



# NGO-GCN MEDA BULLETIN

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## NGO-GCN Implements Service Delivery Tracking Project



*Mrs. Anne Kamwendo - Training participants on Budget Tracking mechanisms*

**By Joseph Josiah (Malawi News Agency)**

NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGO-GCN) embarked on a Socio-economic Enhancement through Local Governance Project whose aim is to empower communities to track and monitor service delivery and budget implementation, among others.

The network held its first orientation

meetings with community leaders in Lilongwe South Constituency's Chiputu and Malingunde wards to kick-start implementation of the project which is expected to cover 12 wards in six constituencies of Lilongwe, Balaka and Machinga districts.

The project is being funded by USAID through the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and is targeting

parliamentarians, ward councilors, local council officials, chiefs, religious leaders and development committee leaders.

NGO-GCN Communications Officer Patrick Maulidi told Malawi News Agency (Mana) that the project will serve as a tool for gathering information that will help ward councilors, citizens, and other stakeholders to understand, track down, and discuss the flow of public money from source to targeted beneficiaries.

Maulidi disclosed that the project will focus on service delivery by duty bearers in health, education and agriculture sectors, among others area of concern .

He said: "The objective is to promote transparency and accountability among duty bearers on Local Development Fund (LDF) and CDF [Constituency Development Fund] funded projects and instill budget monitoring and tracking culture among the beneficiaries."

— *continued on page 3*

## Balaka Residents Empowered to hold leaders accountable

**By Victor Ivan Nyirenda**

Community leaders in Balaka district have started putting into practice budget tracking, monitoring and demanding accountability from their leaders, upon being empowered by the NGO Gender Coordination Network through a programme called Social Economic Enhancement through Local Governance.

The programme which is supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through National Democratic Institute (NDI) aims at ensuring that women and girls are taking active part in decision-making, identifying, and implementation and monitoring of development projects to ensure their needs are addressed.

Community leaders such as chiefs, village and area development committees are some of the beneficiaries who were drilled with skills on Service Delivery, Budget Tracking and Monitoring in order to help them understand, track down, , and discuss the flow of public money from the source to the targeted beneficiaries, including how the money is spent, and whether the money is being spent according to defined local priorities.

— *continued on page 3*

"community leaders have a duty to track development budget implementation in their respective areas," Kamwendo



## MACHINGA EAST CONSTITUENTS ENGAGE MP ON CDF

**By Victor Ivan Nyirenda**

As sign of progress in as far as holding their elected leaders accountable is concerned, Machinga South East Constituency residents engaged their member of parliament at a key stakeholders engagement forum at Machinga Boma.

The meeting offered the constituents an opportunity to seek answers and clarifications from their MP, Hon. Rev. Wilson Ndomondo, on development status in the constituency.

Mrs. Rose Hora from Chikweo ward asked the legislator to account for the constituency development funds (CDF) as there were allegations the funds were suspected to have been diverted to unintended expenses.

Lack of transparency in the way the Constituency Development Funds are being administered in the area had been a concern.

In his response, the MP said the funds in question had not been disbursed.

"The funds I'm being accused of using for personal needs have not been disbursed yet. Even the district council officials know of this. Unfortunately, late disbursement of money led to some people who took part in public works to vent their anger by removing tyres from my car to force me pay



Machinga South East Constituent Rose Hora (in headgear) posing a question to the MP

them", said the parliamentarian.

In a follow-up telephone call, the MP said the funds were expected to be disbursed before end of September, 2015.

Chikweo ADC Chairperson Mr. Roman Dick confirmed disbursement of funds but bemoaned the exclusion of ADC in the whole process.

"I saw people gather at Nakusupe primary school. When I inquired from a public works beneficiary friend what was happening there, it's when I was told they were receiving their due arrears for the public works they did", said Dick.

Chief Sitola called on all duty bearers regardless of their political colours to cease

attaching partisan politics to development but allow decentralization guidelines to guide development endeavours.

Machinga district Director of Administration, Mr. Dominic Mwandira admitted the existence of confusion over how CDF and Local Development Fund are

run. He said the fight for

controls of these funds ensue largely due to political party politics. He nevertheless expressed optimism that some duty-bearers were getting to understanding the way these funds operate.

