



International  
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# Newsletter

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## ▶ Skills for Energy in Southern Africa Project Trainee Excels in Solar Energy Training in Zimbabwe

With the transition to green economies picking up momentum, the need for the right skills for renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies is getting more relevant than ever before. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is supporting the Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) in Zambia to implement the Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) project with funding from the Swedish Government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)... *Full story on page 10*

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Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

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# VISION OF COUNTRY OFFICE-LUSAKA

A united team that delivers sustainable decent work results through strategic partnerships and increasing development cooperation portfolio



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# ► Foreword



A new year traditionally brings hope of renewal and a better future. Yet for now at least, we start 2022 with the global pandemic situation still very uncertain and unpredictable. COVID-19 continues to take a significant human toll worldwide – on health, livelihoods, economies, societies, and our own daily working lives. But, we cannot be discouraged. Throughout the pandemic we have shown that we are able to deliver even in the most difficult circumstances.

We have to continue to rise to the challenge of remaining relevant and influential as COVID-19 continues to have its far-reaching impact on the world of work. The pandemic has not only disproportionately affected workers who are inadequately protected and are at higher risk of vulnerability, but

also brought to the fore new areas of work that have gained prominence in view of the changing realities in the world of work.

According to the “World Employment and Social Outlook Trends” 2022 report released in January, global unemployment is expected to remain above pre-COVID-19 levels until at least 2023. The 2022 level is estimated at 207 million, compared to 186 million in 2019. The latest estimates project a deficit in hours worked globally equivalent to 52 million full-time jobs relative to the fourth quarter of 2019, our pre-pandemic benchmark.

The crisis has brought new challenges and exposed and crystalized existing ones, such as inequality and poverty. The outlook remains fragile and the path to recovery is slow and uncertain. The losses will be far from recovered even in 2022. Much will still depend on how the pandemic evolves.

From 22 to 24 February 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted the Global Policy Forum for a Human-Centred Recovery from COVID-19. This was a key moment for the multilateral system and shaped how we work together to deliver on the Global Call to Action. The high-level Global Forum brought together Heads of State and Government, heads of international organizations and multilateral development banks, and employers' and workers' leaders from around the world.

It examined actions and investments needed to promote decent jobs and inclusive economic growth, universal social protection, sustainable enterprises, and a

just transition towards a carbon-neutral global economy. The Global Forum laid the foundations of a plan to build a more inclusive and sustainable future. This action followed the adoption at the June 2021 International Labour Conference of the Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. These highlights show that the life and work of the ILO will go forward in 2022 just as it has over the last two years.

Meanwhile, on 25 March 2022, the Governing Body elected the next ILO Director-General, Mr. Gilbert Houngbo, the former prime minister of Togo, and will become the first African to lead the UN agency. After two rounds of voting, the ILO's Governing Body elected the 61-year-old to succeed Mr. Guy Ryder, who steps down at the end of September, after 10 years in the job.

We have seen the best of ourselves in these times of adversity. I know that whatever lies ahead, we will approach it with the same professionalism, ingenuity and pragmatism, that we have shown these last two years.

I wish you a successful, happy, and much improved 2022. Thank you for your continued hard work and commitment.

**George Okutho**  
Director ILO Country Office for Zambia,  
Malawi and Mozambique



# INSS Holds Media Awards Ceremony on Mandatory Social Security



One of the recipient of the awards

By Luis Cotinguiba

With the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the ACTION/Portugal project, the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) staged the National Journalism Prize on Mandatory Social Security award giving ceremony held on 24 February 2022 in Maputo.

Launched in July 2021, the competition was conceived by the INSS, in partnership with the National Union of Journalists (SNJ) and the ILO, with the goal of raising the quality of reporting on mandatory social security. Officiating at the event, Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security, Mr. Rolinho Manuel Farnela, highlighted that the initiative would contribute towards recognizing the work being done by journalists in disseminating information on social insurance thereby supporting the extension of social protection to the informal sector.

"With these awards we want to value the professionals who, with their knowledge, contribute to the enlargement of our Social Security System", said Mr Farnela.

Meanwhile, ILO Social Protection Programme Manager Mr. Rubén Vicente stressed that journalists and media outlets play an important role in promoting national debate on social protection, a move which would help raise awareness among the public on the functioning, conditions and benefits of the contributory social security system.

During the competition, journalists had the chance to participate in three categories: press, radio and television. The judges, composed of representatives of INSS, SNJ and the ILO, selected and awarded three best journalistic reports of each category. The jury considered four technical aspects for assessing the articles: originality and relevance of the theme, due respect to the ethical principles of journalism, knowledge of the social security system, and structure and objectivity.

In the television category, Mr. Águeda Paixão Macuácuá, from Televisão de Moçambique, scooped the first prize with the work entitled "Impact of the Electronic Platforms introduced in the modernization and digitization process of the Social

Security System." While Mr. Victor Arcanjo África, from Rádio Moçambique, emerged winner in the radio category, with a report that addresses the contribution situation of private security companies in the INSS. Meanwhile, in the press category, Mr. Raúl Pascoal Senda, from Jornal Savana, was the winner with the article "Social security for own-account workers: a still neglected support".

