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Report faults private education

Young women gang up against gender unjust macro-economic policies



Tilimbike FFS shines at a learning event



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Report faults private education

Provision of education in private primary and secondary schools in Malawi is not in line with the Abidjan Principles which Malawi is signatory to, notes a recent report by ActionAid Malawi

Launched on 16th February, 2020 in Lilongwe the report entitled *“Private Education in Malawi and compliance with the Abidjan Principles: The case of Malawi”* analyses a number of human rights areas including quality, financing and regulation in private education.

The report launch, which was attended by various stakeholders in the ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Civil Society Organisations, and the private sector, was part of the “Tax Justice for Gender Responsive Public Service” project implemented by ActionAid Malawi with funding from NORAD.

The report, among others, notes that private education has brought growing discrimination against learners from poverty-stricken families due to rising cost of education.

“Families on low incomes or with limited or no monetary resources have not been able to access secondary school. Gender disparities in enrolments in secondary school suggest families are forced to choose between children in deciding who they will put through secondary schools, with an evident preference for boys over girls,” reads the report in part.

The report further notes that financing towards public education remains a challenge, a development that condemns learners from poor family backgrounds to poor quality education.



Mr. Assan Golowa speaking during the report launch in Lilongwe

This, says the report, is exacerbated by lack of a comprehensive public private partnership (PPP) in the education sector, arguing PPP in Malawi is mainly associated with specific development assistance programmes in primary and secondary education.

The report also bemoans lack of regulation in the private education.

“There is weak regulation of private primary and secondary schools. Many private schools are unregistered, or proprietors do not respond to annual government surveys. There are high proportions of unqualified teachers, and researchers found little evidence of innovative teaching methods or breadth in the curriculum,” adds the report.

“There was a stress on performance in high stakes examinations. Children who fail to pay the fees have to leave school,” it bemoans.

Addressing the stakeholders during the report launch, AAM Executive Director, Assan Golowa, said private schools that provide private education should aim at complimenting government efforts in education.

“We see few that are more into business than providing education service to the country. As such, let’s make sure that as we embark on private education, we should ensure that we abide by the basic principles that focus on quality education process,” said Golowa.

Golowa said the report was relevant to Malawi context because the country has a blossoming private education system as such government and stakeholders need to regulate and see if it is contributing to the quality of education.

Director of Policy and Planning in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Dr. Rodwell Mzondi said the report would, among others, help solicit further discussions on the state obligations on the provision of free public education for all.

Pictorial highlights of the Education Report Launch



AAM's director Assan Golowa delivering welcoming remarks



Dr. Rodwell Mzondi from Ministry of Education speaking during the launch



AA Education Manager, Julie Juma, taking participants through the Abidjan Principles



AAM Programme Specialist, Yandura Chipeta, making a presentation during the launch.



Delegates pose for a group photo after the report launch



AAM Head of Business Development, Tiwonge Kumwenda (in black attire) interacting with donor, Margaret Myklebust after the launch

Donor calls for local solutions to education challenges

The Malawi government and other players in the country's education sector have been called upon to mobilise more resources locally to deal with the challenges in the education sector.

The call was made by ActionAid NORAD donor representative, Margaret Myklebust, after a tour of the project activities in Malawi during the mid week of February. NORAD is supporting ActionAid through a four year-project: "Tax Justice for Gender Responsive Public Services" which is implemented in Chitipa, Lilongwe, Ntchisi, Neno and at a national level.

Speaking after joint tour of Lilongwe's Makunje Primary School with Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Technology, Myklebust said education is important for the future of the country, hence the need for the country to prioritise addressing the challenges in the sector using its domestic resources.

She, however, hailed stakeholders' commitment towards the project despite various challenges.

"It's amazing that stakeholders including learners are able to apply the tax justice knowledge at the school level by demanding certain services provided within the school budget, and I would like to urge them all to keep doing the good work," said Myklebust.

In her response, parliamentarian Esther Mcheka Chilenje, who is a member of Parliamentary Education Committee, said the committee is equally concerned about the situation in most of the primary schools in the country. She said the pathetic situation at Makunje Primary School will move



A learner at Makunje Primary School sharing project successes and challenges



Myklebust (Right) and Honourable Chilenje share light moments during the tour of Makunje Primary School

the committee to lobby ActionAid Education Programme government to allocate more resources to the education sector. Manager, Julie Juma, expressed optimism that the joint tour of one of the primary schools the project is reaching out to could help the Malawi Government take actions against the challenges in schools.

