

# SHAPING HORIZONS

**QUARTERLY REPORT**

APRIL – JUNE 2022

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**Shaping sustainable solutions for complex challenges.**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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During the second quarter of 2022 (April-June), Lydia Action strengthened its commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable women, children, and the elderly by enhancing capabilities for organizational growth and improvement including accelerated implementation of its programmes.

The quarter also saw strategic shifts consistent with the organization's aspirations during periods of growth and continued engagement with strategic stakeholders especially the Malawi government. In addition, Lydia Action supported 110 women self-tailored socio-economic activities by providing zero interest and non-collateral loans under its European Baptist Mission and Elizabeth Bakat women economic empowerment projects.

Lydia Action further established 4 elderly care guardian support groups, and supported 76 primary school pupils through school learning materials support in Zomba. Furthermore, Lydia Action supported 33 prospective university students through youth development and leadership capacity building workshops.



**Enhancing capabilities**  
for organizational growth  
and improvement.

## 2. INSTITUTIONAL DRIVE

Lydia Action responded to strategic shifts throughout the quarter with a vision and agility consistent with the organization's aspirations during periods of growth. Joseph Banda, the former executive director, transitioned from executive director to a strategic representative for Lydia Action. As a consequence, Thoko Mulauzi, formerly the Executive Advisor, was promoted to the position of interim Executive Director. Tamanda Suwati (prior Southeast Regional Coordinator) was promoted to Human resources and administrative officer at the National office, and Francis Mwamlima (previous Programmes quality and Resource Mobilization officer) was appointed as the new southeast regional coordinator.

### 1.4. Challenges

- Continued international donor fatigue to non-profit organizations including Malawian non-governmental organizations due to the global economic instability.
- Increased organization operational costs as a result of deteriorating local economic conditions straining budgets and use of resources.

### 1.5. Way forward

- Continued engagement with strategic stakeholders such as the government and donors on resource mobilization and partnerships in implementing projects.
- Accelerate the implementation of Lydia Action programmes and continued strengthening of organizational internal policies and systems in line with Dream30 for sustainability.



ELIZABETH BAKAT  
PROJECT

### 3. ELIZABETH BAKAT PROJECT

**Output 1:** Women in Need Benefit from Self-Tailored Socio-Economic Activities

### Weathering the storm

Judith, a 36-year-old mother of two, is a native of Dimusa village of T/A Ngwelero in Zomba district. Inspired by her own story to overcome adversity, she had always tried her hand at various business endeavors until she ran out of hope and motivation to keep going.

In 2020, she launched a wooden groceries stand using the proceeds from the sale of her farm products. After realizing profits in 2021, she used the money to build a little and modest thatched shop and began managing her business from there. As 2022 approached she was looking forward to a promising new year, only to experience the most disheartening start to a year in her life.

As Malawi's President (His Excellency Dr. Lazarus Chakwera) declared a State of National Disaster in response to Cyclone Anna, Judith was in the thick of it, seeing firsthand its devastation. Cyclone Ana caused severe flooding in a number of districts in Malawi as a result of heavy rainfall and strong winds, most notably in the Southern Region, where Lydia Action's programmes are mostly focused.

*"Cyclone Anna seriously wrecked my shop, blowing off the roof and collapsing a side wall, ruining practically all of the goods that I had stocked." Judith elaborated. "All my ambitions of building a huge business in my community were destroyed by Cyclone Anna," she lamented.*

"I've been struggling to make ends meet as a single mother supporting my family, but being a member of the Lydia Action women's economic empowerment programme has given me a second chance to fulfil my ambitions. "I am delighted to reinvest in my grocery shop," she said.



**Judith** from Dimusa village of T/A Ngwelero in Zomba district.

## A means of earning trust

Lizineti aged 41 is from Lilongwe's Chikanga village of T/A Chadza. She is the chairperson of the Chikanga Lydia Action women's economic empowerment group. She has been taking the group through capacity development trainings for about a year. As a woman leader, she was motivated to assist her fellow group members to take the programme seriously since she knows firsthand how difficult it is to be a woman in a rural area with no means of income generation.

"A number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had previously been here with similar programmes, some of which were primarily frauds and others of which even took our money in the guise of helping us," she stated. "Most of them promised to provide us the loans, but they simply disappear after the trainings," she added. "This has ingrained a bad impression in many women, who are no longer as driven to engage in NGO work, that's why some women bailed out because they thought in their minds, Lydia Action is one of those organizations," she noted.

Lydia Action's Elizabeth Bakat Women Economic Empowerment programme, which enables women to engage in self-tailored socioeconomic activities through capacity building in income-generating activities and entrepreneurship supported the women in T/A Chadza with loans without interest and collateral to finance their businesses. During the financial support distribution ceremony Lizineti expressed her heartfelt appreciation for the programme that Lydia Action introduced in her community.

