



ASUD

Action for Sustainable Development

A CRY FROM MTHETHO AND SINGINI VILLAGES: ASUD, PLEASE, GIVE US BOREHOLES!

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Established in 2009, Action for Sustainable Development (ASUD), is a local non-governmental organization operating in the three districts of Nkhatabay, Mzimba and Rumphu. Its primary interest is a school going child, particularly a girl in primary school. ASUD realizes that for this child to be able to concentrate on her studies and unleash her potential then her health has to be sound. It is for this reason that ASUD made food security in the areas where they operate its priority. Since children live under their parents' charge, ASUD engages parents to achieve food security which will benefit the whole family. For instance, it is supporting agricultural projects like irrigation schemes where people are helped with water pumps, maize and bean seeds on top of providing people with pigs. After observing that some communities are finding it very difficult to manage backyard gardens and pigs because water is drawn from very far, ASUD decided to do site visit and appreciate the challenge.

Mthetho Hara Village is located in Erukweni area In Mzimba. According to the chief of the village, Mr. Thomas Hara, 55, his village has 422 members out of which 260 are children. He said in the whole of this village there is only one borehole which was dug by the community and therefore very shallow. The borehole dries up after filling two to three buckets and people wait for long hours for their turn to come.



Women queue for hours to draw water as the borehole runs dry because it is very shallow

Talking about the challenges that they face as school children, Wezzie Hara, 13, who is in standard six said that when she wakes up in the morning she has to go to the borehole and draw water. However she says most of the times she takes more than an hour to wait for her turn. This means if she wakes up late she is likely going to be late at school. Her school, St Monica is half a kilometer away from her home. Wezzie explained that usually her and her friends go to school without eating as there is no one to cook since both girls and mothers waste time at the borehole in the morning.



Wezzie: We usually go to school hungry because there is no water for cooking in the morning

Wezzie said that sometimes people are forced to draw water from a well which was dug in Luwazi River which is not safe.

Another village which ASUD visited to appreciate the situation regarding water is Gideon Singini Village. It is located along Mzuzu-Karonga M1 road in Embombeni area in Mzimba District. It was discovered that people in this village draw water from a river called Chamono. This river is half a kilometer away. During dry season like this one, Chamono River dries up and people dig shallow wells on the river bed. These wells are as shallow as half a meter and they are usually dug every day as they are destroyed by cattle literally on daily basis. One Mr. Oswald Ngulube, 64, lamented that they fear for their lives because this stream is where people from Mzuzu buy river sand for construction work and people who do the sand mining relieve themselves right there in the stream.



People of Gideon Singini village draw water from Chamono River

People in this village suspect that one of the reasons responsible for poor performance of kids from this village in school is fatigue because there is a steep slope between the river and the village which girls climb with buckets of water every morning before going to school. Commenting on the challenges faced due to lack of water, Chrissy Nyambose, 86, who stays with her five years old granddaughter, lamented that her life is very difficult because she has to wait for well-wishers to bring her water as cannot manage to climb the steep slope up the river bank with a bucket full of water. She says most of the times she stays without water. She suspects that dysentery and skin diseases she and her granddaughter suffer from is due to lack of clean water. Chrissy believes that if her village had a borehole she and her granddaughter could be able to draw water for themselves.



Chrissy Nyambose: I suspect we suffer from dysentery and skin diseases because of unhygienic water we use.

Commenting on the situation in Mthetho Hara and Gideon Singini villages, ASUD director, Mr. Thomas Ngwira said he was saddened by what he saw in Mthetho Hara and Gideon Singini villages. He said it is very unfortunate that though water is described as the most abundant of all resources on earth, there are people

who are struggling to get clean water like that. He concluded by saying that ASUD will engage anyone interested in the matter to make sure people get clean water in these villages. "There are several other villages in the same situation and that affects implementation of their organization's primary objectives that revolve around food security. Something must be done and it must be done as a matter of urgency." He said.