Chilenje hailed NORAD for the support rendered to the country's education sector, saying it has gone a long way in alleviating the challenges in the country's education sector.

ActionAid's ECD Program to be sustained—govt

The Malawi Government, through the ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development, says the comprehensive Early Childhood Program (ECD) implemented by ActionAid Malawi (AAM) provides a necessary benchmark to government for its sustainability.

Speaking in an interview in March, Director of Children Affairs, Mcknight Kalanda said the AAM'S ECD program helped the learners grow in all aspects of life including, physically, intellectually, mentally, spiritually, psychologically.

“We thank ActionAid Malawi for its investment in the ECD program especially through the construction of 80 model community based childcare centres in the ten districts

“As government, we will build onto this achievement by launching our World Bank-funded program called “Investing in Early Years” in which we target to construct 250 community based child care centres across Malawi,” he said.

Mr. Kalanda said as one way of motivating care-givers, his office is negotiating with the Ministry of Finance on the possibility of paying the care-givers some monthly honoraria.

“Most importantly, we also intend to continue with the revolving fund initiative currently done by ActionAid Malawi whereby caregivers will be given some seed money to kick-start their village savings and loans initiative in the CBCCs. We believe that's the most sustainable way of reducing high care-giver turn-over in the CBCCs,” he added.

Kalanda disclosed that the world bank ECD program is worth \$60 million.



Kalanda: Government will sustain the gains realised by ActionAid Malawi



Learning through play: Children learning at a model CBCCs in Rumphi

“We thank ActionAid Malawi for its investment in the ECD program especially through the construction of 80 model community based childcare centres”

Young women, allies in a campaign for economic justice

Young women in the country have teamed up under the Feminist Macro-Economic Alliance-Malawi (FEAM) to influence macro-economic policies including debt management to achieve economic justice for women.

The women's rights-centred alliance, comprising ActionAid Malawi, Every Girl in School Alliance, Malawi Human Rights Resources Centre and NGO-Gender Coordinating Network-Malawi is currently supported by African Women Development and Communication Network and Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA)

Speaking during campaign's first outreach activity dubbed the "#SheTalks dialogue on Feminist Macro-Economic Police and Public Services" held in Lilongwe in February, one of the young women activists, Nthanda Manduwi, said young women in the country need to rise and start holding Malawi Government accountable on some of the economic policies which negatively affect young women and girls.

"One of the areas we need to look at in this campaign in the issues of public debt and how it affects service delivery for young women in the country. For a long time, government has incurring debts, but do such debts benefit young women and girls in the country?" She wondered.

Outspoken feminist, Dr. Jessy Kabwila, urged women to start looking at patriarchy and how it affects young women and girls in accessing the essential public services in the country.



Dr. Kabwila addressing young women during the #SheTalks Dialogue



Nthanda Manduwi stressing a point during the discussion

ActionAid Malawi Women and Girl Rights Specialist, Chikumbutso Ngosi, said with time, the campaign will need to beyond borders to effectively challenge unjust macro-economic policies by multinational institutions.

"The solutions to challenges emanating from macro-economic policies go beyond local activism. This is due to the fact that some macro-economic policies negatively impacting Malawi emanate from external forces such as IMF," she said.

Chisomo Young Women Club venture into artisanal entrepreneurs

There is a lot of remarkable artisanship hidden among young women which can only come to light when they are given a chance to display it. Such talent has been identified among Chisomo Young Women Club from GVH Mdala, Traditional Authority (TA) Chilipa in Mangochi district.

The club comprises of 36 members of ages between 18 and 24 who came together under the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Project that ActionAid Malawi is implementing in seven TAs of Mangochi the district through World Vision Malawi, with support from the Global Fund.



A members for Chisomo Young Women Club displays one of their artworks

The AGYW Project aims at reducing HIV incidences amongst adolescent girls and young women aged 10-24. The module facilitates establishment of in-school and out-of-school girls' clubs where different key interventions are implemented targeting increased awareness of AGYW in HIV and AIDS, reduced school drop-out rate, reduced incidences of gender-based violence (GBV), but also economic empowerment activities.

According to the ActionAid Malawi AGYW Programme Coordinator, Gladson Mopiwa, under economic empowerment, out-of-school girls are enlightened on how they can save and utilize the little money they earn from small-scale businesses which they are encouraged to establish.

