



MALAWI IRISH
CONSORTIUM
ON GENDER BASED
VIOLENCE



Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland

MALAWI GBV LEARNING, INNOVATION AND ACTION SYMPOSIUM 2026



24th – 25th
August, 2026



Pearl Convention
Centre, Lilongwe

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME



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FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION

Accelerating Innovation, Learning and Collective
Action in Prevention and Response Systems to End
GBV

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

The Malawi GBV Learning, Innovation and Action Symposium 2026 is a two-day national learning and engagement platform bringing together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, development partners, survivors, advocates, and community leaders to share evidence, innovations, lessons learned and promising practices in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response. The programme has been intentionally designed to move participants from understanding the current GBV landscape and available evidence, to examining innovative solutions, hearing survivor perspectives, identifying practical recommendations, and strengthening collaboration for sustained action beyond the symposium.



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DAY 1 | EVIDENCE, LEADERSHIP & SYSTEMS ACTION

- MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2026

Official Opening, high-level reflection and thematic sessions focused on policy leadership, systems strengthening, evidence, data and digital innovation.

TIME	SESSION	SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES
6:30 – 7:30 am	Pavilions	Setting up of all Pavilions at venue
7:30 – 8:30 am	Arrival & Registration	MICGBV Secretariat.
8:30 – 9:00 am	Opening Session	Welcome Remarks • Welcome remarks by the Malawi Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (MICGBV) Chair, Susie Kiely. • Welcome Remarks by UNFPA Deputy Representative / OIC, Sabrina Pestilli. • Statement by the Embassy of Ireland in Malawi, Sarah FitzGerald.
9:00 – 9:15 AM	Entertainment	Performance by Daughters Band.
9:15 – 9:45 am	Official Opening Remarks	Remarks: • Principal Secretary of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Dr. Esmie Kainja. • Guest of Honour: Speech by Hon. Mary Navicha, MP, Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare.
9:45 – 10:45 am	Panel Discussion	Focus: Unpacking the symposium theme. Perspectives and Panellists:



TIME

SESSION

SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES

10:45 – 11:15 am

Group Photo & Refreshments

Government: **Dr Esmie Kainja**
(Principal Secretary of Gender,
Children, Disability and Social Welfare)

Development Partners:

- **Sarah FitzGerald** - Embassy of Ireland of in Malawi
- **Sabrina Pestilli** - UNFPA

Academia – **Orpah Kabambe** -
LUANAR

Implementer - **Gavelet Mzembe**-
NGO-GCN

Youth representative - **Tusayiwe
Sikwese**

Community Representative - **SGVH
Mkuka**

Official group photo followed by
networking and tea break.

11:15 – 1:00 pm

Theme 1 | Policy
Leadership &
Systems
Strengthening

**Presentations Focus on policy
implementation, accountability, GBV
financing, and multisectoral
coordination.**

1. A government -led GBV Prevention and Response System: Policy and Practice
2. From Evidence to Action: Strengthening Multisectoral Accountability for Child Marriage, Teenage Pregnancy and School Dropout in Malawi Through a National Systems Scorecard.
3. Repositioning Rape Case Management as a District Governance Issue: A Proposed ADC



TIME

SESSION

SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES

1:00 - 2:00 pm

2:00 – 4:30pm

- Led Social Accountability Model for Accelerating Justice for Survivors in Lilongwe Urban.
- Integration for transformation: Rethinking Gender Violence Management in Malawi – eco system model.

Moderated plenary: Q and A Session

Lunch and informal networking

Theme 2 |
Evidence, Data
& Digital
Innovation

Presentations Focus on highlighting research, digital innovations, and emerging evidence.

1. Mapping Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Service Provision in Malawi: A GIS-Based Study in Five Districts
2. From Estimates to Accountability: A Bayesian Analysis of Two Decades of Violence Against Women Trends and Strategic Response Priorities in Malawi, 2000–2023
3. Bridging the Rural Digital Divide to End GBV: Evaluative insights from TEENS Digital Safe Spaces and Multi-Channel Tech Innovations in Malawi.
4. Gender- Based Violence Prevention and Response in Malawi Since 2000

Moderated plenary: Q and A Session.





DAY 2 | SURVIVOR VOICE, LEARNING & ACTION

- TUESDAY, 25 AUGUST 2026

Survivor-centred reflection, thematic breakout discussions and a facilitated action-planning and closing session.

