



Name of partner organization: Foundation for Children’s Rights
Title of the project:
Project number: 62331
Reporting period: Jan – June 2020
Project duration: 5 years
Name and position of person responsible for the project: Leah Mbizi
Author/s of this report: Leah Mbizi
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**1. Introduction**

The Foundation for Children’s Rights (FCR) is promoting the ‘Self Help Group Approach’ with support from Kindernotehelf (KNH). The approach is being promoted in Mzuzu City covering major locations of Zolozolo, Mchengautuwa, Geisha, Nambo, Sonda, Chiputula, Nkhokwe, Kaboko, and Lukalazi.

This report therefore emanates from activities carried out in the year 2020. It highlights achievements and challenges in implementation period.

**2. Developments in environment and external conditions with implications on the project (max. 0,5 pages)**

The year 2020 has been very critical and full of activities that came with many negatives than positives. The situation has impacted many Malawians negatively. 2019/2020 was full of political activities, from elections disputes which led to demonstrations across the country, political party campaign meetings, court proceedings and later presidential elections. and while the nation was on the page of recovering from political impasse as a result of 2019 election disputes, the country was and is still registering cases of Covid 19 which is a global pandemic. The situation has contributed much to slowing down of business, closing down of school (Primary to tertiary). The



country was put to stand still, rumors of lockdown made many Malawian to lose direction as they were not sure of what tomorrow brings.

Implementation of Self-Help Group Approach was also largely affected, i.e. opening of new groups, zone meetings, and some strengthening activities was put on hold. CLAs could not accomplish their action plan because most of the time they were being involved in political party activities. It has also paralyzed business activities for small scale businesses especially SHG women which has resulted in reduction of income in most households. Children have been exposed to different forms of abuse i.e. sexual exploitation, cases of teen pregnancies and child marriages are on the rise which is as a result of closing of schools by government. In some circumstance children were forced to remain indoors, which gave them full chance to use

Internet, watch videos and sharing inappropriate material with peers which has influence on other children as well. A lot of girls (provide stats) got pregnant from rape as well as child marriages as they were over exposed i.e. in Mzimba north 69 girls got pregnant, 405 girls got married and 37 boys got married

### 3. Project Outreach (max. 1/4 page)

- **Please provide an overview on the target groups of the project which you reached during the year and provide figures.**

In the year 2020, FCR has established 5 new groups in Kaboko, Miracle Cluster has formed 2 groups (Geisha zone), and 2 groups have been formed in malivenji and 1 group in Mageza in Soweto (Sonda zone) totaling to 117. Currently these groups are performing well in terms of savings and attendance.

In this reporting FCR has not established new children groups, and meetings for old CGs were put on hold as a measure of not exposing children to covid 19. No new clusters were established in this reporting period 89 youths have been reached in the 2020, 26 in Mchengautuwa (Nkhokwe zone) and 63 Kaboko (Geisha zone).



#### 4. Progress of the intervention in the reporting period: from activities to objectives (max. 6 pages)

##### 3.1 Description of progress on each Sub-Objective<sup>1</sup>

-> Please describe in separate chapters for each sub-objective the progress along the intervention logic in the following manner:

a) Name the Sub-Objective:

Please repeat the sub-objectives (as approved in the project proposal) and use them as headings for each chapter

##### **Specific Objective 1 to improve the household income and political participation of 118,000 SHG women promoted in 30 communities by 30 Promoting Organizations by 2022**

###### 3.1.1 Facilitate formation of new SHGs

SHGA though with some challenges in the implementation, it has proved to be a sustainable tool to drive out poverty and low self-esteem amongst poor women. The holistic approach in the implementation has facilitated a platform to women, youth and children, to identify issues that affect their day to day lives. Children are able to share their daily life experiences in homes including child abuse cases from various households, and through youth SHGs, it has instilled a culture of saving amongst the youth to understand that they can also do it on the own without really depending on their parents/guardians.

This is why FCR though with some challenges in the year 2020, has facilitated formation of SHGs in some areas in the semi urban. It has managed to established 5 new groups in Kaboko, Miracle Cluster has formed 2 groups (Geisha zone) and 3 groups by promoting organisation in

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<sup>1</sup> If the project does not have sub-objectives for different components or target groups, please apply this structure once for the project objective.



the same zone, 2 groups have been formed in malivenji and 1 group in Mageza in Soweto (Sonda zone). Currently these groups are performing well in terms of savings and attendance. Their savings ranges from MK300 –MK500 and loans are at MK15000 – MK35, 000.000 respectively. Groups performance started to pick up a little bit in the last 6 months of 2020 compared to first 6 months.