The aim is to empower the girls economically so that they do not engage in transactional sex, thereby preventing them from contracting or spreading HIV.

On the other hand, the project

encourages the club members to reach out to their peers with the information they learn from the club, but also help the needy within their community in kind or materially whenever they can.

For Chisomo Club members, they have ventured into production of various artisanal works which society considers only men are capable of producing most of them. The club sell and earn money from wooden motors and pestles, wooden dolls, wooded cooking sticks, earthen pots, mats and brooms among other things.

"Apart from buying our individual and group's basic needs, we use part of the money to support the education of needy learners, the elderly, and those who are chronically ill in our community," explains the club's Peer Educator, Memory Dzuwa, who also said that the club generates income through crops which they grow as a group, such as maize and groundnuts.

The Young Women's entrepreneurial activities haven't gone unnoticed by their GVH Mdala who says he stands tall and proud of the Club. "I am very proud of what these young women are doing and the impact of their activities on the lives of people in my area. I'm really grateful to World Vision for bringing these women together and for the trainings it provides to them," she said.

ActionAid Malawi through the Joint TB/HIV Global Fund Programme is implementing the AGYW Project in five districts of Lilongwe through Plan International, Mulanje through Christian Aid, Thyolo through Dignitas International, Chikwawa through Norwegian Church Aid and Mangochi through World Vision Malawi.

Tilimbike FFS shines at a national learning event

Delegates including the Guest of Honour, the former Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa, were all eyes and ears as Chrissy Itete, a member of Tilimbike Farmer Field School in Mpamba Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Nkhatabay explained how the European Union (EU) funded KULIMA-BETTER project is transforming their lives through enhancement of food, nutritional, income and resilience security.

Itete made the presentation in Lilongwe on 14th February during the KULIMA-BETTER national learning event organized by Self Help Africa under the theme: "Finding local solutions to sustainable agriculture production, diversification and climate change through farmer field schools".

"Through the project, we have learned innovative and modern farming methods which are helping us benefit in a number of ways. Most importantly we are also learning how to add value to our crops to improve our nutritional status as well as sell it at a profit," said Itete, whose FFS is supported by ActionAid Malawi (AAM)

The event also saw AAM, a member of the KULIMA-BETTER implementing consortium make a presentation on how the use of botanical and cultural methods such as tephrosia, bonya soup and ash are proving effective against Fall Army Worms in Zebra maize variety. AAM Project Coordinator, Greshan Kamnyamata made the presentation.

Speaking at the event, Guest of Honour, Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa, said the ministry would upscale some of the project practices to other districts in the country.



Chrissy Itete, making a presentation to Honourable Nankhumwa and other officials

"Through the project, we have learned innovative and modern farming methods which are helping us benefit in a number of ways. Most importantly we are also learning how to add value to our crops to improve our nutritional status as well as sell it at a profit," Chrissy Itete, Tilimbike FFS member, Nkhatabay



Honourable Nankhumwa posing with leaders of project consortium

ActionAid Malawi hosts IHART fundraising expert



Litta, (Right) with ActionAid Malawi senior management during a community engagement meetings in Nsanje

In March, International Humanitarian Action and Response Team (IHART) Fundraising Expert, Giulio Litta was in the country where, together with ActionAid Malawi management team visited Nsanje District to appreciate challenges communities affected by natural disasters are facing.

The visit also provided the platform to identify short and long term solutions to the disasters in the district. One of the areas visited was Mmembe CBCC where 746 families have been displaced due to recent floods in the district.

Since 2019, ActionAid Malawi has been carrying out disaster-related interventions in Nsanje and Phalombe districts with financial support from IHART.



Litta, ActionAid Staff, Partners and Nsanje Council Officials posing for a photo

What is a coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
- A novel, or new, coronavirus is called nCoV
- The current new coronavirus is called 2019-nCoV

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

- The most common symptoms are fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties.
- In more severe cases infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, and even death. The period within which the symptoms would appear is 2-14 days.



Where do coronaviruses come from?

- Coronaviruses cause disease in a wide variety of animal species
- Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans
- A spillover event is when a virus that is circulating in an animal species is found to have been transmitted to human(s)

How can I protect myself from infection?

- Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, sleeve or a flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid unprotected close contact with anyone developing cold or flu-like symptoms
- Seek medical care if you have a fever, cough, and/or difficulty breathing
- When visiting live markets, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and

