



16 Days of Activism launch event in Balaka district

UP MALAWI NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

Programme Highlights

- With support from our Kapichi Integrated WASH project funded by The One Foundation, **Traditional Authority (TA) Kapichi in Thyolo district was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF)** by the National Sanitation & Hygiene Technical Committee. A month prior, **TA Tambala in Dedza district was declared ODF** through support from our GIZ/BMA funded nutrition programme. UP, through its use of the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, remains the most successful champion of ODF in Malawi.
- Since its inception in December 2016, our EU-funded DIVERSIFY project facilitated the establishment of 26 STAR Circles in Thyolo, Chiradzulu and Balaka to enable community level discussions on social issues and human rights. STAR circles are local structures made up of community members to look into social justice issues. In Thyolo, 7 STAR Circles were established and are functioning well with a membership of 150 people (42 men and 108 women). In 2020, **the STAR circles in Thyolo supported four girls who were forced into child marriages**. As a result, the marriages were dissolved and the girls went back to school.
- The DIVERSIFY project also **conducted entrepreneurship and leadership skills trainings for women**; 15 women in Chiradzulu and 30 women in Thyolo district received training.
- With funding from Charity: water, **UP conducted community-based management trainings for 16 water point committees** in TA Chiwere in Dowa district, empowering 160 committee members with knowledge on borehole management and maintenance.



Farm Inputs Distribution at Mthiramanja Court in Mulanje District

- With funding from the EU, **UP distributed rain fed farm inputs** of 3,122Kg of maize and 765Kg of pigeon peas to 1,522 (254 men and 1,268 women) project participants in Mulanje.
- At United Purpose, we challenge inequality and stand up for justice. This is why we are part of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Campaign**. Our PROSPER team attended the national launch of the campaign and the solidarity march which took place in TA Mponda, Mangochi District on 25th November. The PROSPER team also supported the Balaka district launch of 16 days of activism against GBV which took place in Sub TA Kachenga.

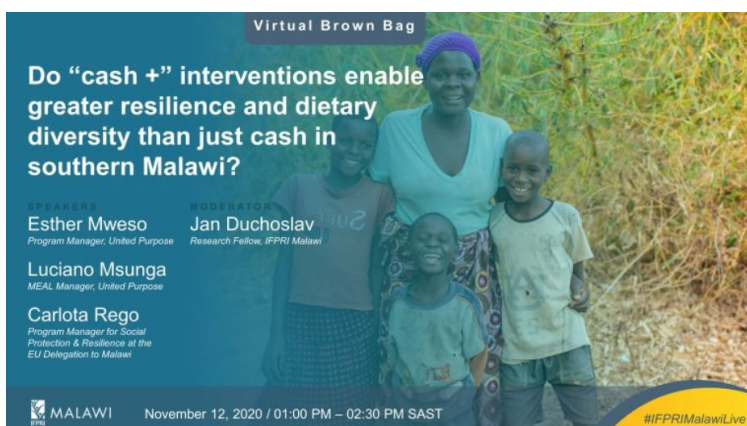
 united-purpose.org

 [united_purpose](https://twitter.com/united_purpose)



Learning, collaboration and influence

- **Malawi has reached 2 million clean cookstoves!** With funding from the Embassy of Ireland, UP has been the Secretariat of the National Cookstove Steering Committee and has taken a leading role in guiding the work towards the achievement of the 2 million target by 2020! **We have also directly contributed 500,000 clean cookstoves towards the target.** More information available [here](#).
- Our **Pro-ACT team presented key findings and recommendations from its annual assessment** at a virtual Brown Bag Seminar organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on 12th November. The theme of the event was “Do CASH+ interventions enable improved resilience and dietary diversity in Southern Malawi?” and the event recap is available [here](#).



- Our Sustainable Energy Programme Manager, **Lloyd Archer, together with the University of Strathclyde and Community Energy Malawi (CEM) presented at a virtual event organized by Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS).** This was a regional event for Malawi, Zambia and Kenya during which UP, the University of Strathclyde and CEM presented sustainable energy achievements in Malawi, in particular in relation to improved cookstoves, and plans for the future.
- In December, **Girls INSPIRED Project Manager, Yamikani Flao, presented the Girls INSPIRED project and discussed how we can use sport as a tool for development at an internal webinar for UP staff worldwide.** The topic of the webinar was “the importance of investing in women”. It is also the theme of our winter communications campaign. More information about the campaign is available [here](#).

Our Team and Operations

Office Reopening

We reopened our offices on 2nd November 2020, with cohort working in place and all necessary COVID-19 preventive measures. Our offices are closed every Wednesday for deep cleaning.

