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Once again, the Tilitonse Foundation presents to you another edition of its newsletter. This is the third edition of the newsletter and covers the period July – September, 2021. In this edition, the Foundation has shared with you developments, outcomes and results from projects that are being implemented by our grant partners working in urban governance and management, with selected developments in projects that are focusing on Youth Friendly Health Services in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights services plus interventions in monitoring Drug Pilferage.

The Tilitonse Foundation is supporting projects under urban governance and management in the cities and urban centres of the country. This is based on the realization that urban governance and management is key in promoting economic development and wellbeing of the people through the provision of essential services, as revealed by studies done on the subject matter. The Foundation undertook a Political Economy Analysis (PEA) in 2019 that identified the following as the key issues on urban governance and management in Malawi: incoherent Legal and Policy Framework; Multiplicity of Actors, Competing Jurisdictions of Authority and Coordination Failures; Incomplete processes of creating Urban Jurisdictions; Excessive political interference and enforcement challenges; Challenging Interface and capacities of urban council political and administrative Officers; Weak community participatory structures and mechanisms of dialogue and feedback; and Weak presence and limited focus of CSOs in urban governance activities, among others. The projects being supported are therefore geared towards addressing the issues highlighted.

As the Tilitonse Foundation funded projects are in the third quarter of implementation, there are exciting and interesting developments, outcomes and results that are coming out from these projects. This edition is sharing these with the view of engaging Government, Citizens and all stakeholders on the progress being registered on this journey. As we march together with all these stakeholders, it is necessary that we take stock of the work we are undertaking and share the successes and challenges being faced. We believe that through the work the Foundation is supporting and undertaking, we can move together to realize the development aspirations of the nation through mobilizing citizens and relevant institutions (public, private and CSOs) to engage in improving the governance landscape of the country. The work of the Foundation is aligned to the aspirations of Malawians through the Malawi Vision 2063: An Inclusively Wealth and Self Reliant Nation.

Tilitonse Foundation invites you to join us in this exciting journey we have embarked on as you enjoy the third edition of the newsletter.

Robert White
Chief Executive Officer
Rigorous Revenue Collection Strategies Improves Mzuzu City Council’s Revenues

By Franklin Mumba

Find Your Feet in conjunction with Church and Society Programme of the Synod of Livingstonia and Voice of Livingstonia is implementing a Project titled Strengthening Urban Governance in Mzuzu and one of its objectives is to improve the revenue collection of the city council.

Better late than never, the popular adage says. This fits well in the progress Mzuzu City has made in enhancing its revenue collection. For the past years, Mzuzu City has not been collecting enough from its revenue avenues due to poor and compromised revenue collection strategies.

During a Town Hall Roundtable Meeting that was conducted in the period December, 2020 – February, 2021, the residents agreed that some things had to be changed in order to improve the revenue collections for the City Council. One thing that was suggested during the meeting and implemented, was the introduction of an electronic device. Members proposed that the city council should use electronic device when collecting market fees, enhance awareness on the same and engage market structures. This was done and the result is improved revenue collection. So far, the use of electronic device is being piloted in some markets of the city.

During another town hall meeting held on 25th September, 2021, one of the issues members were keen to know was an update on revenue collection. Updating the house, Khumbo Nyirenda, Director of finance updated the residents that revenue collection has been improved citing that, figures have increased from a minimum of MK3 million to a minimum of MK5 million per day. He attributed the increase to rigorous engagements the project has facilitated. ‘Mmalo mwa wanyane ku city council nkhuuwongani chomene chifukwa naumo tikutolera ndalama. Vikulongola kuti sono tikutolera makolako kuluska kumanyuma uko, ivo vikulongola kuti wanthu na council tayamba kwendera lumoza’ (On behalf of colleagues from the council, I would like to thank the resident for showing willingness in remitting taxes to the council, this has improved our revenue collection) Nyirenda said.

