



YICOD

Newsletter

Issue 8

Volume 2

April - June 2026





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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

It is with great gratitude that I present this edition of our newsletter, which captures inspiring stories of resilience, transformation, and collective action from our communities. Each story reflects the heart of our mission to empower women, youth, and vulnerable groups with opportunities that improve livelihoods, health, and dignity.

Our board of trustees continues to emphasize professionalism and compliance with organisational procedures. With support from different esteemed partners, presently we are strengthening our systems to align with the best practices. This commitment ensures that YICOD remains accountable, transparent, and effective in delivering life changing interventions.

We are also encouraged by the leadership local leaders who are championing family planning and community led initiatives. Their role reminds us that sustainable change is only possible when communities themselves take ownership.

Equally inspiring are the personal journeys of women like Lokesi Esimu and Tiliya Salatiyeri. Just to mention, Lokesi's determination to prosper despite her disability demonstrates that inclusivity is not just a principle but a lived reality.

Her success with livestock and poultry farming is a proof of resilience. Tiliya's vision to expand her tomato farming and reinvest in her household shows how small interventions can trigger lasting transformation. These stories remind us that when women are supported, entire households and communities' benefit.

Finally, we celebrate the approval of our new project by Dedza District Executive Committee. With support from the CORE Group, this project will contribute in expanding access to modern contraceptives for women and youth in the rural areas of Dedza. It is a bold step towards reducing unmet needs and addressing teenage pregnancies in rural areas.

As you read through these stories, I invite you to see the common thread; hope, determination, and collaboration. Together with our partners, community leaders, and members of various communities, YICOD is building a future where every individual has the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

Andrew Bwanali



Disability is not inability: Lokesi says not underrating herself has been a key



Lokesi feeding her goats

“Now, late last year I received five goats, and now I am happy to say that all four female goats are pregnant and soon they will have kids, and I will be able to pass them on to other rightsholders. These chickens are the biggest asset, which I am sure will help me for a long time and improve the welfare of my household,” she said.

However, Lokesi has appealed to parents and guardians of children with disability not to subject them to discrimination and that they need to expose them to the realities of the world so that when they grow up, they should be self-reliant.

Meet 62-year-old woman, Lokesi Esimu, who was born with clubfoot and comes from Fosa Village in the area of traditional authority Kachere in Dedza district.

For Lokesi, her disability has never made her look down on herself, and she says she has always worked hard for her survival and for her family.

“Each morning I walk about 2 kilometres to my farm where I cultivate maize and other crops. When I come back here, I go and fetch water and prepare food for the day,” narrates Lokesi how her days run when the sun rises.

She hailed YICOD for the support that she has been receiving, which has improved her livelihood.

“Through YICOD, in 2023 I received five chickens in a pass-on programme where each beneficiary was supposed to give back 10 chickens; luckily, within three months I was able to do as obligated. The chickens have been helping me to be able to get instant income whenever it is needed; I just grab one and sell it and solve the problem.

“These days we hear that parents lock their children in the house and do not allow them to move freely and chill with their fellows due to shyness and being afraid of stigma. Please stop that; I am glad my parents never did such a thing to me; they exposed me to the reality of the world. Look, I am an independent person today; I can do everything on my own,” she said.

YICOD’s Project Officer Sheripher Dassu says the organisation is proud to see that people like Lokesi are taking seriously interventions that are being championed by YICOD, which are meant to improve the livelihoods of the people.

“We take issues of inclusivity seriously; hence, we ensure that all our interventions are inclusive. Lokesi is displaying a good example of how people should embrace interventions that are meant to improve their welfare,” she said.

Traditional leader commends YICOD for life-changing interventions



Senior Chief Kasumbu addressing members of his ADC

Senior Chief Kasumbu of Dedza district has commended the planned community-led initiatives supported by IM Swedish Development Partner Southern Africa through YICOD, expressing his belief that these will improve his subjects' livelihoods.

He made these comments during YICOD's meeting with the Kasumbu Area Development Committee (ADC), where the planned interventions were presented.

He emphasised that the initiatives will empower women and youth groups to be self-reliant in matters of income and food, among others.

"Our women and youth will never be the same, as most of these activities aim at empowering them economically. Look at the irrigation scheme which our people proposed and has been adopted so that it will be implemented; this means people will be cultivating crops throughout the year in the selected area," he said.



