



TOGETHER FORWARD

2021 ANNUAL REPORT





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Together forward, we have
strengthened the **legacy of**
hope through our **bold vision**
for a better world.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a year of unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Lydia Action successfully demonstrated its agility, innovation, resilient, and relentless drive for results. Lydia Action launched DREAM30; a 10-year (2021-2030) strategic plan that will guide implementation of interventions to achieve our goals and propel the organization's development agenda forward.

The year 2021 saw Lydia Action accelerate delivery of its programmes. Eighty-seven (87) elderly people were provided with care and support packages, 66 women and children were provided with nutritional support items, and 25 young prospective university students were supported with practical knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively contribute to the development and humanitarian sector. Ninety-nine (99) women were equipped with income generating activity knowledge and skills. Two hundred twenty-four (224) people were supported with COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) in 2021, with 78 primary school students provided with educational support from 7 primary schools in Zomba, Malawi.

Lydia Action also developed policies to govern operations and work processes. This included improvement of financial systems, refinement of monitoring and evaluation systems, and repurposing staff positions as part of its human resource overhaul to create functions that are fit for purpose.

Additionally, Lydia Action was the first NGO in Malawi to register using MyNGO, the NGO Board of Malawi's online information management system, as part of the Public Service Sector Reform. Lydia Action sponsored the Lilongwe district council's first education technical working group and signed a memorandum of understanding for the Women Empowerment programme with the same Council. In October 2021, Lydia Action supported the Lilongwe district council in the Whirlwind disaster verification process. Further, Lydia Action sponsored the 16 Days of Activism campaign under the localized theme "Orange Malawi: End Violence Against Women and Girls, Act Now.

These and several more accomplishments were achieved during very unpredictable and unprecedented times.

Joseph Banda



Executive Director
Lydia Action

A photograph of two women sitting at a table in a meeting. The woman on the left is wearing an orange polo shirt and has her hair in a bun. The woman on the right is wearing a purple polo shirt and has her hair in a ponytail. There are two water bottles on the table in front of them. The background is a plain wall. A purple overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the text for the slide.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVE

Strengthening and advancing
**knowledge, skills, systems,
transparency and accountability**
to achieve meaningful and
collective results.

2.1. Institutional strengthening

The year saw Lydia Action establish a National office in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. The move was aimed at positioning the organization to build and strengthen existing partnerships at national level. In its efforts to ensure the realization of Dream30, Lydia Action established a youthful leadership including the appointment of a new executive director, national coordinator and board of trustees.

Lydia Action also completed the development of various organizational policies such as the human resource, safeguarding, procurement and finance policies, to ensure compliance to national standards, statutory legislation and adherence to internal controls for efficiency, transparency and accountability.

2.2. Compliance

Lydia Action committed to continually strengthen the institution by ensuring the organization exists as a legal entity in Malawi. Lydia Action officially registered with the Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA) and the Non-Governmental Board of Malawi (NGO Board). These are part of Lydia Action's commitment to ensure transparency and accountability at national and international levels.

2.3. Enhanced diversified funding

Lydia Action continued to strengthen its existing relationship with the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI) programmes through better planning, budgeting and reporting. Lydia Action further secured significant funding from a private donor (the Bakat Family) to support women economic empowerment and youth development and leadership initiatives.

2.4. Strengthening of partnerships and networking with key stakeholders

Throughout the year 2021, Lydia Action continued to strengthen its coordination with different stakeholders and partners at all levels especially at National level. Under the youth development and leadership programme, Lydia Action partnered with three universities; DMI St. John the Baptist University, Malawi Assemblies of God University and Exploits University.

In its efforts to deliver on its pledge to enable disadvantaged children to fulfil their potential in becoming productive citizens of society through DREAM30, Lydia Action sponsored the first ever Education technical working group at a district level in Malawi, for the Lilongwe district council. Further, Lydia Action signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and social welfare through the gender sector office to implement its Women Empowerment (WE) programmes in Malawi. Lydia Action strengthened its partnership with the government of Malawi by contributing to the 2021, 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) campaign launch conducted at Namitete Primary School in the area of T/A Kalolo in Lilongwe.

