

Community Governance Action

A Tilitonse Foundation Newsletter: Issue 4, January 2022



**Tilitonse
Foundation**

INSIDE

**Msakambewa granny, others
smile at last as access to AIP is
eased**

**Chang'ambika Health Centre to
reopen after more than
ten years**

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Foreword



The fourth edition of the Community Governance Action newsletter of the Tilitonse Foundation is here. It covers the period October – December, 2021 and brings outcomes and results from the Tilitonse Foundation funded projects. In this edition, the newsletter covers projects from both the Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Thematic Call windows of the Foundation, and these cover the following thematic areas: Affordable Input Programme (AIP); National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF); Drug Pilferage; and Urban Governance and Management.

In this newsletter, we bring to you stories on the successes of the Tilitonse Foundation-funded projects. These stories revolve around citizen voice and action regarding AIP and NEEF in Mponela, Dowa district; results from efforts to improve access to Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights by the youth in Malidadi and Enukweni, Mzimba district; efforts on waste management at Kachere Township in Blantyre City; Active Citizenship on health services in Chapananga, Chikwawa district; and an update on the Drug Pilferage case at Makanjira in Mangochi district.

The stories captured and shared in this newsletter give you a feel of what the projects are focusing on,

and shares the results from the efforts by citizens on governance interventions. There is strong evidence coming out from the results from citizens' efforts, where duty bearers and service providers have been engaged and taken to task on their roles and services provided. Such remarkable and moving stories come from community-based organizations located in remote and semi-urban areas. This development shows strides that the Tilitonse Foundation and its grant partners have made in contributing towards good governance in the country.

In the edition, you will come to know the story of one Maligelita Sambo of Gusu Village in Dowa on her experiences in AIP; Kachere Township residents' engagement with Blantyre City Council on garbage collection service; Lazaro Malekano of Mkhwecha Village in Mponela and his experiences on NEEF; experiences of youth in accessing Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights services in Malidadi, Mzimba; and citizen voices in calling for health services in Chapananga.

The Tilitonse Foundation feels honored to walk you through these developments and achievements from its supported projects with grant partners and showcase results from these investments.

The Foundation would like to acknowledge Chilungamo Programme that assisted in the collection of the articles through the Media and Visibility Shortterm Expert Mr Wisdom Chingwede.

Robert White
Chief Executive Officer



Chawanangwa Chipeta narrating his ordeal

Positive voices from Voice of Livingstonia (VoL) - Youth inclusion in access to SRHR services

When Chawananga Chipeta, 24, impregnated a girl at 19, peers praised him as a “real man.” He repeated it with another girl, and the applause got louder, “oblivious that I was destroying their future and mine too.”

“We were expelled from school. I regret,” he recently told us in a focus group discussion at Emcisweni Primary school, some 120km west of Mzuzu city.

Fortunately for him, “I now know that my mistake was having unprotected sex which put me at risk of impregnating the girls or contracting STI (sexually transmitted infections).”

His is not a unique story around Malidade, TA Mpherembe and elsewhere in Mzimba. We came across similar stories at Erukweni in TA Mtwalo when we met some 10 youths.

For the youth here, “having multiple sexual relationships was normal and many dropped out of school due to early pregnancies, child marriages or STIs.”

“The main challenge was lack of information. We never knew where and how to get family planning services,” says Wezzie Soko, 17, Secretary of Malidade Youth Radio Listening club.

For others, the challenges were multiple.

“I visited a clinic, and a nurse shouted at me saying I was too young to be seeking FP (family planning),” says Rachel Mhone of Erukweni Youth Radio Listening club.

“Those days, our parents shouted, even beat us up if found with condoms which prevented us from protected sex. Not anymore,” adds James Chavula, 22.

VoL got Euro 25,000 grant for the project which has reached out to a population of more than 30,000 people with messages that have empowered the youths to demand Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights services.



Erukweni Radio listening club

“The project has also helped us, health workers, to be youth friendly, and parents to be accommodative,” says Mabvuto Nyirenda, a youth focal point at Malidade Health Center.