TIME

8:00 - 08:30 am

8:30 - 09:10 am

9:10 - 9:20 am

9:20 – 10:00 am

10:00 – 10:45 am

10:45 - 12:30 pm

SESSION

SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES

Registration

Participant Arrival and Registration

Recap

Recap

Poster Presentations

- **Poster Presentations** – Gallery Walk From Awareness to Action: **The Role of Strategic Communication in Strengthening Community-Based GBV Prevention in Malawi**
- **Voices Unheard:** Drivers of GBV- Men's Perspective

Performance

Poetry – Phindu

Survivor-Led Session

Live testimonies from GBV survivors
Community Perspective:
Strengthening GBV Prevention,
Referral and Access to Support

Tea Break

Refreshments before breakout groups

Thematic Breakout Sessions

Break Out Room 1 - Theme 3: Prevention Models that Work.

1. Best Practices in the Mentorship Safe Space Model: An Innovative Community – Based Strategy for SGBV prevention and Response in Malawi.
2. Ending GBV (Early, Child and Forced Marriages and Unions through the Champions of Change Model)

TIME

10:45 - 12:30 pm



SESSION	SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES
Thematic Breakout Sessions	1. From Listening to Action: The Worlds Women's Observatory's Community – Based Approach to preventing GBV in Malawi. 2. Male Engagement in Boys Clubs 3. Building Technical Capacity (CBF) for VAWG prevention and influencing: Lessons from a Phased Curriculum for WRDs in Malawi.
Thematic Breakout Sessions	Break Out Room 2 - Theme 4: Survivor-Centred Services. 1. From Training to Transformation: Youth Led Economic Empowerment as a Survivor – Centered Pathway to End GBV in Malawi. 2. From Policy to Action: Strengthening Accountability for GBV, SEAH and Child Protection in Malawi. 3. From Survivor-Centred to Survivor-Led: Lessons from Promising Survivor-Led GBV Accountability Initiatives. 4. Kuthetsa Nkhanza: Preventing and responding to intimate partner violence in Malawi





TIME

SESSION

SESSION DETAILS & KEY ACTIVITIES

Lunch Break
Plenary, Action
& Closing

Break Out Room 3 - Theme 5:
Emerging Risks & Future Challenges.

1. Withdrawal of Sexual Gender Based Violence Cases: Duress or Free Will
2. Beyond the Clinic: Faith Leaders as frontline Mental Health support providers for women experiencing GBV in Sex Work.
3. Participation of Women and Girls with Disabilities in the Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Movements in East and Southern Africa.
4. RISE UP: Research Informed Solutions for Early and Unintended Pregnancies.
5. Is the 21st Century ushering a New Era for GBV? Reflections on Cyber and Online GBV as Key challenges of the period.

12:30 – 1:30 pm

Lunch and networking.

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Launch of the MICGBV open access Knowledge Portal

- Brief Remarks by MICGBV
- Appreciation of the portal

Breakout feedback: Rapporteurs present summaries, key lessons, and recommendations.

Closing:

Closing Remarks by MICGBV Chair

Key takeaways and closing remarks by Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare

3:30pm

Refreshments, Networking and Departure



MEET OUR PRESENTERS

Alphabetical presenter directory

01 Blessings Mbendera SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLAR, PROGRAM MANAGEMENT EXPERT	02 Chilufya Chokwe Siwale PROGRAMS MANAGER DISABLED WOMEN IN AFRICA
03 Christina Banda A SOCIAL WORKER	04 Daniel Simbeye Nyerere MEAL COORDINATOR AT GENET
05 Danwell Chitani Banda SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECT (SDD) - VAWG PREVENTION AND RESPONSE COORDINATOR	06 Deborah Tambulasi Banda GENDER, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST
07 Emmanuel Kanike EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THEATRE FOR A CHANGE (TFAC)	08 Godfrey Chavula SOCIAL JUSTICE EXPERT AT PARTNER FOR DEVELOPMENT
09 Kennedy Mwalwanda SAFEGUARDING AND PSEAH ADVOCATE	10 Lucy Joceylin Vokhiwa BOARD MEMBER, WORLD UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS (WUCWO)
11 Macdonald Donnie Kaluwa SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST	12 Meka Kamanga Gausi PROGRAMS MANAGER AT WOMEN'S LEGAL RESOURCES CENTRE (WOLREC)
13 Niamh O'Connor McCabe PROGRAMME AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER WITH THE IRISH CONSORTIUM ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (ICGBV)	14 Sellah Yekha SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
15 Silence Banda EVAWG PROGRAMME TECHNICAL SPECIALIST	16 Tamara Chikopa Chapeyama STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER
17 Yona Nyondo MONITORING, EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND LEARNING (MERL) FOR IPAS AFRICA SOUTHERN REGION (IPAS ASR)	18 JOHN MOYO, PHD. TECHNICAL PROGRAM MANAGER - EDUCATION, WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL



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1. **BLESSINGS** **MBENDERA**

SOCIAL SCIENCE SCHOLAR,
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
EXPERT

Blessings Mbendera is a Social Science scholar, Program Management expert, researcher and consultant specializing in governance, Gender and social inclusion. Currently pursuing a PhD in Development studies at University of Malawi school of Law, Politics and government. The research work presented is part of the ongoing research papers developed as part of the requirement for attainment of Doctoral degree paper. Mbendera has been in gender and Social inclusion space from programming, policy analysis, research and community led GBV programming, having previously worked with CARE Malawi, CRECCOM, RTI, DAI in a number of GBV interventions, and contributing to Gender Based Violence discourse in Malawi through research, and membership in various District Gender Technical working groups in various district councils.



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2. **CHILUFYA** CHOKWE SIWALE

PROGRAMS MANAGER
DISABLED WOMEN IN AFRICA

Ms. Chilufya Chokwe Siwale holds a Master's in Business Administration, a Bachelor of Laws, a Diploma in Project Management, and certificates in Management Studies and Teaching. With over 20 years of experience, she is a teacher, lawyer, project management practitioner, and enterprise development expert. A committed gender activist and human rights defender, she has led initiatives on gender equality, disability rights, women's economic empowerment, SRHR, HIV and GBV, policy analysis, governance, leadership, and organisational development.

Chilufya has developed strategies for socio-economic development, especially among women and youths including women with disabilities. She has implemented grant management programs through sub-granting and supported projects and programs focusing on elimination of the worst forms of child labour, ending violence against women, economic empowerment for persons with disabilities, and livelihood, legal framework, policy formulation and analysis, gender mainstreaming, social accountability, women's and girls' rights advancement, media and advocacy strategies, governance for CSOs and gender responsive budgeting. She is currently working for Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) as Programs Manager on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) project.



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3. CHRISTINA BANDA

SOCIAL WORKER

Christina Banda is a social worker with strong experience in community-based research, youth engagement, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and project coordination, with a focus on preventing early and unintended pregnancies among adolescents. She is passionate about inclusive development, social justice, and community-driven solutions. Christina has worked extensively with women, young people, and rural communities, supporting their empowerment through evidence-informed interventions and meaningful participation. Her experience includes research and data collection, community mobilization, stakeholder coordination, and translating evidence into practical actions. She is committed to advancing programmes that promote young people's well-being, strengthen communities, and contribute to sustainable, inclusive development.



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4. **DANIEL** SIMBEYE NYERERE

MEAL COORDINATOR AT
GENET

Daniel Simbeye is a MEAL Coordinator at Girls Empowerment Network (GENET) based in Lilongwe, with experience in programme monitoring, data analysis, community engagement, and learning. His work focuses on gender Mainstreaming, GBV prevention, and Male Engagement and Gender Equality Advocacy.





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5. **DANWELL** CHITANI BANDA

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
DIRECT (SDD) - VAWG
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE
COORDINATOR

Danwell Banda is a dedicated facilitator and curriculum developer with over a decade of experience in gender-based violence prevention and response. He began his journey with Theatre for a Change in 2015 as a Facilitator, before advancing to Curriculum Developer and Trainer of Trainers (ToT) from 2019 to 2023. In 2024, he became a Lead Facilitator of the Building Technical Capacity (BTC) curriculum. He began as participant of the Curriculum before progressing through to be the Lead Facilitator.

Danwell currently serves as the VAWG Prevention and Response Coordinator at Social Development Direct (SDD), where he continues to work with WROs in community-based approaches to ending gender-based violence through facilitation, training, and curriculum innovation, grounded in participatory and evidence-based approaches.



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6. **DEBORAH** TAMBULASI BANDA

GENDER, GOVERNANCE AND
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST

Deborah Tambulasi Banda is a passionate Gender, Governance and Human Rights Specialist with over 15 years' experience in PSEA/SH trainings, document review and analysis, gender analysis, gender audit, gender integration and mainstreaming, social inclusion and gender coordinating, as well as GBV response, prevention and human rights activism. She is also an inspired Educationist, with more than 7 years' experience in both local (MSCE) and international high schools with IGCSE, AS and A2 syllabi, who is flexible to adapt to new challenges and a team player.