2.5. Challenges

- Donor fatigue to Malawian non-profit organizations as a result of the effects of COVID-19 on the global and local economies.

2.6. Lessons

- Young leadership is capable of delivering results at a strategic level if provided with the right resources and a conducive environment to apply their skills and learn.
- Partnerships with other relevant non-profit organizations is vital for sharing skills, resource mobilization and enhances collective results.
- Within a constrained donor funding environment towards local non-profit organization, innovative and efficient utilization of limited resources can ensure continued support of vulnerable communities.

2.7. Way forward

- Continued engagement with strategic stakeholders including donors on resource mobilization and partnerships in implementing projects.
- Accelerate the implementation of Lydia Action programmes in line with Dream30.
- Strategic geographical expansion of Lydia Action programmes.
- Continued strengthening of organizational internal policies and systems.

3. ELIZABETH BAKAT PROJECT



Output 1: women in need benefit from self-tailored socio-economic activities.





BREAKING THE CYCLE

“I now understand not only what to consider carefully before starting a business, but also possess the essential knowledge and ability to do so.”

Estere 36, from Namakhuwa village of T/A Mgwelero, Zomba District, has been attempting for over a decade to establish a steady business that would allow her to support her family. However, she had difficulties in sustaining all of the businesses she started. “My family has lost a great deal of money investing in little enterprises that were judged capable of supporting us owing to their regular losses,” she complained.

Estere is part of Lydia Action’s Elizabeth Bakat Women Economic Empowerment program, which allows women to participate in self-tailored socioeconomic activities via capacity training in income-generating activities and enterprise development. “At the start, I had absolutely no idea it would turn out this way,” she adds. “It keeps me motivated to know that I now understand not only what to consider carefully before starting a business, but also possess the essential knowledge and ability to do so.”

Estere, from T/A Mgwelero, Zomba District

A woman with short, dark, curly hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a bright yellow shirt. She is focused on braiding the hair of another person whose head is in the foreground. She is using a bright green comb. The background is a blurred wall of reddish-brown bricks. The image is framed by a large orange shape on the left side.

SAVING THE FUTURE

“I had no idea how little savings could be maximized in so many ways; prioritizing necessities has helped me and my family recognize the value of managing our small resources properly.”

Esnala from Langison village of T/A Chadza in Lilongwe lost both parents at an early age, and as an orphan, it was difficult to support herself. She was compelled to marry young, which resulted in her schooling being cut short. As is the case with many rural illiterate women, she has spent most of her time as a housewife caring for her two children and depending on her husband's farming business, which has faced difficulties owing to a lack of agricultural inputs and unpredictable rainfalls.

“Naturally, I was given with the ability to braid hair; I have clients in the community, but I largely operated on a casual basis since I had no idea how to develop my business because I lacked a suitable plan.” As she said.

Esnala aspires to run a small beauty parlor in a market near her village in order to provide chances for other communities to benefit from her hair braiding and styling abilities. “In order to achieve my ambitions, I needed to learn how to save,” she said. “Prior to attending the Lydia Action session, I had no idea how little savings could be maximized in so many ways; prioritizing necessities has helped me and my family recognize the value of managing our small resources properly.”

Esnala, from Langison Village,
T/A Chadza, Lilongwe

DISCOVERING OPPORTUNITIES

“The most critical lesson I’ve learned is to do market research before deciding which crop to plant in order to ensure a lucrative market for my crops.”

Aida is a 38-year-old widow with five children. She lives in a remote village of Namakhuwa village of T/A Ngwelero in Zomba district. Her family relies on rains to cultivate maize, which is their primary source of food and money. “It’s been years now of harvesting low yields, which has created difficulties for our family since we haven’t had enough to sell because a large portion of the harvests has been consumed for food,” she said. A lack of agricultural inputs has further resulted in poor yields for Aida’s family, disrupting their business, and Aida has struggled to pay for her children’s education as a single mother.