The elected leaders and key stakeholders engagement forums were some of the activities under the "enhancing social economic development by addressing issues affecting women and girls through local governance" project that NGO Gender Coordination Network conducted in the impact districts of Balaka, Lilongwe and Machinga with funding from USAID through National Democratic Institute (NDI).

## Lilongwe South Constituency Reaping the Benefits of NDI Project

**By Patrick Maulidi**

The NDI-NGOGCN Social Economic Enhancement Project has started bearing fruits and citizens in Lilongwe South Constituency are hailing the project's impact.

The community members say the project has given them an opportunity to discuss issues together with their elected leaders and there is cordial relationship with their Member of Parliament, Councillors and

other leaders, a development they say is very rare.

Speaking on behalf of other residents, Chairperson of Area Development Committee (ADC) in the area of Traditional Authority Masumbankhunda Mr. Lucky Kamtambo said the project has empowered them to hold their leaders accountable, unlike in the past where MPs and councillors were feared and deemed unapproachable.

-continued on page 5



Lilongwe South ADC Chairperson Mr Lucky Kamtambo (Standing), presenting success stories from his area



## Service Delivery Tracking at Implementation levels

.....continued from page 1

Maulidi said through the project NGOGCN envisaged an increased citizen capacity to influence budget decisions in LDF and CDF funded projects as well as more transparent processes and expenditure management.

Meanwhile, Lilongwe District Community Development Officer Annie Kamwendo welcomed the project saying community leaders have a duty to track development budget implementation in their respective areas.

"Public funds must be tracked and ADCs [Area Development Committees] and VDCs [Village Development Committees] have a responsibility to do this because they are owners of development.



*Group Village Heads discussing issues from their areas and how best to track budget implementation in addressing such*

## ....Leaders should be held accountable

.....continued from page 1

As one way of putting into practice the skills, the community leaders recently held their leaders accountable on how they are implementing development projects and queried how in project for example, a bricklayer used 10 bags of cement weighing 50-kilogramme each in a single day, a scenario that raised suspicion of resource misuse.

Traditional Authority Msamala Area Development Committee (ADC) chairperson Mr. Bamusi Makilole also took an initiative in approaching local ADMARC workers following several complaints of late start of work and serving people at sluggish pace. At times, the officials' actions were deemed deliberate so as to induce kickbacks from those who wanted to be served quickly.

"Many people were complaining of deliberate delaying tactics employed by ADMARC employees. For instance, before opening sales for the day, they would spend over two hours advising customers in the queue for a long time on procedures for purchasing maize. Many of the customers would have spent hours in the queue having come early in the morning. After approaching them, they changed their conduct. This just underlines the need for us (ADCs, VDCs leaders) to be

on our feet all the time if we are to perform our duties diligently for the greater good," said Mr. Makilole.

The ADC Chair thanked the NDI-funded project since its rolling out in 2014 for playing a huge role.

In his remarks, ADC Chairperson in the Area of Traditional Authority Mkaya Mr. Richard Malindi said, "Through the meetings convened by NGOGCN, we've been able to summon chiefs, elected leaders (councillors, MPs) without fear and point out wrongs. This is contrary to the past when such meetings would never take place".

Mr. Malindi also expressed the challenges the ADC leaders are facing which, among others, is the persistent misunderstandings over roles between ADC, VDC and chiefs.

He cited an example where a need was identified for an additional school block at Utale primary school where Group Village Headmen and the school project management committee (SPMC) received training on project management leaving out the VDC. When the VDC Secretary attempted to monitor the

project during implementation, she was told to stay away.

"When I was told I had no part to play in the supervisory role of the project, I stayed away. I heeded the warning because it was the chief who uttered it and I had to obey. I believe this may have happened from either lack of knowledge on the roles VDC or utter sidelining on the part of the chief," narrated Ms. Florence Rodreck, VDC Secretary.

In the course of the project she received communication that she would be welcome to work with them (SPMC) after the chiefs and management committee were trained on service delivery by the NGOGCN-NDI supported Project.