Safeguarding and Well-being

Whilst COVID 19 has brought so many challenges, one positive is that we are now better connected than ever. For the first time we organised two online psychosocial support sessions for the whole team. Feedback from the team on this included: **“Its been an amazing session, I loved every moment”.**

United Purpose takes the safety and wellbeing of all those we work with, and our staff, very seriously. Our Safeguarding and Well-being policy and procedures aim **to prevent abuse or harm caused by UP personnel**, operations or programmes; **support a safe, respectful and nurturing culture**; **respond to any concerns or incidents** that arise; and, **report these through relevant pathways** so that appropriate people are informed and lessons are learnt and implemented.

To ensure all UP staff have an in-depth understanding of our safeguarding policy, a refresher safeguarding training is organised at least once a year. This year, **a virtual training was organised on 2nd December.**

Our team is the driving force behind our successes

In the spotlight this month: Alinafe Gama

Alinafe Gama, PROSPER Gender and Social Inclusion Coordinator, started at UP as a data officer at UP in 2016, then in 2017 applied for the position of field facilitator under the FCDO-funded *Breaking the Cycle of Humanitarian Assistance Through Enhancing Resilience and Shock-Responsive Capacity Project*. In 2019, Alinafe became Gender and Social Inclusion Coordinator under the FCDO-funded PROSPER programme. She has become a leading member of the safeguarding committee, has been an active INGO District focal point during the COVID-19 response and even presented at the National Humanitarian Country Team in front of many donors, UN and government officials. Alinafe has now been appointed as Acting District Manager under PROSPER in Balaka. Well done Alinafe! We look forward to seeing your career progress at UP.



Alinafe Gama, Acting District Manager, Balaka

Living our values

Environmental respect is one of UP's values. On 11th November, **UP team members took part in the 2020 National Clean Up Day Launch.**



UP Team at National Launch at Chinsapo Grounds, 11th November

Stories from the people we work with

Championing Change: The role of male champions in promoting gender equality

Informed consent was obtained before recording this story

In Dedza, some men who previously stated that they committed violence against their wives, have now changed their attitudes and behaviour and are championing gender equality.

One of these men is 32-year old Hagai. Hagai was struggling to provide enough for his family and he had serious problems in his marriage. He used to drink a lot and fight with his wife, Eunice. Hagai is now committed to keep violence out of the home.

“It all changed when I met a male champion, Mr. Chimasula, who invited me to attend couple sessions for male champions organised jointly with Kangulu Village Development Committee. During the session, I was touched by Chimasula’s personal testimony on how he was transformed from being unfaithful, frequently drunk and mistreating his wife. It touched me so much because at this moment my own family was on the verge of collapse. My wife was very angry with me. I never thought that my bad habits would hurt and ruin my family. It was always my desire to live a successful and thriving life,” Hagai explains.



Mr. Hagai

As it often happens to children living in rural areas in Malawi, Hagai dropped out of school and went into an early marriage. Hagai and Eunice were struggling to make ends meet. Eunice could usually sell their meagre harvest to provide basic needs for the family. Their business in second-hand clothes was unsuccessful. Hagai was hopeless and his drinking habit got worse which also negatively impacted his marriage.

The couple sessions organised by United Purpose (UP) with funding from the Embassy of Ireland and in collaboration with male champions, helped Hagai and Eunice to get back on their feet.

‘I was greatly inspired by testimonies during couple sessions from those who were previously like me and are now living a happy family life,’ Hagai narrates. *‘This opportunity helped me to reflect on my life and I made a firm decision to improve and rebuild my family,’* he adds. *‘I have revived my business in second-hand clothes jointly with my wife who also sells doughnuts. We earn an average of MK25,000.00 per week from our business and we are happy again together,’* concludes Hagai who has now become a male champion himself.

The Embassy of Ireland-funded ASPIRE programme contributes to the reduction of violence against women and children, by supporting shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours relating to women’s empowerment and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) among men, women, boys, and girls.

To promote gender equality, the ASPIRE programme is using the male champions for change approach which encourages men to play an active role in raising awareness about Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and its devastating impacts and promote women’s rights. The approach recognizes the importance of social connections and works with couples who are identified by their peers. It builds upon existing relationships to advocate for change through word-of-mouth or other creative ways that male champions choose to influence their peers.

So far, the ASPIRE programme has trained 8 men to become male champions for change. The male champions for change conduct couple sessions and encourage other men to positively change their attitudes and behaviour. To date, over 240 couples have been reached through this approach.

