

## International Service Committee

# It's All in the WASH NOTL Rotary project in Chisimuka, Malawi

By Gordon Young and Patrick MacNeill

**I**t's called WASH — it stands for water, sanitation and hygiene projects.

With Transform International, NOTL Rotary club is undertaking a WASH project in the village of Chisimuka in the Rumphi District in north-western Malawi.

Potable water supply, sanitation and hygiene are vital for basic human health, especially for children and maternal well-being. This is well recognized globally and is particularly relevant in poor countries such as Malawi.

The Rumphi District has some 230,000 people and is growing quickly. It has 18 health care facilities, including two hospitals and 13 clinics that are in urgent need of upgrading to basic healthcare standards.

Transform International is working with the Rumphi District Council to build a program addressing infrastructure shortcomings in these 18 health care facilities, and this project will be the first step in this program — addressing WASH shortcomings at the Chisimuka Clinic.

Chisimuka Clinic has access to water near the facility. There is a borehole nearby with a small capacity solar pump. This system has been tested and found to have adequate capacity as long as a larger storage tank is provided. It also has pipes, toilets, showers and sinks inside. However, the two had never been connected.

Piping will be required from the new tank to the clinic and to four nearby staff houses. Some of the interior plumbing fittings will need upgrading and the washrooms will be renovated. It will be important to maintain these facilities — such sustainability is an essential ingredient in the Transform International mandate.

This upgraded system will provide much easier access to water for cleaning, drinking, cooking, bathing, and most important: hand-washing with soap. This upgraded infrastructure will be transformative for basic human health.

The Project team consists of a group within NOTL Rotary, led by Patrick MacNeill and Gordon Young, and Transform International (Canada) led by Nancy Gilbert working with Daniel Nyirenda, a local contact in Malawi and DAMRA (Development Action for Marginalized Rural Areas) a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that will assist with project management.

The estimated cost of the project is US\$8,000, with NOTL Rotary providing basic funding and with the generous support of other Rotary clubs in the 7090 District.

The basic assessment, water volume and quality testing are complete and the project should be up and running quickly.

This is a small, but likely highly effective project at low cost and with low risk. It could be a component in a much more extensive WASH program within the Rumphi District.