Community Governance Action

A Tilitonse Foundation Newsletter: Issue 1, March 2021

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Makanjira Community Ready to Demand Accountability in Drug Management

Blantyre City Council Nods to Accountability Project
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Foreword

I am pleased to share with you the maiden E-Newsletter from the Tilitonse Foundation. The year 2021 marks the third year of Tilitonse Foundation programming, with the first round of grant making rolled out in the year 2018. In the first round of grant making, the Foundation provided grants to 16 projects spread across the country. In 2020, the Foundation rolled out the second round of grant making and extended support to 25 projects through the Thematic Call and Community Based Organizations (CBO) Call Windows for project funding.

This newsletter highlights the key developments during the grant making, grant award and initial key activities undertaken in the second round of grant making through the Thematic Call and CBO Call projects. The projects supported and highlighted in this newsletter are on monitoring transparency, accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness in the following focus areas: Affordable Input Programme (AIP), National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF), management of drugs and medical supplies in health facilities, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights services, and urban governance and management. The Tilitonse Foundation is looking forward to successful implementation of these 25 projects, with results in all the focus areas that will lead to changes in peoples’ livelihoods and contribute to development of the country.

As indicated, this is the first e-newsletter from the Foundation, and it is a platform where we intend to interact and interface with all stakeholders of the Foundation. It is our hope and wish that through the newsletters, we will provide you with developments in the Foundation, and opportunities that may arise. We are excited with this venture, as the Foundation works towards engaging more and in a better way with all of you. We look forward to your engagement and support to the activities of Tilitonse Foundation as we work towards bringing positive and long-lasting change to the governance landscape in Malawi.

Robert White
Chief Executive Officer
On January 13, 2021, Tilitonse Foundation launched the CBO Call Projects at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe. The function brought together 20 organisations that had been awarded grants under the CBO Call Window. A total of Euro400,000 has been granted to 20 CBOs that are pursuing social accountability in different parts of the country.

Honorable Dr Patricia Kaliati who is the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare was the Guest of Honor. Also present were the Principal Secretary for Administration at the Ministry, Mr Isaac Katopola and their team, the Board Chairperson, Mr Desmond Kaunda, the CEO, Management and staff of Tilitonse Foundation, the CBO Coalition and media houses.

In her speech, Dr Kaliati commended Tilitonse Foundation for choosing to work with her ministry and funding a component of her ministry (CBOs). She lamented the funding drought that exists in the country that is preventing CBOs from implementing projects. She pointed out that it is rare to have a funding opportunity for grassroot organizations like CBOs to compete amongst themselves. She observed that many opportunities that exist see CBOs compete alongside well-established NGO’s and most of the times CBOs fail to make it. She pointed out that this funding will go a long way to create public voice for the communities represented by the funded CBOs. She asked CBOs to exercise prudence in the management of the funds and ensure that the funds benefit the intended beneficiaries. Honorable Kaliati further denounced the corrupt practices that different stakeholders engage in and pleaded for combined efforts to curb the vice in all work related to her ministry.

This launch comes on the back of another launch of 5 projects under Urban Governance and Management which took place in November at the same venue and was presided by Chief Director in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Dr Esmie Kainja.
Participants singing national anthem during the launch of Urban Governance and Management Projects for the Thematic Call

From Left to Right: Director Mseka from Tilitonse Foundation, Tilitonse Foundation Board Chairperson, Director Kaunda, Dr Esmie Kainja, Chief Director at Ministry of Local Govt and Rural Dev, Councillor Wild Ndipo and Mrs Ann Maganga (Royal Norwegian Embassy)
Tilitonse Foundation CEO, Robert White, making a point during the CBO Grants Award Ceremony

Minister of Gender and Community Services, Honorable Dr Patricia Kaliati conferring with Tilitonse Foundation Team during the CBO Grants Award Ceremony
Blantyre City Council (BCC) has welcomed the “Building an active citizenry for accountable and transparent urban governance” project by Concerned Youth Organization (CYO) with financial support from Tilitonse Foundation, describing it as a game changer towards promoting accountability and improved service delivery.

Speaking during the project briefing session which CYO organized for BCC Management, the Acting Chief Executive Officer for Blantyre City Council, Costly Chanza said the project is a milestone towards promoting good governance in the city. According to Chanza, Blantyre City faces a lot of governance challenges which can only be addressed if partners like CYO and others can hold hand with the Council and bring initiatives that will improve governance and service delivery. He commended Tilitonse Foundation for partnering with CYO to bring change in the City.

CYO’s Executive Director Harvey Chimaliro said the project was conceptualized following the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) report that was conducted in all urban areas including Blantyre. According to Chimaliro, the PEA revealed: excessive political interference and enforcement challenges, weak community participatory structures and mechanisms of dialogue and feedback, weak presence and limited focus of CSOs in urban governance activities, lack of effective engagement between elected officials, councils and urban residents as well as lack of transparency, oversight and weak civil society organizations among other key challenges. “We looked into these issues and were real issues that reflect situation on the ground. We therefore thought of coming up with a project that will increase capacity of citizens and local governance structures to actively promote citizens’ engagement in democratic governance and upholding citizens’ rights and responsibilities towards improved service delivery”, he added.