In the year 2020, 28 groups disbanded in Zolozolo, Target and Chinga'mbo locations. This is a very big setback as SHGA is about number of groups which constitutes next levels of the approach. The issue was shared with Chimango Federation, so that we can work together in revamping groups in the mentioned areas.

### **3.1.2 Group Assessment and Strengthening**

Group assessment was only done to 11 SHGs out of 40 (20 in the first half and 20 in the second half) which was planned in this reporting period. The exercise was marred with a lot of challenges, women could not meet as planned due to covid-19 restrictions and political party involvement.

To identify some strengths and weaknesses in individual groups has been a challenge due to situations mentioned above. However FCR did sampling during monitoring visits where it has been established:

- That most group members do not attend meetings for various reasons i.e. covid19 fears.
- Savings and loan repayment are not being remitted to the groups
- Business has gone down because of movement restrictions due to covid.
- Sharing of savings in fear of losing their money if Covid19 restrictions are to continue.

This has compelled the promoting organization to come up with SHG revamping strategy as follows:

- Orient CFs on revamping strategies of SHGA
- Mobilise disbanded SHGs for strengthening
- Facilitate self-assessments to SHGs
- Facilitate review and reinforcement of group rules
- Orient SHGs on resource flow
- Facilitate group conflicts resolution



### 3.3. CLA Assessment

In the year 2020, assessments for clusters were not done because of gathering restrictions, this has contributed to failing to implement six months action plan which was developed for Jan – June 2020. July – December 2020 action plan was developed which incorporated activities which were not carried out in Jan – June 2020. This has also not been fully implemented, the notable one which has been successfully implemented is CBT. (Miracle and Lunyangwa)

#### Miracle Cluster

- Successful implementation of CBT following all the laid procedures
- Sensitization of Covid 19 preventive measures to SHGs and the larger community of Geisha and Nambo through different forums.

#### Lunyangwa Cluster

- Successful implementation of CBT (2019)
- Facilitated implementation of Youth SHG

These are the recent notable activities done by Miracle and Lunyangwa clusters. Other activities that were conducted in first 6 months were already reported in the in Bi-annual report.

For Favour Cluster, FCR is still mobilising disbanded groups, to strengthen them to prepare them for a Cluster.

#### CBT – Miracle

Youths in Geisha and Nambo have are being trained in agribusiness. Looking at the market trend, it is important to think outside the box, and the option being to diversify. In these areas are where vegetables are grown in Mzuzu, there is high demand of Ginger, Garlic and other vegetables on the market in the wake of covid 19. With support from the promoting organisation (FCR), Miracle cluster is working with extension workers from government and other institutions i.e. seedco on the project. So far 63 youths have benefitted from the project. (38 for soap



making, Carpentry, Tailoring and plumbing 25 for agribusiness) out of 63 youths trained in 2020 by miracle cluster 24 are girls while 39 are boys.

Lunyangwa Cluster (second cohort) implemented CBT with 2019 funding. 26 youths benefited from this training in different vocational skills as follows, Painting, electrical installation, soap making and plumbing. Initially they agreed to also do baking and decoration, however looking at the cost of this skills, it was dropped and maintained the 4 mentioned above. The training was for the period of three months at a cost and additional two months free from February – July 2020 as follows:

- Painting had 5 trainees (4 boys and 1 girl)
- Electrical had 6 trainees (3 girls and 3 boys)
- Soap making had 8 youths (all girls)
- Plumbing had 7 trainees (1 girl and 6 boys)

The training was successful as all the youths identified finished their training without dropping out. The soap making training has attracted many women as Cluster women are now contemplating to do the training so that they can be training their youths alone. Currently youth SHGs are in progress with 11 members (6 girls and 5 boys) with savings of MK200/week.

### **CBT Orientation**

12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 members of Miracle cluster together with local, business youth and religious leaders were oriented on the implementation of CBT. This activity aims at building the capacity of Miracle Cluster on CBT concept and its implementation. The promoting organisation (FCR) as per KNH is supposed to sub grant to the identified Cluster to implement the CBT, hence the need to orient the CLA before the start of the implementation.

