



UP MALAWI NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

Programme Highlights

- On 22nd March, UP joined the rest of the world in commemorating the **World Water Day**. This year's theme was Valuing Water and aimed to raise awareness about the multi-dimensional values of water. Our WASH Programme Manager, Smorden Tomoka, took part in a World Water Day [Documentary](#) by the Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources.
- With funding from Charity: water, UP **distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and WASH supplies to Dowa District Health Office (DHO)**.
- Again with support from Charity: water, **UP drilled 15 new boreholes and rehabilitated 10 boreholes** in Dowa district. UP also conducted community based management (CBM) trainings for 42 water point committees.
- After successfully implementing the three year Pro-Resilience Action (Pro-ACT) project funded by the EU which aimed to ensure all 35,461 Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) beneficiaries (10% poorest households in Malawi) are more resilient to food and climate change shocks in the three districts of Mulanje, Nsanje and Zomba, **UP launched the Social Support for Resilience Programme (SoSuRe) funded by the EU (March 2021 to August 2023)**. This consortium programme led by UP and implemented together with Save the Children will continue building the resilience to climate change and other shocks, including COVID-19, of 68,231 SCTP beneficiaries in Mulanje and Zomba districts.
- Under the Embassy of Ireland-funded Accelerating Commercial and Community Energy Supply Sustainability (ACCESS) programme, **UP 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.
- In 2020, with funding from the One Foundation, **UP provided WASH services to three Health Care Facilities (HCFs)** serving a population of 66,165 people in Thyolo district. In February 2021, again with support from The One Foundation, UP started providing preventive and response WASH services and activities in two other HCFs in Thyolo serving a population of 90,055 people.
- Our ECHO-funded "Support to at risk districts and communities in Malawi to prevent, rapidly detect and effectively respond to COVID-19" responded **to the shortage of oxygen in Malawi's ETU through an innovative partnership with the Global Health Informatics Institute (GHII)**. GHII have developed a technology that can repair oxygen concentrators and are slowly building maintenance team capacity so that these oxygen sources can remain functional.



Distribution of PPEs and WASH supplies to Dowa DHO



UP Technician finalising the rehabilitation of a borehole in Dowa

Learning, collaboration & influence

Using Sport as a tool:

- At UP we see sport as a driver of positive change and we wanted to share our experience using netball to empower girls and engage boys in gender equality in rural areas. Based on our experience implementing the Comic Relief-funded Girls INSPIRED project, **we developed a [learning paper](#) to serve as an implementation guide** and be of practical help to practitioners, including other organizations working to promote gender equality through sport.



Some of the project participants in the Girls INSPIRED project

Internal cross learning between projects:

- UP organised a learning session on livestock with the Project Managers of the ASPIRE, SoSuRe, PROSPER and FNSP programmes with the aim to enable sharing of best practices and lessons learnt between programmes and **revised the UP Livestock Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**.

Mapping access to water & real time monitoring:

- The University of Strathclyde –funded Mwater project is coming to an end this month. **The project implemented in four phases has been successful having mapped a comprehensive data set for the country and generated**



Government enumerator collecting data using mobile phone with mWater platform

significant learnings in the implementation – particularly around effective government engagement and logistics to expedite mapping and streamline community and district-level meetings.

- **The Mwater platform has been used in four other UP WASH projects**, namely the Charity:water– funded Dowa Integrated WASH project, the ECHO—funded COVID-19 Response Programme, The UNICEF– funded COVID-19 EWASH project and The One Foundation– funded Kapichi WASH Project, at various stages of the project cycle. Using the water point functionality data from mWater, UP has been able to construct 86 new boreholes and rehabilitated 50 water points in Dowa District between January 2020 to January 2021.
- **The Mwater platform also proved to be an extremely useful tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it allows real-time remote monitoring.** As a result, some of our donors, such as UNICEF, were able to monitor remotely progress of the COVID-19 Response projects. UP staff have also benefited. *“I have gained knowledge, skills and technical know-how of designing surveys, deploying surveys and managing deployments in mWater during baseline and end-line surveys and borehole drilling supervision and water point mapping and monitoring”* - says Chifundo Mandala, WASH Manager, Thyolo WASH project.

