



Washing TB away? Health Minister Atupele Muluzi washing his hands during the function

AAM participates in World TB Day

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ActionAid Malawi (AAM) through its Joint TB/HIV Global Fund Programme participated in this year's TB Day commemoration which took place at Matenje Secondary School ground in Salima District on 24 March, 2018 under the theme "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world, You can make history. End TB". Among other support, AAM provided six bicycles that were awarded to three best Community Sputum Collection Points (CSCP) in Salima.

The guest of honor at the function was the Minister of Health and Population, Honorable Atupele Muluzi, MP. Muluzi urged leaders in various capacities to use their roles to encourage people in the country to utilize the free Tuberculosis (TB) testing services provided in a number of health facilities and the mobile clinic vans that are equipped with X-ray machines, in an effort to end TB.

The minister mentioned that Malawi is making a significant progress in the fight against TB disease. However, he acknowledged that TB remains a big challenge as it continues to be the number one killer among people living with HIV. "Statistics indicate that 28,000 people were diagnosed with the disease in 2008 while only 17,000 were diagnosed in 2017. On the other hand, TB/HIV confection has also fallen from 77% in 2008 to 49%," he explained.

AAM takes 50:50 campaign to March4Women, IWD



Loud and clear: marchers carrying placards that centred on empowering women and girls

On 2nd March, 2018, Action-Aid Malawi (AAM) joined CARE International in Malawi on [#MARCH4WOMEN](#)- a solidarity march for Gender Justice. CARE International is marking commemoration of 20 years of their work in Malawi which is centred on empowering women and girls.

AAM, one of the 50:50 Campaign Management Agency, used the event to raise awareness on the 50:50 campaign by calling on citizens to vote for women during the 2019 polls.

On 8th March, 2018 AAM partnered with the Malawi Government in celebrating the International Women's Day (IWD) under the theme: Time is Now: Urban and Rural Activists transforming Girls' Women's Lives.

Speaking at the national function that was held at Bingu International Conference Centre, Guest of Honor. First Lady, Professor Madam Getrude Mutharika, said IWD presents

women with an opportunity to support each other against all forms of injustices rather than waste time pulling each other

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Women Rights Theme Manager, Chimwemwe Fabiano, addressing the gathering on 50:50 campaign

down.

“As women, we can only develop if we support each other rather than pulling one another down. Women must be united in fighting against the common challenges they face,” she said.

The first lady’s speech resonates well with the 50:50 Campaign Programme aimed at increasing women’s political presentation in key decision positions such as parliament and local government councils.

The 50:50 Campaign Programme is managed by AAM and Centre for Civil Society Strengthening in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare with funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

AAM supported women from



Win with Women: A young lady with a 50:50 placard during the IWD



Stakeholders displaying 50:50 campaign messages outside the BICC during the IWD

AAM for level play-field ahead of tripartite elections

Action Aid Malawi (AAM) Executive Director, Grace Malera, says political parties are custodians of the 50:50 Campaign because without their support, women participation in politics cannot be increased.

Malera made the remarks on 29th March during the engagement meeting the 50:50 Campaign Management Agency had with General Secretaries of Political Parties in the country. She said the campaign wants to work closely with parties to ensure meaningful inclusion of women from councillor level to that of Member of Parliament.

“The campaign wants to open the social space for women participation starting from primary elections to actual elections and beyond,” said Malera.

“This will require us working together with parties and individuals towards having a critical mass of women participation at all levels for the attainment of the country’s sustainable development.”

Team leader for the 50:50 Campaign, Viwemi Chavula, highlighted some of the actions political parties are supposed to take to improve women participation.

Some of the actions included having a deliberate female recruiting strategy for the elections, deliberate quotas and targets for women and develop-



The 50:50 Management Agency team pose with delegates from political parties

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ment of a code of conduct for party meetings and events.

“Let us have these affirmative action steps in creating a political system that promotes women participation,” Chavula said.

“There is a need to entrench the mindset that they should support women, in their capacity to deliver, not just because they are women,” he said.

Reacting to the engagement MCP Deputy Secretary General, Eisenhower Mkaka said there is need to have programmes that address people’s mindsets. Mkaka said political parties are always ready to promote equal participation but pointed out that women themselves should demonstrate the willingness to take up the challenge.

“Women have to prove that they can deliver because they will never get a sympathy vote. All what parties can do is to provide resources for the women to unleash their potential,” Mkaka said.

DPP Deputy Director of Women Yacinta Chikaonda, said the party would aim to have a deliberate policy to have a quota for women in various positions.

Government urged to prioritise ECD programme



Driving the ECD message home: Stakeholders listening to a presentation by Dr. Khama Chibwana

Northern Region stakeholders in Early Childhood Development (ECD) have called for more investment in the programme, saying ECD remains key to laying a foundation for sustainable socio-economic development of the country.

The call was made on 14th March, 2018 in Mzuzu at the end of a one-day meeting ActionAid Malawi (AAM) organized for ECD stakeholders drawn from Chitipa and Rumphi districts.

Participants to the meeting included chiefs, councillors and parliamentarians from the two districts where AAM is im-

plementing a ten-year comprehensive ECD programme with funding from the Roger Federer Foundation.

Chancellor College's ECD specialist Dr. Khama Chibwana urged government to take full control of the ECD programme by providing adequate resources to the area rather than relying on the non-state actors and communities alone.

