



YICOD

Newsletter

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Table of Contents

- 3 A word from the Executive Director
- 4 A new project to tackle Gender Based Violence bring hope to Dedza district
- 6 Women and young people hone financial literacy and business management skills
- 7 Women and youth commend goats pass-on initiative as the life changer
- 9 YICOD trains Village Natural Resources Committees



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Our line is available from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. We accept calls and SMS only.



A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to this edition of our quarterly newsletter, where we share stories of our work. We are thrilled to announce the rolling out of a new project supported by Hlanganisa Community Fund for Social and Gender Justice. The project is aimed at combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) while mainstreaming disability in Dedza district. Titled “Breaking Barriers for Women and Girls with Disabilities in Combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV),” the project seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for women and girls with disabilities to access essential services.

During recent inception meetings, stakeholders expressed their optimism about the project’s potential to promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities in the impact areas.

During the quarter, we saw YICOD being elected as the chairperson of the District Gender Technical Working Group which is one of the technical arm comprising of government, CSOs & community partners promoting gender equality, inclusion and social justice in the district.

I am also proud to report that our initiatives have made significant strides in the communities we serve. We haven’t relented on our quest to improve the lives of young people and women in GVH Fosa, Kachere and Mkomawanthu supported by IM Swedish Development Partner. We initiated the goat-pass program and provided capacity on business skills and effective financial management with an aim of economically empowering them among others.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to empowering communities and fostering environments where all individuals can thrive.

Your support will be crucial in achieving these goals. Together, we can make a lasting impact in Dedza district and beyond.

Thank you for joining us on this important journey.

Happy reading!

Andrew Bwanali



A new project to tackle Gender-Based Violence brings hope to Dedza district



YICOD Project Officer Sheripher Dassu briefing Kachere ADC Members about the project during the inception meeting

The chairperson of the committee, Kelvin David, stated that the project will contribute to the area's development, emphasising that GBV hampers progress. He noted that involving everyone and protecting the rights of women and girls with disabilities will help community members recognise, respect, and safeguard their rights, enabling them to participate freely in development processes.

He also added that the project will enhance the reporting system for GBV issues in the area, allowing relevant authorities to address them as quickly as possible.

Various stakeholders in Dedza district have expressed their optimism regarding a project titled “**Breaking Barriers for Women and Girls with Disabilities in Combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**,” which YICOD is implementing in the district.

They believe the project will bring positive changes, mainly in ensuring that the rights of women and girls with disabilities are respected and safeguarded.

These stakeholders made these remarks of optimism during the inception meetings supported by the Hlanganisa Community Fund, which YICOD has been conducting.

Members of Kachere Area Development Committee (ADC) under Traditional Authority Kachere, where the project is being implemented, described YICOD's initiative, which aims to create a safe and supportive environment for women and girls with disabilities to access essential services, as beneficial for community development.

“You are welcome here in Traditional Authority Kachere; you are not new here, as we have been working on several aspects and projects.

“Now that there is this new project, we are happy. We are confident that by the end of this project, many women and girls with disabilities, along with the entire community, will be aware of the reporting system for GBV matters and their referral pathways. This will reduce cases of GBV as well as aid in the development processes of this area,” he said.

In his remarks, Anthony Chaima, a representative of persons with disabilities in Kachere ADC, stated that the project will help ensure the rights of women and girls with disabilities are protected and that all forms of GBV they face are dealt with.

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From the previous page

Speaking during the introduction of the project to the District Executive Committee (DEC) meeting for Dedza, Liznet Kathyole, the Gender Officer for Dedza district, applauded YICOD for bringing a unique project, as it mainstreams disability in GBV interventions and ensures that everyone is involved in the development of the district and the country.

YICOD is implementing this 18-month project, expected to end in June 2026, in the areas of three Group Village Heads under T/A Kachere: Fosa, Mkhoma Wanthu 2, and Kachere, with financial support from the Hlanganisa Community Fund for Social and Gender Justice.



YICOD Executive Director, Andrew Bwanali, giving a clarity on some of the important elements of the project



Bwanali presenting the project during Dedza District Executive Committee meeting

Symptoms and Warning Signs

When people first begin to experience symptoms of a mental health condition, they shouldn't be ignored or brushed aside in the hopes that they go away. Like other health conditions, we need to address the symptoms early, identify the underlying disease, and plan an appropriate course of action on a path towards overall health.



