

St Mary's support for a church in Malawi

1. At the end of 2019 a consultation was organised for the congregation of St Mary's, as part of its Mission Action Plan, to decide which of three church projects in a developing country should be supported in the coming year. Almost 35 responses were received, and the strongest support was received for the Anglican Church of Malawi's Community Integrated Intervention Project, which works with churches in the poorer parts of Malawi to encourage girls to continue in education beyond puberty. St Barnabas church Kayoyo and St Mary's church Chapanaga are actively involved in this project.
2. This project encourages girls to continue in education beyond puberty, when they are often withdrawn from school by their parents to be married, to help with chores or to care for younger siblings. It provides girls with educational materials, and the creation of hostels for girls at secondary boarding schools. It installs girl-only toilets in schools and promotes sexual health services to reduce early pregnancy.
3. The project aims to give these rural communities a more secure future in the long-term, to help them be more resilient to future economic or environmental shocks, as vulnerable households will have measures in place to help protect them in challenging times, as well as a greater access to services. At a community level there will be support groups for vulnerable households such as the farmers' groups. The extra income they have secured has been enabling them to buy their own seeds, and expand their farms making them more self-sufficient. In addition, the funds generated from the improved farming have allowed the households of the farming groups to send their children to school and give them the opportunity for a better future.



4. Achievements so far include:
 - Improved literacy among the 1,006 girls who have enrolled in ten primary schools across Chintheche, Kayoyo, Samama and Chapananga.

- 184 of the girls who enrolled in school have now completed their primary education, and have applied for places at secondary schools.
 - 1,000 households have been trained in modern farming technologies and how to make briquettes to replace wood fuel, and have received drought resistant seeds such as maize.
 - 25 Farmer's Clubs have been established that offer access to village savers schemes, and participants gain profit from selling the group harvest, as well as retaining a portion to feed their families.
5. Nancy is one woman supported by the project. She is 43 and lives in Chipayika village in Msomba Parish in Northern Malawi. Sadly, Nancy's husband passed away in 2012, and she was left trying to support her two children; a girl and a boy. Nancy and her children would often go hungry throughout the year because she couldn't afford to buy maize and fertiliser. Her children would sometimes not go to school so that they could help her with do some casual labour to earn money to buy food and other essentials.
 6. Despite her own challenges, Nancy used to help out in her local community. A priest from the church visited her one day to ask her to volunteer, and upon seeing her poor living conditions he asked her to join the church programme's Chipayika Farmer's Group. She received training in small business enterprise, modern farming methods, livestock management and how to use the village savers scheme. Through accessing a loan through the village saving scheme, she was able to start a small business rearing goats. She has now developed a successful business, and has enough food for her family. In the future she plans to diversify her business so that she has funds for the educational needs of her children.
 7. As well as running her own business, she is also involved in joint activities with the other women in the farmer's group including growing beans for commercial purposes, and rearing pigs so that they can be passed on to other members of the community. Nancy has been supported by the Diocesan Field Officer, and from the farmer's group, which encourages women to work together and learn from each other.

HOW WILL OUR PARTNERSHIP WORK?

8. We are supporting this project through the USPG Partners in Mission programme. Every few months we shall receive further reports about this programme. The Church Committee has agreed that the regular outside giving which it provides to USPG should in 2020 be allocated to support this particular project in Malawi. If individual members of the congregation also wish to contribute financially to this project, or

another Partners in Mission project, further information is available at www.uspg.org.uk

9. If you have any questions about this project, or about getting more involved, please contact the champion for this goal in the Mission Action Plan, John Neilson, at john.neilson@stmaryswimbleton.org or on 07714 051206.

PRAYERS

10. Please remember the following in your prayers:

- Praise God for the work of the Anglican Council of Malawi, especially the *Community Integrated Intervention Programme*.
- Give thanks to the staff of the Anglican Council of Malawi for their hard work and support of girls' education, working in the poorest rural communities.
- Pray for food security for vulnerable communities in Malawi.
- Pray for the farmers' groups as they are trained in small business enterprise, to help them become self-sustaining.