



Changu Changu Moto Project
Dining for Women Interim Report
February 2016

Information

Organization Name	RIPPLE Africa, Inc
Program Title	Changu Changu Moto Project
Grant Amount	\$45,000
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What was the program designed to achieve?

The funding received by Dining for Women is enabling RIPPLE Africa to build 3,000 Changu Changu Moto fuel-efficient cookstoves in Malawi, directly benefiting 3,000 women and an estimated 4,500 girls. In Malawi, 95% of the population relies on wood or charcoal for cooking. Almost exclusively, those responsible for cooking and sourcing fuel-wood are women. However, cooking on inefficient traditional open fires daily has serious repercussions for women's lives. These repercussions include:

- Health hazards such as serious respiratory illnesses and burns
- 15 – 20 hours spent weekly on wood collection for women living in rural areas
- Greater risk of rape and sexual assault with wood collection in remote areas
- Increased household expenditure for women who live in urban areas and buy their fuel-wood
- Destruction of the natural environment on which millions of Malawian women and families depend

The Changu Changu Moto project combats each of these issues and is delivering positive outcomes for women in the areas of health, labor, safety, economic circumstance, and the natural environment.

Has funding changed for this program?

There have been no changes to the funding of the program.

Is your organization or program situation different than presented in the approved proposal?

As approved by DFW following our original application submission, the location of the project was changed from the Nkhotakota District to Mzuzu in Mzimba District. The reason for this change was due to another NGO that had already begun work on a fuel efficient cookstove project in Nkhotakota District. Not wishing to duplicate services, RIPPLE Africa felt that Mzuzu would be a prime location because of an expressed need and our established working relationship with the Forest Department staff in this region.

What challenges are you facing as you move forward with this project? How are you approaching these challenges?

One of the main challenges we have faced is that Mzuzu is a more urban area than our previous CCM project locations, with a more transient population. Subsequently, we have instances where we have supported the householder to build the Changu Changu Moto only to find that the family has moved on when we next visit and the new householder does not understand how to maintain and use the cookstove effectively. We are approaching this challenge by encouraging neighbors to assist the newcomers so they fully understand the rationale and operation of the cookstove.

In addition, we have also found many households are using small charcoal burners because they do not have a kitchen. This challenge has been addressed by thoroughly explaining the savings that will be realized by not having to buy charcoal, which is much more expensive than wood, and helping households to build a kitchen to house the Changu Changu Moto.



Charcoal selling and buying is illegal but this practice has become rampant in the Mzuzu area in recent years. Because wood is essentially burned twice (once to produce the charcoal and again when the charcoal is used for cooking), carbon emissions are doubled and the effect on the environment is devastating.

Choma Hill, pictured left, is now almost completely bare due to deforestation and has unfortunately become the landscape in much of this region.

The under-resourced Forestry Department has found it very difficult to control the charcoal industry. Subsequently, RIPPLE Africa is now working closely with them to enforce the ban and to

help the forest regenerate. We are also educating local householders about the effect of charcoal on the environment with the goal of ultimately reducing demand.

Have you revised your original objectives since the project began?

Our original plan of action for the CCM project included:

- Introductory meetings in each village to explain the project
- A one-week training session for the new Coordinator shadowing project staff in existing project areas
- 30 one-to-one training/support sessions where the Coordinator spends an intensive day with each Community Volunteer in their own area at the start of the project
- 3,000 hours of education and training with women recipients (one hour per household, as CV and woman recipient build the stove together)
- Over 20,000 follow-up visits (a follow-up check to each household after one week, two weeks, eight weeks, and then quarterly until the end of the two-year period)

This is the model that we have been using successfully in other regions to date. However, because of feedback that has been captured through case studies, we have modified our original methodology slightly to the following process. Lead Community Volunteers (CV's) are now conducting meetings and training sessions with groups of five to ten householders, who then go home and construct the stoves themselves, with the assistance of their neighbors. Women have commented that constructing the stove with neighbors, rather than a CV, has promoted a heightened sense of community and ownership over the project. Once the stove has been completed, CV's visit each household to ensure that the stoves have been constructed properly and are being used correctly.

Although there is no change to the overall cost of the project, we have found this approach to be more successful and are now expanding this practice to other areas.

What progress have you made towards achieving your objectives?



We have identified 3,029 households in the area and have held the introductory meetings. To date, 1,987 Changu Changu Motos have been constructed, with 75% in use consistently.

This means that 1,490 cookstoves are now in daily use and the householder has not returned to using her previous cooking system.



In addition, RIPPLE Africa is working alongside the Forestry Department and local chiefs, all of whom are committed to decreasing deforestation, allowing the forested areas to regenerate, and to reducing the amount of charcoal which is being produced.

Through the introduction of our forest conservation project in the region, local people are empowered to monitor the activities of farmers and charcoal burners—reporting illegal activity to the police. If the availability of charcoal is greatly reduced, there is less likelihood that women will return to their old cooking methods and that others will be receptive to a more fuel-

efficient method of cooking and embrace the Changu Changu Moto for themselves.

From the qualitative analysis collected thus far, women who are already using the Changu Changu Moto are reporting their positive experiences. Here are some of the findings:

- Women who collect their own wood are reporting that the decreased need for wood translates to a significant time savings, freeing them up to do other things.
- In some cases, women have reported that their daughters (who previously had to help them gather the firewood early in the morning) are now able to attend school.
- As a result of our training sessions, women have learned about the importance of conservation and the positive role the Changu Changu Moto plays in preservation of the environment.
- The women have written songs that reinforce the message that more trees = more rain = more food.
- The Changu Changu Moto is making their lives much easier – it cooks faster and they can cook two dishes at once, making family life easier for them.
- Women living in urban areas are reporting that they are spending less money on wood/charcoal – a huge incentive for others to follow suit in this very poor area. On average, the savings are 2,200 MK per week (\$3) in an area where the average income is extremely low. With many households earning less than \$30 per month, this 10% savings has a huge impact on a family's finances.

Do you anticipate any difficulties in completing your project in the timeframe outlined in your proposal?

The women of Mzuzu have enthusiastically and wholeheartedly embraced the Changu Changu Moto and we do not anticipate any problems with completing the project on time and within budget. We are working towards completing construction of all cookstoves in the first year, with the second year spent reinforcing the message about how to use and maintain them properly.

It is our goal to ensure that the women maintain their enthusiasm by addressing issues swiftly and effectively in order to prevent householders from reverting back to old cooking methods. Our experience has shown that changing cultural behavior is extremely difficult and requires a long term approach. As a result, we focus much time and effort on follow-up—a critical component that has been fundamental to the success of the CCM projects to date.