



Mrs Kamanyi (2nd from Left) with her certificate of recognition, flanked by Board Chairperson Professor Address Malata and Director Frank Zambezi, as AAM Executive Director, Grace Malera looks on

‘Happy’ Kimanyi bids farewell to ActionAid Malawi

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On 17th February, 2018, Board Director, Mrs. Judy Kamanyi bid farewell to ActionAid Malawi (AAM) following the expiry of her tenure of office with the organization. During farewell function that took place at Sunbird Capital, Lilongwe, AAM presented a certificate of recognition to Mrs. Kamanyi in honour of the her exceptional role she played as Director of AAM.

Mrs. Kamanyi, who was chairing the Board’s Audit and Risk Management Committee described the recognition as a celebration of collective efforts by all directors in steering AAM towards its vision of “A nation without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to life and dignity” Kamanyi joined AAM Board in 2012.

UWF 9 for increased women representation



Chimwemwe Gondwe 9th from Left (Standing) with other delegates after the meeting

The ninth session of Urban Women Forum (UWF 9) called for women's representation in all areas of governance. The call was made by the UN-Habitat, Executive Director, Dato Maimunah Mohd Sharif during the Women Assembly at the session held on 7th February, 2018 in Malaysia. The Women Assembly was one of the key activities at UWF held under the theme: "Cities 2030, Cities for All: Implementing the New Urban Agenda." UWF ran from 7th to 13th February. The World Urban Forum (WUF) is a non-legislative technical forum convened by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) held since 2002.

It is recognized as the foremost global arena for interaction among policymakers, local government leaders, non-governmental organizations and expert practitioners in the field of sustainable urban development and human settlements.

Sharif emphasized the overarching need of linking the New Urban Agenda in SDG 11 to all the 17 goals but in particular Goal 5 and 17. She reminded the assembly that poverty can never be eradicated without realization of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. She was quick to say, governments might not have all what it hence the need to make use of goal 17 which is equally important as it talks of strengthening means of implementation and revitalize global partnership for sustainable development.

In particular, she called on governments to accord women and girls equal opportunities to education, decent work, and financial resources by creating an enabling environment through provision of gender responsive public services. She ended her speech by inspiring governments and citizens to support Planet 50:50 and Cities 50:50 which aim to bring meaningful transformative political participation of women in positions of influence at all levels.

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) delegate at the meeting, Chimwemwe Gondwe, said there is need to stakeholders to join hands to fight for an inclusive society if

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women are to get out of poverty.

“My take home message is there nothing for women without women. Let’s amplify the voice of women and girls living in poverty. Let’s sing inclusion for it is the engine for transformation and can bring about the radical desired change,” said Gondwe, who is the AAM Programme Coordinator Lilongwe Peri-Urban Women.



Chimwemwe Gondwe, AAM
Lilongwe Peri-Urban Women
Programme Coordinator

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Rural Women, Girls Strategise for CSW 62

ActionAid Malawi (AAM) in partnership with the Malawi Government through Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare and other stakeholders, namely, UN Women, Oxfam NASFAM, COMSIP, NGOGCN and Malawi Human Rights Resources Centre organized a Rural Women consultative conference which ran from 8-9 February 2018, at Linde Motel in Mponela, Dowa District, under the theme: “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls.”



Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare pose with rural women and girls

Speaking when opening the conference, Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Dr. Jean Kalirani, said Empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas, is critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs.).

“Despite commitments enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), SADC Gender and Development Protocol, Malawi Gender Equality Act (GEA), among other gender related laws, resolutions and statements on the empowerment of women and rights of the girl child, systemic inequalities, and discriminatory practices still persist,” she said.

She thus said conference would prove significant in ensuring that rural women come up with key messages aimed championing gender equality and women empowerment.

Kettie Chiundira, one of the ten participants AAM supported at

the function said the conference would go a long way in sending a strong message against various forms of sexual violence rural women and girls are facing.

“For so long, we, women living in rural areas have been suffering various forms of gender-based violence such as sexual violence and early marriages, a situation that has imprisoned us in perpetual poverty. We thus, hope that through this interaction we will be able to find common solutions to the common problems we face”, she said.

Over 80 participants drawn from women and girl focused organizations, CSOs, traditional leadership structures and faith based institutions attended the meeting. The meeting was aimed at creating an interactive forum that will allow rural women and girls contribute towards the gender equality agenda and empowerment of rural women and girls in Malawi. Rural women’s and girl’s contribution towards

the conference and the CWS62 and beyond will emanate from their works and experiences in five thematic areas which are critical for the achievement of the sustainable productive resources, gender and climate change, violence against women and girls, decent work and



Chiundira thinks the conference could help end sexual violence

equal pay and rural women and governance.

673 girls withdrawn from marriage in Mangochi District in one year

673 girls are reported to have been withdrawn from marriage in Mangochi district alone in a period of one year, courtesy of the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) project that World Vision Malawi (WVM) is implementing through ActionAid with funding from Global Fund.