Aida is a beneficiary of Lydia Action’s Elizabeth Bakat Women Economic Empowerment programme. She is one of the ladies who attended the workshop in Ngwelero, Zomba on business management and financial literacy. “Prior to attending the Lydia Action workshop, I had no idea how to examine my community in order to uncover opportunities to diversify my farm produce.” As she said. “The most critical lesson I’ve learned is to do market research before deciding which crop to plant in order to ensure a lucrative market for my crops.”



Aida, from Namakhuwa Village,
Zomba



3.1. THE PROGRAMME

Lydia Action's Elizabeth Bakat Women Economic Empowerment programme targets 200 women to benefit from the initiative. During the year, the Elizabeth Bakat Project identified 100 women in the south and central regions of Malawi and conducted 3-day workshops on business management and financial literacy knowledge and skills in T/A Ngwelero, Zomba district and T/A Chadza in Lilongwe. The workshop addressed fundamental business ideas such as developing business plans, identifying viable ventures, doing market research, maintaining financial records, and maximizing profits, among other subjects aimed to hone entrepreneurial skills.

3.1.1. Challenges

- Dire economic environment partially due to the global COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges for women to practically endeavor in viable income generating activities.
- Unpredictable rainfalls as a result of climate change has presented susceptibility in agribusiness income generating activities.

3.1.2. Way forward

- Geographical re-targeting of women beneficiaries within the programme framework.





Output 2: Young prospective university students are equipped with practical knowledge, skills, and tools to meaningfully contribute to the humanitarian and development sector.




Annie, a student at Malawi Assemblies of God

A WOMAN FOR WOMEN

Annie (22) from Mangoch is a student at Malawi Assemblies of God University in Lilongwe, pursuing a degree in community development. Her objective is to work for a women-empowering organization and to advance to the position of project manager.

“Before Lydia Action, my understanding of work and employment were limited; today, I have a new viewpoint. The programme is important because it prepares students for the challenges they will experience once they enter the workforce and how to deal with them. Additionally, it educates students on the requirements of the employment field.” She said.



Trino, a student at Malawi Assemblies of God

A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Trino (26) from Lilongwe is a student at Malawi Assemblies of God University, pursuing a degree in community development. His objective is to work as a community development practitioner for an organization that works directly with less fortunate individuals.

“Before Lydia, I had little awareness of the work field; I had no idea where to begin after I completed my education; also, prior to the program, I was not exposed to as many professional opportunities. As an inspiring development worker, I had no idea what was expected of me, but after attending the course, I saw where I needed to improve.” He explained.

