

NEWSLETTER

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Inside

FINALLY BACK TO SCHOOL

NO LONGER A VICTIM OF ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

WOMEN HONE BUSINESS SKILLS

CONTENTS

- 1 Two NGOs Team up To End GBV in Mzimba and Nkhatabay Districts
- 2 Pictorial segment
- 3 No longer a victim of economic violence
- 4 Stakeholders trained in SGBV prevention
- 5 Training women in entrepreneurship in Nkhata Bay
- 6 Euthini Police in Mzimba guarded by civilian watchman
- 7 Six defilement suspects roaming freely around Euthini in Mzimba
- 8 Purple Innovation for Women and Girls aims at graduating 300 vulnerable women and girls
- 9 GBV worries community members
- 10 Finally back to school

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FORWARD

WUKANI STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a global phenomenon and Malawi is no exception. The 2015/16 Malawi Demographic and Health Survey found that 34% of the women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical violence, 14% experienced sexual violence while 23% experienced emotional violence within the 12 months period prior to the survey (National Statistical Office, 2017).

Malawi is characterized by a high prevalence of violence against women and girls, from traditional practices that harm girls and teenagers (from sexual initiation rituals to child marriage) to sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. It is of this background that Purple Innovation for Women and Girls is implementing Wukani Stop Violence Against Girls in Mzimba and Nkhata Bay Districts.

The Wukani Stop Violence Against Girls project is a two-year Project being implemented by Purple Innovation with support from the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund through UN Women.

The Project is expected to contribute to reduction of

Gender-Based Violence in Mzimba and Nkhata Bay Districts in the Northern region of Malawi.

The project is eradicating duplication of efforts by mapping all initiatives by all actors in the prevention of the vice in Nkhata Bay and Mzimba into world class digital data repository that will be utilized by civil society and Government actors.

The Project is further providing economic empowerment of women who are Survivors of GBV as well as increasing awareness and prevention of GBV at community and District levels through enhanced local systems of women's grassroots organizations.

We look forward to the successful implementation of this project through collaborations and networking with various private sectors and Government.

Patricia Mtungira



Executive Director

Purple Innovation for Women and Girls



SIX DEFILEMENT SUSPECTS ROAMING FREELY AROUND EUTHINI IN MZIMBA

VANANI NYIRENDA

Officers at Euthini police unit in Mzimba have come under fire from the community for thwarting the fight against gender-based violence as they are failing to arrest defilement suspects while releasing others on dubious police bails.

Speaking on the sidelines of a mobile campaign, to end gender-based violence in the district organized by a local NGO, Purple Innovations on Wednesday, Washington Phiri who is a child protection worker in the area told us that 6 defilement suspects who committed the crime in August this year alone are walking Scot free, while the police claim they don't have transport for them to effect arrests.

Phiri said, this is a major setback in the fight against gender-based violence being orchestrated by various stakeholders like Purple Innovations for Women and Girls under the banner of the spotlight initiative.

"We have documented 6 cases of defilement in the month of August alone. And the suspects are walking as free men when the cases were reported to the police."

Sometimes we arrest a defilement suspect and within days we see him roaming freely in the society. This is demotivating and when we ask the police they say they don't have transport to effect suspects", said Phiri.

He said they are concerned with failure by the police to arrest a 25-year-old man who defiled a 3 and 11 months girl who had to be referred to Mzimba district hospital for further treatment as her private parts were torn

"We are appealing to officers at Mzimba police or police headquarters to intervene and transfer some of these officers who have overstayed in this area", said Phiri.

Chindi Area Development Committee chairperson, Malaulira Chibaka concurred with Phiri saying the

conduct of Euthini police unit officers is questionable and leaves a lot to be desired.

"One wonders why the police fail to act when we report defilement suspects and when they do make arrests they release the suspects on bail barely days after being arrested", said Chibaka

Mzimba police officer in - charge Stain Chaima confirmed being bombarded with such concerns from communities around Euthini but said as the police they are investigating the matter to ascertain the allegations.

"We are aware of such concerns, but we will conduct our investigations to establish the truth about the allegations", said Chaima.

Meanwhile, a non-governmental organization - Purple Innovations for Women and Girls which is implementing a spotlight initiative project in the area dubbed, 'Wukani End Violence Against Women and Girls' with funding from UN women is also concerned with the conduct of the police.

Purple Innovations for Women and Girls project officer, Liness Kwata said they will facilitate an interface with the police, the community, and other stakeholders to discuss the allegations leveled against the men in uniform.