While this calls for celebration, members were quick to warn the city council to exercise prudence in managing the funds. “Apo tikusangwa kuti vinthu vikusinthwa kweni tididimizgepo kuti kusolora yayi” (while we celebrate the good news, but we should warn the city council against fraud, said Peter Mumba, a representative of Civil Society Organizations). In his response, Director of Finance, Khumbo Nyirenda assured the residents that the funds are safe as they have introduced an Anti-Corruption Bureau committee that is assigned to track all the expenditures. In addition, Nyirenda told the residents that the finance committee, which comprises Ward Councilors, has also been mandated to provide an oversight on the same.

The project will be implemented for 15 months and is being supported by Tilitonse Foundation with Funding from the European Union and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.
Council Responsiveness and Improved Service Delivery Key to Improved Revenue Collection

By Henderson Nlash

Mangochi is one of the districts which lies along the Lakeshore to the east of the country, and along the Great Rift Valley of Africa. The district also attracts local business people from all walks of life, from other districts and outside Malawi who come to buy and sell their commodities as well as services. Its beaches also attract a lot of tourists from outside the country and citizens who visit the resorts and lodges along the beaches. These and other activities in the Council increase challenges to sanitation and/or hygiene practices.

Due to this fact, environmental management has not been effectively done over the years, due to these diverse human activities which have brought social and economic threats in the district. Mangochi Municipal Council and the whole district have witnessed an accumulation of waste, and over the years the Council has had challenges to manage waste. This has put the council in an awkward situation in terms of sanitation and hygiene practices which have affected their relationship with the business community and the Mangochi community at large. The waste management problems have not spared markets where economic activity takes place and other trading points within the municipality.

To address these problems, Nkhadze Alive Youth Organisation is implementing a project titled “Mangochi for increased local revenue generations through sustainable waste management and citizen voice in the municipality” whose aim is (among others) to accelerate adoption and use of sustainable and cost-effective waste management systems at Council level and to improve performance of revenue generation.

The project has mobilized the youth into clubs in all the 10 wards and agreed to a number of commitments as regards to waste collection. One key activity agreed was that the youth will be reporting to the Council when the dumping sites are almost full so that waste it collected in good time. The youth were also trained on re-using and recycling the waste into income generating products. One result as a response to waste collection in the municipality has been the resuscitation of the interest in paying market fees and city rates because of the service being provided.

For example, in Mwansa Ward at Mtagaluka 2 market communities are now demanding forums where they would discuss strategies on how to collect more revenue. This is an area where the council was being challenged each time they go to collect city/town rates and market fees, to the extent that staff from the council would be chased away every time they go to collect market fees and town rates. The community is now changing its mind-set and is now cooperative. In one of the meetings the Chairperson indicated that if the council is organized and transparent in how it utilizes the revenue it collects, we are ready to assist with collection by registering all Bicycle taxi operators who shun from paying fees we can register 1000 bicycle taxi operators in this ward alone”. The Mtagaluka market chairperson told the meeting organized by NAYORG to analyze the challenges the community and the Council encounters in revenue generation and usage.

"Ngati mutakhonza bwino dongo solo lanu logwilitsa ntchito ndalama zomwe mumatolera mumisika yathu ndikagwilitsidwe kake ka ntchito, ife tili okhonze ka ngakhale kuthandizira continued on page 9
CYO Supports Blantyre City Council with digital Governance Responsive Enhancement Platform

By Harvey Chimaliro

Cognisant of the many governance hindrances in the Malawi’s industrial city, Blantyre City Council partnered with Concerned Youth Organization (CYO), a governance civil society organization, to go digital in tackling governance issues. This was characterized by the launch of a digital governance responsive mechanism through a WhatsApp helpline 24/7, in order to enhance communication and interaction between the Council and City residents towards improving service delivery. This is a result of an urban governance and management project being implemented by Concerned Youth Organization (CYO) with financial support from Tilitonse Foundation.

The organisation launched the helpline at an event where it also handed over a mobile handset for the WhatsApp line under the title "Building an Active Citizenry for Accountable and Transparent Urban Governance".