The Training focused on the following, why CBT, needs identification, Youths and Trainers identification, financial management and Monitoring. After the training the cluster sensitized the community about the concept, conducted community needs assessment and identification, formed the CBT subcommittee and identified Trainees and Trainers. 63 youths were identified to do undergo the following skills training carpentry, Tailoring, Plumbing, soap making and horticulture (17 girls and 21 boys).



## **Federation (Chimango) Training in Record keeping and report writing**

As one way on of ensuring smooth role transfer, Foundation for Children's Rights jointly with St. John of God organized a one day orientation on record keeping and report writing. Being in existence for 2years, Chimango Federation is to submit its first annual report to the National Office, hence the orientation. It targeted all members of Chimango federation. It consist of 28 members from 14 CLAs. The orientation focused much on gathering necessary information from SHGs, Cluster and Federation itself that will build a good report. Participants were also encouraged to write report with relevant information to a particular stakeholders. In the awake of covid19, members were also encouraged to gather information i.e. child abuse cases, teen pregnancies, child marriages and other abuses faced by children in their homes and anywhere else and refer them to relevant stakeholders i.e. church and society legal department for rapid response or other intervention. The orientation was facilitated by Assistant National Coordinator (Kuwala Consultants)

### **4.3. Monitoring**

In the year 2020, monitoring was conducted by management, National office and Project officer. This is done to give support to the project team and motivate project beneficiaries. FCR management conducted monitoring in Geisha and Nambo (Miracle Cluster), it focused much on CBT implementation. Management also facilitated the link between WINCO and Miracle to work together on covid19 sensitization and distribution of protective material to Geisha and Nambo communities. FCR management also visited all points where youths from Lunyangwa cluster catchment area were being trained in different skills i.e. painting, plumbing, soap making and electrical.

The NCO also visited Lunyangwa miracle and had interaction with Cluster women, CG facilitators and CBT youths to appreciate some challenges that came with Covid19 and find possible to solutions.

The following are some of the highlights of the meetings

- Women are not attending meetings fully at all levels (SHGs, Clusters and Federation)

- Women are not going to sell their commodities to markets due to lockdown rumors.
- Planning and implementation of activities is slow
- Sharing of savings and non-repayment of loans which has led to disbandment of groups.
- CBT implementation was implemented without much hiccups despite some community leaders’ orders that restricted gathering.
- CGs not meeting due to government directive to close schools
- Issues of child rights violations are on the increase i.e. sexual harassments.

However, in the last three months things started to pick up a little bit in terms of attendance and savings.

**Child rights and protection**

Child rights violation cases have been on increased in this reporting period. Reports from various stakeholders indicates that child abuse cases, i.e. Child marriages and teen pregnancies have been on the rise since the closure of schools due to COVID-19 pandemic. The following are some of the statistics for Mzuzu city and Mzimba north where FCR is implementing its projects

Mzimba North primary registered marriages and pregnancies since closure of schools due to COVID-19

#	Registered no of pregnancies	Registered no of marriages		Total
		boys	girls	
	38	31	386	417

Mzuzu city primary schools registered marriages and pregnancies since closure of schools due to COVID-19

#	Registered no of pregnancies	Registered no of marriages		Total
		boys	girls	
	31	6	19	56

Due to this alarming rate of cases of child abuse, Foundation Children’s Rights (FCR) would like to link Chimango Federation with DEMs office (Mzuzu and Mzimba north) and Mzimba north District Health Office(DHO) to work together in areas of sensitization and referrals. FCR would also want to capacitate

Clusters in case management and referrals in order for them to know where to report, when to report and who to report in cases of child abuse.

*b) Activities and Outputs of the year*

- *What activities were conducted to achieve this sub-objective? Please describe briefly how you implemented the most important activities for good understanding of the work in the project and inform about anything new or innovative. Which outputs did you achieve with these activities?*

As reported in the previous report, this reporting period January – December 2020 has been so critical, there has been low progress in almost all indicators, reasons being political activities taking center stage and the coming of Covid19 pandemic. This has resulted into putting all activities on hold especially field work, Community facilitator cannot go for supervision and the same with the Project officer. SHG weekly meetings, CGs activities, business activities. Gradually women are losing the drive in the process, which is very risky for the future of the project.

