

Project 3647 – FY25 Karonga Diocese Water II (Need Stories) – Chilipapa Village

Chilipapa Village is home to 595 people (129 households). Small homes are clustered together (almost like a mini neighborhood). This isolated village is located on mountainous terrain. On the day we visited, the village was quiet, because almost everyone was attending a funeral.

Interestingly, there is a path from Chilipapa Village with an incredible view of Lake Malawi. (The lake itself is a full day’s walk from the village, so it is not used as their water source.)



This is a raw, unedited photo of **Glory Halawa** drinking water collected from the stream with Lake Malawi in the background. The experience was both beautiful and haunting. I instantly thought of the famous quote from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: **“Water, water everywhere. Nor any drop to drink.”**

Yes, water is everywhere.

But *this* is the water source families rely on in Chilipapa Village.



This is the Chahuwa Stream – a thin trickle of rusty brown muddy water. The stream is located down a steep and slippery embankment. It’s only about a 5 to 10 minute walk from the nearest homes, but the slope is physically challenging, especially when carrying a heavy bucket of water. Marion Kauta, CCO’s in-country colleague, described it as so physically challenging that it

felt like her heart had relocated to her throat. Since the stream is so small and narrow, women and girls use bowls and plates to scoop small amounts of water into their buckets. It takes up to 30 minutes to fill a single bucket.

Interviews, Photos, Video and Social Media Content from Chilipapa Village:

I interviewed three girls and one woman. Portions of two interviews were video recorded, and an appeal for help was recorded in 9x16 for social media.

Beneficiary Interview # 1: Patricia Mkandawire, age 11



Grade: Standard 5

Favorite school subjects: English and agriculture

Favorite meal: Chicken and rice

Special talent: At first, she said washing dishes and clothes, but after some questioning, she told us she is a talented runner. Her favorite distance is 900 meters.

Age she started collecting water: 4 years old

Other chores: washing plates, pounding maize (into cornmeal), collectig firewood

Prayer request: "Please pray that we get clean water."

Career goal: secondary school teacher

Questions about America: She wanted to know if children in America carry buckets of water from streams like she does. Marion explained to her that in America, water comes out of faucets inside of people's homes. This was a

big surprise to Patricia. She didn't know that there are parts of the world where clean water is so readily available.

Reflections on water challenges: "Collecting water is challenging. I've slipped and fallen at least six times. The path is difficult."

"I collect water two times per day after school. The water isn't clean. Sometimes there is stuff floating in it."

"I've missed school from being sick from the water. Sometimes I get stomachaches and diarrhea. I've also had dysentery which causes diarrhea with blood in it. The last time I was sick from the water was just two weeks ago."

"I want clean water. We will be clean, and our whole household will be clean. I will stop throwing up and having diarrhea. I will not miss class and will be able to learn. I admire my teacher and want to be like her when I grow up. I work hard in class. Clean water would change my life."

MEANINGFUL MOMENT: I've long understood that children in the U.S. typically aren't taught about extreme poverty and that many don't realize there are parts of the world where children don't have food, clean water or toys. I never really thought about what kids in extreme poverty know (or think about) about wealth. When Patricia asked if children in America carry buckets of water like she does, it broke my heart. Marion patiently explained to her what a faucet was, and the look on Patricia's face was pure amazement. How cruel it is to know that there are children in the world

who can't even imagine what it would be like to have running water at home – who don't even know that running water exists.

Beneficiary Interview #3: Glory Halawa, age 10



Grade: Standard 2

Favorite school subject: English

Special talent: She likes to work and particularly likes to wash plates.

Age she started collecting water: 5 years old

Prayer request: "God knows my prayers."

Career goal: Teacher

Message for kids in America: "I want you to see me and know me. I want you to know what our lives are like."

MEANINGFUL MOMENT: We have incredible photos of Glory drinking water with Lake Malawi in the background (both in horizontal and vertical orientations).



Beneficiary Interview # 4: Memory Mkandawire, age 10

Grade: Standard 3

Favorite school subjects: English and math

Career goal: Teacher or doctor

Career inspiration: "I want to teach just like our female teacher. I also want to be a doctor and give injections (vaccines). I'm scared of injections, but I'd like to give them to other people to keep them healthy!"

Prayer request: "I pray that God will guide me in life."

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Chilonga Village is home to 350 households spread out over a large area. The cluster we visited had 35 households and St. Paul’s Catholic Church outstation right next door. The area has never had a borehole.



The water situation in Chilonga Village is abysmal and easily one of the worst I’ve seen. Families here rely on the **Chilonga River** as their water source.

The Chilonga River is long and wide, flowing from the mountains to Lake Malawi. It’s also heavily polluted. Upstream, the water flows through an animal preserve/national park where it is a water source for wild animals such as elephants and antelopes. As the water continues flowing, it then passes by large rice

plantations where the water is diverted and used for farming. (Northern Malawi is known for its aromatic rice.) Excess water – filled with fertilizer – is then dumped back into the river. During the dry season, the river is essentially mud by the time it reaches Chilonga Village. However, I’m told that during the summer, the river is significantly fuller – but the water is still very dirty.



The walk to the riverbank is short and steep. It only takes about five minutes to reach the river, but that doesn’t mean the river is a convenient source. It takes about 50 minutes to collect a single bucket of water, because women and girls must dig in the mud first.

Here, **Tumse Mwaijumba** (left) and **Ester Halawa** (right) demonstrate how they collect water. They dug a shallow pit and discard all of the water on the surface. Then they wait for the pit to refill with water. They then use their bowl to fill up their buckets.



Families in Chilonga Village tell us that they've been taught to boil the water. However, they don't always have time for this step. During our visit, we witnessed a young girl – **Ester Pwele**, age 10 – drinking water straight from one of the hand-dug pits. The water was cloudy and filled with sediment.

Beneficiary Interview # 1: Tumse Mwaijumba, age 46



Tumse Mwaijumba is a married mother of seven. She has four girls and three boys ranging in age from 9 to 29. All three of her sons are married, and she has seven grandsons. (She really would like a granddaughter, though!)

Every day, Tumse makes at least five trips to the river, spending between five and seven hours collecting water. She has painful, swollen knees, and the backbreaking task of water collection is physically draining for her.

When asked about what a borehole would mean to her: “I want my 9-year-old daughter to be able to access safe and clean water. Our lives would change a lot.”

“People bathe in the river. Some defecate in the river. We get sick from diarrhea and stomachaches. It’s very common here. The whole village relies on this river. We have no access to safe water.”

“This water source is far away from our house and the walk is not safe. I have knee problems, so often

I need help from schoolchildren to collect water. Collecting water is very painful for me. My family suffers from dysentery from this water.”

“Water is life. For me to live, I need water. My family needs water. This water source is far from my house and unprotected. I drink together with domesticated and wild animals, and some people defacate in the water. We drink chemicals from the nearby rice fields. This is indeed a problem. If you can help us install a safe water point, we can be assisted from this suffering.”