She is currently the Deputy Director for Gender and Women's Rights at Malawi Human Rights Commission. She holds a Master of Science degree in Gender and Development from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and is currently studying Law at Malawi School of Government.



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6. **DEBORAH** TAMBULASI BANDA

GENDER, GOVERNANCE AND
HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST

Among others, She has worked as Consultant in the following work: the development of Grievance redress mechanism and training manual on Exploitation, Harassment and Abuse including of Sexual Nature for the Ministry of Health on the Care of Carers Policy; Gender, Safeguarding, livelihoods and Social Inclusion for Resettlement Action Planning (RAP) Studies Malawi–Zambia 400kv interconnection project; “Strengthening governance of child protection to end early marriages in Salima District, Malawi”); a Consultant at Lilongwe Pentecostal Church Christian School on Sexual harassment and School Related Gender Based Violence; World Vision International consultancy on Safe and Nurturing Project in Nkhatabay; and Consultant on domesticating Gender Responsive Pedagogy Tool-kit to Malawian context (2020)- Malawi Institute of Education - Ministry of Education and FAWEMA In addition, she has Trained over 50 institutions on safeguarding issues in both public and private sector and reviewed over 50 policies on safeguarding issues.



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7. EMMANUEL KANJIKE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THEATRE FOR A CHANGE
(TFAC)

Emmanuel Kanike is the Executive Director of Theatre for a Change (TfaC), a participatory development organisation that uses theatre, dialogue, research and community engagement to advance gender equality, health, rights and social justice. He brings over 20 years of experience in development programming, research, monitoring and evaluation, public health, gender and social protection extensively in Malawi and across Southern and East Africa.

Emmanuel has worked extensively on mental health and psychosocial well-being, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, behaviour change and the inclusion of marginalised populations. His current work at TfaC focuses on strengthening community-based approaches to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. Emmanuel holds a Master's in Business Administration, a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health, and a Bachelor of Philosophy



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8. GODFREY CHAVULA

**SOCIAL JUSTICE EXPERT AT
PARTNER FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Godfrey Chavula is a Social Justice Expert at Partner for Development. He leads P4D's work on strengthening Gender-Based Violence prevention and response systems.

In 2018, Godfrey conducted a national study for National Child Justice Forum on Criminal Justice Services: The case of survivors of sexual violence in Malawi, analyzing lived experiences of 138 survivors who accessed One Stop Centres in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu.

In 2022, he led a rapid assessment on accountability in Criminal Justice System for rape cases in Lilongwe urban, focusing on 50 cases of survivors who accessed services at Kamuzu Central Hospital One Stop Centre. He is currently spearheading design of an ADC-Led Social Accountability Model to reposition sexual violence prevention and response as a district governance issue. Godfrey holds a Master's Degree in Women's Socio-Legal Studies. He collaborates with the Government and CSOs to translate evidence into policy and practice.



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9. **KENNEDY** MWALWANDA

SAFEGUARDING AND PSEAH
ADVOCATE

Kennedy Mwalwanda is a safeguarding and PSEAH advocate with extensive experience in humanitarian response, institutional safeguarding and organizational capacity strengthening. He is a Master Trainer and Mentor in GBV prevention, PSEAH and Effective SEAH Misconduct Investigations. Kennedy has supported higher learning institutions, humanitarian organizations and government MDAs to strengthen Internal Complaints and Investigations Management Committees. He is a Public Health Practitioner and Humanitarian Action Specialist, with professional certifications in Social and Behavior Change (SBC), Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Ethics and Research, Post-Trauma Counselling and MHPSS in emergency settings. His work advances Survivor-Centered Investigations, Institutional Accountability and Safeguarding Systems that Strengthen Organizational and Community Action against GBV and related Harms.



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10. **LUCY JOCEYLIN VOKHIWA**

BOARD MEMBER, WORLD
UNION OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S
ORGANISATIONS (WUCWO)

Lucy Joceylin Vokhiwa is a Malawian business leader and women's rights advocate, serving on the Board of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) since 2023. She holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences from Chancellor College and is Managing Director of Chain Logistics.

