



Training on soy milk production (AgDiv project; USAID)

UP MALAWI NEWSLETTER JUNE 2021

Programme Highlights

- With funding from ECHO and in partnership with ArtGlo, UP organised a three-day **training for radio journalists on how to communicate on COVID-19 and the vaccination process**. Six journalists from Bembeke radio, one journalist from Zodiak Broadcasting Station and two representatives from Dedza District Health Office attended the training. The workshop had three main focus areas: (i) The importance of appropriate selection of information sources, (ii) Approaches to communicate often complex information in a simple and clear way and (iii) How to bust myths and misinformation, and contribute to a positive social behaviour change.
- Again, with support from ECHO, UP installed a **10,000litre water storage tank at Dedza District Hospital which is one of the busiest healthcare facilities in Malawi**, serving approximately 27,661 people. The hospital has intermittent water supply from the Central Region Water Board and used to have only one water storage tank which was not enough to ensure 24/7 water supply. Patients and guardians had to walk long distances to fetch water outside of the facility. The new water tank is also connected to the groundwater **ensuring continuous water supply even when water supply from the Water Board is affected**.
- With funding from The One Foundation, UP **rehabilitated a non-functional solar-powered water supply scheme at Mapanga HCF (Thyolo district)** which serves approximately 34,821 people. UP also trained the Water Supply Scheme Management Committee on maintenance and operation of the scheme.
- Again, with support from The One Foundation, UP continued to **raise awareness about COVID-19 in Thyolo District**, by orienting extension workers and community leaders on COVID-19; organising handwashing demonstrations at markets, schools and HCFs and disseminating **COVID-19 prevention messages on GAKA FM radio reaching approximately 105,472 people**. In addition, UP has been **distributing WASH supplies to schools and two HCFs in Thyolo district**.
- With funding from USAID through Palladium, UP trained 30 extension workers (20 men and 10 women) and 54 lead farmers (28 men and 26 women) on **groundnuts post-harvest handling and use of Mandela cock**. Mandela cock is a technique which is used to achieve low levels of aflatoxin in groundnuts. **60 entrepreneurs (18 men and 42 women) were also trained on soy milk production and marketing** in Dedza and Balaka districts. Participants also received soy kit for milk production.
- The Embassy of Ireland –funded ASPIRE programme supported a **learning visit to a successful beekeeping Cooperative in Misuku, Chitipa district. A team of six people representing 15 Village Forest Areas (VFAs) in Dedza, one Forestry Assistant, Dedza District Forestry Officer and two UP staff took part in the learning visit**. The VFAs members learned how to speed up colonization; quality assurance in honey production, including value addition; production of other products from honeycomb, such as wax and polish; and effective collaboration for a profitable beekeeping business. After the learning visit, community meetings in all 15 VFAs were organized to mobilize community members to participate in beekeeping and mobilize resources through VSL groups to purchase more bee hives as a means to increasing production. The programme will then organise a training in bee hive production.



Training for radio journalists on how to communicate on COVID-19 and the vaccination process. (Dedza)

Project Accountant for one of UP’s biggest and most innovative projects—DIVERSIFY project funded by the EU and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through Action on Poverty.

The advice Musowi wants to give to her fellow colleagues is: “*Know the reasons why you are at that position, know your roles and apply best practices. You will go far.*”



Musowi Sikwese

Henry Kalomba joined United Purpose in July 2017 as Project Manager and Agribusiness Specialist for the DIVERSIFY project. Henry was the lead in planning and implementation of the project’s activities. He was responsible for developing the project’s yearly and quarterly plans, supervising project staff, monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, budgeting and budget control, stakeholders and partners’ coordination, managing project assets, and donor reporting.

Henry was also the Head of UP office in Blantyre. In March 2020, he was also appointed Blantyre District Focal Point for UP’s COVID-19 prevention initiative and as a wider INGO District Focal Point working to contribute towards improved coordination and collaboration during the COVID pandemic.



Henry Kalomba

UP is extremely fortunate to have such amazing, pro-active and curiosity-driven employees like Musowi and Henry. **Thanks to their tireless efforts, one of UP’s most ambitious and innovative ideas became a reality: the launch of Baker’s Gold** —a bio-fortified OFSP-based bread, by Mothers Holding. Bakers Gold is made using a mix of wheat and OFSP puree. The OFSP are sourced locally from around 3,000 smallholder farmers under DIVERSIFY. While this approach of developing bio-fortified OFSP-bread has been demonstrated at small-scale in other countries, this was the first time globally that this was attempted at such scale – as UP worked with the largest baking conglomerate in the country to make a truly mass market product.