Other winners were: Mr. Domingos Manuel Tomás from Televisão de Moçambique in Gaza, who scooped the second prize in the television category, followed by Ms. Cristina Cristiano Malissau from TVM Cabo Delgado. Mr. Herminia Francisco Horácio Jamal dos Santos, from the provincial broadcaster of Rádio Moçambique in Nampula, and Mr. Horácio Romão from Rádio Moçambique in Inhambane got the second and third prizes in the radio category, respectively. In the press category, Mr. Naércia Lizete Zefanias Langa from Diário de Moçambique, Maputo Delegation, was second, while Mr. Jocas Felisberto António Achar, from Jornal Notícias, Zambézia Delegation, was awarded for the third best article.

The first classified in each category had as a prize 150.000,00 MT (about USD 2,350), a laptop and an honor diploma, the second received 100.00,00 MT (about USD 1,566), a laptop and an honor diploma, and the third received 50.000,00 MT (about USD 783), a tablet and an honor diploma. The journalists Mr. Normélia Venâncio Inguane Nhancale, from the Social Communication Institute, Maputo Province Delegation and Mr. Miguel Paulo Munguambe, from the Público newspaper had honorable mentions in recognition of the good quality of their works.



One of the recipient of the awards

# ▶ ILO Director Meets Tripartite Partners to Discuss Skills Development



ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Mr. George Okutho (r) with Operations Officer Dr. Ezara Sakala during the Breakfast Meeting

By Allan Mulenga

On 16 March 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Mr. George Okutho hosted the tripartite partners comprising the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Zambia Federation of Employers, and the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) at the breakfast meeting held at ILO offices in

Lusaka.

During the gathering the discussions revolved around skills development for Zambia under the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), a Programme of the African Union Commission (AUC), and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The SIFA Programme, financed by the European Union and the German Government, is implemented through the technical leadership of the German Development

Agency (GIZ).

The SIFA Programme aims at improving the employment prospects of young Africans by providing technical support to improve the responsiveness and employment orientation of skills development programmes. The SIFA action seeks to create stronger continental dialogue platforms for learning and sharing of best practices and facilitating conditions for mutual recognition of qualifications. SIFA specific objective is to strengthen the capacity of labour market and skills development players to provide evidence-based policy and programme advice on Technical, Vocational and Education and Training (TVET).

Welcoming the tripartite partners, Mr. Okutho emphasized the need for harmonious relationship that promote productivity between the ILO and the tripartite partners, stating that the existence of the ILO is anchored on tripartism.

“The ILO is here because of the tripartite partners, without whom we have no reasons to be here. So, we are here to give you all the necessary support that you require for you to execute your mandate. Our tripartite relationship is based on mutual support,” he said. “Our relationship should ensure that there is harmonious relationship that promote productivity not the relationship that interrupt productivity. I am proud that since I came here three

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Labour Minister Mrs. Brenda Tambatamba speaks during the Breakfast Meeting



years ago, I have witnessed that tripartism which is working well. I wish to congratulate you.”

Mr. Okutho called for the review of the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Act to make it relevant to the skills demand on the labour market.

Meanwhile, Labour minister Mrs. Brenda Tambatamba said there was need for a labour market that has a right match between the skills supply and demand, adding that skills mismatch contributes to structural unemployment.

“It is incumbent upon all of us players in the labour and employment sector to ensure that we achieve the much-needed skills

match in our labour market in a well-coordinated manner. It is my sincere hope that you will find this breakfast meeting fruitful, and may I urge all of you to contribute to the drafting of the National Action Plan,” Mrs. Tambatamba said.

She applauded the ILO for bringing the tripartite partners together to discuss skills development as it is key to national development.

And ZCTU deputy secretary general Joy Beene said the workers are eager to contribute towards the development of the TEVET Act, stating that the Act would promote work-based learning for those who do not go through formal training.

“It is not every young person that should

reach the university level of education to be employed. Those are the skills that we need to harness at the early stages. As ZCTU, we want to reaffirm the establishment of the training programmes that will help trainees to find jobs that suits their capacities and be productive towards the development of the nation. We also want to contribute towards anticipating the skills available in the country so that they can be matched with the demand. Let the training institutions training according to the demand,” Mr. Beene said.

He said there was need to change the mindset of young people towards TEVET institutions, stating that many young people have a wrong perception of TEVET institutions.

Meanwhile, ZFE executive director Mr. Harrington Chibanda commended the ILO for extending the programme to Zambia, stating that the project would help sharpen the demand-driven skills.

“We are moving in the right direction and even that, we now have the Skills Levy. We hope that TEVETA [Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority] will ensure that training institutions have the right equipment. There is need for a proper linkage between the industry and training institutions, so that our learners can be introduced to modern equipment in the industry, especially if we talk about technical fields,” he said.

Mr. Chibanda has since called for the creation of a database on available skills.



ILO Country Office Director for Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique Mr. George Okutho (middle) welcomes Labour Minister Mrs. Brenda Tambatamba at ILO Offices in Lusaka

# ▶ GBV Survivor Narrates how her Business Flourished after Receiving Start-up Kit



Ms. Catherine Chanda at her stall

By Kalunga Chikate

**M**s. Catherine Chanda is a 37-year-old mother of five (two boys and three girls), who resides in Kawama township of Chililabombwe District. After being subjected to ill-treatment, ridicule, and physical abuse daily, she reached a point where she could not take it anymore.