Emiliyo addressing questions from Kasumbu Youth Network

On his part, YICOD's Project Coordinator, Reonard Emiliyo, told the development committee that the organisation believes in solutions that can transform the communities and their people.

"We always believe in the baseline information; hence, before rolling out any interventions, we go into the communities and hear from people themselves. We are glad to see that interventions that have been adopted have been agreed by all. With these interventions, we believe that the livelihoods of the people will be improved," he said.

The interventions are being implemented in the areas of three Group Village Heads of Chiludzi, Kanyama and Kapesi. Among these interventions are livestock farming and irrigation farming.



Dedza DEC approves YICOD's project



DEC meeting in progress

District Executive Committee (DEC) for Dedza has approved YICOD's new project aimed at improving access to and utilization of modern contraceptive methods among women and youth in rural areas.

The 18 month project will be implemented in 11 health facilities across the district with support from the CORE Group.

Speaking after the meeting, Programmes Manager Chinsinsi Kalibwanji thanked the committee for approving the project, stating that YICOD will follow all guidance to ensure smooth execution of the project.

"The committee's guidance is very important. We will work with all relevant stakeholders to achieve our targets of reducing the unmet need for modern contraceptives among youth and women in the rural areas of this district," she said.

Commenting on the same, the Executive Director, Andrew Bwanali, noted that although the government is working to increase availability, access, and utilisation of modern contraception for young people and women, significant challenges still hinder effective service provision.

He further stated that access to modern contraceptive methods enables women and adolescent girls to exercise their right to decide whether to become pregnant, determine the number of children they want, and plan their spacing.

It will also reduce unintended/teenage pregnancies as well as child marriages in the communities. In addition to that, it will also improve women's socio-economic opportunities and create more educational opportunities for adolescent girls and young people in the district.



YICOD's board urges staff to always comply with procedures



Mbewe addressing the house after the training



Part of the training session in progress

Vice Board Chairperson for YICOD, Simwaghile Mbewe, has urged staff of the organisation to always act professionally and to follow all the rules and regulations that govern the organisation's operations.

Mbewe made this statement during Human Resources Management (HRM) training for staff and board members, organised with support from the Civil Society Strengthening Fund (CSSF) under the Shifting the Power Programme, which Tilitonse Foundation is implementing in partnership with Comic Relief and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UKaid).

She further thanked the CSSF's support, saying YICOD will never be the same, as different systems of the organisation are being strengthened, and she singled out the HRM component, saying the organisation will now follow best practices and current trends.

"Look, we have seen that most of the sections which were in our previous HRM manual were outdated. The world is changing, and a lot in HRM has changed.

As a board, we want to see professionalism and ensure that you follow all the rules and regulations that we have. Put into practice whatever you are learning here.

"I would also like to thank our partners, Tilitonse Foundation in collaboration with Comic Relief and UKaid for the support. Now we have an updated HRM Policy that will ensure that operations run smoothly," she said.

On his part, Human Resource Management Officer, Aefeso Kachepa, said Management training for staff and board members was to align the workforce and leadership to good HRM practices. He added that the staff will continue to comply with the rules and regulations and that management will ensure that non-compliance is not entertained.

"These kinds of training are so critical for everyone at an organisation. For the staff, I want to mention that this will be put into practice as we continue to strengthen our capacity as an organisation," he said.

Community leaders encouraged to promote family planning



Senior Chief Chilikumwendo addressing the community leaders

Senior Chief Chilikumwendo in Dedza District has encouraged community leaders in his area to champion the promotion of contraceptive use among young people of productive age, stating that this is the only way to reduce teenage pregnancies.

He made these remarks during the inception meeting of a new project aimed at improving access to and utilisation of modern contraceptive methods among women and youth, which is being implemented by YICOD with support from CORE Group.

The traditional leader said the project is likely to help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies in the area, hence the need for community leaders to take a leading role and also to continue with awareness campaigns.

“Let’s take advantage of this project to raise awareness and increase uptake so that we deal with issues of teenage pregnancies in this area. I would like to thank YICOD for this project,” he said.



Innocent Mponya, Clinician from Dzindevu Health Centre explaining more about modern contraceptives

On his part, Chairperson for the Kasumbu Youth Network, Davie Patrick, commended the organisation for the initiative, saying he believes access to contraceptives among young people will increase, which will help reduce unintended pregnancies.

