

Connecting Lives



Urgent need for disaster resilience

Disasters are growing in strength and frequency in Malawi. Rains are unpredictable. And many farmers are struggling to survive in the current climate. In this issue: celebrate with churches who have worked with their communities to grow in resilience, and discover how you can help through a more personal partnership.

Eagles wins presidential award

In December 2023, Eagles received an award for the 'Best Cyclone Freddy Response' from President Dr Lazarus Chakwera at a reception in Kamuzu Palace. Out of 772 local NGOs registered in the country, only six were selected to receive a presidential award in a variety of different categories.

Eagles' director Victor Mughogho (pictured above accepting the award) shared stories of churches across Malawi who Eagles had mobilised, with your support, to work with their communities to prepare for and respond to disasters. (Stories like Nedi's on page 4.)

◀ *It is very difficult to describe the experience. I am absolutely thrilled and overwhelmed! It felt surreal, receiving a direct invitation from the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Gender and Community Services to attend the State Dinner. Never in our wildest dreams did we expect this!* ▶

Catalyse resilience in growing climate chaos

Malawi is on the front lines of the climate emergency. In the last few years, communities have been struck by cyclones, swept away by flooding and struggled to survive. Experts predict that disasters will only grow in frequency. Communities need to adapt to the changes, mitigate the impact of disasters and respond to emergencies. As recognised by Eagles' recent presidential award, local churches can be key. They are already present in every community, with deep connections, wide networks and a biblical mandate to support the most vulnerable. Eagles is working to activate this potential across Malawi - mobilising churches to work with their communities to grow in resilience to climate change.

We are inviting *you* to catalyse this transformation in Zomba, a district in southern Malawi regularly hit by disasters. You will walk alongside pastors, community leaders and members for three years as they are equipped to transform themselves and inspire transformation in others.

Why 'Catalyse'?

Many organisations sell you the message that *you* are the solution, and offer detailed programmes that they will deliver on your behalf. But external solutions risk creating dependency and crushing communities' ability to problem-solve for themselves. Eagles' approach recognises the creativity and agency of every individual, and that churches and communities already have the potential to solve their own problems. Through Eagles, you will 'catalyse' mindset change away from dependency and release people's creativity to find their own solutions - in community and through local partnerships.



Communities in Zomba were badly hit by cyclone Freddy, and fear more disasters this year — this pile of rubble used to be Esnat's house (mother of five)

Churches as climate leaders

- already present in communities
- deeply connected
- with wide networks
- mandated to seek justice

Thank you so much to our existing Catalyse supporters. Your partnership has been so successful that this is a **NEW** opportunity for others to extend Catalyse to new places.

How will Catalyse work?

Eagles will inspire churches in Zomba to understand the biblical call to social justice. Churches will then work with their local villages to prioritise their greatest vulnerabilities to disaster, identify their own resources and use them to find local solutions.

We need 40 people / groups to partner with these communities. By giving just £40 a month for three years, you will cover all the training costs needed to catalyse lasting change for hundreds of people. You will receive quarterly updates from the communities and walk alongside them as they transform themselves.

How do we know it will be successful?

Eagles has 20 years' experience empowering churches to respond to disasters. Each time a cyclone hits, churches who have been through Eagles' Church & Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) have been among the first responding on the ground - offering shelter in their buildings, giving sacrificially to those who have lost everything and mobilising people to work in unity as they recover. Strong evidence proves this is the most effective and dignifying way to see lasting change - 27 times more cost-effective than traditional ways of doing development, according to Eagles research (*available on our [website](#)*).

Why should I become a partner?

Catalyse partners in another community witnessed astonishing change in three years of partnership -



More ways to earn a living, have enough food and protect the environment: running income generating activities (e.g. fish farming, bee keeping); improving food production (e.g. permaculture); and reforestation.



Children staying in school: monitoring attendance and ensuring all children remain in school; parents paying fees with improved livelihoods; covering costs for those who are orphaned; building classrooms and teachers' houses;



Looking after their health and hygiene: carrying out their own health surveys and using the data to take action (e.g. building toilets, handwashing stations).



Women and children protected from abuse: ending impunity for rape and ensuring perpetrators are arrested, where before abuse was unacknowledged.

And the transformation isn't ending with these communities. They're so excited by their development that they are choosing to train 55 other villages in the surrounding area this year! One of our first Catalyse partner says: *"I very much appreciate seeing how transformation is happening in people's lives and ... learning about how Eagles works through equipping the local population to bring about change."*

Will you choose to walk with a community in Zomba to help them transform life for their whole village and grow in resilience. Commit £40 a month for three years. Email eaglescatalyse@gmail.com to sign up.

Cyclone survivors still recovering their lives

Your generous response to cyclone Freddy in early 2023 allows Eagles to continue to support survivors to rebuild their lives. While disasters quickly fall from the news, those who have lost everything cannot recover in an instant. Eagles' response combines both meeting urgent needs in this pre-harvest season (as all their harvest from last year was washed away), with longer-term support to harvest in this and future years.



Nedi village strengthen their own disaster-resilience



In Nedi village in Chikwawa (southern Malawi), local churches and the wider community are showing tremendous initiative without external resources to mitigate flooding. Mobilised by Eagles, they recognised they were frequently hit by disasters and determined to build a system of trenches to carry away flood water. When cyclone Freddy hit, they found their system highly effective, diverting water away from their houses. Now they are extending it by excavating rivers to carry more water, still using just their own resources. Two days every week, the whole community works together to do this - in temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius. They are also planting trees to strengthen the banks.

In disaster-prone areas like Nedi, the cycles of NGO and government disaster responses can erode initiative as people just wait for outside help. Eagles' approach activates the church and community to build resilience before a disaster, and to be ready to act immediately in partnership with other actors in the aftermath, rather than being passive recipients.