- Please also compare the activities and outputs with the plans for the year and explain the deviations. Please describe additional activities which you carried out

*c) Overview on project indicators for the sub-objective<sup>2</sup>*

Use of Output (can be skipped, if this is not part of the project log frame)			
Specific objective 1: To improve the household income and political participation of 118,000 SHG women promoted in 30 communities by 30 Promoting Organizations by 2022			
Indicators	Target for the end of the project	Baseline <sup>3</sup> at start of the project	Status <sup>4</sup> at the end of this year
Improved basic living conditions for SHG families	118000	-	2138

<sup>2</sup> If you need more space in the table, please use the landscape format

<sup>3</sup> If available

<sup>4</sup> If data was collected in the reporting period



Functional peoples institution sustaining the approach and promote the rights of women and children	10	-	4
Number of SHG members in profitable business in each site	118000	-	2033
Number of children taking 3 meals a day	231452	-	4984
Number of children accessing good health care services	231452		193
Number of CLAs taking up their roles in each site(number of development projects facilitated by CLA)	370		2
Number of CLAs women in leadership positions( addressing social issues, influencing changes through representation in community development committees, initiating provision of material needs in their respective communities)	370		43
Specific objective 2: Established child friendly environment safe for 231,452 children in 118,000 SHG families in 30 communities with rights promoted for child development			
Functional community structures created and utilized for child rights promotion(protection, participation, provision and development- PPPD)	550		5

Specific objective 3: To enable 4564 vulnerable youths to own sustainable businesses through skills promotion for communities and families by 2022			
improved income for youths in the community	4564		129

- Looking at the table, how do you see the progress in regard to the targets of the indicators? What are the reasons for an especially strong or low progress?

2020 FCR experienced challenges in terms of SHG implementation, as reported in the previous report there has been low progress in almost all indicators, reasons being political activities taking center stage and the coming of Covid 19 pandemic had more negatives. This has resulted into putting all activities on hold especially field work i.e. SHG weekly meetings, Zone meeting, CGs activities, business activities. Community facilitator cannot go for supervision and the same with the Project officer. Gradually women are losing the drive in the process, which is very risky for the future of the project.

- *Is there need for changes or additional interventions? If yes, please describe.*

In the awake of Covid 19, Miracle cluster partnered with Women Investment Cooperative (north chapter) to sensitize communities on Covid19, and distributed soap and hand sanitizers amounting to MK150,000.00 to 100 people from Geisha Nambo and Kaboko areas. It targeted women who are vulnerable i.e. child headed families, widows and elderly, each went home with 5 tablets of ufresh laundry soap and 2 bottles of hand sanitizers. These were not only from SHGs but other ordinary community members

- Are there any changes related to this (sub)-objective which are interesting to share?

Information of covid19 was disseminated to communities successfully, members of the community are able to follow some preventive measures i.e. putting on mask and social distance



during meetings. This output is not only attributed to SHG only, but also information from health personnel and other measures put in place by local leaders

-> *Please repeat this sequence for each sub-objective*

### 3.2. Overall Project Objective

- *How do you see the progress? Is the project on track?*

As earlier explained there has been low progress in almost all objectives, the reason being political activities taking center stage and covid19 pandemic.

- *What are the reasons for especially strong or low progress?*

People were busy with political activities, demonstration was another contributing factor from elections, anti-quarter system demonstration, vendors against lockdown demonstrations and of course covid19. All these have negatively affected the SHG progress in almost all areas

- *Is there need for changes or additional interventions? If yes, please describe.*

The changes required this period is the approach for conducting activities due to increasing numbers of Covid 19 cases. There is generally low levels of income amongst households due to less movements and slowdown of business activities. More children are being abused as a result of just staying at home. There is need to introduce programmes that would mitigate the vice.

### 5. Unintended effects (max. 1/4 page)

*Which unintended positive or negative effects did the project have that are not already mentioned above?*

The community facilitator for Geisha, Kaboko and Nambo has been sick for some time which has created a gap in terms of monitoring SHGs. However Miracle cluster (strengthen committee) is doing some monitoring but very much effective. So far FCR has 5 CFs that's covers Zolozolo,



Chiputula, Chingambo, Geisha, Nambo, Kaboko, Nkhokwe, Malivenji, Sonda, Mageza, Mchengautuwa, tagert and other surrounding areas.

