

**Project Number #MW 096754**  
**Project Name 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 disciplined 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 16,140 young Malawians are being coached and loved by their trained sports ministry coaches 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 3 partnerships with denominations and church-planters and 2 para non denominations ministries also. We have trained 381 CCSM Coaches of their local churches who have gone and started over 500 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:

October 2019 was a month of casting the vision of Sports Friends to the eastern side of Malawi with Mangochi –Malindi pastors fraternity as well as Zomba –Mayaka Pastors fraternity.

November 2019 was a month where we had a family retreat where we were celebrating and praying for what the Lord is doing with Sports Friends Ministry in Malawi.

On December 14th, 2019 We had 4 day camps both netball and football in 3 regions: Central, South and eastern side. Same month on the first week we were blessed to have had our regional coordinator, brother Brahanu from Ethiopia, visiting us with as a mission to meet some of the Denomination leaders that we are in partnership with for Ministry evaluation. I had a time to make follow ups with Nsanje Church centered Sports ministries.

January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 We had prayer and fasting in many local churches led by our Local church centered sports ministry coaches across Malawi and it went well for the very first time. I had a follow up with Mangochi fraternity and we also had a day camp with Passion Center.

February 2020 was a busy month with follow ups, travels and camps. Chisomo our netball coordinator had follow ups in Balaka Church Centered Sports Ministry teams. She had also netball Camp in central region of Malawi Salima where 60 campers show up. Fostance had opportunity to attend Sports Friends Global gathering in Thailand.

March 2020 was a month where we had another fasting. We do it every 3 months where many teams led by their coaches did it across Malawi. Fostance had a time to meet leaders from denominations that we are working with. We had also a time of casting vision to a new denomination of Church of central Africa Presbyterian.

### **Story time:**

#### **The power of prayer**

One of our denomination Coordinators by the name John Lufani from Baptist Convention shared with us about his ministry in central region and how scared he was and his family because of the threats he was receiving from Nyau people.

Nyau is more like animist movement full of darkness. They believe in Magic, Witchcraft and many more bad stuff like that.



These people believe in ancestral Spirits (Spirits of dead people), magic, witchcraft and they are one of the lost groups of people and is one of the unreached groups in Malawi.

It was not easy to make them friends; they were sometimes threatening his family. As a human being, he sometimes asked himself if this is the right place for him to stay looking at the fact that his family is at risk! But through prayer he was much confident that God wanted him to stay there. He started a team and some of his players are coming from the background of Nyau tradition or religion.

From the very beginning of his team, some would go and put on their costumes (masks) secretly and come at the ground to threaten the players and Lufani. Nyau looks very scaring and they were scared, and some

would run away and not to come back to finish the training. Lufani, his family, Sports Friends Malawi team and also our partners around the world, their prayers have been heard and that some of these people are now able to respond to the gospel. One of his players who was leading others to put on their costumes (masks) and came during trainings to threaten others recently joined the body of Christ through the platform of Sports. His name is Mabvuto Chiyembekezo, recently he made a decision to know and follow Jesus. He is very proud of his Jesus and is on fire to share Him with others. He has been in Nyau since he was born, his parents introduced him there. He became more active and taking part in many ways in this dark and hopeless religion but through his Coach Lufani the light has come to him and now is walking in the light and is one of us as sons of the light. Lufani has been walking with Mabvuto in this journey. It took love, patience and prayers to help Mabvuto draw closer to God. Coach Lufani has been sharing the good news with his team many times but it was just recently when he was sharing from the book of Romans 10:9 and Philippians 3:10 about the power of God that made



Mabvuto Chiyembekezo new believer

Jesus rise from the dead is also in those who believe Him. This has nothing to do with magic but that this power is in believers and will make them resurrect just as Jesus did. He challenged them that all who practice magic, witchcrafts and other means of false supernatural power will be left out from the Kingdom of God. He continued saying to them that it is not too late for those who want to turn to God, they just need to repent and believe in Him and they will be saved. After the sharing of the word Mabvuto was helpless, it was more like



Coach Lufani in White and Mabvuto

the whole message was for him. He had no gas to leave the place as usual so he asked his Coach to help him get to know Jesus well and follow Him every day in his life. The Coach was so happy with the response of Mabvuto to the gospel. He is now helping him on how he can grow in his faith and has joined the body of Christ. There are more people who are still where Mabvuto is coming from and that they need the very same light he received. Some of these people are his family members, close friends and relatives. Lufani who is the coach of this young man is very grateful to God and all who have been with him in prayers. He said that prayer is the key and is the fuel to run Ministries. In his ministry he has seen the power of prayer and the need to have faith in God the owner of the work or Ministries /Church.

#### Prayer Points

- Pray for Coach Lufani in this area to continue to be the salt and light to Nyau people
- Pray for Mabvuto the new believer to keep moving and trust in Jesus
- Pray for more people to turn to Christ in this area as Mabvuto did.
- Pray for Malawi and all other nations around the world to prepare well against Covid 19

#### Praise

- We thank God for using Malawian Church centered Sports Ministry teams to point people to Christ.
- We thank God for the coming of more people to faith through Sports Friends Malawi ministry
- We thank God that many Malawian churches are able to see how useful this