His Erukweni counterpart, Mamie Moyo, says “VoL has been a bridge. We now have more youths coming to access health services.”

The fruits are evident with statistics at Malidade health center showing that by August 2021, some 377 youths sought SRH services up from 77 in August 2020.

The youth, both at Malidade and Erukweni, are now SRH ambassadors, no longer spreading pregnancies

and STIs but preaching abstinence and safe sex in surrounding villages.

Launched in February 2021, the year-long VoL Campaign for Improved YFHS in Mzimba North covers traditional authorities Kapingo Sibande, Mpherembe, Mtwalo and Jalavikuwa, works with youths aged 16 to 24 organised into 23 clubs.

The VoL project falls under the Tilitonse Foundation’s Gender and Social Inclusion Result Area and is funded by The European Union and the Royal Norwegian Embassy.



Lazaro Malekano for a fair access to NEEF loans

Mponela Youths fighting greedy politicians on NEEF

Empowered to demand his rights, the story of 24-year-old Lazaro Malekano of Mkhwetcha Village, TA Mponela in Dowa, resembles the Biblical tale of a catapult-powered David who defeated the giant, Goliath.

Mammoth in scale and scary in its context, but Malekano and his colleagues, members of Chisuli-Chilembwe Club, have taken on political leaders who duped them in a NEEF loan scam.

The story has it that a politician in the area organised the youths into a group of 10 to access K5 million from the National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF),

hoping that each “will receive K500, 000 to boost their small businesses such as goat keeping.

“The money came, and to our surprise, we were given less than what we expected, and we couldn’t trace some of the money,” Malekano told us at his home.

Sensing foul play, the primary school dropout father of one, refused to receive the money, and that was the start of a battle “we are very hopeful we’ll succeed.”

With the help of Mponela AIDS Information and Counselling Centre (MAICC) under the project called Nzatonse (communal), Malekano and another member



Katope Women showing their plans

Judith Francisco, 22, reported the matter to Mponela police.

The empowered youths insisted on the truth until one political cadre, Felix Kamfosi, a neighbour to Malekano in the same village, was arrested and is now answering theft by trick charges. He has also implicated a Chairperson of a Political Party in the constituency.

“The chairperson paid back K500, 000 which to us is admitting guilt and he should also be arrested,” insisted George Kaunda, MAICC Programmes Manager.

“I was very concerned when I heard this. We encouraged the youths not to fear because these loans were our hope,” Village Headman Mkhwetcha told us.

Under Nzatose on NEEF, MAICC also works with women groups such as Katope Women Club where similar stories are rife.

“We were meant to receive K5 million, and to our surprise, we got K2 million kwacha. They picked 10 out of 20 members and gave us less than what we applied for without even reading our business plans,” says club secretary, Bertha Yonamu.

Surprisingly, they were made to sign forms showing that each received K500, 000 although some got as low as K150, 000. Empowered to demand their rights, the women are now seeking justice with the help of MAICC.

To implement the Nzatose project, MAICC received Euro 25,000 through the Tilitonse Foundation. The Project wants to ensure that rural poor women and adolescent girls actively participate in and influence decisions that increase their life chances and empowerment.



Maria Sibanda, chairperson of the club



The cleaned up Kachere skip and before the clean up (insert)

Kachere residents empowered: Engage Blantyre City Council on garbage collection and waste management

Residents of Kachere Township in Blantyre, particularly those doing business in and around the council market, are now happier with their surroundings than ever before.

The residents are also happy with what they say is “improved relationship with Blantyre City Council (BCC)” which has seen better service delivery by the council.

“They brought us garbage bins around the market. On our part, we sensitize residents and those doing business in the market to keep their surroundings clean, and people are following,” says Margret Magombo, a member of the market committee.

A visit to the market revealed a complete transformation of the once dirty and smelly Kachere market, a development that has excited men and women plying their trade there.

“We now have happy customers than before. They are now able to come here freely without being disturbed by garbage and flies. Cholera is history here,” Paul Kamoto, a fish merchant told us.