*Malindi - We've engaged elected leaders without fear or favour*

# NGOGCN Equips Development Leaders on Local Governance Processes

By Patrick Maulidi



Some of the development committee leaders in Mapuyu Ward that have been trained on Local governance

It has been observed that thousands of poor Malawians living in rural areas in Lilongwe District are failing to benefit from different development projects/funds from District Councils due to lack of knowledge by community leaders on how they can tap resources from the districts.

During a meeting organized by NGO Gender Coordination Network on how local governance systems work, it has transpired that local development leaders such as Village and/or Area Development Committees have not been submitting their development plans to district council offices as required, in order for the plans to be included in the district development plans.

This has resulted into implementation of development projects communities people say they are not a priority, and that, the district council is imposing projects without consulting the needs of the people.

However, it was revealed that local authorities such as village and area development committee leaders and chiefs in Malingunde and Lilongwe Mapuyu North constituencies were not aware that they were supposed to submit their proposed plans and had never submitted any plan

before.

Lilongwe District Council Community Development Officer Mrs. Annie Kamwendo explained that for communities to access funds from the council such as Local Development Funds they are supposed to do the mapping of their areas and compiled a list of their development needs and submit to the council.

“The leaders need to know the population of their area with all disaggregated data such as number of men and women, boys and girls, the disabled, literacy rate and all their development needs based on the data. When they submit this information to the district council, we compile all this information from all areas in the district and come up with district development plan. We then allocate funding according to the plan. Therefore, if one area committee has not submitted their plan, it either misses out completely or the council uses its discretion to allocate any development project it feels relevant to the area,” she said.

The District Community Development Officer thanked NGOGCN and NDI for coming up with the programme of training local government structures in rural areas saying it will help beneficiaries to fully un-

derstand the how development projects works and monitor the proceedings that are being conducted in their areas.

Lilongwe Mapuyu North Area Development Committee Chairperson Mr. Divesius Chimzimu said the training saying it has opened their eyes on how they can access development funding from Lilongwe District Council as well as ensuring transparency and accountability.

**“The leaders need to know the population of their area with all disaggregated data”**

“In the past, we had been complaining that the district council is not considering the people of Mapuyu North in its budgets, we thought it was deliberate but we now understand that it starts with us (ADC leaders) to submit our plans to them so that they can be funded,” he said.

The ADC Chairperson said the project has also empowered them with knowledge and skills on how to monitor and evaluate implementation of development projects in their area.’

NGOGCN, with funding from USAID through the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted the training of ADC/VDC leaders, local chiefs, religious leaders and councilors on how they can benefit from district council development projects.

The meetings focused on the LDF and CDF and how the district assembly can help in soliciting developmental projects that can benefit the poor especially women and girls and empower them to take part in decision making, identifying, implementing and monitor development projects being undertaken.



# MACHINGA SOUTH EAST CONSTITUENTS TO PETITION THEIR MP



*Machinga South East MP, Hon Wilson Ndomondo clarifying issues during an interactive meeting with constituents*

**By Victor Ivan Nyirenda**

Tired of petty inter-party squabbles among their elected leaders that are negatively impacting on development in their area, 23 group village heads (GVHs) from Chikweo are planning to present a petition to Machinga District Commissioner over the

conduct of their elected leaders.

The GVHs' representative made the revelation at the meeting NGOGCN conducted to orient community beneficiaries on budget tracking and monitoring.

According to GVH Maniya, chiefs and constituents are fed up with continued fight between their Member of Parliament Rev. Wilson Ndomondo and Ngokwe Ward Councillor Neverson Sawasawa such that there is little or no tangible development in the area yet they are in the second year of the 5-year mandate given to them in the 2014 polls.

**“We discovered there is very little or none on the ground,”**

We, as constituents convened a meeting at which councillors and the MP attended. We have noticed a number of things going wrong. For instance, our elected leaders do not work together. So we wanted to reconcile them”, explained Maniya.

“Again, low development is affecting the constituency negatively. We (traditional leaders) had a meeting with ADCs to take stock of development projects in the area. We discovered there is very little or none on the ground. However, what is clearly visible is party politics tearing apart the constituency while retarding meaningful development,” he said.