Speaking after donating the mobile handset, CYO Executive Director Harvey Chimaliro said his organisation wants to promote reporting and feedback mechanisms in improving service delivery and they hope that this will enable residents to report various developments pertaining to status of service delivery in the city.

“It is to our hope that residents will be reporting incidences that require the Council to take action as well as utilizing the platform to commend the Council for the action taken on various incidences of concern,” said Chimaliro.

He added that CYO, Blantyre City Council and other key stakeholders will be convening review meetings to track progress and responsiveness of Blantyre City Council in addressing issues received from the residents through the WhatsApp hotline whose contact number is 0888 811 000.

The Director of Administrative Services at Blantyre City Council, Lytton Nkata thanked CYO for partnering with the Council in the promotion of good governance and emphasised that the Smartphone will be used for the intended purpose. He further said that this is in line with the Malawi’s Agenda 2063.

In his remarks, the then Spokesperson for the Council, Anthony Kasunda commended CYO and Tilitonse Foundation for the development which he said will help in responding to the residents’ concerns with urgency.

“With just phone calls, sometimes it is difficult to remember everything but with the WhatsApp hotline; we will be able to keep records of incidences including photos and videos as well as make proper follow ups where necessary,” he said.
Citizen’s voice yields Kameme Health Centre a Pharmacist after 4 years

By Richard Mwanjasi

Kameme Rural Health facility in Traditional Authority (TA) Kameme is located about 32 Kms north of Chitipa District. The Health Centre serves a total population of 27,880 people, (2018 population and housing census main report) who come from 74 villages. The facility offers all the services, such as maternity, OPD, General Wards, ART (just to mention a few) to Malawians as well as people from the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and Zambia. The health facility has been operating without a pharmacist since 2017 despite a pharmacist being posted to the facility. The pharmacist had been giving several excuses for not reporting to the duty station such as unavailability of staff houses.

Hope for Relief with funding from Tilitonse Foundation is implementing a project titled Òübwełu Withu meaning “Our Light” which aims at ensuring that Ifumbo and Kameme Health Centres are responsive and accountable in delivery and management of drugs and medical supplies. The project revamped Kameme Health Centre Management Committee (HCMC) by capacitating it with a training, conducted in March, 2021 on the roles and responsibilities of the HCMC. After the training with guidance, the committee was tasked to develop an action plan on the issues affecting the health centre one of which was identified as the absence of the pharmacist. In the absence of the pharmacist, a Health Surveillance Assistant was covering up bringing in more inefficiencies and risks to peoples’ lives. The facility was facing a number of problems like shortage of essential drugs like Panado and Lumefantrine-Atemether (LA) and late arrival of drugs. This was attributed to late reporting and under reporting of drugs to authorities at Chitipa District Health Office.

Hope for Relief and Kameme HCMC used community scorecard as a governance tool to reach out to citizens to voice out and demand services of the pharmacist from duty bearers.

At an interface meeting with the District Health Management Team (DHMT), the Director of Health and Social Services assured the community that the Pharmacist will be deployed to the health centre. A house for the Pharmacist was identified, and the pharmacist reported and commenced work at Kameme Health Centre on 12 of August, 2021.

Kameme Health Center now has a pharmacist and orders drugs in-time and in the right quantities which has not been happening for the past 4 years as most essential drugs like Asprine, Panado and Malaria drugs were often out of stock. The HCMC has also managed to work on better transportation of drugs. Drugs are now transported to the health centre from the District Hospital using an ambulance unlike in the past 4 years when a hired motorbike was used resulting in many challenges such as drugs getting damaged especially during the rainy season.

Traditional Authority Kameme is thankful to Hope for Relief for the coming of the pharmacist “This is a great development to the community since we will not be facing the problem of insufficient drugs at the healthy centre”.

The project will be implemented for 12 months and is being supported by Tilitonse Foundation with Funding from the European Union and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.
Over the years, various actors in waste management in Blantyre City have been working largely in isolation. This is beginning to change as the Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) is promoting coordination among both state and non-state actors in waste management in the city of Blantyre. Through the Tilitonse Foundation supported project, “My City My Space; Strengthening Waste Management Systems for Improved Environment and Community Well-being”, CEPA conducted a mapping of stakeholders involved in waste management in the City. This was followed by engagements and dialogue on building of synergies among stakeholders and working together in sustainable waste management systems.

