

## **Project #MW 096754 - Sports Friends Malawi**

### **Vision of the project**

To mobilize, train and equip Malawian churches and church planters to use the powerful platform of sports as a tool for effective church planting, evangelism and discipleship. To see youth and members of their family grow in their relationship with God through relationships built on the sports field/court.

### **Project background**

Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God's good news, we believe that he has called us to make disciples of the Lord Jesus in communities where he is least known. This vision fueled the first missionaries of Sports Friends Malawi in 2011 and the project was started through the leading of the Holy Spirit, with the desired objective of launching a nationwide movement of churches using the platform of sports for intentional evangelism, discipleship and church planting purposes. Five years later, sports ministry is a growing movement among the evangelical churches and church planters of Malawi, which God is using to expand His Kingdom. Multitudes of youth have come to faith in Christ; and hundreds of young people are being discipled to become more mature followers of Christ. Sport is a magnet that attracts young people and creates an environment for relationship building, which leads to opportunities to share the love and Word of God. The relationships built with young people through sport, can also extend into opportunities to reach the family and wider community. Sports Friends' vision and focus is developing ongoing and sustainable sports ministry programs in Malawi that are fully managed and funded by the local national church. Sports Friends strategy is to 1) share vision, 2) train local church sports ministry leaders, 3.) provide ongoing support, mentoring and training to these leaders, and 4.) develop leadership capacity for Sports Ministry within the national & regional church structures and denominations. It's all about making disciples who will trust and obey Christ and then become part of the local church.

### **Progress**

God continues to use this work tremendously in the lives of many young Malawians. Now over 11,000 young Malawians are being coached and loved by their trained sports ministry coach and large numbers are coming to Christ because of the joy and love they see from their coach and the church he/she is connected to. There are 4 partnerships with denominations and church-planters and we have trained 255 of their local churches who have gone and started over 375 church centered sports ministry teams all across Malawi for the fame of Christ. Both guys and girls have been trained and they are shaking this nation with the Gospel. The ministry is simple, church-based, and sustainable for development and growth. Sports Friends Malawi continues to focus on and reach "tough" Islamic places in Malawi that have been historically difficult to reach with the Gospel. The platform of sports ministry has been a wonderful bridge to make the name of Christ known among Malawians who would otherwise never step foot in the church. The church is coming to them! Here is an update on what has been happening over the past 6 months with Sports Friends in Malawi:

April 2017 was a busy month of fruitful ministry trainings and follow ups. We had an Ongoing Training in the eastern region with Evangelical Baptist Churches of Malawi. Then, there was a church initiated and run Basic Training in the southern region of Malawi with the Africa Evangelical Church. Both trainings were really a success and was great to be able to train and equip these new sports ministry leaders. In addition to the trainings, we had a short-term missionary from England named Sarah Haddow. SF Malawi staff netball leaders, Chisomo and Sarah went for follow up trips to the eastern region of Malawi to encourage the coaches who are toiling for the Lord in those Muslim areas. From this month to July, Fostance was transitioning into his new role as the SF Malawi Team Leader.

In May, Sports Friends had a large netball camp that combined campers from 2 SF Malawi denominational partners, namely EBCM and AEC. That week featured a very exciting netball camp in Malawi. 100 girls

came from far and wide (some girls travelled nine hours, others even crossed the Mozambique border!) to reach Blantyre for a four-day residential camp. The camp is a great opportunity to share the love of Jesus as well as giving the girls a few days out of their regular routine at home. We had the camp in school term time to focus on the girls who do not have the means to go to school - and they loved it! Sarah Haddow and Chisomo did an amazing job of organizing and running this camp and many girls gave their lives to Christ during this time.

June 2017 was a **historical month for SF Malawi**. It happened at a Basic Training held by the Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi (EBCM) in Balaka district in Central Malawi. Two notable landmarks were achieved on this day. The first was that this was the first such training event the EBCM had organised and funded on its own. The second milestone was marked on day one of the three-day event. That day, 22 June 2017, was exactly five years since the first-ever Sports Friends Malawi Basic Training camp was held. Glory be to God because today when we look back we are able to see clearly that the Lord our God has brought us to this very far.

For more information about Sports Friends Malawi and the Evangelical Baptist Church of Malawi please see the video at: [simmelawiki.org/...](http://simmelawiki.org/)

July 2017 was another busy month of trainings as we had BT in the central region of Malawi in Nanjoka AEC in Salima and then another Basic Training in the eastern region of Mangochi with the Baptist convention of Malawi. Both trainings went well we thank God for his direction during these times.

August 2017 was a wonderful month of camps and trainings! From August 2-6, we had a week-long football camp in the northern region of Malawi and we were glad to have our STAs Joshua and Emma with us for this camp. Then, in the middle of August, Coach Ben Willdman came to help us with the coaching/discipleship training. Finally, at the end of the month God enabled us to build more leadership capacity into the churches who we work with by hosting a Training of Trainers. Glory be to the Lord for the great impact we have seen in the lives of young people through the camp as well as trainings we had this month.

