



# Chimembe Church

Chimembe, Blantyre



**Location**  
Chimembe, Blantyre, Malawi

**Type**  
Place of Worship

**Year of Construction**  
2009 - 2018

**Design Architect**  
Noella Mzinza

**Project Engineer / Head Foreman**  
Paswel Chiumia

**Total Building Area (GAE)**  
149m<sup>2</sup>

***“The community are very happy for the gift of the church. The village Chief is happy that the small church which was there before has been replaced.”***

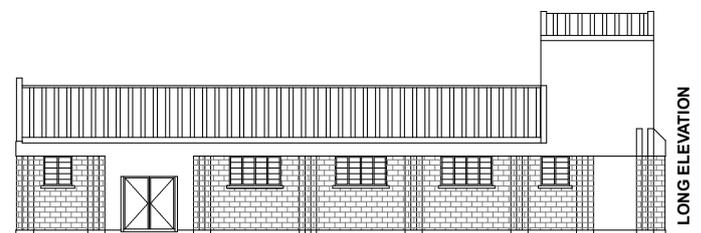
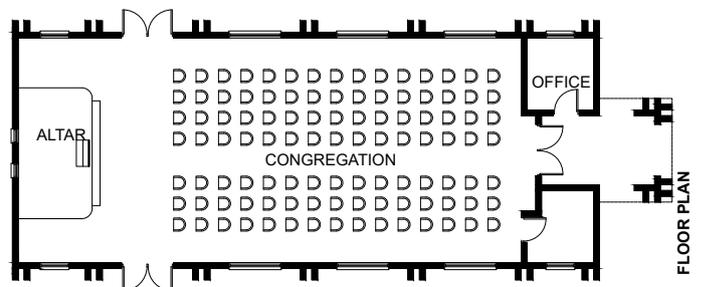
*Paswel Chiumia, Project Head Foreman)*

In 2008, Krizevac, a UK-based charity, began working in the township of Chilomoni, Malawi. Their intent was to create jobs, education and provide training to the local community, and required new, good-quality built facilities in order to achieve this. Hydraform blocks, formed from local soil, were chosen for use as a construction material, due to their low-cost and low-impact on the environment. In addition, the interlocking blocks require no mortar, and so are relatively easy to built with.

Initially, the best-quality soil for the blocks was identified in a small residential area called Chimembe, about 30km from Chilomoni. Krizevac formed an agreement with the locals in Chimembe, who agreed to produce to blocks for Krizevac, and that a bonus of 50 blocks was to be awarded to the community for each day that over 1,000 were produced. These ‘bonus’ blocks were to be used by the community to build a church at Chimembe. The river sand and stones required to make the blocks were collected by the local catholic community, and, in addition, Krizevac donated the roof and the floor slab fo the building. In summary, the building of the church became a true community project.

The design and management of the church’s construction was undertaken by Krizevac’s in-house team; the intention was that the locals in Chimembe would learn valuable construction skills during the building process.

The church is located on a hill, providing an impressive view of the surrounding landscape, and also enabling the church bells and any



worship taking place inside to be heard by all. The single-storey building accommodates approximately 100 people. Within the large, open space, a small office and a confessional booth have been provided. The church does not require a concrete structural frame, due to the load-bearing nature of the Hydraform block construction method. The external block faces of the church have been left exposed, and the floors as a polished screed, so that long-term maintenance be kept to a minimum. Carved mahogany doors adorn the entrance to the church, which is covered with a metal roof canopy, to protect church-goers from the elements.