A lot has changed following CEPA’s interventions and Emmanuel Kanjunjunju, Director of Health and Sanitation Services for Blantyre City Council, during a clean-up at Bangwe Market had this to say.

“We need a synergy in the system. This is because the council is not having the money to buy the necessary equipment. Some times the council can’t buy a truck for the waste collection because the money is not there. But when stakeholders contribute their efforts and pool their resources, it is easy to get the required equipment.”

He further explained that as a council, they face many challenges especially in waste management hence the coming in of stakeholders to collaborate is so crucial.

“Our waste collection fleet is very small and most of the times the vehicles get broken down. Such being the case, the coming in of stakeholders in composting and recycling wastes like plastics, reduces the volume that the council would have collected.” Added Kanjunjunju.

Chris Walker of Pamthunzi Eco solutions, who are cleaning the Mudi river in collaboration with Art Malawi, says coordination among stakeholders is helping in sharing of ideas and resources.

“Nobody knows it all and especially in waste management, the approach should be holistic with each and every one playing his or her role but at the same time doing it together. Through coordination, we are able to share insights on issues to do with waste management such as recent innovations, best practices etc. Moreover, we are sharing resources too. I should say thanks to CEPA for supporting us with 90 reflector vests and 85 pairs of hand gloves. Had it been there wasn’t any coordination or working relationships, we couldn’t have gotten these things.” said Walker.
CEPA’s Executive Director, Herbert Mwalukomo, was pleased to note that coordination among stakeholders is improving.

“We cannot keep operating in silos if we are to make progress. Waste management is so multi-faceted and everybody including the communities should play a part but in a coordinated manner.” He said.

Mwalukomo further said that CEPA’s efforts in enhancing coordination among stakeholders has not been confined to Blantyre City alone.

“Following the launch of the National Waste Management Strategy, the Environmental Affairs Department proposed formation of the National Coordinating Committee on waste management and other environmental issues, comprising CSO’s and Government agencies. Terms of reference for the Committee have since been drafted, pending endorsement.” Said Mwalukomo.

As part from promoting coordination, CEPA has managed to prepare a directory of stakeholders involved in waste management which has at least 20 individuals and CSO’s.

The ‘My City My Space’ project is aimed at increasing capacity of urban communities to demand and implement safe and sustainable waste management systems and practices. The project contributes to Tilitonse Foundation’s result areas of active citizenship and local governance by empowering urban communities to demand efficient service delivery in waste management; and empowering local governments and citizens to implement their roles.
SRHR governance advocacy to earn a Magistrate in T/A Mtwalo

By Taonga Kayira

T/A Mtwalo is 33 Kilometres North of Mzuzu City. For the past 20 years the area has had no Magistrate despite having a structure for a Magistrate Court, and a house for the Magistrate built in 1997. The last Magistrate left in the area in 2002.

Gender Governance Institute (GGI) with funding from Tilitonse Foundation is implementing a project titled improving access to youth friendly health services (YFHS) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) products amongst adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in T/A Mtwalo, Mzimba.

During a meeting with different stakeholders including the ADC and the Police to identify issues that affect AGYW, it was discovered that lack of a Magistrate denies the AGYW the required justice because cases are referred to Mzuzu High Court and transport is a problem for both the victims, the perpetrators and the Police and it is difficult to follow up on such cases. Considering the gravity of the issue, Gender Governance Institute (GGI) resorted to conduct high level advocacy and engaged with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Registrar of High Courts and the Chief Resident Magistrate for the Northern Region.

During these engagements, GGI learnt that the High Court was in the process of deploying 58 third grade magistrates to various parts of the country and that 12 of them, would be deployed in the northern region. The Chief Resident Magistrate would be the one allocating these 12, and he did not know about the situation of T/A Mtwalo. The Chief Resident Magistrate committed to allocate a Magistrate and signed a letter of commitment. He also made a commitment to visit TA Mtwalo area.

