



Chipunga Development Committee
P.O. Box 611
Mzuzu
Malawi

26th November 2007

FROM DR. JENS DIEDRICH, PRESIDENT OF GRACE IN GERMANY: MINUTES OF THE VARIOUS MEETINGS AT CHIPUNGA BETWEEN NOVEMBER 2-6, 2007

Dear CDC members and Chipunga Community,

First of all I want to thank everybody who helped to organize the different activities throughout my visit. I'm confident that many of you now understood the way GRACE is operating. The initiative is primarily driven by self-regulation, self-contribution and the empowerment of your community. Merely CDC (nominated out of the staff of Chipunga Farms) shall collect, discuss and forward proposals to GRACE in Malawi and in Germany. CDC has the budget responsibility, proposes and supervises projects and reports to GRACE. I was impressed about the precise financial tracking and wait to get your annual account review by January 2008. But, if truth be told I can't accept e.g. that concrete rings haven't been positioned in the water hole for more or less 11 months! In view of upcoming projects I take it for granted that you complete the outstanding projects by the end of this year 2007. As stated in our principles, and according to findings of the SWOT analysis of the four groups (see next page of this letter) I recommend to conduct the first re-election of the CDC and HC members by the end of this year 2007.

Saturday November 3, 2007 – Meeting at Chipunga F.P. School

Participants: School Project Committee, Parent-Teacher-Association, Area Development Committee, Headmaster Mr. J. Ngwira, Group Village Headman Mr. Chimojimoji, Village Headwoman Mrs. Kayuni, W. Msisya (CDC), W. Ehret, Jens and Peter Diedrich (GRACE)

Proposal: CDC requested GRACE in Germany to support the building of an additional school block (with 2 classrooms) and two teachers houses for Chipunga F.P. School. This extension of the school's infrastructure will enable the Chipunga community to request for committed and dedicated teachers. The combination of improved school facilities and committed and dedicated teachers will be key to the improvement of the primary education around Chipunga which is the ultimate goal of this school proposal.

Conditions: The District Education Officer (DEO) in Nkhatabay must agree in writing clear good teachers will be sent to Chipunga F.P. School after getting the school extension. In addition, the DEO must confirm in writing that the Chipunga school committees are included in the selection procedure of the additional teachers since they have contributed significantly to the improvement of the school's infrastructure.

Status: All attending committees and associations agreed to go ahead with their efforts to get the project started and implemented. In a previous letter the DEO gave his written agreement to erect a double classroom school block and 2 additional teachers houses. (Problem in this letter was that by mistake the DEO wrote B. Schwarz instead of CDC / GRACE can go ahead → thus a new letter must be obtained from the DEO, as otherwise Government authorities can charge up to 35% extra costs). The district education manager (DEM) clearly mentioned in his communication that the school is understaffed and that he agrees to send 2 additional teachers to Chipunga F.P. School immediately after the expansion has been completed.

Goal: In return for the Government to get school buildings at no cost the school committee is in the position to demand from the Government to post committed and dedicated teachers to the Chipunga Primary School. GRACE has already negotiated with the Christian Teachers Training Centre in Lilongwe (EMANUEL) to get two highly qualified and committed teacher couples for the 2 new positions.



As the total cost of the school expansion will amount to about **MK 3,500,000** it is not easy to raise this huge amount in the short term. However, fundraising activities in Germany and an application to the micro project fund of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Lilongwe might assist. A self-contribution (e.g. manpower, ensure security, delivery of construction material like bricks and sand) comes from the community (organised and supervised by the involved committees and associations). Supervision and reporting towards GRACE in Germany must be done by the CDC. A local contractor experienced in similar projects needs to be identified who has the reputation of quality work and integrity.

Next steps:

1. Obtain corrected letter from DEO
Who: → Headmaster Chipunga F.P. School / Chipunga Project Committee
2. Fund raising in Germany and apply for a Micro Project Fund of the German embassy
Who: → CDC / GRACE
3. Identification and selection of a local contractor to build double block and houses
Who: → W. Ehret / CDC / GRACE
4. Application for 2 EMANUEL teachers couples from Lilongwe
Who: → Chipunga Project Committee / CDC / GRACE
5. Supervision, security, and claiming the promised self-contributions
Who: → Entire Community / CDC

Sunday November 4, 2007 – GRACE Meeting

Participants: Employees of Chipunga Farms and their families, B. Schwarz (MD Chipunga Farms), Chipunga Development Committee, Health Committee, ANAMED Group, W. Ehret, J. Diedrich, and P. Diedrich (GRACE representatives)

SWOT Analysis: After 3 years of GRACE support an analysis of the progress has been done. For that purpose the participants were divided into 4 groups that is:

- A – younger women
- B – older and experienced women
- C – younger men
- D – older and experienced men

All groups had 15 minutes discuss and reflect on the **SWOT** topics:

- **S**uccess = enjoying, good and well going things;
- **W**eakness = things not so well going, want for improvement;
- **O**pportunities = things possibly should be done;
- **T**hreads = things that should not happen, traps we have to avoid.