3.2. THE PROGRAMME

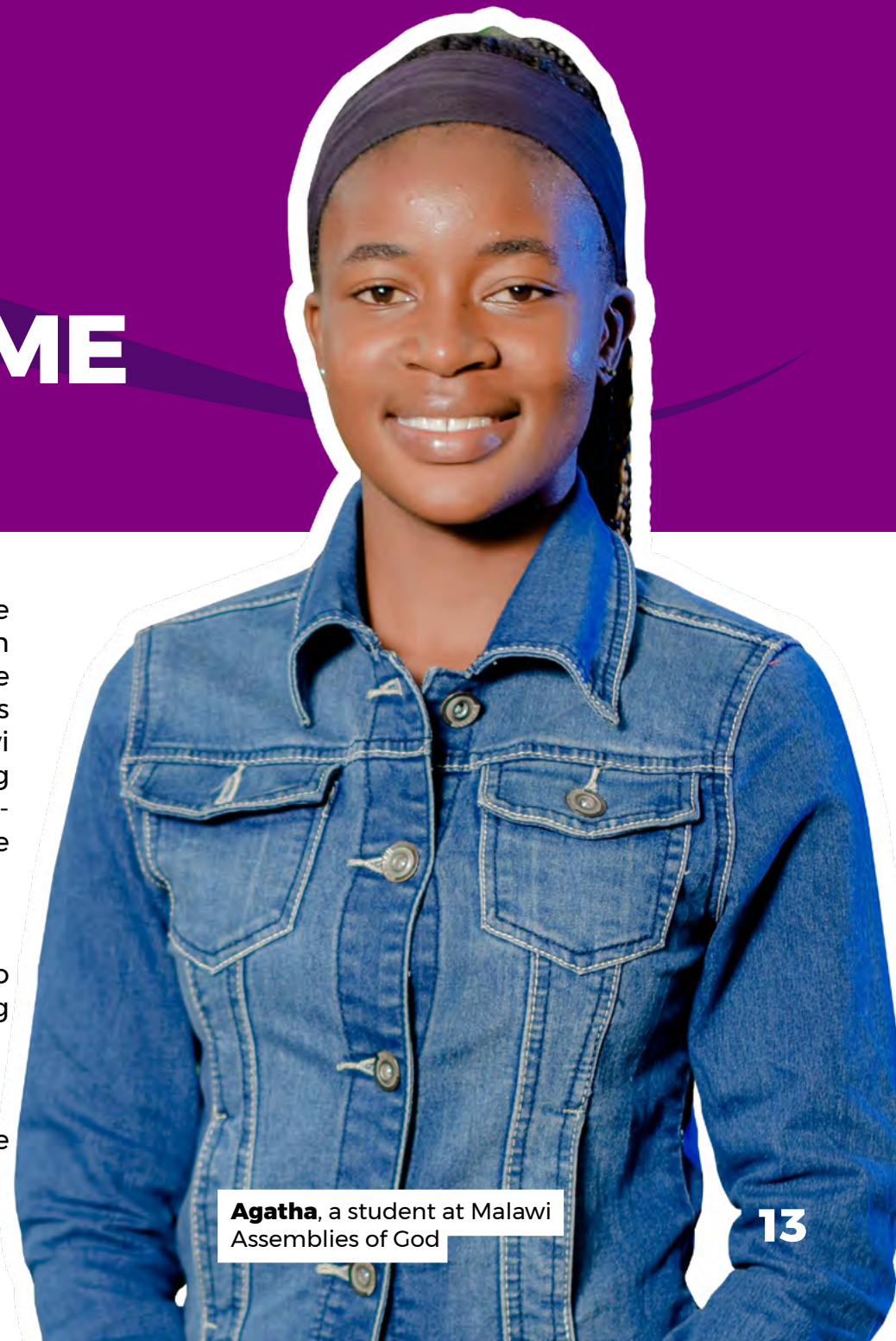
Lydia Action's Elizabeth Youth Development and Leadership programme aims to provide 75 young university students on the verge of graduation with practical knowledge, skills, and tools that will enable them to make a significant contribution to the humanitarian and development sectors in Malawi. The Elizabeth Bakat Project enrolled 25 students from Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) in Malawi's central region during the 2021 academic year. The students attended a four-day capacity development workshop on job-related knowledge and soft skills at the Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) campus.

3.2.1. Challenges

- Change of academic calendar's due to the universities efforts to adapt to COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges in organizing programme activities.

3.2.2. Way forward

- Geographical re-targeting of universities within the programme framework.



Agatha, a student at Malawi Assemblies of God



4. EUROPEAN BAPTIST MISSION INTERNATIONAL (EBMI) PROJECT



Outcome 1: The livelihood of women and children including the elderly is improved by providing access to nutritious food options and conducive living environments

BEYOND A PROMISE

Annie (82) from Mkwera village of T.A Malemia, Zomba is a blind elderly woman being taken care of by her grandchild. Her grandchild spends more time caring for her which makes it difficult to balance her education and providing support to her grandmother. Annie is a beneficiary under Lydia Action's EBMI nutritional care and support initiative. She was supported with 20 kgs maize flour, 2 litres cooking oil, 2 Kgs salt, 2 kgs beans and a carton of 30 tablets of soap.

“I am thankful for the support rendered by Lydia Action, with my current condition I have been confronted by several organisations and given promises but none have returned the support. I thank Lydia Action for your support” She said.



Annie, from Mkwera Village,
Zomba



A STEP TOGETHER

Charity (14) from Ntagaluka village of TA Mwambo in Zomba is a paraplegic child. Due to her disability she is unable to walk and can barely help herself. Her parents spend more time caring for her which makes it difficult to focus on finding food and other resources for their household. Charity is a beneficiary under Lydia Action's EBMI nutritional care and support initiative.

