

# STORIES OF CHANGE

## VSL GROUPS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

### 1. Village Savings Loan Groups Intensify Activities

The Village Saving Loan groups that SCOM established with the aim of empowering parents for the cause of their students are gaining ground in own initiated activities. Apart from meeting regularly for VSL activities the Katsekaminga group, named 'Umodzi Group' has become a model in villages surrounding the school.

The group organize meetings to challenge communities on a number of issues. One of such meetings took place at pabwalo la a Mfumu Kasteiaminga (Village headman Katsekamingas yard) on 20 March 2014.

Participants to the meeting included: The Group Village Headman Kastekaminga, other 3 Chiefs and their members. 27 people present at this meeting.

Topics that were shared during the meeting were: Drug and Substance Abuse which was done by Chairperson of VSL group, Mr. Sandy Phiri; Behavior Change done Mrs. Chisakaza and Mr. Mvumbwe. Reproductive System was done by Mrs. Banda and Zefania. Mr. Francis Misinde handled Adolescence stage and teenage pregnancy. Nyakwawa Chulu concluded that the programe must come again and she will call the whole village.

### 2. Birth Of Other VSL Groups Around Katsekaminga School

The activities are still going on according to the working plan of the group. These activities have lead the birth of other groups within the village that have started VSL.

These groups had very much interest in what 'Umodzi Group' is doing and requested to join. When they were advised that according to the constitution that the use to rung their group it is somehow complicated to join. They were advised to start own groups and ask for a training. The SCOM staff in Dedza was pestered to at least be part of the group as leader or treasurer. He denied but only offered guidance and support. He organized the Umodzi group and provided training to these new groups.

Now the groups are up and running under the tutorship of the Umodzi group. They have adopted a strategy and are targeting to visit clinics surrounding Group Village Headman Katsekaminga, Mgwele and Nguchi with the reason of reaching many teenagers that are found in such clinics. These villages are the ones that surround Katsekaminga Secondary school.

They organized their own trip to a health clinic at Sukwasukwa village where the chairperson of the group is working as a Healthy Surveillance. At the health center they gathered pregnant women who came to visit the clinic and the chairperson opened with a word of prayer. He then went on to talk on issues of teenage pregnancies and sexual reproductive health.

## **SRH EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS MARCH ON**

### **1. Group Village Kapesi Mobilises His Subjects For an SRH Talk.**

Group Village Kapesi also mobilized his people on 27/03/2014 at Kapesi Village and disseminated the information on issues of sexual reproductive health.

### **2. SRH Taken To The Village Via Yahaya Mosque**

Sheik Yahaya and Mai Jambo represented the Yahaya Mosque during the Sexual Reproductive Health training that SCOM organized in Dedza. On Sunday 6 April 2014 the two organized a meeting to sensitize the village on what they had learnt at the training. Invited guests to this meeting included village head Mlomupasula and Group Village Head Katsekaminga and other elders. They also extended the invitation to SCOM office. Staff from SCOM went to the meeting in company of SCOM patron from Katsekaminga.

In his speech Sheik Yahaya, who was later supported by Mai Jambo, said seeing that people are being hit by the HIV pandemic SCOM organized the training to discuss on cultural practices that are putting the youth at risk. He said many youth are going astray. He asked parents to remember their role on children and keep children in school.

Sheik Yahaya took the audience to task when he said Village headmen are wondering as to what is going on in the village. What do parents tell adolescents that the village loses many of them to marriages or just dropping out of school. They see pregnancies among girls without knowing where the pregnancies are coming from. According to Yao culture, he continued, when there is a pregnancy elders organize a ritual known as 'litiwo'. But now such a practice cannot be done where the pregnancies are just happening anyhow.

The Sheik who characterized his speech with the story of Noah and the Ark said SCOM does not want a situation like that of Noahs time to happen to us. He finished his speech saying that the faith community is discouraging sexual immorality but there are other people who are busy distributing condoms.

The Katsekaminga SCOM patron also spoke and said that there is need to join hands to help the youth. The school is at pain to see that many girls are getting pregnancies and this is putting lives of the girls at risk.

In response the village head said things are indeed worrisome in the village. Another disturbing thing going on is that many are pregnancies that are noticed in the village, but news about babies being born out of those pregnancies are never told. Where do those pregnancies go?

He wondered. Is it high time now that we should guard each and every pregnancy so that it should not disappear? The village head asked.

Due to a heavy rainfall that started pouring down the meeting ended in hurry with promises for further meetings.