Here are the results presented by the 4 groups:

A – younger women:

<p>Success (phindu):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • household tools • sunflowers and sunflower oil • bush knives • dairy goats 	<p>Weakness (kufoka):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no cooperation with CDC • not assisted in time
<p>Opportunities (mwawi):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further education beyond secondary school • having a clinic in the Chipunga area 	<p>Threads (vyakogya):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if there is no cooperation among CDC/people/GRACE the initiative will die • corruption



B – older and experienced women:

<p>Success (phindu):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • health • fertilizer • household equipments 	<p>Weakness (kufoka):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no micro credits given up to now • CDC is weak • CDC has no responsibility
<p>Opportunities (mwawi):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health education should be improved • further education for younger boys and girls • household equipment should be given every year • invite more visitors → we learn much from them 	<p>Threads (vyakogya):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selling of things received through GRACE • corruption • if GRACE will get knowledge about selling of things and corruption they stop their activities

C – younger men:

<p>Success (phindu):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education support • health improvement • sports + football • fertilizer → no hunger • goats 	<p>Weakness (kufoka):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of cooperation between CDC and youth • applied for courses, but no reply yet • limited support to sports program (transportation) • CDC meets only when a visit of someone from Germany is announced
<p>Opportunities (mwawi):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further education • hunger never stops → continue fertilizer program • sport equipment allocation directly to football club 	<p>Threads (vyakogya):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corruption • youth will not get enough attention

D – older and experienced men:

<p>Success (phindu):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • goats • education • health • fertilizer • community action • poverty reduced and eradicated 	<p>Weakness (kufoka):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misusing what we get from GRACE • no cooperation between GRACE members and CDC • backbiting • lack of active participation (beyond meetings)
<p>Opportunities (mwawi):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the budget to fulfil the multiple tasks • continue with the GRACE activities 	<p>Threads (vyakogya):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • misusing the support by GRACE

Comment: It seems that people benefit from some GRACE initiative and their livelihoods have started to improve significantly up to the point that hunger is eradicated and poverty reduced. However, the CDC is described as weak, dormant, and in some way corrupt. A re-election by the end of this year 2007 is recommended to stop the reported weaknesses and treads. GRACE system runs only if CDC is committed and clever in handling all needs.



Tuesday November 6, 2007 – Meeting with CDC and HC

Participants: CDC, HC, J. Diedrich (GRACE president)

J. Diedrich confirmed the annual total contribution of MK 500,000 from the members in Germany. This amount will be paid in to the recently opened account at Malawi Savings Bank Ltd., Branch Mzuzu .

CDC informed the GRACE President about details of the recently opened account:

Malawi Savings Bank Ltd.
Branch Mzuzu
Account Name: Grace Charity / Chipunga Farm
Account #: 49120 7332420001

Ongoing Projects:

Education – CDC stated that a number of pupils dropped out because of either finalizing their education or due to failing examinations. Right now secondary education of 12 pupils is supported. Major school places are Chikwina and Mzuzu. If students who have completed primary education will be identified the CDC will evaluate the individual cases and will make sure that a second supported child of a family is a girl. Thus, the number of secondary education support of GRACE might increase.

Vocational Training – J. Diedrich clarified that at the moment the proposal which were submitted to the charity lacked substance. A business training without any explanatory documentation of contents and cost will not be considered. At this point in time and the Primary School expansion being proposed the supporting funds from GRACE in Germany are already exhausted. Also, the CDC needs to consider whether the support of trainings - like getting a driving licence - can benefit the Chipunga area. Certainly, a driver will quickly escape to a big company to drive trucks or other vehicles. Thus, CDC has to judge if this might be a waste of money. However, GRACE continues to be open for profound applications of the young people.