She opted to involve her family members in her affairs, and they got interested in the matter. They decided to take the matter to the police under the Victim Support Unit (VSU).

She wondered what would become of her. For months she depended on handouts from her family members and other well-wisher. She had left her matrimonial home, to begin a life that she was not so certain of. With only a K100 (about USD 5.66) in her pocket and having no financial support for the children from her husband, she embarked on a small business venture of selling house floor polish to fend for her children.

It was almost at the end of 2020 that she was identified as a potential beneficiary of a new programme in the district. Ms. Chanda was identified by a Community Welfare Assistant Committee (CWAC) Member of Kawama ward of Chililabombwe district and included on the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and United Nations (UN) Joint Programme (JP) on Gender Based violence (GBV) Phase II as a beneficiary for support with economic empowerment interventions which is being coordinated by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Through the GRZ-UNJP on GBV Phase II

Economic empowerment component, ILO and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) are working together in 15 districts, where they are providing training, start-up kits and strengthening the formation of savings and credit groups to GBV survivors, those at risk and members of communities.

This programme targets GBV survivors, those at risk and community members for support with economic empowerment interventions to break the cycle of abuse. The programme is aimed at contributing towards strengthening GBV prevention and response systems in Zambia with the provisions of the GBV Act of 2011 of the Laws of Zambia.

The programme endeavours to increase

access to, use of quality prevention and response services by those that have survived GBV or are at risk and support the survivors and empower the communities to break the cycle.

Ms. Chanda as one of the beneficiaries of GRZ-UNJP on GBV phase II, was given K2,000 (about USD 113.26) start-up kit.

She was among the 27 GBV survivors supported in the district.

She says: "I didn't know about this programme, but I was ready to get the help. I grabbed the opportunity with both hands."

Ms. Chanda explains that Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET) Ahead Training in Enterprise Skills made her see the light to a new tomorrow.

She adds that the training did not only equip her with entrepreneurship skills, but generated interest in running a small business.

Ms. Chanda narrates that after receiving the start-up kit of K2,000 (about USD 113.26), she opted to quit selling floor polish and decided to venture into a different kind of business of cross border trading.

She used to go to Kasumbalesa Border to order various food items like groundnuts, soya pieces, beans and rice. Later, she would re-pack and sell them.

After a few months, she was able to expand her business and started selling dry fish, cabbage, salt, Kapenta and washing powder.

Ms. Chanda reviews that with the expansion of her business she is now able to provide for the family and sponsor her children to school.



Ms. Catherine Chanda at her home



# Creating Employment Opportunities and Transforming Lives Through Horticulture Value Chain



Ms Cristina Zefanias at her farm

By Egidio Simbine

Since 2019, the “Decent Work for Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Transformation in Mozambique” commonly known as MozTrabalha project has been supporting 300 small-holder farmers as part of the horticulture for tourism value chain, in the Inhassoro and Vilankulo, Inhambane Province in Mozambique.

Vilankulo and Inhassoro are main touristic destinations in the country. The province has a huge potential in agricultural production, there by stimulating local production and promotion of import substitution in the catering value chain.

There is also the opportunity to increase the participation of the cooperatives in the catering supply chain of big companies like SASOL, if they can meet the quality, quantity and frequency of delivery of the demanded products.

The horticulture production in the country is dominated by small-holder farmers. The techniques are basic, with low usage of extension services and quality inputs as a

reflex of the poor access to finance; the supporting infrastructure, like irrigation systems and good access roads are scarce, there are poor market linkages and limited access to market information, farmers face high costs for extension services and quality inputs due to low level of association.

The combination of these factors has resulted in low productivity and standards below the ones requested by the market, with seasonal production, failing to meet the market demand.

The MozTrabalha project in coordination with Aceagrarios, a market system stakeholder, developed the following market functions to the benefit of small-holder farmers: agricultural inputs provision; extension services provision; aggregation services, market linkage and market information.

Through the implementation of better management and production practices, the producers increased the use of quality inputs, better production techniques and sustainable operations leading to increased production and better quality.

Aggregation by Aceagrarios, a commercial stakeholder, made sure that small-holder farmers have access to markets among hotel and restaurant owners.

Among the beneficiaries of the initiative is Ms. Cristina Zefanias of Nhawache, Vilankulo district.

The 49-year-old mother of five was not spared by the many challenges faced by other small-holder farmers in the area.

Similar to many places in Mozambique, Vilankulo experience droughts and the excessive heat making horticulture growing difficult.

Ms. Zefanias is one of the 300 small-holder farmers who received support from MozTrabalha project in terms of quality inputs, better production techniques and sustainable operations.

She received a 600 metre-square greenhouse to improve her production of horticulture. With the small shade net, Ms. Zefanias has been able to produce horticulture throughout the year.

