

FEDOMA-NDI Project upcoming activities in September, October & November

SEPTEMBER

- Training ADC & VDC representatives on budget tracking and Monitoring
 - Follow up meetings on inclusive service delivery with ADC and VDC representatives
 - Press conference
- Production of September Monthly Bulletin

OCTOBER

- Budget Tracking Exercise and Service Delivery Monitoring in the sectors of Education, Health and Agriculture
 - Media tour
 - Capacity building of leaders
 - Develop guiding Principles
- Production of October Monthly Bulletin

NOVEMBER

- DEC Briefing
- Press conference

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FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION

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Enhancing Active Participation of Persons with Disabilities and Accountability in Local Government



The HIGHLIGHTS

Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) is implementing a project whose rationale is to Enhance Active Participation of Persons with Disabilities and Accountability in Local Government Projects with funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through National Democratic Institute (NDI). The project is underway in three districts of Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe. The project started in March, 2015.

The project is based on the notion that strengthened voice and action by persons with disabilities will influence positive change in attitude and decisions by citizens, civil society and

local authorities, thereby making local government more inclusive, responsive and accountable.

This bulletin encompasses news items generated from the activities conducted by FEDOMA -NDI Project in the months of July and August in its three targeted districts of Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe



Stories compiled and edited by Lyson Mapanga

A lot to be mainstreamed in Health, Education and Agricultural sectors: NDI report reveals

Persons with disabilities in Balaka have pleaded with the duty bearers in the district to mainstream disability issues in areas of Health, Education and Agriculture in order to make inclusion raises to its pick.

The call has come at a time when the FEDOMA-NDI project conducted meetings with Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), Persons with disabilities, VDCs, ADCs among other stake holders in three targeted districts of Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe.

The meetings were meant to make the DPOs see for themselves the challenges persons with disabilities are encountering in areas of Education, Health and Agriculture in such targeted districts and map the way forward to deal with such challenges.

Speaking at one of the meetings held in Balaka, chair person for Mkaya Area Development Committee ADC, Richard Malindi, said in agricultural sector, the challenge

is that most of ADMARC structures are not disability user friendly, the development that causes challenges to persons with disabilities during the time of buying the subsidized farm inputs.

"Steps in ADMARC centers prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the subsidized farm inputs in our district. This makes persons with disabilities use relatives to buy for them the farm inputs. It is our duty as an ADC to arrest such challenge," said Malindi.

The Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) teamed up in March 2015 in a project to enhance active participation and accountability in local government projects among persons with disabilities in three targeted districts of Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe.

It has been the work of FEDOMA since it was established in 1999 lobbying for inclusion of persons with disabilities in all sectors.



Persons with disabilities and stake holders in an interface meeting in Balaka - Picture by Nike Msamba



The meeting at Ntaja TDC- Picture by Nike Msamba

Lobbying for disability inclusion – the work of all

Councilors in Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe have been asked to work inline with the social contract they are abide to, involving persons with disabilities in local development activities in areas of Health, Education and Agriculture.

The remarks were made on July 15, 2015 during the meeting conducted by FEDOMA-NDI Project to meet councilors ADCs, VDCs, District Disability Forum (DDF) and persons

With disabilities and the meeting was held at Ntaja Teachers Development Centre (TDC) where councilors were advised to bring in development activities that would benefit persons with disabilities.

Speaking at the meeting,

the FEDOMA-NDI Machinga District Project Coordinator, Umali Sungani said councilors are supposed to work inline with the social contract they are abiding to, enhancing disability inclusion.

"We voted for you councilors and it is your responsibility to make sure the needs of persons with disabilities are reached at," said Sungani.

Early March, 2015, councilors in three districts of Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe signed for a social contract within the FEDOMA-NDI Project so that they should be mainstreaming disability issues in areas of education, Health and Agriculture with an intention to enhance disability inclusion in those sectors.

Persons with disabilities in Machinga benefited from FEDOMA-NDI Project – need it to continue

Machinga district has seen the coming of the FEDOMA-NDI Project as a relief to the pain of discrimination persons with disabilities were encountering before the coming of the project in March 2015.

Speaking at a meeting with representatives from ADCs, VDCs and persons with disabilities held at Mselema in Namasika Teachers Development Centre (TDC) in the area of Traditional Authority T/A Kapoloma, Innocent John, a person with visual impairment from Chamba ward said the project has achieved a lot in as far as inclusion is concerned.

Before the project was implemented in the district, persons with disabilities were discriminated in various development activities. People perceived a person with disability as some body who can not make a formal decision.

He said, "The project has made the tremendous progress here in Machinga and let me say clearly that if the project ends at this time, for sure, the communities will backslide the way people perceive persons with disabilities. Let me assure you that persons with disabilities were not involved in local development activities before the implementation of this project but now as you can see, am part and parcel of ADC which means persons with disabilities are recognized in various development committees."



Innocent John: This project has made us recognized in various development committees

"If this project continues, the work of lobbying for inclusion will be effective in this district since some people are not yet to understand disability issues. I would wish the project to continue". He added.

FEDOMA-NDI project on 17th – 21st August, 2015 embarked on field visits in Machinga, Balaka and Lilongwe districts to find out how effective is the project's rationale to its targeted districts and it has been noted that the FEDOMA – NDI

project should make it to another phase so that those who have not yet started involving persons with disabilities in local development activities should learn through it.

If this project continues, the work of lobbying for inclusion will be effective in those three districts since some people are not yet to understand disability issues. According to the participants, there is a wish for the project to continue.

MPs compromise roles of councilors when addressing needs of persons with disabilities at local level – FEDOMA has learnt



Group photo comprises of councilors, VDCs, ADC & PwDs at Bridge view hotel- Pic by Nike Msamba

There are revelations showing that the working relationship between councilors and Members of Parliament is in a bad state when addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in the communities since these duty bears contradicts themselves as to who is responsible to bring local project activities in the communities as they fail to understand their core responsibilities.

The revelations have come at a time when FEDOMA-NDI Project conducted an interface meeting with councilors and persons with disabilities at Bridge View Hotel in Lilongwe

on Friday 17th July, 2015 as the rationale of the meeting was to find out how effective is the work of councilors in the communities to address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Speaking at the meeting, Councilor Fernando Katenje Zulu from Nyanja Ward in Lilongwe Mapuyu North said him as a councilor, is encountering challenges in a process to make local development activities inclusive. He said his work is compromised with the work of an MP suffice to lack of understanding on job description between

a councilor and an MP This makes his work ineffective.

"There is a sour relationship between councilors and MPs in our communities since both of us don't know our core responsibilities to save people including persons with disabilities. This is why our work as councilors is not manifesting on the ground to address the needs of persons with disabilities," said Katenje Zulu.

"However, we are trying our level best to make persons with disabilities in our communities well saved," he added.

Addressing this challenge, Charles Banda, member of the Lilongwe District Disability Forum DDF, advised councilors to remain loyal to the social contract they are abide to in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in the sectors of Education, Health and Agriculture.

It has been all over that councilors and MPs do not understand one another as to who is responsible to spearhead the local development projects in their communities.