According to WVM AGYW Manager, Nellie Galeta, several factors are still fuelling child marriage cases in the district thereby reducing the number of girls who reach and complete tertiary education. These factors include peer pressure, lack of parental care, high poverty levels, harmful cultural practices like initiation ceremonies and poor access to HIV and SHR services. Migration of most men to South Africa in search for green pasture just as fishing business also attracts more girls to marry such men.

Nellie said WVM considered implementing the AGYW project in Mangochi district with the aim of reducing school dropout rate among girls but also contributing to the reduction in incidences of gender based violence (GBV) which include child marriage among other reasons.

Following this, the project facilitated establishment of 163 in-school clubs and 200 out-of-school clubs where it is reaching out to 72,996 and 44,506 girls and young women respectively.

Nellie said the 673 girls are among 1021 girls from in-school and out-of-school clubs that WVM has managed to facilitate their going back to school as part of the activities being implemented within the AGYW project.

At Koche Primary school, 53



Some of the members of Koche in-school club during their meeting

girls would have not continued their education and possibly enter into early marriages after getting pregnant during the 2016/2017 academic calendar if it were not for the AGYW project.

According to the Head Teacher of the school, Ronald Mkwichi, at least three out of seven girls were dropping out of school and proceeded to getting married on a yearly basis as they believed that once a girl gets pregnant, the next option was marriage. He said during the 2015/2016 academic year 53 girls were impregnated and dropped out of school. This was before WVM started implementing its in-school-girls club activities. However, the number of girls getting pregnant has reduced drastically after WVM intervention.

“Only 3 girls were found pregnant in the 2017/2018 academic year. Two of these girls have already requested for their place to be reserved to come after delivery. I can boldly attribute most part of this achievement to the AGYW Project that has created a forum where members of Mother Group and Parents Teachers Association come and

speak to the girls at this school,” he explained.

Mr. Mkwichi said 12 out of the 53 girls that got pregnant have returned to school. “We believe the rest will be joining us back after their children have grown a little bit and when they have found a proper person to be taking care of the children whilst they are at school.

Amina, 18 years and in Grade eight, is one of the girls that have returned to school in September, 2017 after delivering a child. She dropped out of school in September, 2016 after falling pregnant. According to her, she is determined to finish her education and become a teacher one day.

“I thank God that my grandparent did not marry me off and is taking care of my child whilst am in school. Again, my pregnancy could have been the end of my education if it were not for the encouragement I got from members of Mother Group who visited and encouraged me to come back to school. I am grateful to all of them,” she said.

Debate exposes capacity gaps among VDCs and ADCs



Demanding total accountability on CDF and LDF, Panelists during the debate conducted in Lilongwe

Development packages such as the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Local Development Fund (LDF) and District Development Fund (DDF) need to have a capacity building component for grassroots structures such as Village Development Committees (VDC) and Area Development Committees (ADC) if the rightsholders are to successfully influence accountability and transparency on the development packages.

The observation was made on 17th February, 2018, during the live radio discussion on the “Role of the Councillors, Parliamentarians and District Council Officials on the management of the CDF, LDF and DDF” organized by ActionAid Malawi (AAM). The activity was part of the Social Accountability Project AAM is implementing in partnership with CISANET with funding from European Commission.

Giving his remarks during the discussion, AAM Head of Programmes and Policy, Peter Pangani, said AAM is failing to

meaningfully engage the ADCs and VDCs because most of the structures don't have the capacity on the local development packages.

“This is the major challenge we encounter when we are implementing the social accountability projects in the communities. We are thus asking the government to consider including the training component for the VDCs and

ADCs in the DDF, LDF and CDF funds,” said Pangani.

The discussion further suggested the need to ensure complementarity among the three development packages to increase impact on the lives of the communities in the councils. The debate also called for stiffer punishment for those abusing the council resources.



Pangani: There is need for a training component for the VDCs and ADCs

Case study: Mother Group fights for girls education



Mother group members pose with girls from Neno Mission Community Day Secondary School after giving out the uniforms to girls.

As one of encouraging that girls that drop out of school due to poverty go back, the mother group under ActionAid Malawi (AAM) funded Neno LRP donated school uniforms to 20 needy girls at Neno Mission Community Day Secondary School. AAM Neno LRP trained the mother group in tailoring and gave them a sewing machine as a starter pack for the good work that they are doing in promoting girl child education in the district.

Realising that girls were dropping out of school due to various reasons including lack of school uniforms, the mother group sew the school uniforms and gave them to girls for free.

One of the beneficiaries, Christina Masina, thanked the mother group for the timely gesture., saying she has now been encouraged to work hard in school to realise her dream. She said her poor parents find it hard to make ends meet and buying her a school uniform has never been a priority.

“It is like a miracle for me since my parents are very poor and they rely on small scale farming which does not yield enough harvest to meet the basic needs for the seven children in our family,” she said.