“I am very thankful for this project. Before having this shade, I use to lose 40 percent of the lettuce seeds and production due to the

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Ms Cristina Zefanias watering vegetables

intense heat, but now I am using 95 percent to 100 percent of the seed package," she relates. Ms. Zefanias together with other nine small-holder farmers were given green houses by Moztralalha project. These green houses have improved the production of the small-holder farmers from 20 percent to 40 percent. The increase in the horticulture production has greatly helped in meeting the market demand in the hospitality sector. Hotels and Restaurants used to complain over inconsistencies when it comes to supplies among small-holder farmers involved in horticulture production. With the increase of production, Aceagrarios managed to build a processing and packing unit in Vilankulo. This unit employs four people and manages to pack approximately 500 kilograms of horticulture per month. With this production, Aceagrarios managed to partner with hotels and catering businesses in Inhassoro and Vilankulo to supply

fresh horticulture. As for the value chains, it can be seen that the horticulture sector in Vilankulos is reasonably well-coordinated and sustainable. Besides the increase in horticulture production, the small-holder farmers have employed three additional workers for their farms. They have also reinvested their profits in horticulture production thereby bringing efficiency in farm management. "Before the shades, a 15 metres lettuce bed was sold by 1200 MT(Meticais) (about USD 18.9), now I am selling the same bed by 3000 MT (about USD 47.46) and more regularly. For instance, before I had to wait one month and half to harvest, but now in three weeks I am harvesting and selling. The money I earn I am using it to buy other products that are needed and requested by hotels such as; carrots, cucumbers and pepper which I couldn't produce before. Now I can afford to buy clothes and educate my children," explains Ms. Zefanias.

## ▶ ILO Malawi Project Office Leads Partners in Social Protection Advocacy

By Reagan Kaluluma

In 2012, the Malawian Government adopted a National Social Support Policy to guide implementation of social protection interventions in the country.

Since then, there has been good progress in a number of areas except that Government funding to social protection programmes is still limited.

A number of programmes such as; social cash transfer, public works, school meals feeding are by far funded by development partners. This raises the question of financial sustainability of social protection programmes.

One key element to improve Government financing and ownership of social protection programmes is advocacy. Over the years development partners have been implementing social protection advocacy initiatives to promote increased Government funding to social protection but the impact has been very minimal, the causes among others include key partners working in silos.

One of the key outcomes of ILO - Irish Aid Regional Programme on Inclusive Growth, Social protection and Jobs project is to

promote a well-informed political and public debate on social protection. To achieve this, the social protection team in



Meeting members of parliament on community and social affairs.

Malawi in 2019 embarked on systematic advocacy initiatives with media, civil society organizations and Members of Parliament through standing committees.

For the past three years, the ILO social protection team has met members of the parliamentary committee on community and social affairs on three occasions. The First engagement was during the caucus meeting between the ILO and Members of Parliament, the second advocacy meeting involved participation from Members of Parliament, Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The third one was a landmark as for the first time, the ILO managed to bring together, Government line ministries, development partners and representatives of civil society organizations.

The meeting presided by the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Community and Social Affairs updated the Committee on key developments in the social protection sector in Malawi and advocated for increased social protection budget.

The Committee also lobbied to have social insurance measures be incorporated among the priority areas in the new social protection policy. The Committee raised

pertinent issues on the need for increasing the target group for social protection programmes, the need to increase awareness on targeting approaches and effective monitoring of social protection programmes among others. The Committee proposed that there was need for more engagement on social protection to ensure effective advocacy.

This milestone is a demonstration of the ILO taking the lead in advocacy in social protection sector. It is an indicator that focused and strategic implementation of activities is bearing positive impact in shaping the future of social protection.

During the meeting the Malawian Government through line ministries, Parliament and development partners appreciated the role of the ILO in bringing key players together to dialogue on social protection.

Meanwhile, the Chairperson of Parliamentary Committee on Community and Social Affairs, Honourable Savel Kafwafwa said comprehensive social protection system is key to national development.

Honourable Kafwafwa has since appealed to the ILO to continue engaging parliament and other stakeholders to ensure all stakeholders understand the role of social

protection in national development.

And Community and Social Affairs Committee member Honourable Gladys Ganda expressed happiness over the engagement meeting, stating that the parliamentarians were sensitized on the importance of effective social protection programmes.

"This is an eye opener and would like to request the ILO to engage my budget and finance committee of parliament so that we appreciate and take action towards social protection financing", said Honourable Ganda, who is also Chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee of Parliament.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Director of Poverty Reduction and Social Protection, Ms. Patricia Zimpita hailed the ILO for organizing the meeting.

"This meeting offered us an opportunity to engage with the parliamentarians, this is very important and I urge the ILO to continue supporting this advocacy," said Ms. Zimpita.

And Outreach Scout Foundation Director Mr. Amon Lukhele said the engagement meeting had strengthened the working relationship among development partners in the country.



Participants during the Civil Society Advocacy Meeting on Social protection

# ► Mozambique's Women Group Launches Online Business Networking Platform



Participants pose for the photo during the launch

By Egidio Simbine

With the support of the International Labour Organization's MozTrabalha project, CTA Woman and Business through its Business Women's and Entrepreneurship Department has launched the Online Platform "CTA Mulher e Negócios - <http://ctamulher.com>".

This platform aims to increase the rate of women entrepreneurs with long-term sustainable businesses; promote capacity building actions; boost networking and facilitate businesswomen's access to financing.

The platform will allow the creation of an enabling environment for the expansion of women's businesses, as well as increasing the visibility of women entrepreneurs, thereby increasing competitiveness, sustainability of businesses run by women and decent work opportunities.

In addition, the platform has a space for women to register and include their logo, as well as advertise their business without associated costs.

CTA Woman and Business is a platform that aims to offer networking opportunities, and organizational development for women entrepreneurs.