"We will ensure that we conduct an interface discussion between the police and members of the community so that the police should clear out people's concerns because we believe if they can discuss they can come up with the best solution."

Kwata said as Purple Innovations they are going to discuss with other organizations working on spotlight initiative program so that they should brainstorm on how they can deal with allegations being leveled against police officers at Euthini police unit.

Purple Innovations for Women and Girls is implementing a project dubbed 'Wukani end violence against women and girls under the spotlight initiative with funding from UN Women in Mzimba and Nkhata bay districts.



TWO NGOS TEAM UP TO END GBV IN MZIMBA AND NKHATABAY DISTRICTS

VANANI NYIRENDA

Two upcoming NGOs in the north - Purple innovation for women and girls and Mzuzu Entrepreneurial hub will embark on a two year project dubbed 'Wukani stop violence against women and girls' aimed at curbing the rising cases of gender based violence in Mzimba south and Nkhata - bay districts with funding from the spotlight initiative.

Executive director for Purple innovations for women and girls Patricia Mtungila said the project will contribute to reducing violence against women and girls by using an electronic digitized data base to ensure that all activities of women and girls are openly accessed by various stakeholders

Mtungila said the women and girls at grassroots' level will be taking an active role in promoting solutions that are women led and women driven in ending gender based violence.

"The project is here to contribute against gender based violence against women and girls in Mzimba south and Nkhata bay where we will promote the participation of the women themselves at the same time we will promote collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders working towards

eradicating gender based violence", said Mtungila.

Through the joint project, the two organizations will also train communities in citizen journalism so that they are able to unearth issues of gender based violence in their areas.

“We will equip the citizen journalists with bicycles so that they don't face challenges when following up on issues to do with violence against women and girls", Said Mtungila who is also team leader for the Wukani stop violence against women and girls project.

Director of Planning and development at the Mmbelwa district council Precious Kantsitsi welcomed the project saying it will have an impact in ending GBV among women and girls in the district.

“We welcome your project but you should also engage the gender technical working group which can play a critical role in ensuring that your project is implemented without any setbacks”, said Kantsitsi.

The project comes at a time when Mzimba district is registering a rise in gender based violence where with a lot of defilement cases being pursued in courts on a daily basis

In Mzimba the project will be implemented in the area of Inkosi Chindi.

PICTORIAL

Segment

ACTIVITIES



EUTHINI POLICE IN MZIMBA GUARDED BY CIVILIAN WATCHMAN

VANANI NYIRENDA

Euthini police unit in Mzimba is being guarded by a civilian watchman a thing which has led to some suspects escaping lawful custody on numerous occasions.

This was revealed when, Purple Innovations for Women and Girls conducted a dialogue session where it pooled together police representation from the police unit, the district police station, and community representatives from Euthini to discuss some allegations being leveled by communities around the area of Inkosi Chindi against the men in Uniform.

Apart from being accused of using a civilian watchman to man the cells, police at Euthini unit, the law enforcers are also being accused of failing to arrest defilement suspects and releasing some arrested suspects on dubious bails.

Mary Ngwira a resident around Euthini said that she is shocked by the conduct of officers at the police unit.

"We are surprised that police are contributing money to pay a civilian watchman to guard cells when they are sleeping at their homes is this being professional? Argues Ngwira.

‘ Ngwira said on numerous occasions suspects including those who committed defilement offenses have escaped from lawful custody at the police unit after they allegedly broke the cells. ,

"On a number of occasions we have been told that suspects have escaped the police officers tell us that they broke the doors to the cells but we believe they may be some conniving with the officers", said Ngwira.

According to Ngwira when the members apprehend defilement suspects and hand them over to the police officers most of the times they are free within days after being given bail by police.

Chairperson for Chindi Area development committee Malaulira Chibaka believes such conduct by the men in uniform at the facility is because they receive bribes

as they have overstayed in the area.

"We as the community feel the police receive bribes for them to be releasing defilement suspects on bail some of them have overstayed in the area hence they have built strong relations with the society ", said Chibaka.

‘ Meanwhile, Mzimba police officer in charge Stain Chaima feigned ignorance on the matter but was quick to say his office will investigate the allegations. Such allegations compelled Purple Innovations for Women and Girls to bring the police, the community, and other stakeholders to discuss the allegations being leveled against the men in uniform. ,

The organization's project officer Liness Kwata says the dialogue session was meant to discuss the way forward on how various stakeholders around their catchment area can complement each other in ensuring that women and girls are not facing any kind of violence.