Health – On November 5, Dr. Diedrich had a personal discussion with Mr. Raphael Nyrenda who is the hospital administrator at St. John's Hospital in Mzuzu (Tel. +265 1 332 299; email: stjhospital@malawi.net). The proposed procedure is to design an agreement between the hospital and the CDC so that the entire Chipunga workforce and their family members can be treated by the hospital. A list of names of the workers, their partners, and relating kids will be created by Mr. Justin Menenjembe (preferable electronically – so updates can be done simply and list can be reprinted once a year). The list has to be forwarded for St. John's disposal. If a worker needs treatment or medical care, the CDC or Health Committee shall hand out a voucher or short note confirming name of the person and place of work. The voucher is valid for all kind of medical care at St. John's. The hospital will compare name on the voucher with the present list of names. If OK is given, the patient gets medical care without immediate payment. St. Johns Hospital will compile a monthly health record for the Chipunga workforce and relatives. GRACE will be invoiced by St. John's Hospital according to this record at the end of every month. The 25% self-contribution of each person receiving medical treatment will be paid back as usual to the GRACE account by deduction of her/his monthly gross.

Health – it was mentioned by J. Diedrich that the cost for building a health post around Chipunga is beyond the limits for GRACE in Germany at the moment (also in view of the proposed expansion of the Primary School). However, HC shall consider how such a medical service can be installed in the future. Probably it is possible to get better health education in the future. E.g. throughout his visit at the employees compound J. Diedrich realized that not many mosquito nets are in use, and that people even don't know why and how to use nets correctly. HC shall consider to apply for more nets and to ensure that people are trained on the use of the nets. Malaria will decrease dramatically (especially kids may benefit from sleeping under a net). Nets are available for MK 100,- only.

Livelihood – good quality blankets of MK 2,500 each shall be considered once more to be applied for.



The pressing needs:

Fertilizer – is needed now. CDC confirmed that they wish to get 2 different fertilizers of total costs around MK 9,000 per family. As 50% is covered by GRACE, the 50% self-contribution is MK 4,500 x 52 workers = MK 234,000. The pay-back goes by deduction from the monthly wages and will be deposited into the GRACE account with Malawi Savings Bank in Mzuzu.

Maize Seed – is needed with immediate effect. CDC plans to get 52 packs of 5 kg of type DK807. Total for 5kg maize is approx MK 800 → 52 workers x MK 800 = MK 41,600 (75% through GRACE account = MK 31,200).

The MD got order to buy fertilizer and maize seed. As he covers cost for transportation all recipients shall include loading, transportation, unloading and distribution! CDC will track and supervise the distribution.

CDC agreed to inform GRACE in Germany quarterly on the progress of the individual projects and annually on the spend and pay back of funds. Appropriate forms were handed out and explained by J. Diedrich.

Tuesday November 6, 2007 – Meeting with ANAMED Group and CCMC

Participants: CCMC, ANAMED, J. Diedrich (GRACE president)

Meeting with CCMC – CCMC complained that no financial support has been released by the CDC so far. J. Diedrich underlined that just well thought-out proposals which promoting rural development will be considered by the CDC and the charity. Business proposals like simple selling and reselling will not be supported (there are already too many groceries in the Chipunga area). A good proposal needs to centre around production of any kind, most likely agricultural produce (e.g. breeding of pigs, or broilers). Prior to any proposals, CCMC should carry out a simple market analysis to find out needs and therefore the most promising projects. After identifying the needs, the first 2 women groups should start with their business plans w/o any additional postponement (possible kick-off could be your annual December meeting).

Nevertheless, CDC is advised not to grant money if there is no sound proposal submitted by the CCMC. J. Diedrich clarified again that the GRACE loan scheme is completely **interest-free** (GRACE is a charity and not a bank)! The period a women group has to repay their so called “initial money” was fixed by CCMC to 8 months. CCMC will keep an eye on the performance of the women groups and shall report with CDC insight to GRACE.

ANAMED Group meeting – Mrs Msefula who had a GRACE financed ANAMED training in Dedza showed a list of things required for cooking and mixing natural medicines (e.g. pure alcohol, pots, measuring cups, knives, vegetable oil, containers for storage, honey, aluminium foil, charcoal oven, solar dryer, iron sheet for making the oven, block paper sheets, fertilizer, isolation material, hygrometer, thermometer, etc.). Because GRACE agreed to fund the first step (training of Mrs. Msefula) the next steps of the scheme will also be granted. Hence, the ANAMED group shall prepare an application for all things required to produce the medicines including a budget expenditure. The application shall be endorsed by the CDC / HC who will forward it to GRACE. **Note:** The ANAMED budget will not debit the CDC account. This is an extra health fund for the community.

With kind regards from now wintry Germany (first snow has fallen and temperatures are below 0°C),



Dr. Jens Diedrich
President