



## **THE MCHINJI WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH) PROJECT - MALAWI**

### **Success story**

Prior to the commencement of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project by New Apostolic Church Relief Organization (NACRO) in 2019 in TA Mduwa's area in Mchinji, hygiene challenges reached unprecedented levels to such an extent that two people died of cholera epidemic. Apart from the challenges to do with lack of access to safe and potable water by community members in the area, open defecation was very rampant in the area due to lack of access to improved toilets. For schools in the area, the problem was even worse. Learners in primary schools had few toilet facilities, some of which were made of mud and grass thatched. This made life very difficult for learners, most of whom used nearby bushes to relieve themselves. Also the available toilet facilities did not provide privacy for pupils especially girls. Furthermore, girls used to skip classes during menstruation periods, and this affected their performance adversely. The situation was also very bad for under-five clinic clients and market traders and buyers in the area. No good hygiene practices were observed, and the situation was dire and hopeless.



*Dilapidated toilets used by learners at Kanjochi Primary School prior to the project*

In responding to the challenges listed above, NACRO construct 16 improved latrines in 5 primary schools and 3 public places (a market, an under-five clinic and a church) targeting over 3,706 school learners, 200 traders, 3,000 buyers, 300 clinic clients and 100 congregants in the area from September 2019 with funding from NAK-karitativ of Germany. As a result of this intervention, school learners now have access

to improved latrine facilities. The latrines provide privacy, are spacious and have hand washing facilities. The development has increased the hygiene for learners. School attendance has also increased for girls, who used to skip classes during their menstruation periods.



*Improved pit latrines constructed at Kanjochi Primary School (left) and Mtsapira Market (right)*

Hygiene practices have now been improved in public places such as markets, under-five clinics and schools. “Toilet shortage was indeed a big challenge, including for us girls. We had few toilets that most of us used the cemetery and bush nearby. It was difficult to use the available toilet facilities which were almost close to boys’ toilets. Most of the girls skipped classes during menstruation periods, as available facilities did not provide space for changing,” narrates Judith Kabweza, head girl at Chimongo Primary School. “We thank NACRO for constructing the improved latrines at our school. The number of girls skipping classes has now gone down. We strongly believe that our performance will also improve with this development,” she concludes.