Further, the constituents suspect the existence of parallel ADC structures in the constituency. They agreed to work on modalities to sort out the challenges to ensure the elected leaders are helping in addressing identified issues, among others.

## ...NDI Beneficiaries enjoying fruits of project interventions

.....continued from page 2

“In the past we used to fear our MPs and Councillors. They were our bosses and everything they said was final. However, we are now able to talk frankly with them. Whenever there is a need to question how they have used the development funds, we are able to demand answers,” said Mr. Kamtambo.

Mr. Kamtambo said this when NGOGCN conducted a Score Card exercise to assess and monitor the progress made by the elected leaders in as far as addressing issues affecting women and girls are concerned.

The exercise was also held to appreciate efforts being made by community leaders through Area Development Committees

(ADCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) in engaging the citizens, especially women and girls, in any development-related activities with regards to the identified issues in the Social Contracts signed during the 2014 Elections as well as their level of participation in holding the elected leaders accountable.

## Lemwe Health Center now open In LL Mapuyu North

By Patrick Maulidi



Mapuyu North ADC hair Divesius Chimzimu (L) and his Vice Namoni Nyaluwi (R)

Tempers flared. Strong words exchanged. No one seemed to back down to each other's demand and point of view. Lemwe Health Center remained closed and no hope for re-opening. That was the scenario but now, communities can afford a smile, thanks to NDI and USAID as through their project, NGOGCN intervened and contributed toward the reopening of this facility.

The Health was closed in 2009 after health personnel abandoned the health center on allegations that members of the community were bewitching them. Reports indicate that when health workers went into their houses to sleep at night, they mysteriously found themselves outside the house in the following morning. In some instances, they

could find their belongings outside the house while the door is locked.

Six years down the line, current Member of Parliament for Lilongwe Mapuyu North Hon. Horace Chipuwa contacted the Lilongwe District Health Office on the possibility of reopening the clinic but was told that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) be signed between the District Health Office, MP, Chiefs and Area Development Committee that once health personnel has been deployed, they will no longer be harassed with witchcraft practices.

This conditionality did not go well with the chiefs and ADC members who argued that witchcraft is illegal in the laws of Malawi and refused to sign the MoU.

Lilongwe Mapuyu North ADC Vice Chairperson Mr. Namon Nyaluwi and Lemwe VDC Chairperson Mr. Kanyanda Lamison put their foot down when MP Chipuwa pleaded with them to sign the MoU for the sake of having the health center reopened.

"The same government says witchcraft is illegal and anyone found calling someone a witch or admits that he/she is a witch, will be arrested. So if we sign the MoU, are we not admitting that we practice witchcraft? How safe are we that we will not be arrested?," queried the community leaders.

The insistence by some members of the development committee forced MP for the area to use other chiefs and political party leadership to sign the MoU for the sake of opening the health center.

The facility is now in full operational after Lilongwe DHO officials inspected the facility and certified it fit to resume services.

These disagreements came to light when NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN) with funding from National Democratic Institute organized an advocacy meeting at Chiwe TDC in T.A Kalolo in Lilongwe district.

Follow up meetings included stakeholder meetings that ensured elected leaders, ADC and VDC members and community members interact to map way forward in resolving the prevailing issues so that Lemwe Health centre is re-opened.

The health Centre was among the identified priority issues which communities wanted to be addressed by the elected leaders. As such, NGOGCN included it in the social contract for the area and made every effort to ensure continuous engagement among the elected leaders and their community in working towards having the centre reopened.

The efforts bore fruit as the centre was finally re-opened. The MP did his best and in consultation with the Councillor and the leaders in the area, found a common ground. All this was possible through the USAID -NDI supported project NGOGCN is implementing in the area.



Horace Chipuwa - Lilongwe Mapuyu North MP presenting his concerns during a stakeholders meeting as LL District Council DPD Mr. Jimusole and Hon Peter Dimba of LL South Constituency listens



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER - MHG CHIKWEO WARD COUNCILLOR

By Victor Ivan Nyirenda



Machinga Chikweo Ward Councillor Evance M'bwana (standing) addressing members of the community

'I have a copy of the handbook but I've not shared with constituents to avoid crossing paths with the my MP who controls the fund'. Chikweo ward councillor Evance M'bwana admitted having been pressed if he knew existence of and/or had a copy of Guidelines to the Constituency Development Fund handbook-a document that outlines roles of various development stakeholders like councillors, MP and community members at local government level structure.