Support for this initiative is linked to the implementation of the MozTrabalha project gender mainstreaming strategy, particularly in strengthening women's agency, promoting work opportunities for women, as well as their economic

empowerment and collective action. Speaking at the launch, ILO Chief Technical Adviser Eduardo Viera pledged the organization's support towards initiatives aimed at promoting the culture of entrepreneurship among women.

"Given that the woman is financially responsible for an average of five people in the household, which means that, by

supporting women's projects, at least five people in a family are reached," said Mr. Veira.

Moztrabalha project was a five-year project funded by the Swedish Government, that aimed at promoting employment creation for women and youth in rural areas in line with the National Employment Policy.



# ▶ Impacting the Next Generation of Farmers: Disability is not an Inability



Ms. Monica Mulongoti at her farm

By Muya Mwiya

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are among the most marginalized groups in Zambia. According to World Health Organization (WHO), Zambia has an estimate of 1.7 million PwDs, translating into 10 percent of the total population.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) through the Government of Republic of Zambia United Nations Joint Programme for Social Protection Phase II (GRZ-UNJP-SP II) with United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Programme (WFP) is providing technical support to the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD) with financial support from the Government of Ireland, Swedish Government and UKaid from the British people in creating awareness on the rights of disabilities and increase in access to social protection services.

Among the beneficiaries of the social

protection programmes under the GRZ-UNJP-SP II in the country is 57-year-old Monica Mulongoti.

Ms. Mulongoti of Luanshya's Fisenge area was born visually impaired.

Despite her visual impairment she took advantage of the assistance she got from the Fertiliser Input Support Programme (FISP), one of the social protection programmes offered by the Zambian Government to vulnerable people, in 2019 to be a productive small-scale farmer.

She believes that it pays to be a hard worker, stating that upon being identified as the beneficiary of FISP, she ventured into maize production.

Ms. Mulongoti, a mother of 10, narrates that the programme has helped her to increase her maize yields and hectareage.

She adds that she uses her earnings from the harvest to support the family and sponsor her children to school.

Ms. Mulongoti has since taught her children farming, a move which has seen them take

up beekeeping, poultry and goat farming.

"My aim was to empower all my children because I hate poverty," relates Ms. Mulongoti, an assistant chairperson of the Persons with Disabilities Group in Fisenge area.

True to her words, Ms. Mulongoti has expanded her business to fish farming.

She states that her passion for fish farming started from the workshop she attended for persons with disabilities in her area.

"I started fish farming when I heard of a workshop offering classes on fish farming for persons with disabilities which I decided to attend. At the end of the workshop, I was given 1,000 fingerlings, which I put in the ponds made by my children on the farm," she explains.

Ms. Mulongoti adds that upon seeing that fish farming is lucrative, she hopes to expand her business so that she could be among the major fish suppliers to leading butcheries in Luanshya District.

# Skills for Energy in Southern Africa Project Trainee Excels in Solar Energy Training in Zimbabwe



Dr. Fortunate Farirai (left) conducting training in Zimbabwe

By Lloyd Ngo

With the transition to green economies picking up momentum, the need for the right skills for renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies is getting more relevant than ever before.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is supporting the Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) in Zambia to implement the Skills for Energy in Southern Africa (SESA) project with funding from the Swedish Government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). This is a three-and-a-half-year intervention with the aim of increasing the deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency and regional energy integration interventions through skills development in Zambia and the SADC region using a Public Private Public Development Partnership (PPDP) approach. The project is targeting at training over 1,600 engineers, technicians, and energy managers of which at least a quarter will be female. Globally, less than 25% females are employed as engineers.

The SESA project is a scale-up of a pilot project the Skill Development on Renewable Energy Sector (SKiDRES) implemented from April 2019 to October 2020 as a national project with support from Sida. This was however scaled-up to a regional project to cover the whole of the 16 countries of the SADC region. This is good example of a scale-up project with potential to provide skills development in the three thematic areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency and power pooling at regional level.

In October 2021, SESA project through its implementing partner KGRTC launched a series of courses designed to respond to the needs of the market in the three thematic areas of the project. This was after the project initiated an assessment of

the skills supply and demand in SADC region to better understand the skills needed and skills mismatch.

Among the courses that were introduced is the Off-Grid Solar Design and Installation for solar mini-grids. This was after a series of consultations with key public and private stakeholders in the energy sector. The overall aim of this course is to train technicians, engineers, and energy managers in basic electrical fundamentals and skills in designing, installing, operating, and maintaining off-grid solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) systems specifically solar mini grid.

As part of encouraging partnerships in the spirit of the PPDP approach, a model which creates concrete cooperation between public partners and private sector actors to achieve its objectives, the course was jointly developed and conducted with one of the local public university (University of Zambia) and two private sector partners Engie PowerCorner and SMARTNET, who provided training equipment and supported a study tour to an existing solar mini grid site. In addition, SMARTNET attached one of the female engineers to a site in Serenje District, in Zambia, where they were installing and commissioning 50 kilowatt solar mini grid.

Thirteen participants including five females took part in the training course. All the five

females were given scholarships as a way of encouraging female engineers, technologists and technicians to continue pursuing careers in the engineering field.