Our Team and Operations

Working arrangements:

- UP offices remain largely closed with limited access through a bubble system. This system has been designed in light of a robust risk assessment process to ensure business continuity. In April UP will conduct another round of risk assessments for all project to inform the measures in place to protect our teams and the people we work with.

Safeguarding and Well-being:

- Our Safeguarding Focal Points trained a cohort of 18 Project Safeguarding Leads to operationalise our Community Complaints and Feedback Mechanism to ensure that our safeguarding reporting channels are systematically rolled-out across UP districts for our project participants. This document is guided by Government of Malawi guidance on Grievance and Response Mechanisms (June 2020).

Our team is the driving force behind our successes:

- **In the spotlight this month:**
Annie Banda: Annie joined UP in 2006 as a Day Guard, working at the Country Director's house. In September 2012, she was promoted to Receptionist and then, in 2014, to Administrative Assistant. Since October 2018, Annie Banda has been working as an Administrative Secretary at UP Office in Blantyre performing administrative and Human Resources tasks. At every position she held at UP, she worked hard and was always upgrading her



Annie Banda, Administrative Secretary, UP Blantyre Office

Stories from the people we work with

Communities in Dedza leading the fight against COVID-19

Informed consent was obtained before recording this story

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Dedza District, UP with the financial support of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) used a **Community Led Action (CLA) approach to engage local leadership in the fight against COVID-19**. Community leaders have a crucial role to play in the fight against COVID-19 as they are custodians of culture and have authority and influence among the communities.

To increase community engagement in the response, UP used a CLA toolkit for COVID-19 developed by GOAL. GOAL's CLA approach was first developed during the Ebola Response in West Africa and proved successful. CLA empowers communities to do their own analysis and take action to protect themselves from a specific disease outbreak. CLA focuses on the community as a whole, collective triggering action to protect themselves.

As part of this approach, **UP trained 54 Community Led Action Mobilisers (one mobiliser per community)**. The mobilisers are facilitating mind-set change in their communities by initiating community participatory COVID-19 risk identification. Once the communities have identified the COVID-19 related risks, the CLA mobilisers help them to develop the necessary actions to reduce the identified risks.

To further strengthen this approach, UP also involved community structures and local chiefs in the risk identification and action plan development process. Community structures, such as Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs), as well as chiefs were sensitised on COVID-19. Involvement of the chiefs in the CLA approach ensured their endorsement of the agreed actions which led to the adoption of the actions by the entire community.

So far, **UP has triggered 32 communities using the CLA approach** and all these communities have developed and approved COVID-19 by-laws. The by-laws were also written in their local language. The COVID-19 by-laws cover many areas, including measures to be taken at places where people usually gather, as well as sanctions for those who are not respecting the COVID-19 measures.

"I am happy to say that CLA has started bringing positive changes in our area in regard to the COVID-19 fight. We have seen more people putting on masks even at funerals which previously was not the case... Outstanding is the fact that people constructed fences in all our three boreholes and placed brackets of water and soap outside the fences such that anyone coming to draw water washes hands before touching our borehole. I am so happy and proud that I am part of the team bringing this change to my area", says Rosemary Petulo, CLA mobiliser in Kude GVH, TA Kachere.

The communities are planning to share their by-laws with Dedza District Council so that the Council can use those as an example to show to other communities and encourage them to adopt similar rules to prevent the further spread of the virus. **UP together with other stakeholders continue to monitor the effectiveness of the CLA approach in all 32 communities where it was adopted.**

This programme "Support to at risk districts and communities in Malawi to prevent, rapidly detect and effectively respond to COVID-19" is funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. The principal objective is to support to the national government, local government authorities, and communities in Malawi to prevent, rapidly detect and effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic thereby reducing morbidity and mortality.



Community Member Leading in Participatory Identification of Covid-19 Risks at Mayani. By her side is the Dedza DHO representative