Amongst key activities; the project will facilitate development and strengthening of service delivery monitoring platforms such as WhatsApp hotline, toll free and suggestion boxes, orient local communities and duty bearers on service charter and service charter standards for increased accountability, translate service charter into local languages, hold radio discussions between citizens and duty bearers on service delivery and fulfilling legal requirement for open and transparent urban council, hold townhall engagements and open day sessions between citizens and city council on service delivery as well as facilitating setting up of a CSO Technical Working Group on governance in Blantyre City towards increased coordination, promotion of good governance and responsiveness, and strengthen the Urban Executive Committee.

Tilitonse Foundation is supporting the project to a tune of MK12, 750, 000.00
Khadze Alive Youth Organization (NAYORG) has asked Members of Parliament, Councilors, Mangochi municipal council executive, chiefs and surrounding communities to join hands and push for bylaws and efforts that would increase revenue collections and address waste management problems in the municipal. Speaking at a validation workshop for the baseline report for the project funded by Tilitonse Foundation and titled “Mangochi for increasing local revenue generation through sustainable waste management and active Citizen Voice”, the Executive Director Mr. Charles Senetre indicated that the harsh revenue collection and waste management challenges have made Mangochi municipal council not perform well.

Presenting the findings of the project baseline survey at a validation meeting with members of parliament, councilors, Mangochi Municipal Council staff, chiefs and members of the communities, Dr. Thindwa a consultant from Karl Max said the study has shown that all markets within the Mangochi municipal council underperform in meeting targets for revenue collections including the main market. Dr. Thindwa further observed that market committees have not been trained for the past 3 years now and that they do not have terms of reference for their work.

Commenting on the baseline report, the Member of Parliament (MP), Hon Idi Kallos who was present at the meeting expressed his concerns over lack of transparency and accountability of the Council over the revenue collections and their usage. The MP claimed that the Council make unnecessary trips which make revenue collectors snoop some revenue for self-help in return. Chiefs and vendors present at the meeting also asserted that the main market is small to accommodate all the street vendors hence there is need for proper mechanism to be put in place before any decision is made to relocate the street.

The representative from Tilitonse Foundation, Geoffrey Singini, the M&E Specialist who also attended the meeting in Mangochi, urged NAYORG to lobby all key stakeholders and work together in this challenging area. He further advised NAYORG to set an example by being prudent on the use of resources, put value for money at the heart of their project as well as demonstrate transparency and accountability.

“The orientation has been an eye opener and will go a long way in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of neighborhood committees and the Municipal Council in promoting urban development as we have stayed too long without being trained”, Said, Brain Uledi, Chairperson of Msikizi Ward

The orientation of neighborhood was done as part of community entry activities after successfully meeting Urban Executive Committee, CSO Network and Full Council for project approval. This followed a successful baseline and Urban Governance Barometer assessments to gauge the status quo of local revenue generation, waste management and citizen engagement in Mangochi Municipal Council.

The Increasing local revenue generation through sustainable waste management project focuses on three outputs which are: Improved performance of revenue generation, management and utilization systems; accelerated adoption and use of sustainable and cost-effective waste management systems at council level; and Increased participation of citizens and urban governance structures to provide oversight on revenue mobilization, management and utilization as well as holding duty bearers accountable in the process.
In a bid to enhance citizen engagement with the duty bearers and improve revenue collection of the city, the consortium of Find Your Feet, Church and Society and Voice of Livingstonia conducted a Town Hall Meeting on 23rd March, 2021 to discuss the Revenue Collection Mechanisms and Financial Management of Mzuzu City Council. In order to reach out to many people in this Covid 19 era, the proceedings were live on Voice of Livingstonia Radio. The meeting was attended by council officials, block leaders, ward and development committee representatives, market leaders, and some Civil Society Organizations. A total number of 47 participants (39 men, 8 women) attended the meeting. The City Council was represented by 8 officials and among the notable ones were, Director of Finance, Assistant Director of Health, Director of Planning and Development and Director of Environment.

During the meeting, Mzuzu City Council highlighted that illegal vending is one of the factors affecting revenue collection of the City. Director of Finance for the Council, Salom Tsoka revealed that the Council has spent almost 20 million Kwacha in hiring police officers to help in chasing vendors who ply their trade in undesignated places and realized 7 million Kwacha only from the Mzuzu main market since September 2020. He then urged non state actors to help Mzuzu city council in civic educating the residents on their responsibilities of paying taxes.