“Through the Youth Community Based Distribution Agents that will be trained, we believe that youth will be able to access family planning services right in their communities, thereby reducing the barriers that have existed. For sure, issues of unintended pregnancies will be a thing of the past,” he said.

In her remarks, Programme Officer, Alice Chiusiwa, emphasised that they want to ensure the availability, access, and utilisation of contraceptives.

“As an organisation, we want young people to have no excuses, as contraceptives will now be available in their communities to reduce the unmet need for modern contraceptives among young people and women of reproductive age,” she said.



A story about a resilient woman who seeks to transform her household



Tiliya tending her tomatoes in the garden



cross-section of the Tiliya's tomato garden

Tiliya Salatiyeri walks for over 20 minutes to fetch water for her tomatoes, which she is growing in her backyard kitchen garden in the area of Group Village Head Fosa in the traditional authority of Kachere in the Dedza district.

Tiliya says she would like to use the income she will earn from selling the tomatoes to rehabilitate her house and invest some of it back into her farming.

“I would like to extend this garden after harvesting and selling the tomatoes I am growing. Of course, I will also channel some of the proceeds towards the maintenance of my house,” she said.

She is among 240 women whom YICOD supported in 2025 through financial support from IM Swedish Development Partner, with vegetable seeds through their various women's groups to grow vegetables in their backyard gardens for sale and to support their livelihoods.

Tiliya notes that from last year's profits, she realised that tomato farming is quite profitable; hence, this year she has bought seeds and pesticides and is growing tomatoes on a larger scale than last year.

“From the benefits I gained from my efforts last year, I have decided to do it again this year. Through various training sessions that YICOD provided, we learned how to take care of the tomatoes while they are in the garden, which is why I have grown them in a larger area,” she said.

Tiliya hopes to make over Mk500,000.00 from the tomatoes.

“According to the current market for tomatoes, I am expecting to make close to half a million kwacha because by the time all these tomatoes are ready, the prices on the market will have risen somewhat,” she added.

Stakeholders agree to intensify GBV Fight, disability mainstreaming



Stakeholders giving their inputs during one of the coordination meetings at Maonde Court in T/A Kachere, Dedza

Various stakeholders from Traditional Authority Kachere in Dedza District have agreed to strengthen their efforts to ensure the area is free from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and that rights of girls and women with disabilities are protected.

This resolution was made during a coordination meeting organised by YICOD with support from the Hlanganisa Community Fund.

Speaking during the meeting, Area Development Committee Chairperson Kelvin David commended YICOD for its continued support, particularly in capacitating different actors in the fight against GBV, disability mainstreaming and bringing them together.

“Coordination meetings like these are very important. We would like to thank YICOD for ensuring that we meet quarterly to review and discuss our performance in combating GBV in this area. I should also mention that the introduction of community paralegals trained by YICOD has greatly helped, as it is now easier to follow up on cases and refer them to the appropriate authorities. Our girls and women now feel safer,” he said.

On her part, Moreen Deziyo, one of the trained community paralegals from Group Village Head Mkhoma Wanthu, said awareness of GBV has been intensified in their area.

“These days we capitalise on every village gathering, whether at funerals or meetings sanctioned by our traditional leaders. We use such platforms to raise awareness about the types and effects of GBV and how we can address them,” she said.

In her remarks, YICOD’s Project Officer, Sheripher Dassu, emphasised that YICOD will continue working to protect the rights of girls and women, including those with disabilities, and to combat GBV in the area.

“As we know, dealing with GBV and disability mainstreaming requires effective response and multisectoral approach. We will continue advocating for the protection of the rights of girls and women, including those with disabilities who are always vulnerable to GBV. We need everyone to remain vigilant,” she said.

IM Swedish Development Partner visits Rightsholders

In June, YICOD hosted a delegation from IM Swedish Development Partner, which came to understand the various interventions that YICOD is implementing to improve the livelihoods of rightsholders in different communities in the Dedza district.

The delegation listened to the rightsholders' stories and observed the changes resulting from interventions supported by the IM Swedish Development Partner. Here are some of the moments during the visit.



The delegation interacting with Lokesi Esimu at her house



Tiliya Salatiyeri explaining how YICOD interventions are improving her household's livelihood



Group Village Head Fosa welcoming the IM Swedish Development Partner's delegation in his area



Cross-section of members of Chigwirizano women Savings and Loan Group demonstrating how they conduct their business when they meet.

