

Connecting Lives

www.eaglesmalawi.org



What does it look like to be a CCM church ?

Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) is about churches living out their calling from God, embodying His love in their community and bringing whole-life transformation – especially for the most vulnerable. In this newsletter, we showcase what it looks like to be a 'CCM Church', with two stories from Malawi where women are leading the process. We also share learning about how to become a CCM church in the UK.

A better place for everyone

Grace Kabula, a female church leader in southern Malawi, motivates and models CCM in her church, bringing increased climate resilience, improved health and vital support for the most vulnerable in their community— all while being a caring mother of four! She says:

◀ *Since I took part in the CCM training, I have always been encouraged and motivated, knowing that, as a church leader, I have more work to do to make sure that our community becomes a better place for everyone. As a woman, I discovered that I'm well-placed to take up the challenge and change things for the better because, so much of the time, women and children are more affected when the community faces a challenge.*

(cont. on p.4) ▶▶

Women pioneers bring health care home

The women in Mbuto community in central Malawi will now receive vital antenatal and postnatal care for the first time, thanks to the passion of their local CCM church and the team of CCM facilitators, led by Mary Magombo and trained by Eagles. Previously, pregnant and new mothers had to travel over 10km on foot as transport was risky, unreliable and expensive, exacerbated by dangerous roads. Travellers could even fall prey to robbers. As a result, most women and babies did not get the medical support they needed, risking stunting and diseases going unnoticed.

After Eagles' training, the church began the CCM Bible studies, putting their learning into practice through 'acts of love' after each one. The women's group immediately felt convicted and began caring for people in need. They also planted a woodlot of 3000 trees!

Since we started the Bible studies, acts of love have become an important part of our ministry as women in our church.

Edina Maenje

The next stage of CCM challenged the church to work with their community to reach a shared vision for their future. The church and community decided to make access to healthcare happen themselves, after a politician, who had promised them a clinic, disappointed them. Community members, teachers, chiefs and church leaders discussed this together (see photo right). They decided to build a temporary clinic and health worker's house with mud and thatch while they continued to raise money for plaster and iron sheets.

With building underway, the community then lobbied the district hospital for a clinic. Moved by their commitment, the hospital agreed to deploy a health worker to the clinic, once it was ready. Needing support to get the clinic built as soon as possible, Mbuto church mobilised churches in neighbouring communities to help, alongside their own efforts. Now they are all working together for a clinic that will give many access to healthcare for the first time!



(cont. on p.3)



(cont from p.2)

As a commitment to their vision, everyone also planted a tree (see photos left). They said,

If all we do is discuss without doing what we have agreed, these trees will cause us shame. Every time we see them we should be reminded about our plans.

Not just ‘over there’ - CCM in the UK

CCM is not just something for ‘over there’ in Malawi, but is vital in our own churches. God’s call is just as urgent for UK churches to respond to the needs of their local community and bring ‘whole-life’ change.

Prompted by participants in Eagles’ online CCM course, Eagles worked with Tearfund, Mothers’ Union and Christians Against Poverty (CAP) to convene a Learning Community in April about how to facilitate CCM in the UK. It was so exciting to hear how much is already going on! Here are some key learnings:

- CCM is an effective approach in the UK too, with evidenced impact at different levels:
 - personal level e.g. increased faith, confidence and passion.
 - church level e.g. a deeper understanding of God’s calling, growing community connection and relationships, greater understanding of their community and the challenges faced.
 - community level, motivating churches to join existing community projects or initiate activities to fill gaps, responding to issues as diverse as homelessness, prisons, loneliness and hunger.

- Church leaders’ personal involvement is essential – or CCM can end up at the periphery of church. They need to see CCM as an essential and effective way to live out their core mission.
- A team of CCM facilitators in each church helps with motivation, encouragement and time. While whole-church involvement takes more time than a small team just doing the work themselves, it is worth the effort for sustainability.

- Creative ways can be found for community engagement, but doing things *with* our community and not *for* them remains essential. It takes time for mindset change, so members don’t run projects for people but listen to and work with them.

It has given us the vision and opportunity to share our faith in action.

I am engaging with our community with eyes and ears open to see what they feel is needed .

A better place for everyone (cont from p.1)

After receiving the Bible-based training from Eagles, Pastor Grace's perspective changed on what it meant to be a church. She mobilised her congregation to see community development as both their responsibility and their joy, a way to demonstrate God's love and to steward and multiply the resources He has given them.

Her church began working with their community to tackle the different challenges they were facing, including:

- building a dyke to prevent water destroying their rice fields in floods that are becoming an annual threat due to climate change
- promoting sanitation and reducing cholera outbreaks, which are becoming more and more prevalent
- improving food security so people can feed their families
- providing care and support to anyone struggling to support themselves, such as elderly people, women who have lost their husbands and children without families

Other churches have requested Pastor Grace to come and speak to them about what her church is doing, inspired by this different way of thinking about the role of a local church.

Meet Francis

Eagles' new CCM facilitator southern region

I joined Eagles because I have a huge passion for the poor and most vulnerable. Eagles offers a platform for me to contribute positively to improve their living standards.

What I enjoy most about my work is working with churches and communities to see change and transformation. I decided to take the online CCM course as well, to learn and increase my knowledge and skills in facilitation. I think CCM is the best course ever as far as Church and Community Mobilisation is concerned - it is easy to use and shows you the most effective way of reaching out to the community.

I am the last born of a family of six. I'm married and have two lovely children, a boy and girl who are ten and five years old.