The Magistrate will be allocated anytime from September, 2021. T/A Mtwalo, expressed his gratitude, "You have done a commendable job. The absence of a magistrate was affecting my duties as a Chief. Instead of focussing on other important matters in my area, I was burdened and distracted with having to deal with matters of the court.

According to the Police Officer In-Charge, 60 cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) including defilement and rape have been reported in the T/A Mtwalo since January this year. He further pointed out that lack of a Magistrate Court means cases have to be referred to Mzuzu High Court and due to financial constraints on the part of perpetrators and survivors, providing transport for them has always been a challenge.

Long distance to access justice has also resulted in poor follow-up on cases as suspects abscond for reporting after being released. Having a magistrate would therefore ease the burden for both the T/A and the Police in improving on referral cases. The third grade magistrates do not have jurisdiction to preside over SGBV cases due to their lower rank, however, having one would bring sanity to the whole process and drive fear in perpetrators to respect the law.

Having a magistrate in the area after almost 20 years is a good development in TA Mtwalo. The community was not expecting it and had resigned itself. The project is aligned to GGI’s key priority area on GBV and sub-theme of SRHR. It is further aligned to Tilitonse Foundation’s key result areas of Gender and Social Inclusion and Rule of Law. The Project is being supported by Tilitonse Foundation with Funding from European Union and Royal Norwegian Embassy.
Helpline Assists in Bridging the Gap between Blantyre City Council and Citizens
Technology supporting citizen voice in urban governance in Blantyre City

Following the launch of the WhatsApp helpline in August 2021, Concerned Youth Organization (CYO) together with Blantyre City Council and Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) held a meeting in September 2021 to reflect on feedback being received from Blantyre City residents through the WhatsApp helpline (0888 811 000) on service delivery by the Council.

It was pleasing to learn that residents of Blantyre City are making good use of the WhatsApp helpline to report on service delivery. More importantly action that has so far been taken by Blantyre City Council in addressing the gaps reported by residents. Since the launch of the WhatsApp helpline, over 80 cases have been reported.

It emerged that WhatsApp as simple as it may sound, the technology has given citizens in Blantyre city a platform to voice out issues of urban governance to Blantyre City Council. For instance, refuse collection by Blantyre City Council in some streets in Chigumula, Federation in Kapeni, and Mount Pleasant had stopped for some time. Through this social platform, residents of these areas raised the issue and demanded for the services. Blantyre City Council has been responsive enough to act on the issues raised.

Currently, refuse is being collected in the concerned streets of Chigumula and Mount Pleasant whereas in Federation residential area in Kapeni the Council has committed to provide them with a refuse collection Skip before end October, 2021.

The WhatsApp helpline has proven to be an effective tool for promoting citizen voice to help citizens demand for improved service delivery. Further, it is contributing towards building a good working relationship between the Council and its residents. The Council has described the WhatsApp helpline as more effective such that it is receiving more reports in form of photos, videos, text messages and voice notes which are also being kept for records.

The Director of Administrative Services, Lytton Nkata commended this initiative which he described as effective and best practice in this century, at a time we need to move with technology and be innovative in delivery of services.

‘So far this is the right direction toward achieving effective and inclusive urban governance. We hope the efficacy of this reporting/feedback mechanism will be sustainable’. Lytton Nkata, Director of Administrative Services, Blantyre City Council
Gender Governance Institute is implementing a project titled improving access to Youth Friendly Health Services and Sexual and Reproductive Health products for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). One activity that the project implemented was to establish AGYW clubs on SRHR. The clubs were established to be playing games such as netball and volleyball, and the community awareness of such games generated a lot of interest from the youth and about 80 girls joined the club. In order to promote male inclusion, 15 boys also joined and are involved in football games. The project supported the clubs with materials for the games and training the volunteers. Amongst those that joined are survivors of child marriages. The clubs are patronised mostly by young women that have survived child marriages. The girls are not only interested in SRHR issues. Kapongolo Club expressed interest to re-integrate the club activities with primary school curriculum and requested that for introduction of extra classes to bring girls back to school when school opens in January 2022. Luckily, one of the GGI volunteers on the project once worked as a volunteer teacher at Kapongolo Primary School. The volunteer started giving the girls lessons in all subjects taught at Primary School level. This sparked more interests from girls in other clubs who followed suit focusing on subjects that give them more challenges. The bring-girls-back-to-school initiative continues to attract more girls with time and is being extending to surrounding areas. Re-integration with school curriculum has proved to be relevant for YFHS with Life Skills subject as a key linking subject to learn more about SRHR.

