

Distribution of Care Bicycles to Koche  
Ward, Traditional Authority Mponda in  
Mangochi District – Malawi 21st October,  
2017

# Independent Report on the Distribution Exercise

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## Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS .....	ii
ABOUT THE REPORTER .....	iii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
AIM OF THE REPORT .....	1
BACKGROUND .....	1
THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY .....	2
OBJECTIVE OF THE DISTRIBUTION.....	4
TARGET BENEFICIARY .....	5
CHALLENGES FACED .....	7
BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITIES .....	8
Reduction of Preventable Pre-Mature Deaths.....	8
Increased Attendance to Antenatal Care.....	8
Increased Numbers of Safe Delivery .....	8
Financial Savings.....	9
DONATION PACKAGE.....	9
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	10
CONCLUSION.....	11

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ACCA	Association of Certified Chartered Accountants
ADC	Area Development Committee
BFI	Butterfly Foundation International
CHAM	Christian Health Association of Malawi
CISER	Community Initiative for Self-Reliance
DEC	District Executive Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
T4T	Transport 4 Transport
TA	Traditional Authority

## ABOUT THE REPORTER

### Professional and Academic Background



**Figure 1 Ufulu Chungu**

Ufulu Chungu is a Malawian who is a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

(ACCA). He strengthened his NGO financial management skills through a yearlong mentorship with KFM Consultants from 2010 to 2015. Prior pursuing the accounting profession, he studied Philosophy and Social Sciences at St. Anthony Kachebere Major Seminary and coupled with practical work on social empowerment of communities in the Diocese of Dedza from 1999 to 2007 which deepened his philanthropy. Current contact details are: C/O Tearfund Malawi Limited, Private Bag B351, Capital City – Lilongwe 3 – Malawi; Email: [ufuluchungu@yahoo.com](mailto:ufuluchungu@yahoo.com); Telephone: +265 (0) 999 260 512.

### Professional Career

Currently, Ufulu is Finance Officer for Tearfund Malawi Limited overseeing institutional grants from Scottish Government to the Malawi partners in areas of environmental care and promotion of boys' & girls' education worth 700,000GBP. The projects have interventions covering the communities of Northern and Central Malawi. From 2010 to 2015 he worked for the Diocese of Chikwawa managing two projects with funding from Cordaid – Netherlands (Performance Based Financing in the field of HIV Home based Care and Connect4Change ICT in Women Health) worth €500,000. The two projects reached out to communities in Chikwawa district which lies to the southern tip of Malawi. His role has been budgeting, monitoring project expenditures and financial reporting to donors.

## INTRODUCTION

Transport4Transport (T4T) contracted Ufulu Chungu to make an independent report on the presentation ceremony of care bicycles by CISER to the communities of Traditional Authority Mponda in Mangochi district. Ufulu is not part of T4T or Butterfly Foundation (BFI) or any of T4T & BFI partner but directly relates with T4T in as far as he is contracted to independently monitor the distribution exercise of the care bicycles to ensure that it is conducted in a transparent manner as per the back donor intention. The monitoring is conducted through observing the actual distribution exercise and interviewing various stakeholders of the care bicycle activities.

## AIM OF THE REPORT

The report aims at the following:

- a) To give an independent account of the care bicycle distribution exercise.
- b) Informing the sponsors challenges the beneficiary communities face and the positive impact/benefits the donation brings forth to the communities.
- c) To encourage other people of goodwill to come to the rescue of needy communities in Malawi.

## BACKGROUND

On October 21, 2017, Community Initiative for Self-Reliance (CISER) distributed 37 care bicycles to 37 villages in Koche Ward which is under Traditional Authority Mponda in Mangochi. The consignment was assistance from BFI and T4T. According to Koche Ward Councillor the ward has a population above forty thousand (40,000) and has two health facilities Koche Health Centre and Mangochi District Hospital. According to the ADC Secretary, furthest village from the nearest health facility – Koche Health Centre – is approximately 15 kilometers which takes at least one and half hour walk for a health and physically strong person to reach the facility. Further, other villages are situated in upper land and they face big challenges of access to safe water for domestic chores. The villages draw water from water points shared both with domestic and wild animals. Consequently, during rainy seasons, the communities become victims of water borne diseases, cholera topping the list.

The Area Development Committee (ADC) for Koche Ward noted with deep concern health challenges facing the communities in the ward which are worsened by transport challenges to ferry patients and pregnant women to and from hospital since the available health service providers being Malawi government and Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) have no adequate transport facilities to meet the needs of the communities. Worse, the Koche communities can afford neither to own nor hire transport facilities to take them to the nearest health facility.



**Figure 2 A consignment of unassembled care bicycles ready for distribution**

### **THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

The presentation ceremony had the attendance of traditional village heads, government officials, district assembly, media, T4T, and BFI. Speeches highlighted importance of using the care bicycles as per donor's intention and proper care. On a special note, T4T chairman hinted on using modern information management systems whereby data will be stored in cloud a development that will enable wider data access by stakeholders for required project information thereby increasing transparency and accountability. He further highlighted that Mangochi has been chosen as a model district for the care bicycle project and the vision is to have a care bicycle for each village. He recognized special contribution from the Area Development Committee (ADC) secretary who timely avails complete and accurate data which has been crucial for decision making in the care bicycle project.