The admission drew laughter from the constituents for its irony in that they are denied access to the document they were supposed to have for informed participation in the development endeavours.

He made the admission at one of the orientation meetings with community beneficiaries on local governance conducted by NGO Gender Coordination Network at Chikweo trading centre with funding from National Democratic Institute/USAID .

Machinga district council Director of Public Works Mr. John Monjeza made a

presentation on the workings of the CDF which among others brought to the fore roles of district council, councillor and community members as stipulated in the handbook.

A Guideline to the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) handbook formed the basis of discussions. The crux of the matter was some sections of the book that allot a larger share of roles to the MP like access to funds as opposed to Local development fund controlled by the district council.

It was learnt from the DPD's presentation that an MP holds larger way when determining funds disbursements and projects allocation. That makes the district council even powerless when supervising or inspecting CDF-funded development projects.

Participants to the meetings expressed

helplessness at the status quo and suggested for the amendment of sections that render them (constituents) powerless.

A male participant said: this is the first time I have seen a copy of the CDF handbook and heard of provisions that effectively grant the MP total control of the fund.

They asked NGOGCN to help resolve the persistent poor working relationship between the MP and ward councillors which they believe is holding back development projects in their area.

Councillor M'bwana assured NGOGCN he would mount awareness raising campaigns so his constituents are equipped with information and knowledge for informed participation.

*I have a copy of the handbook but I've not shared with constituents to avoid crossing paths with the my MP who controls the fund'*

NGOGCN Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Aubrey Chaguzika hailed active participation by the beneficiaries in the impact areas and urged them to keep their elected representatives on toes for the promised pre-election development projects to be delivered.

Other meetings took place in Ngokwe ward (Machinga South East), Chinguni, Lisanjala wards (Machinga Likwenu) , Nyanja, Malingunde wards (Lilongwe South) and Mapuyu and Chiputu wards (Lilongwe Mapuyu North).

The orientation meetings were part of activities in the ongoing project entitled '**enhancing social economic development by addressing issues affecting women and girls through local governance**' which rolled out in on 1<sup>st</sup> March and will run up 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.



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Empowering women to take part in decision making in VDCs in Lilongwe South Constituency. From left to right: Linley Kapungu (Vice Chairperson, Phuma VDC), Violet Lesitoni (Secretary, Phunzi VDC), Malita Madzialingana, (Phirilanjuzi VDC Member)

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Passionate about women issues at ADC and VDC level. These women hold various positions in ADCs and VDCs in Chiputu ward, Lilongwe South constituency and are helping shape development priorities in their area through the NDI and USAID supported project

## Supported by USAID through NDI



## Project Achievements Highlights

### Good Governance

- Elected leaders i.e. MPs and Councillors considerably recognizing and addressing identified issues that affect women and girls
- Women have been empowered to ensure that their voices are heard and respected through representation and participation in ADCs, VDCs and development committees

### Health

- Lilongwe Mapuyu North: Lemwe Health Center which was closed for many years was reopened as a result of the project interventions.
- In Lilongwe South constituency and Machinga Likwenu 2 (two) ambulances were provided by the MPs one to each ward.
- In Machinga Likwenu 2 (two) health centers are currently under construction to reduce the distance women cover to the nearest hospital.
- In Balaka South, 2 (two) hospital staff houses are being constructed at Mphimbi Health center and the number of medical staff has also increased and a maternity shelter is under construction at Kwitanda health

### Water and sanitation

- In all the six constituencies, there is much progress compared to other constituencies in addressing issues to do with access to potable, water, most of the broken boreholes have been repaired and new boreholes have been drilled.

### Education

- In Balaka, Machinga and Lilongwe, school blocks are being constructed using LDF. This will contribute to improve the quality of education, especially for girls
- Girls' toilets and washrooms are being constructed in most schools. This would help girls to easily attend class as sanitation would have improved