Failure by the city to provide quality service delivery coupled with poor information sharing has led to the broken trust between the residents and Mzuzu City Council as testified by the Director of Finance. 'The development is a cause for worry, as lately, the council has been struggling financially to service loans, pay workers and keep the services running. This Town Hall meeting has come at the right time as it will help the council to mend the trust with the residents which has
“been in tatters for so long”, said Tsoka,

During the discussions, the Human Rights Defenders Coalition – HRDC Southern Region Chairperson, Masauko Thawe, who resides in Mzuzu, emphasized the need for Mzuzu City Council and Civil Society Organizations to work together in changing people’s mindset when it comes to addressing revenue collection challenges. Thawe challenged CSO’s to civic educate the masses on the matter, so that the problem becomes a thing of the past. Thawe also faulted the Mzuzu City Council officials for not being vigilant in terms of resource mobilization. ‘We really have a problem in our city. I have never received any bill from the council on city rates. The City Council ought to do proper mapping of the households and sensitize them on the relevance of paying taxes’, Thawe said.

Oness Kasambala, a resident of Mchenga-Utuwá described the engagement as “successful”, as it answered many of the questions people had on why there is perceived poor service delivery by Mzuzu City Council. “I came here to know why our City Council is always saying it has no money despite having several opportunities. For example, there are some taxi ranks that pay gate fees to individuals instead of paying the fees to the Council, can you intervene into this?”, he asked. In his response, the Director of Finance, thanked Mr Kasambala for his observation and made commitment to pursue the issue and report in the next meeting.

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Makanjira Community Ready to Demand Accountability in Drug Management

By Ousman Kennedy

Makanjira is over 100Kms from Mangochi District. Over the years, the area has been recording increased cases of massive theft of drugs in all the 5 health centres that fall within its jurisdiction. This has been the case because of limited participation of community members in drug management and inadequate social accountability monitoring mechanisms. In January 2021 Makanjira Development Foundation received a Grant from Tilitonse Foundation to implement a project titled “Robust Health Management Campaign” which aims at building the capacity of the people of Makanjira...
to hold health care providers and the Malawi government through Mangochi District Health Office accountable.

Since its inception in February this year, the RHMC project has achieved tremendous milestones that points to the prospects of its success. The project team has already engaged all the key stakeholders of the project including Mangochi District Health Office and Mangochi District Council who have welcomed the project and pledged their support towards its implementation. Other stakeholders who have pledged to support the project include but not limited to; the Islamic Health Association of Malawi (IHAM), Chiefs, Councilors, Area Development Committees (ADCs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Health Management Committees among others.

Makanjira Development Foundation signed a commercial agreement with Airtel Malawi plc for a toll free service which will enable the community members in Makanjira to report cases of drug pilferage to the project team for free at any time. The toll free number (3054) has already been installed and will be operational in no time.

The project has also distributed suggestion boxes to all targeted (6) health facilities in Makanjira to afford the community to give feedback on the delivery of health services. The suggestion boxes will also help the community to report cases of drug pilferage and performance failure.

The project which will be implemented for a period of 12 months in Makanjira where over 16,600 people including women, youths, and people living with disability and HIV/Aids are poised to benefit, will promote participation of citizens in decision making processes, and put in place adequate social accountability monitoring mechanisms that will enable the community to participate in the management of health facilities that are operating in the area.

The project is targeting Makanjira, Lulanga, Maganga, and Lugola health centres and six (6) Madinah Social Services (MSS) health clinics owned by the Islamic Health Association of Malawi (IHAM) that provide free health services to the people of Makanjira. The MSS’s mobile clinics include Namalweso, Mkwanda, Jumbe, Mambo, Lukoloma, and Malamia.
Due to the Covid 19 epidemic, Tilitonse Foundation has put the following measures to ensure that staff /stakeholders are all safe whilst working either at the office or from home. These are;

i. Provision of sanitizers, soap and water in strategic places of the office.

ii. Provision of masks and gloves to staff members of the Foundation

iii. Cleaning frequently public places and surfaces with antibiotic detergents

iv. Ensuring social distancing requirement is adhered to.

v. Provision of first aid kit.

vi. Guiding visitors on use of sanitizers and handwashing.

vii. Encouraging utilization of electronic communication equipment to facilitate holding of critical meetings where necessary such as Board meetings etc.

viii. Utilisation of electronic documentation and approvals.

ix. Provision of periodic updates on the Covid 19 status to staff.

x. The Foundation used its website and online spaces to disseminate messages and graphics on Covid 19.

The following are the expected conduct and practices of staff members in light of the Covid 19 situation;

i. Cleaning hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizer) or soap and water.

ii. Cover nose and mouth with tissue or flexed elbow when coughing.

iii. Avoid close contact (when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow 1 meter or 3 feet) with anyone with cold or flu like symptoms

v. Doors to be kept open during the normal working hours

vi. If you have flue or you are coughing you need to self-isolate until you fully recover (this should be done after liaising with your Supervisor).

vii. Staff at individual level to buy enough medical supplies such as malaria drugs, antibiotics, pain killers (to be used for first aid).

ix. Staff encouraged to consult physicians if there are symptoms of the virus.

xi. Visitors and staff to keep the social distance

In addition to the above, there is an establishment of the response team headed by Human Resources and Administration department; suspension of field travel; minimising physical meetings and encourage virtual meetings. Suspension of non-critical meetings with external stakeholders has also been put in place.

Stay safe. Covid 19 is real.