Next to him, we met Dorica Maxwell a tomato seller, smiling saying “this was Kachere market where

everyplace was garbage and that affected our business.”

“The most exciting thing is that it is us, residents of Kachere who have brought this positive change,” emphasises Roy Willard, Kachere market chairperson.

True to Willard’s words, it is the people of Kachere who have changed the outlook of their surroundings.



Roy Willard, Chair of Kachere Market



Deborah Luka, Blantyre City Council Public Relations Officer

“We thank boys and girls of Concerned Youth Organisation who empowered us to be able to mobilise colleagues and know that it is our responsibility to keep the market clean,” says Rexa Mphonde, a committee member.

The Concerned Youth Organisation (CYO) is implementing a project which envisages an “Active Citizenry for Accountable and Transparent Urban Governance.”

Through the project, people of TAs Machinjiri and Kapeni (Mapanga and Nkolokoti Wards), are being empowered to demand services from duty bearers while playing an active role to develop their areas.

“We now know that Blantyre City Council has a Service Charter and we can demand services,” emphasises Simeon Kaphuka of Nkolokoti.

To ease the process of reporting breakdown in service delivery, CYO has provided BCC with a phone and a WhatsApp line which has allowed residents of Kachere and beyond to complain with evidence.

“This has complemented our toll free line. We are now able to know issues around the city much better and faster than before,” says Deborah Luka, BCC Public Relations Officer.

The council says “people share real life photos and videos for our attention and we have been able to resolve so many issues through this communication.”

The CYO is implementing the project courtesy of Euro15, 000 support from the Tilitonse Foundation, funded by the European Union and Royal Norwegian Embassy.

Msakambewa granny, others smile at last – Access to AIP has been eased

Nearly 70, widowed and dependent on handouts, life is hard for Maligerita Sambo of Gusu village, TA Msakambewa in Dowa district. It becomes even worse when “you sale your chickens to buy subsidized fertilizer only to be duped.”

Such are stories of old people, especially women living far from places selling farm inputs under the Government flagship Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP) in Dowa.

“Last year I sent someone to buy fertilizer for me at Mponela; he brought it in February and there was nothing I could do with it. I now have no food,” she adds.

Lifineti Jayison, a member of Matekwe Women Forum, has no kind words for AIP because it made her daughter suffer for three days at Mponela.

“She stayed there while her colleagues were in class,” she remembers, her fears compounded with stories of staff demanding sex for women to access services.

Zione Gideon, chairperson of the women’s group, recounts that “marriages broke down because husbands could not trust women after staying long in Mponela.”



Marigerita Sambo



Zione Gideon explains how women have benefitted from the project

That was last year; this year the story is different. The old Sambo and others around Chibanzi in TA Msakambewa, are all smiles because they are emancipated.

“ This year I managed to buy fertilizer because the market is closer. I’ll have nsima. ”

“In June this year, MAICC (Mponela AIDS Information and Counselling Centre) came to assess how women accessed affordable inputs. We told them our stories and they took it up with agriculture officials,” adds Gideon.

Through financing from Tilitonse Foundation funded by the EU and Royal Norwegian Embassy, MAICC embarked on a project called Nzatose (communal) which is empowering women and the youth to demand their rights from duty bearers. Through the project, MAICC

has been advocating for markets closer to people especially marginalised poor. The project ensures that “marginalised poor farmers and Entrepreneurs are actively participating in and influencing decisions that increase their life chances and access to AIP and NEEF.”

The advocacy campaigns have enabled women and other marginalized groups to access farm inputs closer to their home as testified by Sambo: “This year I managed to buy fertilizer because the market is closer,” says Sambo, smiling because “I’ll have nsima.” Sambo bought her fertilizer at Chibanzi, a walking distance from her home.

Under Nzatose on AIP, MAICC is working with 30 women forums comprising clusters of 10 each and a Women Agriculture Network in TAs Dzoole, Mponela and Msakambewa.

The Project wants to ensure that rural poor women and adolescent girls actively participate in and influence decisions that increase their life chances and empowerment.