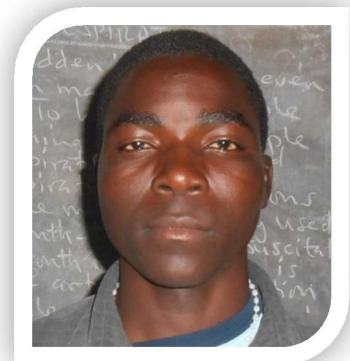


**The audience at Yahaya Mosque**

## **CHAWA SECONDARY SCHOOL STORIES**

### **1. Auscer Chikaiko An Ambassador Against Teasing**

**A**uscer Chikaiko is now in form four at Chawa CDSS. He was among students who were selected to go for training in leadership. When he came back he chose to be an ambassador of teasing reduction at the school. He spoke to the entire form four about why they should not tease their fellow students. He based his message emphasizing on the consequences of teasing. His efforts can be noticed. His class adhered to this and have chosen not to engage in teasing at the school.



**Let there be no teasing,  
Auscer Chikaiko**

## 2. Class Monitor Prevents A Crisis

Chosadziwa Tyson is a class monitor in form four at Chawa Secondary School. He participated in the Leadership training organized by SCOM. Never did he realize that not so long will he be called to duties that will require him to apply skills learnt through that training. Some students in his class one day misbehaved before their teacher. The situation ended up affecting the entire class and tension was so high that there was exchange of bad language. The teacher was about to abandon the class in frustration. Chosadziwa took courage and approached the teacher to ask for forgiveness and indeed after that, things normalized. Asked as to what gave him the courage to do that, Chosadziwa said he remembered one mindset of a leader that says, 'lift up your head'. This mindset says that a leader should be able to see and take action.



**Helped solve a conflict,  
Chosadziwa Tyson**

## 3. Demonstration Are Not A Solution-Students Agree

Today we hear of students demonstrating and in the end breaking property as a means of voicing out their concerns. Alfred Mwale of Chawa Secondary school says their school was not spared to this. As a proof to this, he will as you to take a look at the roof of their school blocks and indeed one will notice stones and other objects that were not meant to be part of the structural design but, he says, were thrown there by students in demonstrations. He said before the project activities their school prefects lacked more skills in dealing with a number of issues and resolved to violence should there be differences with the administration. The head prefect, Joseph Friday, also agreed that this was the situation before. However after the students went for the leadership trainings the head prefect organized a meeting and discussed to start better ways of dealing with issues as they had learnt. They went further to request for a sit down



**Joseph Friday,  
Head Prefect**

with their teachers. 5 teachers came to the meeting and together they fruitfully discussed ways of preventing demonstrations at the school.

#### **4. Leadership Skills Applied In The Library**

One of the beneficiaries of the Leadership training that SCOM organized through the project is a librarian at Chawa Secondary school. Her name is Patricia Nelson. The situation in the library before the training only favored form fours over those in lower classes. For example form four used the library at the same time with form ones. This gave the fours more advantage as they could have whatever they wanted leaving the form ones with nothing to say. After the leadership training, Patricia decided to make initiate some changes to give equal opportunity to all forms. As a start, library time for the two classes was rescheduled. They gave the ones a different time so that they will have no one to compete with at the library.



**Helped Form Ones at Library:  
Patricia Nelson**

#### **5. Student Leaders Tackle Various Issues**

Students at Chawa have stormed their school from all angles to tackle various issues ranging from character, HIV and AIDS teenage pregnancies and academics. School prefects organized an open day with full of activities. The main theme of the event was "Zoyenera Mwana Wa Sukulu" Activities included poems, drama and jokes. The messages did not end here. Students like Davie Canada had an opportunity to speak to fellow students at assembly. Madalitso Chirwa who claims to have three of her friends change their behavior is flat out speaking about consequences of teenage pregnancies. She is advising her friends not to indulge in behaviours that will put them at risk of early pregnancies. Students claim that the messages are bringing good results more especially in form two which was hit with teenage pregnancies in previous year. Jack Simonje added in to this saying that they are advising their friends in boarding at the school not to engage in sexual relationships. Numbers of people in sexual relationships are reducing, they say. They have now instituted regulations to curb those who sneak out for immoral behaviours. Names of those involving themselves into this are written down and the people are brought for discipline. It is estimated that the students have reached their school population of 442 students (248 male and 194 female)

## 6. We All Have Potential To Make It To Colleges And Universities

Salah Austin has a message to fellow students at her school. Many students in Community Day Secondary Schools have a mindset that going to colleges or universities in Malawi is only for those in National Secondary Schools. This is what many students think. But Salah has developed a different thought over this thinking. She is busy telling her friends that they can also make it to college even from their school. The students also initiated a meeting to discuss on academic matters in their school. Prefects were called and then one of their teachers Mr. Nachiola was approached to guide them over this matter. Group discussions have since been initiated on the school. To add on this, Triza Makoza said they also asked the school administration to change punishments administering at the school. Students should not be going for punishments while others are in class. Administration has arranged that punishments be done out of class time.