## **Sustainability (max. 1/2 page)**

### **6. Sustainability**

SHG as an approach is an effective tool to drive out poverty. Since 2013 when FCR implementing the approach, it has shown more positive impact to the advantage. However things have started to be stagnant in 2020, when the country experienced political impasse due to some irregularities in electoral process 2019 and 2020 and then the coming of covid 19 pandemic, these are major challenges so far. It has made women to lose business because movements were restricted, women could not buy nor sell their commodities, business capital was used for consumption due to lack of income for the household. Some group agreed to disband and share their savings. This has been great set back in the implementation.

However as Foundation for Children's Rights have put some measures in order to revamp the approach at levels of the approach as follows:

- (a) Facilitate review of SHG rules to accommodate those who dropped out.
- (b) Facilitate merging of some groups if their numbers are low
- (c) Facilitate use of social fund to support members that have been assessed and proved to be vulnerable.
- (d) Facilitate minimizing time for the meeting ( they should not spend more time during the meetings)
- (e) Facilitate neighborhood watch in communities for child protections (who do they leave their children with when they go for business or other errands)

These and some strategies will be put in place in the year 2021. FCR is optimistic that if Covid19 can be well managed and stop the spread, with these measures SHGA will be revamped.

## **Project Management (max. 2 pages)**



In this reporting period, there are no major changes that have taken place, FCR has maintained the PO, and other staff i.e. MEAL and Accountant. FCR has filled the gap of the Community Facilitator which was reported the in the Bi-Annual report, it has now 5 CFs.

In this reporting period, Community Facilitators had their two (2) days meeting in Lilongwe organized by the National Coordination Office with an aim of sharing experience and get technical support from the NCO. Project Officer also attended a 2 day meeting in Mponela

## **How children's views and priorities influence the project implementation?**

### **7. Child protection (max. page)**

- *How did children participate in assuring child protection in the project and community?*

In the year 2020, all activities meant for children were halted due to the Covid19 pandemic. This made children to be vulnerable to so many abuses i.e. sexual exploitation, they were exposed to internet with no guidance. To some extent they were deprived of the right to play because they were forcefully told to be indoors. This made children to be abused by either their relations or house maids and garden boys. So far no intervention has been facilitated by either cluster or SHGs, because most activities were put on hold.

- **How did staff/stakeholders participate in assuring child protection in the project and community?**

In this reporting period, FCR management sent all its staff members to be working from home, to protect its staff from contracting the Covid19. This therefore means that only those that are directly involved in the implementation of the project (i.e. PO) were sometimes going on the ground to monitor activities and attend some meetings. However FCR is a District Child Protection Committee, and took advantage of the meeting to share some reports on issues of child abuse

### **8. Additional information (max.1/2page)**



CBT has proved to be beneficial to the youth who have not had a chance to continue with education because of various reasons. Many youths in the communities are engaged in different malpractices because they lack opportunity to be equipped with various skills that will help them in their day to day. The coming in of CBT projects in some communities have eased access to some services in the communities thereby injecting some cash in pockets of the youth, however the challenge has been startup capital and recognition. CBT offers informal training which may not be recognized in the industry. It is important to also diversify and look into other ways i.e. horticulture. This is the reason why FCR through clusters would like to engage other stakeholder i.e. government, Seedco and Teveta to work together in imparting the knowledge.

### **9. Outlook and proposed adjustments of the project (max.1/2page)**

- Will there be any major events concerning the project (outside or inside the project) in the next year?
- Please summarize the proposed adjustments of the project, to which you would like to get feedback from KNH.

With the challenges experienced in 2020 due covid19 pandemic, it was and it is still difficult to monitor the project. FCR proposes an increase in some budgetary allocations i.e communication as most activities will be done virtually to avoid direct contact with groups monitoring will be done through online communication. This will facilitate communication and monitor the whole people's institution.

### **10. Required supporting documents**

- Few photos and between one and three case stories - preferably on the family or community level, not only on the individual child. Photos should include some of activities of or with children.
- Copy of selected produced material, publications and merchandise (like pdf or photos)
- Only in case of modification of the log-frame, please attach the new one and mark the changes.