As former National Chairlady of the Catholic Women Organization (Malawi) and Diocesan Chairlady for the Archdiocese of Blantyre, she has led initiatives on gender-based violence, Mental health awareness, climate change response, including research on human trafficking in Malawi's border districts and women's economic empowerment programs teaching: briquette, biochar, soap-making. She recently served on the panel for the Climate Smart Model under the Sisters Blended Value Project, and has presented on Catholic women's response to climate change at a WUCWO conference in Uganda. In 2022, she delivered an online public lecture for Trócaire Ireland on St Patrick's Day, on how Malawian women of faith are responding to the ecological crisis.



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11. MACDONALD DONNIE KALUWA

**SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE
AND COMMUNICATION
SPECIALIST**

Macdonald Donnie Kaluwa is a Social Behaviour Change and Communication Specialist with over 10 years of professional experience in designing, developing and implementing SBCC Interventions in WASH, GBV, SRHR and Occupational Health in both rural and urban community settings. MacDonald is the Executive Director for CAHESH and holds a Bachelors degree in Public Administration from the University of Malawi and professional Diplomas in Public Health and Transport and Logistics.





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12. **MEKA** KAMANGA GAUSI

PROGRAMS MANAGER AT
WOMEN'S LEGAL RESOURCES
CENTRE (WOLREC)

Meka Kamanga Gausi is the Programs Manager at Women's Legal Resources Centre (WOLREC), where she leads strategic programming on gender equality and the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). She has extensive experience in national advocacy, policy engagement, and systems strengthening, working closely with government institutions, civil society, and development partners to advance gender equality.

Meka leads the implementation of evidence-based gender transformative VAWG prevention and response interventions. She also contributes to national level policy processes including strengthening GBV coordination mechanisms, advocating for the prioritisation of GBV prevention and response through improved public funding and institutional and social accountability.



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13. **NIAMH** **O'CONNOR** **MCCABE**

PROGRAMME AND
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
WITH THE IRISH CONSORTIUM
ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE
(ICGBV)

Niamh O'Connor McCabe is the Programme and Communications Officer with the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV), where she supports collaborative research, learning, advocacy and communications on the prevention, mitigation and response to gender-based violence. Her recent work includes facilitating and contributing to research on survivor-led approaches to GBV and fostering collaboration among ICGBV members and its sister consortia in Malawi and Sierra Leone. Niamh holds a bachelor's degree in Global Responsibility and Leadership from the University of Groningen, where she majored in Global Health and published research examining international NGOs' use of participatory approaches in development. She has also designed and overseen the day-to-day operations of the Ankaa Project, an NGO in Greece that provides inclusive community spaces, workspaces, meals and educational opportunities for refugees and other displaced individuals.



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14. **SELLAH YEKHA**

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
SPECIALIST

Sellah Yekha is a social development specialist and emerging social researcher dedicated to gender equality and inclusive development. She works as a teaching assistant in the Department of Sociology and Population Studies at the University of Malawi, where she also completed her bachelor's in social sciences (Gender Studies). In late 2024, she expanded her expertise through the DISCO-BIP Erasmus + student exchange program in Finland, focusing on diversity, inclusion, and social cohesion. Passionate about research, her interests center on the intersections of gender, development, education, and science and technology. A high-achieving recent graduate, she has earned numerous academic and extracurricular awards, and has contributed to development work through volunteer roles with ActionAid (via the UNIMA Feminomics Hub) and AIESEC Malawi.



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15. **SILENCE** **BANDA**

EVAWG PROGRAMME
TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

Silence Banda is an EVAWG Programme Technical Specialist with over 10 years of experience in programme management across INGOs, UN agencies, and local NGOs. He holds an MSc in Gender and Development (LUANAR) and is currently a PhD scholar in Development Studies at the University of Malawi, where his research focuses on the Economic Cost of Intimate Partner Violence and its Impact on Economic Growth.

Silence serves as Research Lead at Global South Change, a development consultancy firm specialising in Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) research in Southern Africa. His expertise ranges from programme design, policy advocacy, and evidence-based research, and he is a feminist who advances evidence-based Gender Justice across diverse contexts



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16. **TAMARA** CHIKOPA CHAPEYAMA

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS
AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER

Tamara Chikopa Chapeyama is a Malawian strategic communications and community development practitioner with over eight years of experience supporting programmes focused on gender equality, GBV prevention, youth empowerment, SRHR and community mobilisation. She has led and coordinated donor-funded programmes across Malawi, working with government, traditional leaders, civil society organisations, development partners and communities to address gender inequality and violence against women and children. She served as Project Coordinator and Communications Lead at CAVWOC Malawi, where she supported community-based programming, youth engagement, behaviour-change initiatives and Champions of Change approaches. Her work has included engaging local stakeholders to strengthen dialogue and collective action. Tamara is interested in how strategic communication can move GBV prevention beyond awareness towards meaningful community participation, ownership and behaviour change. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Communication and Diploma's in Monitoring and Evaluation and Organisational Design and Management. She is pursuing an MBA in Project Management at UNIMA.