" So we decided to bring all the concerned stakeholders together including police officers from the district police station, social welfare officers, mother group representatives to discuss the allegations being leveled against the police and map the way forward",said Kwata.

Kwata said she was optimistic by the outcome of the session as the police have committed themselves to look into the issue which has the potential to derail the fight against gender-based violence.

"We believe the dialogue session has been crucial as it has provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss how best they can address the situation regarding the conduct of the police and other pertinent issues on gender-based violence", said Kwata.

Purple Innovations for women and girls is implementing a spotlight Initiative project aimed at ending gender based violence in Mzimba and Nkhata bay district with funding from EU through UN women.

PURPLE INNOVATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS AIMS AT GRADUATING 3,00 VULNERABLE WOMEN AND GIRLS

DRAXON MALOYA

A two year program, Wukani End Violence Against Women and Girls implemented by a women's rights organization, Purple Innovation for Women and Girls has intensified efforts aimed at graduating at total of 300 Vulnerable Women and girls who have survived from various forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and those withdrawn from childhood marriages in Mzimba and Nkhatabay Districts into enterprenurs.

Speaking at a field visit preparatory meeting in Mzuzu on Wednesday, Executive Director for Purple Innovation for Women and Girls who is also team leader for Wukani End Violence Against Women and Girls, Patricia Mtungira said her organization in partnership with other partners working with assistance from Spotlight Initiative is leaving no stone unturned in ensuring that women and girl rights are no longer violated at all levels.

Mtungira emphasized that it is against the background that her organization is targeting those vulnerable women and girls in hard to reach areas with various interventions which have created a network fighting GBV by empowering them with enterprenurship skills which is the basis for meaningful socioeconomic growth as stipulated in the Malawi Vision 2063 and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

“Women who are survivors of GBV and those teenage mothers get enterprenurship skills so as to be self reliant in all aspects of economic development which is the Paramount requirement in the fight against all forms of social injustices against women and girls. We are also supporting 30 grassroot women's right organizations so that they can be empowered to formulate community structures which are helping in strengthening by-laws combating violence against women and girls in our catchment area of Mzimba and Nkhatabay Districts,” Mtungira said.

Meanwhile, Nkhatabay District is reported to have significantly reduced GBV cases and early marriages following the training of 1,175 survivors of early

marriages and Gender Based Violence issues in eight traditional authorities implemented under the same project initiated by Spotlight Initiative under the District Gender Technical Support Network.

Speaking at the presentation of certificates to the first cohort of 225 girls referred to as mentees who have undergone under intensive six months mentorship program from various safe-spaces of 53 villages under Traditional Authority Fukamalaza, Nkhatabay District Commissioner, Rodney Simwaka said the fight against GBV is yielding positive results.

Simwaka said the coordination of stakeholders under the District Gender Technical Support Network has greatly contributed to the significant reduction of some harmful practices including early marriages among teenage girls and GBV.

“Indeed the fight against Gender Based Violence, early marriages and teanage pregnancies is being won going by critically analysing of the trend of events, lately with the introduction of the Spotlight Initiative interventions such cases have significantly been reduced which is a clear indication that the battle is being won,” Simwaka said.

A midwife nursing technician at Maula Health Centre, Richard Mzumara expressed gratitude with Spotlight Initiative intervention in the area which he said has reduced early motherhood complications even in areas under Traditional Authority Mankhambira despite the project being implemented in Fukamalaza's jurisdiction saying his health facility registered only 5 teenage pregnancies from March 2019 to December 2020.

In a separate interview, Traditional Authority Mankhambira expressed gratitude with the reduction in number of teenage pregnancies and early school dropout among girls having acquired knowledge at various safe-spaces where they peacefully share ideas.

Purple Innovation is implementing the two year Wokani End Violence Against Women and Girls with funding from WPHF and UNWomen under Spotlight Initiative





NO LONGER A VICTIM OF ECONOMIC VIOLENCE LINESSIE KWATA

On 27th May, 2021 Purple Innovation for Women and Girls trained women in entrepreneurship to enhance resilience of women to achieve economic freedom.

The training targeted 60 women and young women from 10 GVHs in T/A Kabunduli (Nkhata-Bay) who converged at Mzenga ADC Hall.

During the training facilitated by Jessy Chiuza, the Child Protection Worker, the women were taught about forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV), where to report GBV cases and how to fight against GBV. Furthermore, the women were trained in procurement, business registration and pig farming.

Before the training, some of the women indicated that they did not have sufficient information about what constitutes GBV but this is not the case at present.

Jacqueline Chima a woman in her thirties, from GVH Thula disclosed that Purple Innovation's training helped her to resolve marital disputes that arose due to financial issues between her and her husband.