“There is no way we can move ahead as a country with the ECD programme if government does not take full control of the programme and invest in it. Government

needs to start investing in the programme,” he said.

Concurring with Dr. Chibwana, parliamentarian for Chitipa Wenya Godfrey Munkhondia said as a parliamentarian he would raise the matter with the relevant ministry to ensure that there is increased resource allocation towards ECD.

On his part, Paramount Chief Chikulamayembe said he is going to mobilise traditional authorities within the area to take an active role towards contributing to quality ECD standards in Rumphi District.

Govt to establish Parliamentary Budget Office



Making headway on social accountability: PBO tax-force during the meeting in Salima

Following an advocacy campaign by Action Aid Malawi (AAM) through its Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) funded “Strengthening Social Accountability and oversight in health and agriculture ,” project, the Malawi Government has kick-started the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

This was disclosed during the PBO taskforce meeting organised by the project on 27th March, 2018 in Salima District.

AAM Project Coordinator, Wales Chigwenembe, said it was pleasing to note that Government , through the Ministry of Finance has allocated K70 million during the mid-year budget review for the recruit-

ment of staff.

“In addition, in the 2018/2019 budget ceilings, government has allocated salaries for the staff who are to be recruited,” he said.

The three year-project is implemented by a consortium of AAM, Public Service Accountability Monitoring (PSAM) Eastern and Southern African Farmers Forum (ESAFF) and Southern Africa HIV and Aids Informations Dissemination Services(SAfAIDS) in Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique.

The project seeks to improve public service delivery in agriculture and health rights by strengthening the oversight and social accountability roles of five target groups in the

SADC region, specifically: selected parliamentary committees, relevant government departments, issue-based civil society organisations (CSOs), smallholder farmer organisations, and the media.

The consortium and its local partners aim to enhance the effectiveness of the target groups by providing focused training, supporting critical monitoring, and offering platforms for collaboration and learning.

Through simultaneously strengthening both state and civil society actors, the project endeavours to develop an environment for greater social accountability at the local, national and regional levels .

AAM in GFS piloting

As one way of enhancing efficiency in the implementation of financial systems, ActionAid Malawi (AAM) will, last week of April, 2018, migrate to an upgraded accounting package that is poised to significantly offset gaps in the current systems.

The initiative, to be piloted at AAM, ActionAid Kenya and ActionAid UK, seeks to integrate all financial systems within the ActionAid Federation and link them to an online banking system.

AAM Head of Finance, Taiwo Ajose, said the new, automated accounting package, *dubbed* Global Financial Systems (GFS) will significantly ease the work for the finance and audit team as it will not require a lot of paper work, as



Acquiring new knowledge: AAM Finance team during the training in Lilongwe

is the case now.

“The new package has multi-currency applications which will enable us to easily conduct the analysis of the accounting systems and enhance accountability of funds at ActionAid,” he said.

He said with integration of the systems from the across the Federation, it will be easy to analyse and improve the accounting systems, a development, he said, would instill donor confidence in the Federation, including AAM.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the migration to the new package, AAM organized a week long training for staff drawn from the Finance, Audit and Information Technology units.

Ajose said the training, which ran 19th-23rd March, 2018, at Golden Peacock Hotel in Lilongwe, enabled the staff members to acquire knowledge and skills ahead of its implementation, considering that this is a new system for the ActionAid Federation.



Team pose for a group photo after the undergoing the training

AAM Chairperson calls staff to solidarity

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) board chairperson, Professor Address Malata, has urged staff to demonstrate fidelity to the organization through, among others, unity and hard-work.

Professor Malata made the remarks during her address to AAM staff on 30th March, 2018, at the organisation's head offices in Lilongwe.

She said AAM is growing despite challenges, hence the need for staff to keep on working hard for the success of the organisation.

“You need to keep working as a team, considering that AAM is already a small team. Remember, God put you there for a purpose so take the job you have as a ministry. Don't underrate yourselves,” she said.

She called upon members to support the current leadership at the organization, saying all leaders perform because of the support from the rest of the team.



Professor Malata (left) flanked by AAM Director, Grace Malera, addressing staff members

“Remember, God put you there for a purpose, so take the job you have as a ministry. Don't underrate yourselves,” said Malata.

Professor Malata then offered her condolences to AAM family for the death of one of staff members, McDonald Mkwaila, who died in car accident on 21st March, while on duty in Chitipa District. She described the loss as a huge blow to AAM family, saying the late Mkwaila was always a sociable person.

Reacting to her remarks, Burton Kamowa, AAM Sponsorship Coordinator, said as staff members, they have been encouraged by the remarks by the chairperson, saying team work is always key to AAM's success.

Before the meeting started, Professor Malata called members to observe a minute of silence in honour of the departed Mkwaila.



Across section of AAM staff members listening to the Chairperson's address

21st March, the unforgettable day for AAM



The Late McDonald Mkwaila



Shockingly unbelievable and painfully difficult to accept that you departed from us on that fateful Wednesday morning, 21st March, 2018. You were a pillar of hard-work, calmness and humility since you joined Action-Aid Malawi in 1994. You are physically gone but the virtues you bequeathed us will keep holding ActionAid Malawi together as a family. The Board, Management and Entire ActionAid Malawi family will always miss you.



Till we meet again, May Your Soul Continue Resting in Eternal Peace