Too much sleep or trouble sleeping



Trouble focusing or having racing thoughts



Changes in appetite



Isolating yourself from others or losing interest in things you once enjoyed



Irritability or having a short temper



Women and young people hone financial literacy and business management skills



Women and young people following lessons during the training

Women and young people from three Group Village Heads of Fosa, Kachere, and Mkhoma Wanthu in the area of Traditional Authority Kachere, Dedza District, have been equipped with skills in financial literacy and business management through core support funding from IM Swedish Development Partner.

The day-long training conducted with an aim to improve business skills and effective financial management, thereby enhancing the livelihoods of the rights holders through small-scale businesses.

YICOD's Project Coordinator, Reonard Emiliyo, believes this will empower rights holders economically.

"At YICOD, we believe in empowering communities through capacity building so they can take action to improve their livelihoods. We hope that by imparting skills and knowledge in business management and financial

literacy, the rights holders will start small-scale businesses and manage their proceeds wisely. This will ultimately lead to economic empowerment and improved living standards," he said.

One of the women who attended the training, Patricia Kalimasenga, praised YICOD for the training, stating it will improve her skills in her farm produce business.

"This is a good training; the skills we are gaining are new, and we will be able to apply them in our daily businesses. You can see that some of those here are young people who are already doing businesses, and others are intending to start small-scale businesses but lacked the skills and knowledge to do so. Now, with this training, I am sure they will apply what they have learned, and their businesses will thrive," she said.



Women and youth commend the goats pass-on initiative as a life changer



(From left) Letina receiving her five goats from YICOD Executive Director and DAHLDO

Women and youth groups from Traditional Authority Kachere in Dedza district have described the goats pass-on initiative implemented by YICOD as a life-changing program that will transform their lives.

They made these remarks during a goat distribution exercise at Maonde, where 60 goats were given to 12 rightsholders, with each person receiving five goats (one male and four females).

Letina Msiska, a young girl from Group Village Head Mkhoma Wanthu 2, expressed her enthusiasm, saying that the goats allow her to achieve two goals: providing manure for her family's farmland and generating income through future sales to start a small-scale business that will support her livelihood.

"I am very glad to have received these goats from YICOD through the pass-on program. I know that once they give birth, I will be able to pass on the offspring to another young person. I am confident that life for us young people will be transformed. We will obtain manure for our farming land, and as the goats multiply, we will be able to sell some and support our livelihoods. This initiative also allows us to start other small-scale businesses in addition to goat farming," she said.

In his remarks, Isaac Gondwe, the District Animal Health and Livestock Development Officer (DAHLDO) for Dedza District Council, advised the recipients to take care of the goats, noting that his office would monitor

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From the previous page

their progress to ensure the success of the pass-on initiative.

“We need to care for these goats as they are valuable assets that can transform our families. This initiative is beneficial for community development, and we commend YICOD and IM Swedish Development Partner for their support,” he said.

YICOD distributed the goats with support from IM Swedish Development Partner Southern Africa, aiming to improve the livelihoods of women and youth from three Group Village Heads: Fosa, Kachere, and Mkhoma Wanthu 2, in the area of Traditional Authority Kachere in Dedza district.





YICOD trains Village Natural Resources Management Committees



Participants following presentations from Sesani

The Youth Initiative for Community Development has trained members of Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMC) under three Group Village Heads (GVHs) of Fosa, Kachere, and Mkhoma Wanthu in traditional authority Kachere, Dedza district.

The two-day training equipped these VNRMC members with skills on how to lead in natural resource conservation and management in their respective villages and their roles.

Speaking during the training, Esita Lodzanyama, a member of the Mkhoma Wanthu VNRMC, said the training was an eye-opener as it enlightened them on how to collaborate with different stakeholders in environmental conservation.

“As you know, in each group village head out of three, there are two tree nurseries established, and tree seeds were

sown. Once the seedlings are ready to be planted, we need to ensure they are planted and cared for. It’s our to conserve the forests by caring for the natural regenerations so that they can grow. Additionally, we must protect the rivers, especially considering that sand mining is causing our rivers to dry up early,” she explained.

In his remarks, Cosmas Sesani, Assistant Forestry Officer under Lobi Extension Planning Area in Dedza district, advised the members to take climate change seriously and help their villages build resilience for the rights-holders.

“We hope that our department will work closely with these committees to ensure the conservation of natural resources here. We want to see this area become vegetated, with trees, as each GVH will have a woodlot,” he said.