September 2017 was a blessed month of praying, review this year of ministry and planning for 2018. We thank God for the fruitful time of planning and prayer we had. We had also a fabulous opportunity to attend SIM Malawi's pastor's book set conference mainly for youth leaders. This conference was a massive encouragement to our souls

**Story Time: *Rachel the Wrestler***

Meet Rachel. She is 17 and from a family of four raised by a single mom because her father died when she was very little. Rachel grew up in extreme poverty in a slum in Malawi. Her mother washed clothes, fetched water for people, and cleaned pots and pans to earn enough to eat once a day. Life was hard for Rachel but one day, she was invited by one of our trained Sports ministry coaches to play netball. Rachel loved playing netball and felt alive when she did so. That week she joined the Bangwe trinity ladies netball team in 2013. Today, she is the captain.



Though she was the most respected player on her team, Rachel still felt "empty in her heart" and she longed to know the Jesus that her Coach Chisomo was sharing each and every week. From the time she was little, like many



Malawians, Rachel attended a local church every Sunday but personally had never experienced the genuine love of God the Father. Over and over again, her faithful coach Chisomo shared the Gospel with her and her team. On several occasions, Rachel questioned her coach about the goodness and sovereignty of God. She asked these questions, *“How can God be a good and loving Father if he took mine from me?”* and *“We struggle so much and live in dire poverty because we don’t have a father bringing home food and money to support us. How can the Gospel be real if we struggle so much?”* *“Why couldn’t God choose someone else to be an orphan?”*

With this myriad of questions coming her way, Coach Chisomo choose to continue to love, pray for, and be that needed source of stability & encouragement to Rachel. Coach Chisomo embraced the awkward and didn’t have all the perfect answers. Rachel was wrestling with God but she was not wrestling alone. Her

coach was wrestling through these questions and issues with her and did not give up on her.

One day in August 2017, the Lord led Coach Chisomo to share with her girls about how God is our good Father. Coach Chisomo said, *“Even if we don’t have a biological daddy anymore, we still have a much better heavenly Father who is the founder and creator of everything including you! This Father cares about your situation and he sees you where you are now.”* And at that very moment, Revelation 3:20 came alive in Rachel on this day. *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to her and eat with her, and she with me.”* The blinders came off of Rachel’s spiritual eyes and she stopped wrestling and resisting the kingship of Christ in her life and became a child of the Father of lights. It has not been an easy journey, but now Rachel studies God’s Word and is keen to learn and even share with her teammates. She understands that she now has a good Father who loves her and has given her the Holy Spirit. Many of her friends are dropping out school because of early pregnancy but she wants to be a light and show them that it’s possible to wait for marriage. Rachel went from questioning and wrestling to knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ. She is no longer Fatherless!

### Prayer Points:

- **Praise the Lord** that Chisomo Chiwambala is now full-time Sports Friends staff and has been used wonderfully by the Lord to boost and encourage the netball ministry at a national level.
- **Praise God** for the support Fostance is getting from many in his new leadership role
- **Praise God** for the successful new partnership Baptist Convention Of Malawi
- **Praise the Lord** for the safe travel on many bad roads over the past 6 months
- **Praise Jesus** for using our trained coaches to populate heaven and depopulate hell. Many are joining the Body of Christ in the muslim dominated areas of Malawi through sports friends ministry.
- **Praise God** for all the new believers in these last 6 months! That is why we do what we do!
- **Pray** for provision of SF Malawi ministry as we need more prayer and financial supporters to stand with us as we serve the Lord.
- **Pray for** the hundreds of local church sports ministry leaders to continue having a solid foundation in the ministry and using this platform to reach many souls for Christ.
- **Please pray** for wisdom for us as there are many churches now that are asking us to partner with them. We need to know where God is leading. So many options but we want His plan.

- **Praise the Lord** for four partnerships we have with three Malawian church denominations and one pastors fraternal.
- **Pray for** the Baptist Convention of Malawi as they are about to elect a national sports ministry denominational coordinator. Pray that God may guide and direct them to come up with the right person .
- **Praise the Lord** that He has clearly opened up the door to minister in the eastern region of Malawi! We have already trained over 200 sports ministry leaders in this region and God is moving in the darkness of this area.
- **Pray for** the nation of Malawi and the incredible difficulties people are facing here because of rampant corruption in the government.
- **Pray for the nation of Malawi to be at peace as innocent people are being dragged to their death, allegedly for being blood suckers.** Mob justice has taken the lives of many over the past few months because of this.
- **Pray for** the residential football camp in the eastern region of Malawi in December 2017. This will be the second camp in Muslim area so we need more prayer that the Holy Spirit would work in wondrous ways