



EASTERN PRODUCE  
MALAWI LIMITED

A large, solid green female symbol is centered on the page. The symbol is a circle with a vertical line extending downwards from its center, and a horizontal bar extending from the vertical line's midpoint to the left. The background of the entire page is a photograph of a lush green tea plantation in the foreground, with rolling hills and mountains in the distance under a blue sky with white clouds. A few buildings are visible on the right side of the middle ground.

**EPM Women**  
Empowerment  
Initiatives

# Community Civic Education program:

Using Theatre for Development (participatory drama) to communicate and educate communities about the negative impacts of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the importance of gender equality.

The project is being implemented by Art & Global Health Center Africa.

## IMPACT



Since 2021 when the program begun, over 23,000 community members (69% female) from 35 villages surrounding 14 tea and macadamia estates have been reached to-date.



31 girls have been rescued from early marriages and 17 of them have returned to school since 2021.



The project has raised awareness about gender equality & GBV within these communities. Using art as a medium, community members are engaged, participate in identifying root causes of and find solutions to issues of concern.



Female community members including workers are being empowered to resist discrimination, sexual harassment or GBV in the communities and the workplace. Women understand that they should report any inappropriate behavior or violence towards them.

## GOING FORWARD



By the end of 2024, all 18 EPM estates will have been covered. The project will continue beyond 2024. This will ensure a sustained progress towards gender equality, and the prevention of GBV and sexual harassment. While short-term interventions can create initial awareness and momentum, lasting change requires ongoing education, advocacy, and the community engagement efforts.



# Female Leadership Development (FLD) Program:

Supporting female employees to attain skills and qualifications necessary for career progression through higher education and vocational training

## IMPACT



31 female employees have joined the program to-date, receiving financial support from the company to train or upgrade in various fields as follows: -

- Master's degrees - 4
- Bachelor's degrees - 4
- Diplomas - 18
- Professional/ vocational - 5



The program is having a positive impact on women by raising their confidence in the workplace and most of them are already applying what they are learning in their jobs.



The program is key in addressing the current disparity in gender distribution at supervisory and managerial levels in EPM. Since 2020 to-date the gender distribution has notably increased from 16% to 29% female supervisors, and from 9% to 20% female managers respectively. Highly skilled and qualified women have the potential and ability to take up and perform well in leadership positions.

## GOING FORWARD



Continue with the FLD focusing on leadership and vocational training for both female and male workers (to address a potential risk of backlash from male workers as the current program has largely focused on female workers only).

Including male workers will help to counter fears that women are being empowered to take over men's jobs and to foster more equitable attitudes.



3 have completed their training programs.

# Gender Equality Scholarships:

Providing opportunities to girls from poor families in surrounding communities to pursue undergraduate studies. This includes children of EPM employees with low earnings.

## IMPACT



There are 15 beneficiaries of the program to-date as follows: -

- Bachelor's degrees – 8
- Diplomas – 5
- Certificates – 2



With only three (3) beneficiaries having graduated to-date out of the 15, the real impact of the initiative cannot be quantified at this stage. However, the initiative has long-term benefits including empowering the girls and their families socially and economically, promoting gender equality and reducing gender-based violence

## GOING FORWARD



Most beneficiaries will graduate by the end of 2026. The program will continue supporting the students currently on the program to complete studies. The initiative has the potential of breaking the poverty cycle among community members including EPM employees by providing a pathway to a better future for the girls and their families.



# Access to clean/ potable water:

Drilling boreholes in surrounding communities to provide easy access to potable water

## IMPACT



10 boreholes have drilled and hand pumps installed in 10 different villages surrounding tea and macadamia estates in Thyolo and Mulanje since 2021.



Approximately 25,000 community members have access to potable water as a result of the initiative.



The project has reduced women's and girls' burden of fetching water from sources that are far away from their communities. This is promoting gender equality now that women and girls have the opportunity to use the freed-up time to pursue education, employment, and other opportunities.

## GOING FORWARD



The program is continuing under the normal EPM corporate social responsibility program. In 2024, two boreholes will be drilled in Mulanje



# Victim Support Units (VSU):

Construction of 3 Victim Support Units to provide a safehouse for victims of Gender-Based Violence in EPM's catchment area

## IMPACT



Victims of crimes particularly GBV, such as women and children, have found a safe and supportive environment to report and access remedy for incidents of violence and abuse. This is helping in preventing further victimization and is promoting the safety and well-being of community members including employees of EPM.



Two VSUs have been constructed, one each in Thyolo and Mulanje districts.

## GOING FORWARD



Construct the 3rd and last victim support unit in Mulanje District; project has delayed as it is pending identification of a safe location for the structure



# Relocation of Makwasa Estate Junior Primary School:

Construction of a new estate junior primary school in Makwasa tea estate

## IMPACT



New school has been constructed and is fully operational; learners' enrolment has increased by 27% as it has been upgraded to a full junior primary school with 5 classes from 4. The number of teachers has also increased from 4 to 5.



The learning environment is more conducive; quieter and away from traffic which was a safety risk to learners at the old school as it was close to the busy Thyolo - Thekerani road (S151).




90% of the pupils enrolled are employees' children irrespective of whether or not the employees live on the estate while the rest are from the surrounding communities.



Part of the old school structure has been converted to a community hall that is available to the community for engagement meetings.







**ADDITIONAL  
WORKING  
PRACTICES**



# Proactive training of female employees:

Providing training to female employees in advance of any need or identified skills gap

## IMPACT



A total of 103 female employees have received training in leadership and management, human resources and drone operation as part of skills development



We are creating a human resource pool that can be called upon when needs arise for a particular skill.

GOING FORWARD



Ongoing

# Women Safeguarding Capitaos (WSCs):

Establishing at least 2 supervisory positions specifically for female workers in every estate

## IMPACT



45 Women Safeguarding Capitaos (WSC) appointed and trained in supervisory skills.



The WSC role provides a safe and confidential space for women in workstations to discuss difficulties that women may encounter in the course of their work including abuse or sexual harassment.

GOING FORWARD



Ongoing

# Women attack alarms:

Providing willing female workers with whistles as panic alarm

## IMPACT



The whistles provide a means of reaching out for help in times of distress arising from sexual harassment incidents, abuse, or any emergency while at the workplace.



Approximately 5,000 women have received the whistles and training on how to use the whistles

GOING  
FORWARD



Ongoing

# Primary education:

Operating 7 estate primary schools, 5 junior and 2 full primary schools



The 7 estate primary schools provide free primary education to employees & non-employees (community members) children, educating more than 2,500 pupils annually, 50% of which are girls.



The schools provide a source of living through employment of 55 teachers (22 female) the majority of whom (75%) are on EPM payroll.

GOING  
FORWARD



Ongoing

# Menstrual hygiene (Ufulu) program:

Provision of menstrual cups to willing female workers to address menstrual poverty among the female workforce

## IMPACT



2,034 female workers have received the menstrual cups. The menstrual cups replace the traditional methods of managing menstruation which compromise women hygiene and health, waste management and the general respect and dignity for women.



Beneficiaries have reported that since they started using menstrual cups, they find it easier to go to work and require less break times to take care of themselves during menstruation period. Factory managers have also corroborated this, reporting that female workers are more present at work since the inception of the program



Women attendance at work has improved as use of the cups has eliminated the need for permission to attend to menstrual needs.

GOING  
FORWARD



Ongoing





**EASTERN PRODUCE  
MALAWI LIMITED**