"I am at loss of words for the love that Lydia Action has demonstrated, my child has suffered and been discriminated against due to her condition." Charity's mother commented.

Charity, from Ntagaluka Village, Zomba with her mother

INSPIRING HOPE AND FAITH

Fatsa (85) lives in Tambala village of T.A Mwambo, Zomba with 6 dependents and stays in a poorly ventilated thatched house. As most elderly people living in rural Malawian communities, she is unable to support herself due to old age. As a beneficiary of Lydia Action's EBMI nutritional care and support initiative she was provided with 20 kgs maize flour, 2 litres cooking oil, 2 Kgs salt, 2 kgs beans, and a carton of 30 tablets of soap.

"I am grateful for the support given especially the food as it was currently running out, so thank you for at least easing my food problem worries."



Fatsa, from Tambala Village,
Zomba



RESTORING DIGNITY

Eighty-five (85) year-old Melia lives in Jambo village of TA Malemia, Zomba. She lives in a poorly ventilated thatched house with 2 dependents under her care. Lydia Action supports Melia under the EBMI nutritional care and support initiative.

“I am now assured that this whole month I will not have to beg for food from my neighbours. I was living hand to mouth, but this is all history; all thanks to Lydia Action for the support” She said.

Melia, from Jambo Village, Zomba District



4.1.THE PROGRAMME

In 2021, Lydia Action provided nutritional and care packages to 87 elderlies from Malonje, New Hope, Chinamwali, Songani, Mikuyu, Naisi, and Msusa communities in Zomba under the southeast region of the Baptist convention of Malawi.

A photograph of two young boys sitting outdoors on stone steps. The boy on the left, wearing a blue t-shirt and grey trousers, is holding a spiral-bound notebook and looking down at it. The boy on the right, wearing a blue button-down shirt and red trousers, is looking towards the notebook. The background is a warm, out-of-focus outdoor setting with a brick wall and a person in the distance. An orange semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing white text.

outcome 3: children are empowered through educational support and provision of psycho-social needs



Charles, from Kalimba Village,
Zomba District

A STORY OF CHARLES

Charles (15) from Kalimba village of T.A Malemia is a standard 8 pupil staying at an orphanage center in Chingale, Zomba. Regardless, of his parents being alive they are too poor to afford for his basic necessities which resulted to an imminent risk of him dropping out of school. In 2021, Lydia Action's educational support initiative worked with communities and schools to identify the most vulnerable children who would benefit from educational support; Charles being one of them.

"I am overjoyed to benefit from Lydia Action's educational support initiative; not only will this help me to continue my education, but it will also alleviate some of the pressure that my lack of resources was placing on my teachers." Charles rejoiced.



Memory, from Kalimba Village,
Zomba

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

Memory (13) from Kalimba village of T.A Malemia is a standard 8 pupil staying at an orphanage center in Likangala, Zomba. Despite her outstanding marks. Her grades have prompted some of her teachers to aid her at times, but they too find themselves terminating their support, due to limited resources. Memory is part of the Lydia Action educational support initiative.

“Being a girl is difficult enough; imagine being an orphan on top of that. Lydia Action’s support extends beyond schooling; it also serves as an acknowledgement of the worth of my hard work. This funding will enable me to pursue my dreams,” she said.

4.2. THE PROGRAMME

In 2021, Lydia Action has partnered with 7 primary schools of (Mbidi Primary School and Namisisi Primary School in Mikuyu; Ndangopuma Primary School in Malonje; Matiti Primary School in Mayera; Chikupila Primary in Chinamwali; and Songani Primary School in Songani) in Zomba under the south-east region of the Baptist Convention of Malawi where 78 primary school students benefit from educational support and provision of psycho-social needs.

4.2.1. Way forward

Working with the district councils in close coordination with partner schools, Lydia Action will accelerate the formation of education technical working groups, which it will champion at a national level through the Ministry of Education, to efficiently provide educational support to primary school pupils in Malawi, especially girls.