Amongst the beneficiaries of the bring-girls-back-to-school campaign are 22 year old Staylin Tchuwa and 20 year old Lusungu Mthandi. Staylin has two children, a 5 year old and a 3 year old. She was pregnant with her second child when her husband migrated to South Africa to look for a job. She stayed behind with his parents. The husband never communicated since he left and after 3 years of not hearing from her husband and with no support, she requested her parents that she return home. Staylin heard about the AGYW clubs and decided to join. Soon after joining, she confided in the volunteers that she wanted to return to school. She had left school after completing standard 7 and now she wanted to start standard 8. Since schools were already in session and she could not join midway, she asked the volunteers if they could support her with lessons as she awaits re-admission. Staylin has already registered for standard 8 at Munyowe Primary School impressed with her interest to go back to school, the headmaster supported her with books for Mathematics, Chichewa, English, Science and Technology and Life Skills. He also provided chalk to Volunteers to be using.

This initiative of trying to keep the girls in schools after marriage responds to GGI's key priority areas of Adolescents and Youths, the Most Vulnerable and Marginalised and sub-themes of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls, Eradication of Poverty and Education. It also responds to Tilitonse Foundation's key result areas of Gender and Social Inclusion.
Prior to the rolling out of a project on youth friendly health services (YFHS) in February 2021, youths under the jurisdiction of Mzimba North District Health Office (DHO) were only organised into social clubs. The concept of radio listening clubs (RLCs) was almost alien.

However, things started changing when Voice of Livingstonia (VoL) radio partnered with Tilitonse Foundation (TF) to implement a year-long project titled ‘Campaign for Improved Youth Friendly Health Services’. The project seeks to contribute to improved health and wellbeing for the youth through a robust YFHS campaign in Mzimba North.

Six months down the line, VoL has established and trained 23 RLCs in the project catchment area. Among others, the RLCs are meant to conduct awareness campaigns and unearth issues surrounding YFHS and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) for the attention of duty bearers. The same issues, complete with responses from duty bearers, inform radio program content.

Almost all RLCs have registered some milestones in their work. They have been at the forefront in fighting early or child marriages through outreach activities and radio programs that are produced by the youths themselves. Listening to such programs, one is left in awe with the level of empowerment demonstrated by the youths. Their ability to engage health workers on any issues that negate their enjoyment of YFHS and SRHS is phenomenal. Such issues relate, but are not limited, to stock-outs of drugs and condoms.

Mzimba North DHO Coordinator for YFHS, Kazembe Saidi, bears testimony to the great work of the RLCs. “Before being trained on rights, advocacy and radio programs production, the youths engaged our health facilities in a confrontational manner. Often, we would disregard them because of their approach”, said Saidi.

However, all that is water under the bridge because of the excellent collaboration and rapport that exist between health personnel in our facilities and members of the RLCs. This is attributed to the project that has imparted relevant skills to the youth.

As a matter of fact, health personnel are now the sources of content for their radio programs. And it is pleasing to receive feedback from listeners who say that health facilities in Mzimba North are doing quite well on YFHS. Such type of feedback encourages us to work even harder”, said Saidi.

He is, however, quick to say that some feedback highlights grey areas where health facilities ought to improve. The good thing is that they take such feedback positively. But all in all, he spoke highly of the role of RLCs in fighting early and child marriages.