Among the beneficiaries of the skills in the design and installation of off-grid solar mini-grids through the training offered by KGRTC under the SESA project is Dr. Fortunate Farirai from Sustenergy Limited of Zimbabwe. To promote gender equality in the energy sector, which is seen to be male dominated, the project provides scholarships for female students and Dr. Farirai is one of the beneficiaries.

Following her training at KGRTC Dr. Farirai has been able to introduce and confidently conduct trainings in Off-Grid Solar Design and Installation through Sustenergy Limited a company she owns and is accredited under Technical and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training (TVET) in Zimbabwe.

"The training boosted my confidence to realise my potential to share my knowledge and skills with my fellow Zimbabweans. After the training, I trained a total of 8 participants on Solar System Design, Installation and Maintenance within Zimbabwe in November 2021 and February 2022 using the knowledge and skills I got from the SESA Off-grid training. We are looking forward to another upcoming Solar System Design, Installation and Maintenance training scheduled from 23-25 March 2022," said Dr. Farirai during an interview with the ILO team during a field visit. However, it is notable that her centre will need support in terms of equipment for training.

For sure the ILO's visit to Dr. Farirai provided some positive feedback on trainings being offered by KGRTC through the SESA project. The project will continue to design tailor-made courses aimed at contributing to skills development in renewable energy, energy efficiency and regional energy integration in the region.



Participants of the training

# ► Skills for Trade – An Innovative Approach for empowering Young Women in Malawi



Thoko Mweneungu during the Agronomy Pest and Disease Control led by the Bvumbwe Agricultural Research Station and Thoko in her Cosmetics Shop in Mzuzu, Malawi.

By Patrick Makondesa

Human capital development, effective governance systems and institutions, environmental sustainability and private sector dynamism are among the enablers of Malawi 2063, which sets an ambitious vision for an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation, driven by a knowledge-based economy with a strong and competitive manufacturing industry and a productive and commercially vibrant agriculture and mining sector.

The Government of Malawi has earmarked on skills development to empower different groups of people including women, youth, persons with disabilities, disadvantaged communities, and workers in the informal economy. Skills development is hence a national priority, and it is firmly believed that a skilled population will help Malawi achieve accelerated economic growth and attainment of the SDGs. The Global programme on skills and lifelong learning in Malawi embarked on skills development in response to the need of the Malawian Government through the Ministry of Trade in the implementation of the National Export Strategy (NES).

The Skills for Trade and Economic diversification (STED) study was conducted in the horticulture and oilseeds sector. It identified skill gaps in the horticulture value chain. One of the major recommendations of the study was to close skills gaps in the whole value chain starting with the producers who are often women and young

people. The project, therefore, specifically targeted the vulnerable groups amongst which are women and young people especially the young women who are not in employment, education or training (the NEET) to be empowered with skills required by the industry in the horticulture value chain.

As the producers of the horticulture products, they needed to develop skills that will improve the quality products as demanded by the market. A strategy was therefore initiated to develop the skills needed as well as creating market linkages for the beneficiaries of the project so that they can begin to grow for the market. This was a way of responding to the needs of the private sector as well as addressing the needs of the vulnerable groups in meeting their daily livelihood. As such the activities were aligned to the outcome 4 of the project which states that vulnerable groups are empowered with skills for improved livelihood after training.

To develop the programme that was well informed and have real impact on the ground and in the lives of the beneficiaries, several activities were implemented and had a huge impact on the beneficiaries' livelihoods. Such achievements included the following: the development of the agronomy, pest and disease control training manuals in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture's research station; the development of the edible horticulture curriculum intermediate level managed by the TEVETA in Malawi; training of TVET

institutions to take the horticulture curriculum into their courses; as well as engaging the community skills development centres and the Agriculture extension and development officers (AEDOs) to be familiar with the developed manuals for their implementation and monitoring of the project activities at the district level. This kind of approach provided the need for targeting both students that goes through the TEVET institutions as well as those that were not in employment, education or training (NEET), as these were the most vulnerable groups identified through community mobilization.

The mobilised groups were then trained in group dynamics and organised themselves into a recognised Girls Empowerment Society (GES) which was then registered by the Government of Malawi as an eligible youthful group of young women engaged in economic empowerment initiatives. Through the grouping 150 young women were mobilised, trained in Agronomy, Pest and Disease control and in financial literacy to bring in an aspect of agribusiness, entrepreneurship and marketing skills.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) further conducted an analysis on the post training support initiatives, which recommended support of young women with greenhouse technologies for them to make a maximum profit and improve on the quality of their products to the market and be competitive on the international market by substituting import of horticulture

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Isaac Sichali at Roseberry Farms in Blantyre

products by the major chain stores, who are now busying from these trained young women and horticulture farmers empowered by the project.

One of the beneficiaries to the program is Thoko Mweneungu, the upcoming young entrepreneur with skills in green house production and has diversified her business to own a grocery and a cosmetics shop.

Thoko says: "Before ILO I had moved to different places because I had nothing to do, but the horticulture skills they provided to me and my friends has economically empowered us, I managed to establish my

own vegetable garden that helped me with some income as I supply this to Shoprite. I have a stable market because of this linkage to the market and have raised enough capital to establish a cosmetics shop and a mini wholesale in Mzuzu. This has contributed greatly to my living standard as I don't rely on anyone but instead, I have become a bread winner in my family."