“Before the training, my husband and I would argue over money issues as he would sell our rice and sweet potatoes from our family farm without sharing any money with me. After the lessons I got from Purple Innovation on Gender-Based Violence and about entrepreneurship, I went home and explained it to my husband.

Since then, he has completely changed. After selling our farm produce, we share the profits and we are able to do budgeting together and for that I am so grateful for what purple Innovation has done and is still doing for women,” Jacqueline said.

STAKEHOLDERS TRAINED IN SGBV PREVENTION

ELTON MHANGO

Purple Innovation for Women and Girls has trained teachers, mother groups, social and health workers from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Chindi in Mzimba district on reporting and prevention of Sexual and gender –based violence (SGBV).

The organization is implementing a Wukani end violence against girls' project in Mzimba with funds from the Spotlight Initiative under the UN women.

In an interview last week, the Project Officer for the organization Linessie Kwata said they decided to train the group because they are concerned party in as far as the fight against SGBV is concerned.

She said, “Basically, we want the group to understand what SGBV is, and how they can raise awareness and prevent such issues from happening whether at school or in the community”

Elizabeth Mtawali, a primary teacher at Mzambazi Primary School, whom attended the training, said cases of defilement and child marriages are rampant in the area.

“The training has empowered us to fight abuses that happen to the girl child in our schools. I also know where we can report such cases when they happen” she said.

In a separate interview, Child Protection Officer for T/A Chindi Washington Phiri said there is need to intensify community awareness on issues of sexual and gender-based violence.

He said “Our records show that we register three to five cases of defilement, and three to six cases of child marriage per month in T/A Chindi. These figures are alarming.”

Mzimba District Gender Officer Japhet Chirwa urged the group to work together with chiefs and ensure by-laws formulated in the area are working.

OUTCOME OF TRAINING HEALTH WORKERS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND TEACHERS IN SGBV PREVENTION IN T/A KABUNDULI

After training health workers, social workers and teachers in SGBV prevention, there has been positive strides made in the fight against SGBV on girls and women.

After the training, the structures resolved to work in coordination. By working in coordination, these structures precisely the CPW, GTWG, Mother group, PTA have withdrawn 5 girls from child marriages.

One girl got married when she was in form 2, the other one in form 1, the other one in standard 8 and two of them while in standard 4.

For the form 2 girl, after she was withdrawn from marriage she has gone back to school at Mzenga Secondary School and despite having a baby, the girl has stuck to the decision of returning back to school.

In addition, one of the girls by the name Hajila Mpinganjira has gone back to form 1 at Mzenga primary school, the other one has written standard 8 MANEB exams, the other one has gone back to standard 4 at Kautamba primary school while the last one is not back to school yet but is expected to go back to school next term.



OUTCOME OF ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY POLICING T/A KABUNDULI

Purple Innovation organized establishing of community policing activity, however, since community policing was already there the organization emphasized on strengthening the already existing community policing forum.

Before the training, the community policing did not have that good relationship with other stakeholders but currently they are working hand in hand with the main police, CVSU as well as other

community structures.

“Currently, community policing forum together with the CVSU and the Kavuzi Police Unit Sargent are conducting community sensitization on GBV issues.”

In addition, Purple Innovation has distributed 7 reflectors to community policing with GBV message at the back which will be used as an identity when they work in various communities.

GBV WORRIES COMMUNITY MEMBERS

JOSEPHINE CHIPOFYA

Mzimba District is registering an increased number of Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases, a development that has spurred community members into action.

One of the highly affected area is Euthini, where cases of GBV have increased from less than 100 between January and February last year to 142 so far this year.

“This is a worrisome development” said Malaulira Chibaka, Area Development Committee Chairpersn for Chindi area.

He said this yesterday, when Purple Innovation for Women and Girls (PIWG) provided funds for GBV survivors.

PIWG Executive Director Patricia Mtungira said they decided to capacitate women survivors of GBV because poverty has been identified as one of the factors fuelling cases of GBV against women.

“We, therefore, want women to find something to do. If a woman is financially empowered, she cannot be abused” she added.

One of beneficiaries, Esther MSIMUKO, said, the money would help make ends meet for her family. She urged institutions such as Parliament to ensure that proper laws were passed as one way of dealing with GBV issues.



In total PIWG gave 142 women from Chindi Area K1.2 million as part of its revolving fund initiative.

FINALLY BACK TO SCHOOL!

