



# SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

## MALAWI



Faith leaders and SCOPE project staff displaying burnt bricks for the Mtsonthe Village Clinic construction project.

USAID/World Relief: Chimwemwe Nocas,  
SCOPE Project Supervisor for Traditional  
Authority Kawinga, Machinga

### LOCATION

Kawinga Traditional Authority,  
Machinga, Malawi

### SUMMARY

Faith leaders engaged in SCOPE's *Making Our Communities Better* program worked together to build a village clinic for mothers and children in their community.

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## FAITH LEADERS MULTIPLY IMPACT FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN IN THEIR COMMUNITY

Members of faith communities are also members of the broader communities in which they live, making concerns of the community also important for the faith community. In Malawi, the voices of faith leaders are some of the most trusted in an individual's life. Faith leaders play critical roles in communities helping members make decisions in their everyday lives. However, faith leaders are often sidelined in community development because the community sees them as spiritual counselors, but their role goes far beyond that.

Strengthening Community Health Outcomes through Positive Engagement (SCOPE) is working with faith leaders through *Making our Communities Better*, a curriculum helping Christian and Muslim faith leaders and faith communities understand their role in community development and envision how they can leverage it to improve the health of families, especially mothers and their children, in their communities.

### SCOPE FAITH LEADERS' TRAININGS: A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN KAWINGA TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

SCOPE's approach of working with faith leaders has sprouted multiple development projects for the betterment of their communities. In Kawinga Traditional Authority, a network of faith leaders from various faith institutions is working to overcome health challenges in their community. Michongwe 1 Faith Network came together to construct an



Msonthe village clinic construction project in progress, now at roofing stage.

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under five clinic using their own donated labor and materials.

Tough terrain and lack of infrastructure development mean that health facilities in Kawinga Traditional Authority have long distances between them. The nearest health facility to Michongwe 1 Faith Network is Ntaja – 12 kilometers away – meaning that women often have to travel long distances to access maternal and child health services.

Msonthe Village Clinic is a clinic that operates under a mango tree. The clinic supports people from several villages, and because of its lack of shelter, it is difficult to operate during the rainy season.

Tired of this problem, Michongwe 1 Faith Network mobilized the communities to construct

a building for the Msonthe Village Clinic. This initiative began as a seed project that faith leaders pledged to do after *Making Our Communities Better*. Faith leaders molded bricks and began constructing the village clinic began.

As Pastor Kalenga, Michongwe 1 Faith Network chair, shared, "Women receive family planning services from the Health Surveillance Assistant under the tree, without privacy at all. Under five children receive child health services under the tree, which becomes a challenge during the rainy season because the Health Surveillance Assistant does not open the village clinic when it is raining since there is no shelter. At first, we just looked at it, waiting for the government to construct a village clinic shelter for this village clinic, but after receiving the Vision Casting [*Making Our Communities Better*] training, we realized that, as faith leaders, we have a role to play in developing our communities."

#### FOLLOWING UP ON MSONTHE VILLAGE CLINIC CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Unity and collaboration are key to the success of this faith network. Faith leaders continually met and engaged to ensure they followed through with their pledged projects. Pastor Kalenga shared that the training helped them realize their potential in bringing about and leading community development. The village clinic will benefit people from Msonthe and Chigunda group villages.

*This story was captured by Chimwemwe Nocas, SCOPE Project Supervisor for Kawinga Traditional Authority, Machinga and Tisunge Chigwede, SCOPE Field Facilitator for Kawinga Traditional Authority, Machinga.*