



## Firelight's Work in FY22 – Impact Report July 1 2021 to June 30 2022

### Thrilled to be back in Kenya – A New Cluster of Grantee-Partners Supporting Youth Resilience

Firelight was thrilled to return to work in Kenya to support a new grantee cluster after partnering for the first time with donor, Imaginable Futures. Together, Firelight and Imaginable Futures are supporting around half a dozen CBOs to create and open opportunities for youth and communities to access or build their own resources, knowledge, capacities, networks, and other support. The ultimate aim is to enable them to surface, analyse, and address the root causes and systems that affect youth's holistic development, resiliency, and belonging in their community. You can read Imaginable Futures' account of why they wanted to partner with us [here](#).

### Proudly continuing our work with other clusters

Supporting early childhood systems in Zambia and Malawi - Firelight proudly continued to support 13 CBOs across Zambia and Malawi to work with their communities and local governments to jointly develop, implement, and monitor actions to improve and create enabling environments that support nurturing care for children.

Fighting child marriage in Tanzania and Malawi - our support for a cluster of 12 community-based organizations fighting to systematically eliminate child marriage in the Shinyanga region of Tanzania came to a planned end after impacting over 145,000 children, caregivers and community members. We're incredibly proud of their achievements and you can read more about them [here](#).

Meanwhile, we continue to support five grantee-partners in Malawi to work with their communities to explore their perceptions and understandings of child marriage as well as its local root causes, and to work together with those communities to reduce its demand, appeal, and occurrence. You can read more about this work [here](#).

We also said goodbye (from funding – not from the Firelight “family”!) to six community-based organization grantee-partners in Rwanda who had been supported to pursue community-based and girl-centered support for vulnerable girls and young women in Rwanda. You can read more about this work here: <https://www.firelightfoundation.org/girls-empowerment>

## Reflecting on the important role that CBOs played during COVID 19

Firelight gathered valuable data on the impact of Covid 19 to understand the major issues faced by grantee-partners' communities as a result of the pandemic and how they worked together to respond to the challenges it presented. Results of the data gathering process, which also supported reflection on how Firelight and others working with CBOs can better support CBOs' resilience and response in crises, are to be launched in FY23 so stay tuned!

## Reflections on our emergency support to address spikes in child pregnancy and marriage in Malawi

Firelight is proud of the achievements of the five Malawian CBOs that were awarded emergency support to address a Covid-related spike in child pregnancy and marriage identified by communities themselves. Support, which concluded in FY2022 after two years, resulted in creation of parenting sessions and youth clubs able to act as support networks for girls. Grantees provided new income earning opportunities for girls, successfully challenged a local by-law promoting fines for pregnant girls and oversaw the return of many girls to school. They also generated valuable learning about breaking the generational cycles of pregnancy and early marriage and grant making in a crisis. We are excited to be gathering their impact and learnings so please stay tuned.

## Coming soon... early childhood support and women's economic agency in Tanzania

Launching a participatory research study into early childhood support and women's economic autonomy and agency. With support from the Hewlett Foundation, in July 2022 we expect to launch a feminist and participatory research study. This study will take a Global South feminist lens and a participatory knowledge-building approach to understand how early childhood programs and services - including access to child care - do or should intersect with programs supporting women's agency and choice, including their economic empowerment, and vice versa. This study will be led by four CBOs across Tanzania with training and backstopping from a research team, and facilitation and support from Firelight.

## Thank you to all of our funders

We were thrilled to be financially supported by MacKenzie Scott for the first time. We also continue to enjoy and value the brilliant donors who do their grantmaking through or just simply support the work of Firelight and our grantee-partners. They include the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the GHR Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Pathy Family Foundation, Tsadik Foundation, the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the Two Lilies Fund, the JWPL Foundation, and all of our brilliant individual donors.

## Sharing the perspective of community leaders on the world stage

Throughout FY22, Firelight was pleased to support community-based leaders to share their truths, learnings, power, reflections and desires to important global audiences.

- Jones Mwalwanda, board member of the National Youth Council of Malawi and the Executive Director of the Foundation for Community Livelihood and Development (FOCOLD), a youth-founded and youth-led NPO working to alleviate poverty through sustainable, community-based solutions in Malawi, shared his perspective on [how philanthropists and other development actors can better value and support youth](#).
- African community leaders Mary A. Kabati, Ronah K. Lubinda, Adela Materu, Kingsley Makuwila, Jones Mwalwanda, Prosper Ndaiga and Moses Zulu [penned a powerful joint op-ed](#) sounding the alarm on the challenges of the traditional structures of aid and development and suggesting tangible ways that donors and other development actors can take the leap and join this movement for a stronger, more effective, more just version of global development.
- Dr. Sadaf Shallwani – Director of Learning and Evaluation at Firelight Foundation, and Mr. Jones Mwalwanda – Executive Director of [Foundation for Community, Livelihood and Development Malawi \(FOCOLD\)](#) sat down with [Philanthropy Circuit](#) for an interview to discuss the findings of Firelight’s pivotal report [Community-Driven Systems Change: the power of grassroots-led change for long-term impact and how funders can nurture it](#).

Firelight staff also shared their advice on Community Driven Systems Change through presentations to the OECD Education Donors, the Philanthropy Workshop, and others.

## Launching our groundbreaking CDSC report and tools

Firelight was delighted to launch its Community Driven Systems Change report and tools after receiving the validation and support of CBO advisors. The report was developed as part of our wider program to grow support for CDSC amongst donors. It highlights the gap between how the global development sector and CBOs from eastern and southern Africa conceptualize success, effectiveness, and sustainability, while providing tools for donors to bring their work more into alignment with CBOs on the ground in communities. It was created through a process of inquiry, learning and co-creation with CBOs that resulted in a series of recommendations for philanthropic reform. You can download the report and tools [here](#).

At a global launch event hosted for Firelight by Dalberg Advisors, [“Centering Community in Philanthropy to Africa”](#) we took the opportunity to launch both our newly created report and tools for donors and offer a particular focus on Africa. Firelight’s work was lauded by leaders from Adeso, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, IKEA Foundation and EPIC Africa as they all shared their insights and perspectives on how to create more effective and sustainable solutions to help achieve justice and equity in philanthropy and development for Africa.

If you missed it, we are delighted to share the recording of the webinar here - [bit.ly/3y2ezl9](https://bit.ly/3y2ezl9)

And please don’t forget to read the report and tools on our website - <https://www.firelightfoundation.org/cdsc>

## Taking the voice of community to the Global Partnership for Education

Firelight was delighted to announce the appointment of Firelight Program Officer Carolyn Ng'eny to the Board for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Carolyn was appointed to act as a bridge between private philanthropy and the GPE and her election represented the first time a community-centered grantmaker had been appointed to the GPE Board. You can read more about her appointment [here](#).

**Thanks for reading our FY22 Impact Report**

**If you would like to reach us please email [info@firelightfoundation.org](mailto:info@firelightfoundation.org)**