Berend van der Weide -T4T Chairman (to the right) addressing the gathering hinting about data cloud storage facility for better data management to enhance transparency and accountability to wider stakeholders

**Figure 3 T4T Chairman Be Van Weide (right) addresses the gathering and Joseph Makwakwa (left)**

CISER Executive Director Joseph Makwakwa reported that the care bicycle project will follow local government structures, using the ADC to monitor the care bicycle usage and promote ownership by the benefitting communities.



Mangochi District Executive Committee Vice Chairman highlights that T.A. Mponda area is among areas with highest maternal mortality rate and the donation will improve safe motherhood in the area.

**Figure 4 Mangochi District Executive Council Vice Chair speaking**

The ministry of health representative thanked T4T for contributing towards uplifting lives of the local community. The District Executive Committee (DEC) representative highlighted that T.A. Mponda is one of the areas that registers highest number of maternal deaths and through T4T intervention, he saw relief from the preventable deaths of pregnant mothers.

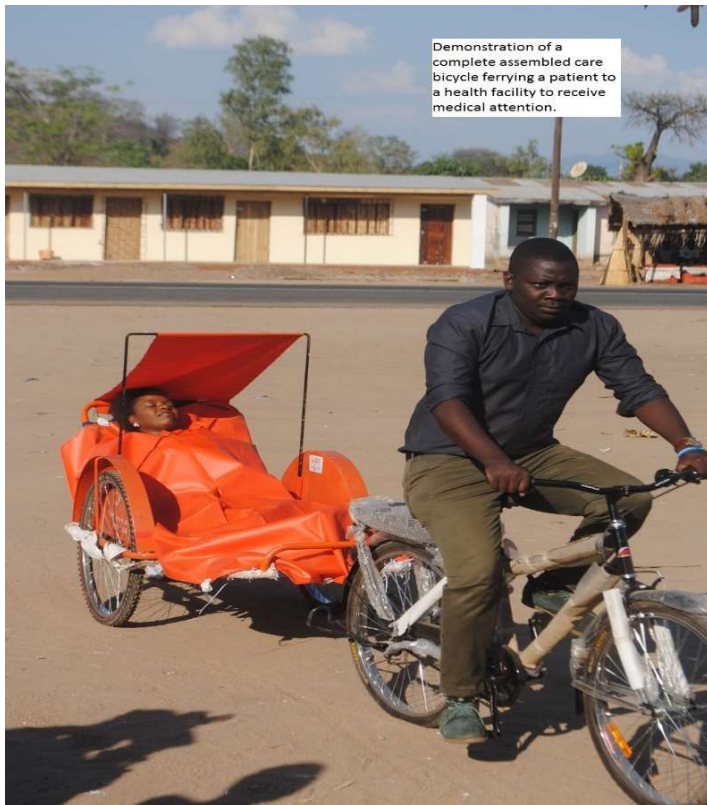


BFI Care Bicycle Monitoring Officer - Rick Mwenye instructs on management of the fully assembled care set

Figure 5 BFI Care Bicycle Monitoring Officer shares management tips of care bicycles

## OBJECTIVE OF THE DISTRIBUTION

To ease transportation problems of patients and pregnant women to the nearest health facility.



Demonstration of a complete assembled care bicycle ferrying a patient to a health facility to receive medical attention.

Figure 6 Demo of care bicycle ferrying patient to health facility





**Figure 7 BFI Monitoring Care Bicycle Officer Leads in demonstrating assembling the care set**

### **TARGET BENEFICIARY**

The distribution targeted pregnant women and patients suffering from general conditions that require attention from the health facility. The beneficiary villages are 37 all in Koche Ward under T.A. Mponda. According to the ADC secretary, Thomson Binali Sanudi, the beneficiary villages have an adult population of 19,850. According to Rick Mwenye – BFI Care Bicycle Monitoring Officer to-date, T4T and BFI have distributed 675 care bicycles to various villages in Mangochi and the first consignment was distributed in 2011.



T4T Chair - Be Van Weide officially hands over care bicycle to Chief Mponda while some village heads and ADC members witness the remarkable event

Figure 8 T4T Chair Be Van Weide official handover of care bicycle set to Chief Mponda



Village heads from 37 villages in their seats occupying the entire left section and part of the right section ready to receive the care set on behalf of their communities

Figure 9 Village occupy the right wing and part of the left wing

## CHALLENGES FACED

Interviews with various stakeholders outlined some challenges that are inherent with the bicycle care set and the beneficiary communities that may slow down benefit realization of the care bicycles.