**We asked that punishments be taken after classes, Triza Makoza**

## KATSEKAMINGA SECONDARY SCHOOL STORIES

### 1. Form Four Class Has Changed At Katsekaminga

Many times the form four students in many schools have made it possible to show superiority by demonstrating in a number of ways. Teasing, bullying and getting first priority over everything are some of the ways they have demonstrated their superiority. When there is general work at the school, form fours have also left this to be done by the juniors just because they, form fours, are superior. But the story is becoming different at Katsekaminga Secondary School. This was very clear when the school was opening just after April 2014 Easter holiday. Unlike previous years where it used to be very difficult for form fours to get involved in general cleaning, this time around the class was in the fore front mopping their class. This has come about because the Leadership training that SCOM organized under the SCOM Tearfund project has helped students to realize their roles and to demonstrate responsibility. Commenting on this development a teacher at Katsekaminga says it is true that this class used to give teachers on duty a lot of trouble.



**Jack Mwamkonda said 'The form fours were busy mopping their class.'**



But things have changed now. The class including all other students are generally willing to work whenever that time comes.

The teacher continued to say that the direction things are taking the issue of teenage pregnancies that was high at the school will go down. Before the project interventions, students were going about in pairs. He said students were at peak of this behavior when they reach form four. This behavior could also be evidenced in class. Because of such sexual relationships going on students were not willing to answer questions in class. But things have changed. The teacher wondered whether they are now hiding or most of them have stopped all together. There many students now willing to participate in class lessons by answering questions, unlike before. Students themselves agreed to this and say that even sharing of pornographic images has reduced around the school because many students realize that this leads to promiscuity.



**'We now have a changed form four class' – Mr. Moyo, Teacher at Katsekaminga**

Issues of indiscipline have also sharply decreased. A teacher at Katsekaminga says he, on numerous occasions could be called for attend ti indiscipline matters. This time around those calls have reduced.

## **2. Katsekaminga Head Teacher Says SCOM Project Helpful**

Views of Headteacher of Katsekaminga Secondary school about the SCOM TF project gives hope that the project is on the right direction. Being someone who has a general picture of the entire school, the Head teachers remarks that among the four classes at the school form three used to be the least in academic performance. However she has a different story after SCOM implemented its project o the school. There is significant improvement, she says.

The head teacher went further to give an example of one student who has changed from being a trouble maker and underperformer since form one. She at one time sat down with the student, Leken Mayani and tried to advise him that he has potential to do well. Leken Mayani had an opportunity to participate in the SCOM Tearfund Project activities. When he came back from the Mindset Change leadership training organized at Chongoni, Leken decided to start a new life. He went back to the head teacher and told him of what he had learnt through the project. In his own analysis, Leken told

the head teacher that his main problem was negative peer pressure. He had decided to embrace new way of doing his things. This time, the head teacher said, Lekenis school performance has improved. The head teacher also told his class of the interesting news that is happening to Lekeni asking the class to emulate this example.

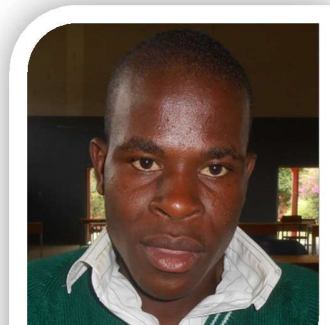
### 3. Charles Lindako Starts A New Life

Charles Lindako is in form 3 at Katsekaminga CDSS. He says that due to lack of proper guidance he has been in the habit of drinking beer and also some drugs. He was among students that were selected for the Mindset Change retreat that SCOM organized for notably troublesome student in its project schools. At this retreat the Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse session made him realize that his habits were wrong and that he was endangering his life. Having considered the effects of drugs Charles considered a stop to his previous habits. He decided to make a turn towards Christ and has become a born again. He has made up his mind that he will be telling his friends that they will be negatively affected if they continue to engage in abuse drugs.