5. COVID-19 RESPONSE

Outcome 4: Women, children, and the elderly affected by sudden emergency onsets are provided with the appropriate assistance

Malawi similar to other countries was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This was compounded by a lack of access to basic personal protective equipment to assist preventative and mitigation health measures, putting more people at risk. In 2021, Lydia Action supported 224 beneficiaries (116 women, 5 children, and 87 elderly) with basic COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) such as soap, washing buckets, masks, and hand sanitizers.

6. RELIEF RESPONSE

Lydia Action delivered on its promise to work with the Malawian government, through the Lilongwe District Council Relief Office, under the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, (DODMA), in verifying data on households impacted by high winds and heavy rains. The disaster struck the Traditional Authorities' (T.A's) Chadza, Kalumba, Kabudula, and Tsabango areas. This data verification exercise was conducted in order to make collectively informed decisions on the assistance required to support the affected populations as determined by the Area and Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPC). The exercise allowed the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) and other supporting partners to provide evidence based support to the 1,400 affected households.

6.1. Challenges

- Failure to respond to emergencies due to limited resources. For example, Lydia Action was unable to respond to cyclone Ana and support the affected population in 2022.
- Lydia Action as a champion of the Baptist Convention of Malawi's ministry was unable to support the church in its efforts to safely continue congregating within the government restrictive measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 due to limited resources.

6.2. Lessons

- Strategic support to stakeholders including the government in a context of limited resources in an emergency can contribute to collective results.

6.3. Way forward

- Efficient allocation and resource mobilization of funds to emergency and humanitarian interventions.

6. FORWARD TOGETHER

We believe in a world where **people** are **empowered** and **inspired** to transform their livelihoods.

Lydia Action's DREAM30 is a 10-year (2021-2030) strategic plan that will guide implementation of interventions to achieve our goals and propel the organization's development agenda forward. DREAM30 was developed in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in the context of Malawi, taking into account Malawi Vision 2063, as well as other local policies and development agendas.

Lydia action aims to focus on women, children, youth and the elderly including supporting relief response initiatives through the Purple vessel; a five tier results-based model that directs Lydia Action's principles, approaches and implementation. DREAM30 will guide collaboration for stronger collective results.



5. OUR PROGRESS

224

People supported with
COVID-19 personal
protective equipment (PPE's)
in 2021

25

Young prospective university
students supported with
practical knowledge skills and
tools capacity building
workshops in Malawi.

87

Most impoverished elderlies
provided with care and support
packages in 2021

99

Women supported with
income generating capacity
building workshops and
tailor-made enterprise
development support in
Malawi.

66

Women and children
provided with nutritional
support items.

78

Primary school pupils
provided with educational
support from 7 primary schools
in Zomba, Malawi.

9. VOTE OF THANKS

Lydia Action is ever thankful to its donors and partners including the Malawi Government and the Baptist Convention of Malawi, especially the resources rendered from the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI). Lastly, Lydia Action extends its gratitude to The Bakat family in Germany for its unwavering support to its programmes.

1 Corinthians 13:13
And now these three remain: **faith, hope and love. ...**

10. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Balance brought down	5,299.67
Donation Received from EBMI	23,269,000.00
Donation Received from EB	27,000,000.00
Private funding	5,383,000.00
TOTAL	55,657,299.67

EXPENSES

Administration	17,390,731.81
Administration (motor vehicle) *	10,000,000.00
Children	3,298,352.59
Elderly care	6,539,684.64
Relief/emergency	4,580,774.66
Women	8,488,556.32
Youth	4,097,386.79
TOTAL EXPENSES	54,395,486.81
Excess of income over expenditures	1,261,812.86
Balance at the bank as 31st december 2021	1,261,812.86

- **Please note that this statement is abbreviated.** The complete audited financial statements with the auditor's opinion and notes are available at: www.lydiaction.org
- All figures in monetary references are in Malawi Kwacha (MK)
- * Donated by European Baptist Mission International (EBMI)



A better world
for **everyone.**

www.lydiaction.org