Meanwhile, Isaac Sichali says the skills acquired in horticulture production has made him establish Roseberry farms, where he has employed four people to manage greenhouse farms.

## ▶ ILO's Economic Empowerment Project in Hand Sanitizer Production uplifts lives of People Living with HIV in Zambia

By Theresa Mukeya

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact households and may threaten the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing many people, including People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). Zambia has not been spared by the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in the derailment of gains made in addressing HIV/AIDS in multiple ways, including the disruption of livelihoods for People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). COVID-19 prevention measures such as; restrictions on gatherings and closure of boards (affecting movement of essential goods) in some neighbouring countries where Zambia depends for imports and exports led to loss of income by most households and disrupted livelihoods.

This coupled with increased commodity prices made it difficult for most PLHIV to afford food and other essential commodities. This is so given the fact that PLHIV are already disadvantaged by stigma, discrimination, marginalization, and have inadequate or no access to social protection.

Although PLHIV receive free Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART), paid by governments and donors, they struggle to cover their out-of-pocket health care expenses. It is against this background that the ILOAIDS Lusaka programme partnered with the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV (NZP+) to step up economic empowerment efforts to mitigate the devastating impact of the pandemic on the PLHIV in Zambia.

In line with one of the project mandates to build the economic resilience for PLHIV, the

ILOAIDS with funding from the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) ILOAIDS Headquarters, partnered with the Network of Zambian People Living with HIV (NZP+) to explore strategies to attain economic resilience of PLHIV through sustainable project financing.

An interactive process to synthesize viable income generating initiatives for PLHIV, identified the production of alcohol-based hand sanitizers to create additional funding streams, contribute to protecting workers in the workplaces and enhance their personal hygiene standards (relevant against the COVID-19 protocols).

In 2020 and 2021 respectively, two grants amounting to K421, 904.63 (about USD 24,500.85), were awarded to NZP+ for the set-up of a factory, purchase of equipment, reagents, packaging materials and

entrepreneurship capacity enhancement/building of some beneficiaries, through which the network was able to successfully commence the production sale of the alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

To sustainably implement the intervention, the ILO collaborated with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Zambia, who provided guidelines on local production of hand sanitizers. The ILO constituent, Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE) came on board to create market linkages for the sanitizer through its members. Profits from the sale of the hand sanitizers are distributed to the members on a rotational basis, and part of the profits are reinvested in the business for sustainability.

The National AIDS Council (NAC) and the NZP+ have developed systems to ensure appropriate production of sanitizers as well as disbursement of funds to the targeted



Health Minister Sylvia Masebo (middle) and Network of Zambian People Living with HIV (NZP+) members display the cheque during World Aids Day commemorations in Lusaka



households. In addition, the project supported the NZP+ to obtain a tax waiver from the Zambia Revenue Authority on the purchase of Ethanol an important reagent in the production of alcohol-based hand sanitizers. In its final stage, the product was vetted for compliance with Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS) as well as the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA).

So far, 1,300 beneficiaries from 231 households of PLHIV have been supported from the sale of hand sanitizers. Of these, 170 are female headed Households and 61 are male headed Households. To leverage resources, beneficiaries are supported in groups (Support Groups) as opposed to individuals. In December 2021, the first 15 Groups were supported with the start-up capital of K7, 900 (about USD 458.7) each. More women were supported due to multiple layers of vulnerability they experience, which was within the project target of 60 percent of beneficiaries from female headed households.

Households can afford basic needs from their various income generation activities at support group and household levels. With the support received from the economic empowerment initiative, groups and households are involved in various micro business such as; tailoring, peanut butter making, salon and production of vegetables.

At organization level, NZP+ has equipped

the members with entrepreneurship skills for business sustainability. At support group and household level, 50 beneficiaries were oriented to ILO's Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET) Ahead Women Entrepreneurship training module. Of which, 15 were male and 35 were female. While two males are persons with disabilities.

Among the beneficiaries is Ms. Regina Katungu, Secretary for Twafwilishanye Support Group. The Twafwilishanye Support group of People Living with HIV is an affiliate of NZP+ and was formed 2006 with 20 members (15 women and five men). "Our group is one of the first 15 groups that received financial support from the profits of the NZP+ economic empowerment in alcohol-based hand sanitizer production project, supported by the ILOAIDS Zambia programme", explains Ms. Katungu.

She narrates that before being trained in ILO's GET Ahead Women Entrepreneurship, the group used to sell secondhand clothes and shirts commonly known as Salaula.

"We used to get on average K150 (about USD 8.22) per day and about K3, 500 (about USD 192) per month from the business. The income from the business was little for the group to grow and engage in other areas of interest. The small business and income meant that it was difficult for us to benefit in form of contribution to support our families with food and other household needs,

especially in the wake of COVID-19", relates Ms. Katungu.

She adds that the economic empowerment project was timely in that the group needed start-up capital to boost their income generation activity, stating that the group was given K7, 900 (about USD 458) from the ILO sponsored economic empowerment project by the ILO by NZP+ in December 2021 to cushion the impact of COVID-19 among members.

"To diversify our business and increase our income streams, we decided to embark on a saloon business as there is demand in our community. We used the money to pay rent for the store, bought a hair dryer, a blower, and some braiding wigs for resell," Ms. Katungu explains.

She reveals that the saloon business is run by the group members with the skill to dress hair.