## DEDZA SECONDARY SCHOOL STORIES

### 1. Student Leaders Put Leadership Skills to Use

Alfred Mwale is a Village Head (Hostel Prefect) at Dedza Secondary school. He is just one example of a number of student leaders who are putting to good use leadership skills that they learnt through the SCOM Tearfund project. There are other students at the secondary school sometimes stealing from their friends. When such situation occurs students could savagely handle such situations. But after leaning some leadership skills, more especially the tip of Iceberg; Alfred said this helped him to deal with a student who used to be a thief at the school. With his leadership the students decided to investigate background of the stealing student. They found that this particular student is in the habit of stealing as a result of severe problems at his home. This then helped the students to find better options in handling this student so as to help him change his habits.



**Alfred Mwale, Hostel Prefect  
at Dedza Sec. School**

The students at Dedza also say that petty issues in class, like asking a question to a teacher, could lead to conflicts among themselves. But this time around, they have learnt that such conflicts are not necessary where every student want to learn.



Adding to this, Tedi Mukholi another Hostel prefect say leaders at the school are now using 'all senses' in dealing with conflicts. This is to say that they are now able to detect matters that may most likely result into major conflicts at the school and by this they are able to prevent them from happening.

## 2. Frank Alfred Mwale Intervenes to Prevent an Abortion.

**A**lfred Mwale has a friend who also has other friends and their group is involved in some bad behaviors more especially beer drinking, smoking and sexual relationships. It happened that one of their girlfriends fell pregnant. The group was then pressurizing the girl to abort. However one of the members of this group who happens to be a friend of Alfred decided to differ with his friends. He asked Alfred on how best to convince his friends. Alfred took this opportunity and took him through what he had learnt during Teenage Pregnancies at the SCOM Sexual Reproductive Health training. It was at this point that Alfreds' friend gathered convincing points and advised the friends and the girl not to abort the pregnancy.

Apart from this group students at the school also say unlike before the SCOM project interventions, they now realize reasons why they should not engage in sexual relationships.

## 3. From Trouble Maker To Trusted Person

**A**mong the students that came from Dedza Secondary school for the Mindset Change Retreat that SCOM had organized at Chongoni in Dedza was Giff Milanzi. However as the students were waiting for supper on the arrival day Gifts father came driving all the way about 50km from Dedza boma to the place of the retreat. He was following Giff and he asked for permission from his teacher to take him back home for questioning. The guardian said that some money is missing and Giff was a prime suspect.

The teacher Mr. Malata allowed the guardian to take the



**Giff Milanzi**

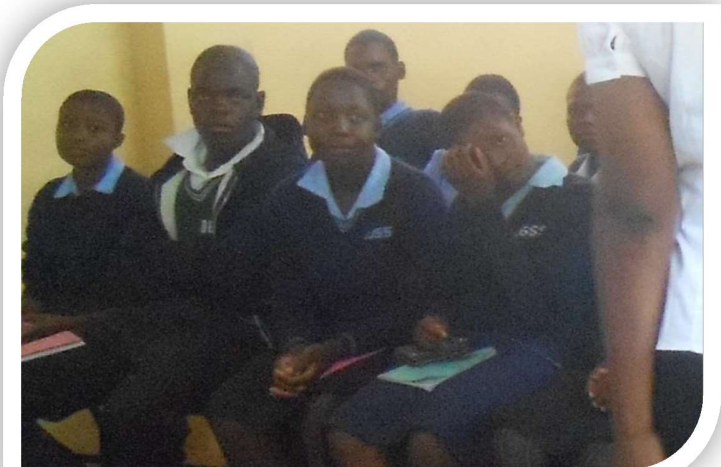
son for questioning but pleaded with him that Giff be brought back because the training was organized for such kind of people. The father reluctantly did as was asked and brought Giff back for the retreat.

After the retreat his teachers started noticing some changes in Gifts way of doing things. He moved his seat from the back roll to somewhere near the front. The trouble maker had started doing the unusual. He was among students who came again for another training (sexual Reproductive Health) organized by SCOM. His friends were very surprised to see him helping in the kitchen by correcting used plates and also helping in serving food to some students.

Gifts father is all thankful to what has happened to his son. A visit was made to his shop. Mr Milanzi was not there but unlike in the past Gift was found in the shop helping with business. This could never happen in the past because he could not be entrusted with the shop business. Today both at home and school people are seeing a changed Gift Milanzi.