Chang'ambika Health Centre to reopen after more than ten years

– Citizen Voice influence decision making in Chikwawa

Chang'ambika Health Centre in TA Chapananga in Chikwawa District was first opened in 1987 but was closed in 2010 after some materials were stolen purportedly by hospital personnel. When this was reported to the District Health Office (DHO), the DHO decided to close the facility citing shortage of drugs.

From 2010 the facility was providing under five clinic only until 2016, when there was another theft at the Health Centre. Eight solar panels were stolen, and when the matter was reported to the DHO, the community members thought the DHO was slow to act on the matter and took the law in their hands by vandalized the property of a suspect. This led to the complete closure of the Health Facility and community members had to travel a distance of about 15 kilometers to Gaga Health Centre to access health services. Reports have it that at least seven women have delivered on their way to the Gaga Health Centre, putting their lives and that of their newborns at risk.

With the guidance of Common Vision for Social Development (COVISODE), a local community based organization (CBO) through a project titled "Udindo wathu", Youth Clubs and community members advocated for the reopening of the health facility. Through a number of interface meetings with the DHO and Chikwawa District Council, the DHO recommended that the facility be reopened after undergoing some

renovations. The community and leaders with the assistance of COVISODE, engaged their Member of Parliament Honourable Susan Dossi to facilitate renovation of the Health Centre.

The Member of Parliament promised to assist and on 27th December 2021, she delivered building materials that included cement and some wheel burrows to kick start the renovation works of the health centre. The Member of Parliament advised the community to ensure that all the building materials are used on the renovation project and expedite the work because the office of the DHO was ready to reopen the health centre.

On his part, COVISODE Executive Director Mr Oscar Chilemba thanked the Member of Parliament for responding to the need of the community and advised the community to work with the duty bearers that are currently in office.

Chang'ambika health Centre is in GVH Chang'ambika which has a population of 9,156 of which 4,852 are female and 4,304 are male, and it has 21 Villages.

It is expected that the health facility will be opened as soon as renovation works are completed.

The goal of Udindo Wathu project is to contribute to improved governance of health service delivery and it



Member of Parliament, Honourable Susan Dossi hands over cement for renovations

falls under the Active Citizenship and Gender and Social Inclusion Result Areas of the Tilitonse Foundation. It is a one year project being funded by the European Union

in Malawi and the Royal Norwegien Embassy funding through Tilitonse Foundation

Update on case number 249/2021 Possession of Medical Drugs without License in Makanjira, Mangochi

On July 26, 2021 and on July 25 2021 the Sunday Times and Nyasatimes respectively carried a story where the Tilitonse Foundation supported project implemented by Makanjira Development Foundation in Mangochi acting on a tip, engaged the police to arrest a suspect Mr Awilo Alex who was found in possession of medical drugs without a license. Police arrested the man and recovered the following drugs:

1. Sulphamethoxazole and Trimethoprim
2. Co-trimoxazole
3. Ethythromicine
4. Amoxiciline
5. Co-trimoxazole(sulfran kids)
6. Iron 60mg (famous fumerate and folic acid)
7. Lumefentrine Artemether
8. Sulfran (UCL)
9. Ciproflaxin
10. Indomethacin
11. ARVs
12. Two types of unidentified drugs.

In November, 2021 the case was concluded in court as follows as reported by Makanjira Police Officer in Charge:

Court Case No). 249/2021

The accused Awilo Alex was convicted and sentenced by Mangochi First Grade magistrate His Worship Mpaso to 24 months in Prison with Hard Labour with an option of K200,000 which he paid.

This will deter would be perpetrators of drug pilferage in the area.

The Project Robust Health Management Campaign is being implemented in TA Makanjira targeting all the 5 Health Centres. The goal is to establish a robust accountability and monitoring system in health centres through which the community will track and report cases of drug pilferage and beef up their capacity to monitor the utilisation of drugs and medical supplies in Makanjira.

COVID-19 is real

Remember to Sanitise

Don't be the weak link!



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