1. Scarcity of spare parts especially hubs which broke frequently. Sourcing spare parts to replace worn out parts remained a challenge since the spares were not readily available within the local market. As a way forward to smoothen the process, spares will be sourced from Zimbabwe which has a ready market. Further, huge plans are materializing to construct a workshop within Mangochi which will have a facility to regularly maintain the bicycles for more continued use.
2. Communities do not report faulty care bicycles until when the monitoring officer discovers the problem himself and sometimes the discovery is after a long period of downtime. BFI will increase the monitoring process through tracking forms that will record usage of the bicycle and any fault will be tracked early if there is slow down of bicycle movement. The ADC secretary will collect report forms from the communities and compile a report that will be made available both to the ADC and CISER.
3. Some communities have individuals monopolizing the care bicycles. CISER has redefined functions of the ADC in the management of the care bicycles which are,
  - a. Distributing and collecting forms to and from communities for tracking usage.
  - b. Monitoring community usage of care bicycles and promoting community ownership of the care bicycles.

Communities will be sensitized to know the benefits realized from proper use of the care bicycle thereby communities owning the care bicycle. Secondly, signing of contract forms spelling out the duty of care and service between the community, CISER and T4T.

## BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITIES

### Reduction of Preventable Pre-Mature Deaths

Some deaths result from delayed health care treatment. Patients and pregnant women experienced delays to reach the nearest health facility when they experienced pregnant complications or when due for delivery. The care bicycle will facilitate more comfort and quicker access to the hospital thereby reducing deaths. Babies born at the health facilities will receive professional health care thereby leading to reduction both to preventable infant deaths and pregnancy complications. Normal walk by a strong and healthy person from the furthest end of the ward (15 kilometers away) takes about 2 hours while cycling takes at least 30 minutes effectively, the cyclist beats walking by 75 minutes representing 75% improvement.

### Increased Attendance to Antenatal Care

Life may be considered to begin at conception and pregnant mothers need to attend antenatal clinical visits at least four visits prior to giving birth. It is through these visits that the unborn baby starts receiving health care that is crucial for its continued health life. Pregnant mothers who are naturally weak will find solace from the care bicycles since the bicycles are more comfortable and significantly reducing effort to reach the health facility for antenatal care. Therefore, the mother's full attendance of the antenatal clinics means securing a health developing fetus which will lead to a healthy baby hence, building a health community. Any complications identified will be treated at the earliest possible time thereby avoiding complications that may lead to death of the unborn baby.

### Increased Numbers of Safe Delivery

The Malawi government is on campaign encouraging communities to take pregnant mothers to health facilities where the mothers will receive professional care during delivery. Lack of proper transport discouraged pregnant mothers to faithfully attend to antenatal clinics consequently, they resigned to unsafe deliveries at home. The availability of care bicycles is a step in the right direction encouraging the mothers to receive professional delivery service at the health facilities. The care bicycles will encourage ladies to undergo safe delivery at the health facility thereby reducing health risks both to the mother and the baby.

## Financial Savings

The communities parted away with their money to meet transport costs of the sick and expectant mothers. Through the care bicycles, communities will have significant financial obligation relief since it is a free service, thanks to the man powered machines.

## DONATION PACKAGE

The 37 care bicycles were worth €15,540 (MWK 11.7million). The set for each village comprises:

- |              |             |                  |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| i. Bicycle   | iii. Pump   | v. Security lock |
| ii. Care car | iv. Spanner |                  |



**Figure 10** Display of assembled care bicycle ready for use

The community representatives received training of how to assemble the set. CISER through BFI pledged to maintain the care bicycles free of charge.



Figure 11 Community representatives practice assembling the care bicycle set

## RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Observation	Potential Risks	Recommendation
1	There is no defined ratio of care bicycle to number of people or number of families.	<p>Challenge to instill spirit of ownership towards the care bicycles to the huge numbers being served.</p> <p>Comparison of usage between villages may be a challenge since there are varying numbers of people in the communities being served.</p> <p>For example, a single care bicycle serves a wider population in the following villages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michezi II 2,800</li> <li>Mpemba 2,000</li> <li>Chipoka II 1,900</li> <li>Malunga Boolera 1,800 people</li> <li>Chipoka I 1,500</li> <li>Ntimbuka 1,400</li> </ol>	T4T, BFI, CISER and ADC to set a standard ratio for care bicycle to number of people or number of families.
2	No defined lifespan for a single care set.	Potential crisis if the care sets expire in huge numbers within unexpected period thereby throwing CISER into off-balance.	While plans to construct a care bicycle repair workshop are materializing, there should be a defined lifespan for the set. This will enable to estimate replacement period for each consignment.

## **CONCLUSION**

T4T and BFI through CISER achieved the goal of the donor of procuring and distributing care bicycles donation to the intended beneficiaries of Traditional Authority Mponda, Mangochi district covering 37 villages and the exercise was done fairly and transparently to all stakeholders. The care bicycles are an asset to the Koche Ward communities through provision of transport service from the village to the health facility. However, strengthening data management remains crucial task for T4T, BFI and CISER since it will promote transparency and accountability to all levels of stakeholders.