**Mr Milanzi's shop – Now Gift can be entrusted with some duties here**

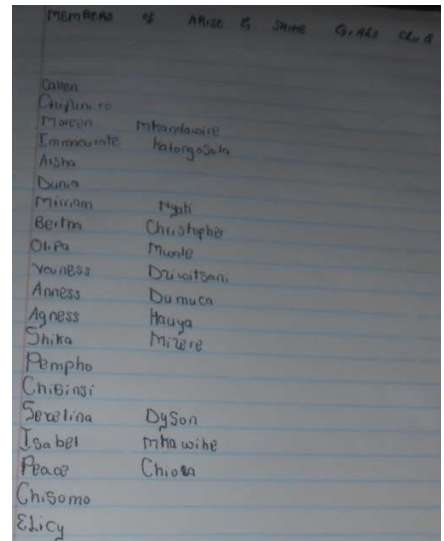


**Gift has switched to front rolls, captured here, 2<sup>nd</sup> from left, during SRH training.**

## **UMBWI SECONDARY SCHOOL STORIES**

### **1. Arise And Shine, to propel Girls into Top 20 at Umbwi.**

It has always been a general concern that girls in many schools do not compete well with boys in class. Many girls have also chosen just to accept that they may not do better because they were born Girls. One girl at Umbwi, Miriam Nyati, decided to turn things around after going through the SCOM Tearfund project activities. She made up her decision that she must do what it takes to improve girls academic performance at the school. She approached one of her teachers, Mr. Chitekwere and they discussed the matter and developed ideas. This was introduced to their school administration and indeed a club was formed. The club has since been named 'Arise And Shine'. Arise and Shine, whose members are only girls, meets every Saturday to discuss issues to do with academics. Their main aim is to take girls at the school to top 20 in class and even if possible go down to top 10. By the time Miriam was telling this story, the club had met three times and they are trying to ask the administration to identify someone to be matron or patron of their group.



**Arise and Shine Membership in their Register Book**



**Some of the Members of Arise and Shine**

## **2. Project Helps Prefects At Umbwi in their Work.**

Students in many schools do not use resources at in their schools responsibly. They leave water taps open, do not care to switch off light bulbs when not in use and many other examples. This used to be the behavior of many students at Umbwi Secondary school. One thing that the SCOM Tearfund project has helped student leaders in the schools is to instill sense of responsibility over school resources. When the leaders went back to their schools most of them made sure that they communicate the message to fellow students. Chifundo Nkombe for example communicated this message to about 300 fellow students in their hostels. This has brought about good results at umbwi Secondary school. Students are learning to care for resources in their school.

The dining hall in many situations is also a place where major conflicts erupt in schools. Short of supply or Delay of meals are some of the reasons that have caused serious

conflicts in schools. Queen Saidi says that Umbwi has not been exceptional on these matters in the past. She said that students could come to a point of hating cooks and sometimes say bad languages to them. But he thanks the SCOM Tearfund project which has given them ideas and skills in conflict management. They have since applied the skills and today they are able to manage their dining hall properly. They take lead speak to fellow students in order to avoid conflicts.

### **3. Prefect Stamps Out Favoritism in Her Duties.**

**C**horus Silungwe is one of the prefects at Umbwi secondary school. Like many other prefects one of her responsibilities is to give punishments to students who have disobeyed school regulations. She has been doing this but unfortunately with some favoritism. The law breaker happens to be her good friend; Chorus has always given lighter punishment to them while non-friends have always faced harder punishments. She says she used to be doing this in order to gain favors in other areas in return like food stuffs and others. But after going through leadership training, Chorus has changed. She confesses that she run into a situation where she gave an equal punishment to a friend and non-friend. Her friend was surprised at such treatment, but Chorus stood her ground and openly demonstrated that favoritism is not to be practiced by good leaders.

### **4. Umbwi Prefect Council Geared To Live as Examples.**

**T**he Umbwi Prefects Council has decided to put to good use lessons learn from the SCOM Tearfund leadership training. They sat down to map way forward after the training and came up with resolutions. They have resolved to work hard in class to be exemplary in their academic work. The prefects have also resolved to make their dressing code exemplary in the schools.

### **5. Dedza Secondary School Students Learn Summer Classes at Umbwi.**

**S**tudents at Umbwi secondary school desire to see good and cordial relationship with their fellow students of Dedza Secondary school. They have taken opportunities and talked to one another in order to foster this good relationship. When schools closed for holiday, Umbwi students say they accommodated fellow students from Dedza who came to attend summer classes. This they say is a very good step to improve their relationships which has been sour for ages.