

Interviewed by Janine Mitchell at CCAP Likhubula House, Malawi on Tuesday 13.06.2023.

Interviewee: Pritchard Safari

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My name is Pritchard Safari, Chairman for the Likhubula Dunblane Partnership.

This partnership started in 2005. Three people from Dunblane came here to Likhubula and at first they visited the church. And the partnership was between the church, CCAP Likhubula church and Dunblane community. The first committee, the chair of the first committee was Charles Kamanga and this is the second committee for this partnership, especially here in Likhubula. And as a result of that, I'm the chairman of this committee. We are happy that this partnership is benefiting our community a lot. There are so many things. As the committee we are just the link between the Likhubula community and the Dunblane community. During 2009 when our committee was elected, this partnership was moved from only Likhubula CCAP church to the wider community. And this community comprises of several villages, namely Mbewa, Mangombo, Chilanga, Nakhonyo, Kalilombe and Gibson [also Lunguzi]. And in this several villages, members of the Dunblane Likhubula committee was selected from all these villages to represent their villages and also this committee comprises of 15 members. We have the communication officer also in this committee, which is Akimu Maula. We have also representative for Likhubula CCAP Mvano.

As I've already said that we are the link between these two communities. My role as the chairman is to organise meetings. Whenever we have some communications from our friends in Dunblane, I and the communication officer organise the meeting with the steering committee. After having the meeting, sometimes you have meetings with the chiefs. We also have meeting with the whole community for the issues which have come, we share whatever our friends from Dunblane want to share in the community. As a community, as I have already said that there are a lot of things which our community are benefiting from. Firstly, we have the bursary scheme, which people from all these villages when they are selected to secondary school, those who are unable to pay fees and have school necessities are assisted through this bursary committee and there is a criteria of choosing this bursars. The bursary monitor is responsible for all the activities concerning the bursary scheme. And also our community, almost every each and every year, our community is assisted as with fertilisers for the crop production. And when we communicate with our friends in Dunblane they send us some money or some funds for the budget of a fertiliser. Before purchasing their fertiliser, we sit down as a committee together with the chiefs to have the names of the beneficiaries.

What we normally do is the beneficiaries are selected right away in their villages. The chiefs and the steering committee members sit down and choose those who can benefit from this fertilisers programme. Normally, what actually happens, is they only choose those who cannot afford to buy the fertilisers, we make sure that those who benefit are those who can't manage to buy the fertilisers. And when we purchase the fertilisers, we gather them at the same place and distribute the fertilisers on the very same day when we collected the fertilisers.

On the bursary scheme. Firstly, we collect names from the communities. We ask the committee members to collect names in their villages, those who are not capable to pay for the fees for access school expenses. So when they collect the names, they bring the names to me as the chair, and they compare the names and I took them to the bursary monitor and the bursary monitor organised some tests – entry tests. So we set the date when this exam is going to be administered and we tell the students to come on this particular day and wrote the exams. They only write English and Mathematics. So after writing the exams the bursary monitor collects the papers for marking. After marking they compile all the marks of the bursars. Those who scored higher marks are the ones which we will normally choose and normally we have five bursars per year: three boys, two girls. And we are supposed to have 20 bursars any year for only Secondary School: five from each section. Unfortunately, due to some other reasons beyond our control, some may drop out due to some other reasons, for example, girls pregnancies and the like. So as of today we have 17 bursars.

And we also have some bursars who are doing tertiary education. Some is doing Sciences. Someone is doing or science also in Mzuzu University. One is at Malawi University of Business Studies. We also have some of these bursars, as I've said, this programme started some time ago, some have graduated some time ago, like Christina who is now a teacher. We have also another one, Tankenedi who is also a teacher. And you also met Magombo. We have Davey which is the mechanic. There are so many. Isaac Limited, an electrician.

Definitely, I can assure you that this partnership, our community is benefiting a lot and they will really appreciate the good work that Dunblane Committee is doing for us. And also, during unforeseen circumstances like we have COVID, our friends from Dunblane assisted us with funds for purchase of face masks. And these face masks were distributed to schools, we have Pasani and Nansato. And we distributed the face masks twice. And our friends also assisted with some maize. So we bought also flour, maize flour, and some relish and supplies which we also distributed to those affected. And our friends in Dunblane also, some time ago, constructed houses in our six villages. Yeah, they constructed houses for some elderly who had housing problems. And as of now the houses are all being occupied, are being used. People are having some shelter in those houses. Yeah, there are a lot of things, there are so many which I can say.

In the future, I think it will also be good if the community can be given something to do in order to generate the funds for the community rather than all the time, we're asking for help from Dunblane. So that maybe there are some other issues which we can solve on our own. For example, we also have the water system, which our friends is assisting. So we sometimes have problems with our water system like taps and the like. If we can have something to do in our community, if we can have some minor problems like taps, I think the community can still use the funds which they are generating to solve those some simple issues.

We have the Mvano. The Mvano were given some funds to have chicks, to raise some chicks. So with the funds which they were getting for their sales of the chicks, they were using for some other issues at the Mvano. They were solving some of the problems in the Mvano for themselves, rather than asking for help all the time.

As you know here in Malawi, we only depend on agriculture. And it would be good if the number of beneficiaries for fertiliser aid, if they can consider to increase the number because, frankly speaking, here in Malawi, if you can't apply fertiliser, definitely you're not going to at least harvest enough for your family.

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I think it would be good if they can also consider increasing the number of beneficiaries. We know that the fertiliser prices are just so high as compared to previously due to devaluation of our currency, Kwacha, but still they have to think about it.

For the tertiary education? We know, we know that maybe sometimes it will be impossible to fund all the students who want to go further with tertiary education because definitely, we know that the tertiary education is very expensive here in Malawi. But sometimes, if your friends can still consider some of our bursars, which we think can do better, it will also be good.