Learning, collaboration & influence

Sharing UP’s experience promoting and supporting productive use of energy in Malawi

Elizabeth Banda, UP Project Manager for the University of Strathclyde and Scottish Government funded Rural Energy Access through Social Enterprise and Decentralisation (EASE) project, **was invited as a panellist to an UN High-Level Dialogue on Energy**. The side event which was organised by International Institute for Environment and Development aimed to explore how productive uses of energy are being promoted and supported in East Africa. Elizabeth shared UP’s experience with installing a solar PV mini-grid in Dedza.

Sharing UP’s experience using Community-Led Action (CLA) Approach to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic

Grey Sagawa, UP DRR Officer, **presented at the last RCCE Cluster meeting** chaired by the Ministry of Health. Grey shared UP’s experience using CLA approach to fight COVID-19 and in particular he explained how through this approach, **we have been able to encourage communities to observe COVID-19 preventive measures at funerals**.

Our Team and Operations

Working arrangements:

As the third wave of COVID 19 creeps into Malawi UP maintains its stringent measures to protect our staff and project participants. Whilst activities continue all projects follow strict mitigation measures in line with quarterly risk assessments. We will be monitoring the situation closely as things unfold over the next 8-10 weeks and be updating our staff, partners and donors on any changes to our guidelines.

Our team is the driving force behind our successes:

In the spotlight this month: Musowi Sikwese & Henry Kalomba (DIVERSIFY project)

Musowi Sikwese has worked for UP for 10 years. She joined us in 2011 as an Accounts Assistant under the Mphuka Futures Shared Project. She was first promoted to Assistant Accountant, then to Accountant and in July 2016 to Senior Accountant. Musowi was the

Stories from the people we work with

Educating the next generation of forest and cookstove champions

Informed consent was obtained before recording this story

Only 2% of the rural areas in Malawi are connected to the national electricity grid. Hence, people rely on biomass, mostly firewood, for their cooking needs. The traditional three-stone fire is predominantly used for cooking. **The use of biomass as an energy source not only drives deforestation and contributes to climate change but is also detrimental to human health and associates with respiratory diseases due to exposure to harmful smoke.**

To address energy poverty, UP with funding from the Embassy of Ireland is promoting the adoption of Chitetezo Mbaula, a locally made ceramic fuel-efficient cookstove which reduces fuelwood usage by 40 to 60%.



Stove Production Group, Dedza District, Malawi

Focter Gobede, a 30-year-old man who lives in Chimutu village, TA Chilikumwendo in Dedza District, was selected by UP to become a Chitetezo Mbaula stove promoter for Masinja cluster in TA Chilikumwendo under the Embassy of Ireland-funded ACCESS programme.

After being selected and trained in 2019, he received 210 stoves: 171 were to be distributed for free to Social Cash Transfer (SCT) beneficiaries and the rest for sale. After successfully distributing all the stoves to SCT beneficiaries in his cluster he embarked on marketing and selling the remaining stoves, but despite his best efforts, uptake was slow.

“I stayed for almost a year without making many stove sales, but soon after the civic education initiative started I sold all the stoves I had in stock. I also see that some SCT beneficiaries who were not using their Chitetezo Mbaula before, are now using it daily and I’m proud of myself”, Focter narrated his experience.

Civic education is one of the initiatives conducted by UP in several primary schools in Dedza district with the aim to raise awareness among pupils about the negative impacts of deforestation, the benefits of energy-efficient cookstoves, as well as good nutrition practices. Masinja primary school in TA Chilikumwendo is one of the schools where this activity was conducted. At Masinja School the lessons were held with standard 7 pupils. The activity took place in March 2020 and 89 pupils attended the sessions. The pupils were happy and participated actively. They promised to tell their parents about the advantages of improved cook stoves and to raise awareness among their communities on the importance of preserving the forest resources. The pupils were also given Mr. Focter Gobede’s contact - the stove promoter for their area from whom they can buy Chitetezo Mbaula.

Only five days after the civic education was conducted at Masinja primary schools, Focter observed an increase in demand for stoves. He sold 29 stoves in two days and requested additional 10 stoves which he sold the day after. He said more people wanted to buy stoves, but he had run out of stock.

When Focter asked his customers from where they had heard about Chitetezo Mbaula, most of them said that they learnt about the benefits of these stoves from their children. Focter also observed that many of the SCT beneficiaries started to use their improved cook stoves more regularly than before.

To date, under the ACCESS programme, United Purpose has trained 961 pupils from 8 primary schools in Dedza using our Forest Champions training guide. The training sessions cover: the negative impacts of the three-stone fire for the environment and the health of those using it, mainly women and girls, as well as the benefits of using energy-efficient cookstoves.

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