

# PROVIDING A HAND UP, NOT A HAND OUT

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## FISH FOR TOMORROW PROJECT IN NKHOTAKOTA DISTRICT 18 MONTH INTERIM REPORT - NOVEMBER 2018

### Overview

Donor Name: Foundation Eagle  
Reference: FF 410  
Project Name: RIPPLE Africa Fish For Tomorrow in Lake Malawi – rapid extension of project into Chia Lagoon and surrounding area, Nkhotakota District  
Grant Size: £41,183  
Grant Period: April 2017 to April 2019

### Project Overview

Fish for Tomorrow is a community based fisheries protection system in northern Malawi supported by RIPPLE Africa. The project was started as a community led approach to conservation to help conserve the remaining stocks of Chambo Fish in the lake and is now being implemented in Nkhata Bay and Nkhotakota Districts by Ripple Africa in partnership with the Department of Fisheries. This funding has enabled us to introduce the project in an accelerated way in Chia Lagoon, one of the most prominent areas in the implementation of Fish for Tomorrow project in the district. This is the biggest lagoon in Nkhotakota District, acting as a breeding area and refuge for many different fish species, including Chambo.

In Chia Lagoon, we are working more closely with local fishing communities and District Fisheries staff to introduce the new bylaws and begin the project in a more intensive way as the situation here is critical. Funding from Fondation Eagle is helping us offer the same level of support and training over the next two years in Chia Lagoon, Nkhotakota as we have done in our long running project areas in Nkhata Bay District and ensure that the decline in fish stocks is halted to safeguard livelihoods and food security.

### Project Beneficiaries

The project covers the Chia Lagoon area, where there are now 14 Fish Conservation committees in operation covering 17 beach landing sites. Beneficiaries are as follows:

- 140 fish conservation committee members who are benefitting from being empowered to play an active role in the project and the training that they are receiving is building their capacity to be more active in other community activities.
- 191 gear owners (fishers who own boats) who will soon be benefitting from increased catches, with the resultant increase in household income that these will generate.
- An additional 670 family members of gear owners will also benefit – based on an average rural household size of 4.5 (from Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-2016)
- There are also other community members who service the fishing industry in this area who will benefit – fish sellers, shop owners, boat builders etc. Applying national averages to this area, that would mean approximately 1,000 people around Chia Lagoon who service fishers will benefit, with the additional benefit to their families also.
- District Fisheries Officer and his team are being empowered and we are helping build their capacity, enabling them to perform their duties more effectively
- 100,000 people living in the southern part of Nkhotakota District obtain their fish from markets serviced from Chia Lagoon and will therefore benefit from increased supplies of larger Chambo. Eventually, once

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the project has become better established in Nkhotakota District, all 404,000 people living in Nkhotakota District will have more availability of animal protein from fish.

### **Progress over the last 6 months**

1. General awareness meetings have been conducted in several areas. These awareness meetings are mainly focused on how best fish can be conserved in Chia lagoon. These meetings occur regularly since the project is trying to change people's mindsets and to develop a sense of ownership amongst the fishing communities. So far over 12 awareness meetings have been conducted since May 2018.
2. Review meetings with established Umbrella Committees and FCCs have been conducted over the past months. The idea of these meetings is to empower the Umbrella Committees and FCCs, while at the same time they help to check the progress of the conservation committees. 11 FCC review meetings and six Umbrella Committee meetings have been held.
3. Eight bylaw awareness campaigns have been conducted around the lagoon with the aim of sensitizing the community. These awareness meetings have been conducted at different levels starting from Village Development Committees (VDCs) to Area Development Committees (ADCs) with support from the extension workers at RIPPLE Africa and the Department of Fisheries. All were well attended.
4. Five closed season awareness meetings have been conducted in different areas around the lagoon. Since the closed season started in November, these meetings were crucial because they help to ensure that the community fully understood the value and importance of the closed season. Attendance was high at these meetings.
5. **Activities Of The Fish Conservation Committees**
  - Chia Lagoon is surrounded by 14 Fish Conservation Committees (FCCs). These committees have been set up by each fishing community around the lagoon with the help of RIPPLE Africa in partnership with the Department of Fisheries. These committees work together with the communities in implementing the project.
  - Since the FCCs have been set up, they have carried out awareness meetings, review meetings, bylaw awareness campaigns and confiscated many illegal fishing gears.
  - In the past six months, 15 illegal fishing gears have been confiscated by the FCCs, including six large mosquito nets, two small mosquito nets, two monofilament gill nets and five fish traps. We are now starting to see a decrease in the number of confiscations, which indicates that fishers understand the need for the project and are complying with the new district bylaws.
  - I recently visited one fish conservation committee who told me that they had confiscated illegal fish traps that were being used on the very edges of the lagoon and had caused considerable damage to the reeds which provide an important sanctuary area for the baby fish. The culprits had been fined and there had been no further problems – the reeds are now being allowed to recover.

### **Challenges and Successes**

- This has been another successful six months for the project. There is now a new District Fisheries Officer in post in Nkhotakota District, Symon Ngwira, as the previous DFO has now left. Simon is already aware of the project and enthusiastic about ensuring its success.
- Signing of the new bylaws was carried out in May 2018 and there was national publicity for this as it was the first time that any district bylaws were signed here.

- The District Council have agreed that there will be no cultivation within 100m of the waterline to protect the breeding areas. This is to reduce the amount of siltation around the edges of the lagoon, which reduces the amount of food available to the baby fish and damages the plants along the shoreline which provide valuable shelter for the baby fish from predators s.

**Budget**

	Apr 2017 - Oct 2017	Nov 2017 – Mar 2018	Apr 2018 – Oct 2018	TOTAL TO DATE	BUDGET TO DATE
<b>Meetings</b>					
Chief Meetings	£1,073	£0	£537	£1,610	£1,610
Government meetings	£609	£0	£305	£914	£914
Community Meetings	£1,176	£0	£588	£1,764	£1,764
Contribution to Bylaw signing	£0	£0	£353	£353	£353
<b>Monthly costs</b>					
Committee Meetings	£1,765	£1,764	£1,765	£5,294	£5,294
Fisheries staff x 2 inc transport	£1,412	£1,412	£1,412	£4,236	£4,236
Fisheries DFO and office	£2,118	£2,117	£2,118	£6,353	£6,353
Umbrella committee members	£706	£706	£706	£2,118	£2,118
Ripple Staff Costs inc motorbikes	£2,824	£2,823	£2,824	£8,471	£8,471
Office contribution	£706	£706	£706	£2,118	£2,118
Vehicle costs contribution	£3,530	£3,529	£3,530	£10,589	£10,589
<b>Total</b>	<b>£15,919</b>	<b>£13,057</b>	<b>£14,841</b>	<b>£43,817</b>	<b>£43,817</b>

On behalf of all you are helping by donating to our fish conservation project in Chia Lagoon, we would like to say:

**TAWONGA UKONGWA! Thank you very much!**



Pam Haigh  
UK General Manager  
26/11/2018

**Photos:**



Ntchanamira and Chimpini Fish Conservation Committee members showing mosquito nets that they have confiscated



Awareness meeting in progress in a village near to Chia lagoon



One of the areas where cultivation near the water's edge is damaging the ecosystem of the lagoon.



Symon Ngwira the new District Fisheries Officer for Nkhotakota addressing the audience during the meeting at Chia.