Kaizenbe Saidi Mzimba North DHO

True to the claim, the youths for Mapale RLC in Mzuzu championed the withdrawal from marriage of their fellow club member who married off unintentionally. In March this year, 14 year Mercy Phiri (not her real name), got married because on the fateful day, her parents refused to welcome her back home after she reported home late. This rendered the Grade 7 girl helpless and she decided to return to her boyfriend's house. That marked the start of the short-lived marriage.

While this was rational for her, the leadership of the club went to reason with the girl and her parents to quit the marriage and go back to school. Young as they are, the RLC members successfully mediated the issue such that the girl is back with parents and is proceeding with her education. Further, she is now a strong and authentic voice on YFHS campaigns, both on radio and outreach activities.

Similarly, Katula RLC facilitated the withdrawal of an 18 year old Damalise Singini (consent obtained for disclosure of full particular) of Gonapanyanja Village from an abusive marriage. It is said that Damalise got pregnant in 2020 and she decided to get married to the boy who was responsible for the pregnancy. Then, she was in Form 3 at Enukweni Community Day Secondary School (CDSS).
‘The first three months were fine. We lived happily as husband and wife. Thereafter, he started abusing me physically and emotionally but I stayed on”, lamented Damalise.

When the club heard about her predicament, some members visited her and her parents too. Their drive was to safeguard the rights and dignity of Damalise.

“We knew that Damalise had gotten into early marriage without knowing the consequences because she had not benefitted from the knowledge on rights and YFHS as we have done. So, we resolved to engage her and her parents to rethink the marriage decision, especially that it was abusive”, said Sam Jere, chairperson of Katula RLC.

Meanwhile, their intervention has yielded fruits. Damalise is back at her parents where she is nursing her baby. Come January 2022, she wants to go back to school at Enukweni CDSS. Her parents have agreed to pay for school fees and other requirements, besides agreeing to take care of the child.

“I am going back to school when a new academic calendar begins. I intend to enrol in Form 2 so that I have a better foundation. After all, we didn’t have Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE) during our time. And I would like to benefit from its resumption”, she said.

The Tilitonse Foundation funded project has also contributed to high demand and uptake of YFHS, including condoms. So far, VoL has conducted 24 road shows in strategic places within the project catchment area. Using a van with public address system playing contemporary music, the shows attract a lot of young people.

Mindful of capacity gaps on YFHS messaging, and in the spirit of networking and collaboration, VoL engages YFHS Coordinator for Mzimba North DHO, Kazembe Saidi, and other health personnel to speak to the crowds that patronise the shows.

Kazembe Saidi speaking to a crowd

The youth are grateful to the project. One of the youths who spoke during a roadshow at Mpherembe, Lameck Mwanza, who is also the chairperson for Mpherembe RLC, expressed gratitude that the VoL project is likely to empower youths to have a say on their SRHR.

“This project provides us an opportunity to make right choices regarding sex and sexuality. I wish it was introduced early enough. Some of our colleagues who got pregnant or STIs or both could have been spared if they had the same knowledge that we now have”, said Mwanza.

Being a radio station that covers the whole of northern region, and Lilongwe and surrounding areas in the central region, it is not uncommon to receive feedback on program content and delivery from listeners from outside the project area. VoL has created feedback loops like letters, phone calls, SMS, WhatsApp or walk-ins for those within Mzuzu.

The Campaign for Improved YFHS project is worth MK21,988,585.00 and is implemented in Traditional Authorities Kampingo Sibande, Mpherembe, Mtwalo and Jalavikuwa in Mzimba district.

Catch VoL on the following frequencies:
Chitipa – 96.0 FM
Karonga – 100.0 FM
Livingstonia (Rumphi) – 101.1 FM
Mzuzu – 93.1 FM,
Chikangawa (Mzimba) – 102.3 FM
Lilongwe – 99.4 FM.

VoL, meeting your holistic needs!
COVID-19 IS REAL!
Get Vaccinated
Always mask up and keep your distance
Don’t be the weak link!

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