RHODA NG'AMBI



On 28th May, 2021 Purple Innovation for Women and Girls trained women in entrepreneurship in T/A Chindi, Mzimba district.

The 38 women and young women were drawn from various GVH across T/A Chindi and converged at Kaphiri TDC Hall in Euthini, T/A Chindi.

Some of the young women were schools drop outs. The women were trained by the Mzimba Gender Officer, Mr. Lloyd Nyirenda about on recognizing forms of GBV, where to report GBV issues in the District, in addition to entrepreneurship training.

18 year-old Esnart Chawinga who had dropped out of school at 15 years while in Form 3 and got married was inspired by this intervention of the Spotlight-funded Wukani Project what Purple Innovation conducted and she started thinking of how important it would be for her to go back to school.

In June 2021, Esnart returned to school and enrolled in Form 3 at Christian Academy in Mzimba District.

TRAINING WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NKHATA-BAY

BY LINESSIE KWATA

Mwai Ngulube a 35yrs old woman from T/A Kabunduli is now free from economic violence which almost led her to committing suicide.

Mwai was married to her husband for a number of years without any problem but unfortunately the problem started when the husband went to further his studies in nursing. He left Mwai Ngulube with a 1 week old baby boy and a 3 yrs old girl. Since he left for school he completely became different and he stopped supporting the family.



“Life became very hard for me as I did not have enough money to support the kids and myself as my salary was not enough. I tried to talk to him to tell me where I was not doing it right so I could change but to no avail. He went on to having multiple relationships and he completely forgot about us since then till now. I became the bread winner for the family which hasn't been a simple role for me.”

“Sometimes I thought of committing suicide but the thoughts of my children made me change my mind. I didn't know where to go to for help and I didn't want to associate with anyone but ever since Purple Innovation came in our area and when I was privileged to be part of the women who were trained in entrepreneurship all that is

of the past. I know what to do, where to get help and I manage my finances well.”

“The women's entrepreneurship group which we have formed has become my hope and we discuss business ideas which am currently implementing and my life has improved for the better,” Mwai says.

Mwai urges other victims of GBV not to lose hope but to stay strong and to make sure that any form of violence is reported.

Women from 10 GVHs in Kabunduli formed groups and 4 groups initially received the revolving funds and are currently doing businesses.

Some of the groups who are doing well in their businesses are Umoza group and Kasanula group. Umoza group is doing baking and irrigation farming. From baking business, they are making a profit of MK, 100 000 within three days while Kasanula group is doing poultry, selling beef as well as doing irrigation farming.

Currently, they have made a profit of MK150, 000 within a week from beef selling business.

OUTCOME OF TRAINING WOMEN AND YOUTHS IN LOCAL BUDGET TRACKING IN T/A KABUNDULI

After training youths and women in local budget tracking in Nkhata-Bay, T/A Kabunduli the women through the ADC chair presented what they learnt to chiefs in the area.

The chiefs from the area have formed a group which will be tracking finances allocated to their area either from government departments or from organisations.

The group had their first meeting on 10th September, 2021 and the second meeting was on 14th October according to the ADC Chair.

Tiwoniyepo women group in Nkhata Bay



OUTCOME OF STRENGTHENING OF GENDER TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP IN T/A CHINDI AND CONDUCTING DIALOGUE MEETING IN MZIMBA (MZIMBA LABOUR OFFICE)

Purple Innovation organized these two activities on separate dates but with same aims. To see good coordination among various stakeholders and also to hear out people's concerns from various sectors in fighting against GBV and how best these stakeholders can improve on this.

During the dialogue meeting in Mzimba (at Mzimba labour office hall) which involved the gender officer, social welfare officer, Mzimba District Police Officer In charge, T/A Chindi ADC Chair, Women's forum chair, mother group representative, Mayor from Euthini Court, Mzimba district Education Coordinating pair, Euthini Pair, Journalists, Purple Innovation staff members among others, Euthini Police issue emerged to be the greatest concern from almost all other stakeholders.

It was due to this that the Mzimba Police OC assured the team that they will look into the matter

and that all officers responsible for all the acts complained by community members and other stakeholders will be dealt with.

Community members with the help of the CPW who participated in strengthening GTWG training continued to report on how corrupt Euthini police unit is especially on GBV issues and other issues.

“ Currently, the Euthini police unit sergeant and other officers who have been found to be involved in a corruption case concerning a young man who was suspected to have defiled a young lady and they wanted his parents to pay MK 150,000 to cover up the story have been transferred from Euthini police Unit.”

In addition, they have been referred to Mzimba police to answer charges against a corruption case.





WUKANI END VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS

