagles knows that every community has hidden issues beneath the surface. As people work together to identify, prioritise and tackle their needs using their own resources, they see improvements in their standard of living, health, education and environment. But they also restore relationships and promote safety and dignity.

In June 2021 Eagles trained a group of church leaders in safeguarding. When Pastor Gibson returned to his community, he began teaching his congregation about protecting children and encouraging people to report abuse. This gave people the confidence to report Martha's rape to him. For three years, the perpetrator had been openly boasting about what he had done, while Martha had been powerless.

Now, the church and community leaders have reported the perpetrator to the police and then followed up to make sure he went to court and was convicted.



Safeguarding champions

Thanks to Eagles' safeguarding training and Martha's courage, village chiefs and church leaders in Kachira have become champions fighting against child abuse. Realising that abuse was commonplace, the church and community asked for further training. They found out about the rape of another young girl and reported the perpetrator, a member of the church, to the police. The police arrested him and took him into custody. Parents also reported a rape of their daughter, took her to hospital to get the medical evidence and the police arrested that perpetrator too. Chiefs have just taken a fourth case to the police, and are working closely with government safeguarding officials.

As the news spread about these arrests, people have begun to believe for the first time that they can get justice. **'I have been going through a lot of abuse from my husband - now I will report the matter to the Chief'**, says Grace.



We have learned some things we did not know... I have seen that we were doing some things because of our ignorance. We saw children being abused and we did nothing about it ... We did not know where to report it and how to go about it. We will now go and teach our people so that they also know that it is bad and there are consequences... We will start discussing it and we will see change.



Village Chief Kapherias

Building resilience (cont from p.1)

Now the churches and communities previously trained by Eagles are working together for long-term restoration. They asked Eagles for additional training in counselling so they can help the traumatised. They are rebuilding houses and making them stronger. They are helping develop livelihoods, such as through tailoring training.



The courage to plan for the future

Every family in Kamkwenu village, Central Malawi, now has a plan for their lives. After poor rains and with the rising cost of living, they are going deeper and further into the vision they created after Eagles training.

In the past people looked down on this extremely poor community, which depended on growing tobacco and had large areas of unused wetland. Now, though, they realise that they can use the wetland to grow food. People are planting maize and vegetables, They have collected seeds and planted fruit trees across the village.



'There has been such change in mindsets in families: they are trying to make sure they have more ways to bring in money' says Farmers' Club Chair Raphael. The village has begun savings and loans clubs and a livestock pass-on scheme. One leader is selling surplus maize to buy an ox-cart, both to transport manure to his farm and to hire out to other farmers. They are also organising their own research into levels of violence and abuse so they can uncover hidden needs.

Not only is this impacting the communities Eagles has trained, but the vision is spreading to other areas - to Chipembere, Kalumba and Nambuma.

Meet Yusuf

Eagles Administrative Assistant & Driver



Even before joining Eagles, I was passionate about working with less privileged people in the community. I was attracted by Eagles' focus on self-reliance and holistic change.

I very much enjoy taking colleagues to do training as I know people in the community will be taken to another level of courage. One of the biggest challenges I face as a driver is breakdowns and poor roads, which prevent us conducting trainings.

I am married to Ester, with two children: Mphatso, who is 14 and wants to be a soldier; and Madalitso, who is 12, and wants to be nurse when she grows up.