"It is gratifying to inform you that the business is now making on average K700 (about USD 38) per day and about K18, 000 (about USD 900). The group now has the capacity to support each other whenever any member falls sick or experiences a bereavement. The long-term plan for the group is to buy each member a 50 kilograms bag of rice for resell to further increase their income at household level," explains Ms. Katungu.



A dancer displays a cheque during the handover ceremony

# Promoting Delivery of Social Protection Services Through a Transformative Capacity Building Initiative



Participants of the training

By Louis Msiku

The TRANSFORM social protection capacity building programme has been implemented in Malawi as a response to the National Social Support Programme II objective to increase the operational capacity to implement effective and comprehensive social protection programmes. The TRANSFORM Malawi roll out is aimed to consolidate capacity building of district councils in implementation of social protection programs while strengthening the role of central government in line with the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) II.

The training programme modules are tailored to cater for practitioners at district, national and policy makers. The TRANSFORM Capacity Building and

Leadership Course was developed by and for African Social Protection experts through an inter-agency collaboration between the International Labour Organization, United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with financial support from European Union Social Protection Systems Program, the Government of Finland, and Irish Aid.

The TRANSFORM training programme takes an innovative approach to promote transformative leadership skills in building and managing social protection programmes. The training delivery method follows an innovative pedagogical style that comprises an interactive learning approach based on the principle that decision makers and practitioners should take ownership in building national social protection systems through continuous learning and reflective

practice tailored to local contexts.

The TRANSFORM training programme is designed to impact beneficiaries of the training with an in-depth understanding of the elements for a comprehensive, rights-based social protection system especially relevant for countries in the process of developing and strengthening their social protection systems. The use of highly participatory learning methodologies enables development of individual leadership skills empowering practitioners to reflect on the changes they can make in their work. Following the training sessions participants are allowed to commit on how they will put the knowledge to practice by indicating actions they will implement as change agents and leaders in their area of responsibility.

The initiative began with engagement of government as the main beneficiary of the

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Participants of the training

capacity building programme. This engagement resulted in clarification on roles among government agencies to support smooth implementation of activities. Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs provides policy guidance, Ministry of Local Government coordinates implementation while the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare will lead the domestication of the curriculum. The clarification of roles was followed up with the implementation of district sensitization meetings to increase awareness on the Transform capacity building programme.

Recently, the International Labour Organization (ILO) with financial support from the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) supported the sensitization meetings aimed at presenting the initiative to members of the district social support subcommittee, structures that coordinates social protection at operation level. The district sensitization meetings facilitated better understanding on district capacity needs and packaging delivery of the training at district level.

In addition, the sensitization meetings contributed to increase the uptake and demand for the TRANSFORM trainings in the districts. These were followed up with TRANSFORM trainings for practitioners at different categories including district, national and policy level. To ensure effective application of the knowledge and skills acquired the ILO supported government to undertake post-training supervisory support visits to monitor the impact and application of the knowledge from the training.

The TRANSFORM initiative had trained officers from 23 out of 28 district councils in Malawi covering approximately over 600 officials involved in implementation of

social protection programmes at district level.

To ensure realisation of the training outcomes the training beneficiaries are taken through the process of preparing follow up work plans designed to be implemented after the trainings, this has resulted in ensuring that knowledge gained result in producing tangible impact on the ground.

Follow up monitoring supervision also reinforce support and ownership by the Government while at the same time ensuring implementation of work plan commitments. The programme has also supported application of tailor-made in-depth training modules including shock responsive social protection, Selection and identification, monitoring and evaluation, Financing and Financial Management and a two-day TRANSFORM training package for

senior policy makers.

Mr. Peter Chiumbuso, one of the participants of the TRANSFORM training, narrates that the initiative has made him appreciate various components of the social protection system in the country.

Mr. Chiumbuso, who is also Balaka District Council Liaison Officer, adds that: "I liked the way the training triggered our minds to think critically in linking various components of the social protection system. We learnt a lot more especially on how we can move from where we are now. We learnt that change is not easy but possible. Transform has helped us to develop confidence in ourselves as change agents. From now going forward, I will be doing things differently. I know how we should network and relate with different partners within the council."

Meanwhile, Salima District Community Development Officer, Mr. Brighton Chunga explains that the training in transformation were good and educative.

"We have learnt a lot of things showing how different things are interlinked. Each one depends on the other and cannot work independently. Skills I have acquired in this training are a lot and I will be able to use them. Moreover, this training has come at the right time when we are implementing a lot of social protection programmes. Before the actual implementation, we have other officers we have left back home who I feel also need to go through an orientation so that we can move together properly. Once we are done with that, we shall organize a stakeholder mapping exercise for all our implementing partners in social protection so that we can better manage and coordinate our activities," relates Mr. Chunga.



Participants of the training

ILO Country Office for Zambia,  
Malawi and Mozambique  
4536 Lubwa Road, Rhodespark,  
PO Box 32181  
Lusaka, Zambia  
T: +260-211-252779  
E: [lusaka@ilo.org](mailto:lusaka@ilo.org)  
[www.ilo.org/lusaka](http://www.ilo.org/lusaka)  
Facebook:  
ILO Country Office  
for Zambia, Malawi and  
Mozambique  
Twitter:  
[@ilolusaka](https://twitter.com/ilolusaka)



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