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17. YONA NYONDO

MONITORING, EVALUATION,
RESEARCH AND LEARNING
(MERL) FOR IPAS AFRICA
SOUTHERN REGION (IPAS ASR)

Yona Nyondo is a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) practitioner with experience in programme monitoring, evidence generation, systems strengthening and learning across health and development programmes. He currently serves as a MERL Advisor with Ipas Africa Southern Region, supporting evidence-informed programming, policy and advocacy, health systems strengthening, and multi-sectoral accountability across the region. His work includes developing and applying monitoring and learning frameworks, conducting assessments and evaluations, translating programme data into actionable evidence, and supporting stakeholders to strengthen accountability and implementation.



VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITIES

18. CHARITY PEARSON

WOMEN'S FORUM LEADER AND
COMMUNITY PROTECTION
VOLUNTEER, T/A MASULA

Charity Pearson is a Women's Forum leader and Community Protection Volunteer from T/A Masula. She has been working with the community since 2023, when she was identified through the Women's Forum and engaged as a community action and protection volunteer.

Her work in preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) extends beyond the Irish-funded Reducing Poverty and Inequality in Malawi project, building on her existing role and commitment as a Women's Forum member.

As a Community Protection Volunteer, Charity plays an active role in strengthening community-level prevention and response to GBV. Her responsibilities include conducting community awareness campaigns on GBV prevention, promoting women's leadership and human rights, advancing women's economic empowerment, supporting the GBV referral system, and providing referrals for survivors. She also supports efforts to withdraw children from child marriages and conducts follow-up visits with GBV survivors to monitor their wellbeing and provide ongoing support. Through her leadership and community engagement, Charity has become an important link between community members, survivors and formal GBV response services.



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19. **BERTHA** PHALAZA

GBV SURVIVOR AND
ENTREPRENEUR

Bertha Phalaza is a GBV survivor who was identified through the Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU). As part of her recovery and economic empowerment, she participated in entrepreneurship training in soap making provided to female GBV survivors.

Following the training, Bertha established a soap-making business, which she is currently operating to generate income and support her family. Her experience demonstrates how survivor-centred economic empowerment initiatives can contribute to rebuilding livelihoods, confidence and resilience following experiences of GBV.

Bertha is now interested in expanding her skills and business opportunities through additional training in candle making and petroleum jelly production.



20. BEZITA DULE

GBV SURVIVOR, VICE
CHAIRPERSON – T/A MASULA
CVSU, SURVIVOR ADVOCATE

Bezita Dule is the Vice Chairperson of the T/A Masula Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU) and has been supporting GBV survivors under the Reducing Poverty and Inequality in Malawi project since 2023.

Her personal experience has strengthened her commitment to advocating for the rights and protection of women and girls. In 2024, Bezita experienced violence from her husband despite her position as a community leader working to support GBV survivors. She chose to report the abuse and seek justice. Her decision was also intended to demonstrate that violence against women is unacceptable, including when the survivor is herself a community leader.

As part of the project's economic empowerment support, Bezita received training in baking. She has since used her skills to generate income and contribute to supporting her household. Bezita now draws on both her professional experience and lived experience as a survivor to speak out against GBV and encourage other survivors to report violence, seek support and claim their rights. Her story demonstrates the importance of survivor leadership in strengthening community-level GBV prevention and response.



21. **SENIOR** GROUP VILLAGE HEADMAN MKUKA

TRADITIONAL LEADER AND
GBV PREVENTION CHAMPION

Traditional Leader and GBV Prevention Champion, T/A Masula Senior Group Village Headman (SGVH) Mkuka, born Dominic Nyondo, is a traditional leader and community champion working to prevent and end violence against women and girls in T/A Masula.

He serves on the Community Action Group Committee in T/A Masula, which works alongside Community Protection Volunteers to address GBV cases, promote human rights and strengthen community protection mechanisms under the Reducing Poverty and Inequality in Malawi project.

As a traditional leader, SGVH Mkuka plays an important role in mobilising communities, promoting positive social norms and encouraging community members to challenge violence against women and girls. His involvement demonstrates the critical role that traditional leadership can play in strengthening community ownership of GBV prevention and response.

THANK YOU