*"I am grateful for being chosen among those that Lydia Action saw fit to support, Lydia Action is the only organization, according to me, that has shown me these amazing results. She stated. "They did not give up on us, they took us through every necessary stage, preparing us for success and they have provided us with the money promised" She added.*



**Lizineti** from Chikanga village of T/A Chadza in Lilongwe.

## THE PROGRAMME

Lydia Action supported women with self-tailored income generating activities through the provision of zero interest and non-collateral loans in five communities located in the South Eastern Region: Namakhuwa, Namalima, Issa, Dimusa, and Ngwelerero. A similar activity was conducted in the Central Region's T/A Chadza, Mnongwa, and Chikanga VDCs. The financial support was provided to women that demonstrated knowledge and comprehension of the business workshop that they had undergone, as well as their aptitude to apply the lessons in their different entrepreneurial efforts after assessments. The targeted women beneficiaries were hundred (100), and out of these ninety-one 91 percent (91 women) were supported with zero interest and non-collateral loans.

### Challenges

The money intended to help the women with self-tailored income generating activities lost value due to the devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha during the quarter and subsequent increase in the cost of living, interrupting the initial business plans and forcing women to adjust expenses depending on their capital. Lydia Action was unable to adjust its programme budget owing to funding limitations.

### Way Forward

Lydia Action plans for continuous monitoring of the progress of the women beneficiaries' businesses. This aims to assess how the women manage their businesses and establish if they are profitable or incurring losses, as this will guide Lydia Action on how to give further assistance or identify evidence-based need for additional training to enhance business performances.



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



**Hellen,** from DMI St. John the Baptist University in Lilongwe.

## An inspiring hope for the future

Hellen, 26, of Lilongwe, will graduate from DMI St. John the Baptist University in 2022 with a degree in social work. She opted to work for an organisation that empowers young girls as a consequence of her Lydia Action youth group engagement and other personal experiences.

Hellen experienced significant challenges and repeated setbacks, which she credits with shaping her journey to academic excellence at DMI St. John the Baptist University. Rising up from these experiences has helped to drive her motivation to use her education as a way to inspire other young people to aim high despite life's challenges.

*“Lydia Action gave me confidence in knowing that I deserved to be chosen for such an important programme,” She stated. “After all of the rejections I’ve received, I want to utilize this chance to establish my career in the development sector and open doors for other young girls in the future,” She continued.*



**Malumbo,** from Exploits University in Lilongwe.

## Priceless ambition

Malumbo, 26, from Lilongwe, is a community development student at Exploits University. She is passionate about people and spends the most of her time researching various approaches to project management and public speaking.

Malumbo has thrived at Exploits University, utilizing her background in overcoming depression. She likes thinking in unique ways, and spends much of her time discussing with her colleagues the many potential answers to the depressing socioeconomic issues that Malawians, especially young women, face.

Malumbo tells how her engagement in the Lydia Action youth group has helped her develop tremendously and has helped boost her confidence.

*“It’s been a fantastic journey; to be honest, what we’re taught in class is simply theory, but having access to actual development sector knowledge is refreshing and exciting for a community development student,” she said.*

“I knew there was a gap between what we learn and what is practiced out there, but I didn’t realise it was that large,” she added. “Lydia Action has helped me have a perspective of what to expect and how to go about it with confidence; I can’t wait to implement our proposed project to get hands on experience at implementation.”

## THE PROGRAMME

During the quarter the programme conducted the last session of the 3 (three-day) capacity building workshop at Exploits University in Lilongwe. The programme targeted 54 prospective university students from 2 universities for the quarter. Out of the targeted 54 participants (33 from Exploits University and 21 from DMI St. John the Baptist University). Sixty-one (61) percent 33 students (20 from Exploits University and 13 from DMI St. John the Baptist University) attended the workshop. The topics covered were leadership, becoming job ready business etiquette and professionalism and Project management (Designing a project, preparing a work plan and budget, monitoring and reporting).

This completes the programme's capacity building workshop interventions that targeted 75 students 25 from each of the 3 universities: Malawi Assemblies of God University, Exploits University and DMI St. John the Baptist University. Seventy-six (76) percent, a total of 57 students (20 from Exploits University, 13 from DMI St. John the Baptist University and 24 from Malawi Assemblies of God University) of the targeted 75 attended the capacity building workshops.

The youth Development and Leadership workshop aims to provide young university students on the verge of graduation with knowledge, skills, and tools that will enable them to make a meaningful contribution to the humanitarian and development sectors in Malawi Challenges

- Lack of commitment of young prospective university students to group meetings and contributions as indicated in the levels of absence during the workshop and on-going group support at all the partner universities. Twenty-four (24) percent (18 Students) did not attend the capacity building workshops.

- Restrictive school calendars that aim to reestablish semester lengths after the COVID-19 epidemic disrupted semester durations, restricted Lydia Action youth groups in implementing their proposed campus-based projects at their various universities.

## Way forward

Lydia Action youth groups from the partner universities plans to conduct a collaborative project. This is an effort to exposing students to first-hand practical experience of project implementation and management, which will allow them to contribute meaningfully to the humanitarian and development sectors in Malawi.



**Shaping the future  
through competent  
young leaders.**



## 4. EUROPEAN BAPTIST MISSION INTERNATIONAL (EBMI)

**Outcome 1:** The livelihood of the elderly is improved by providing access to conducive living environments, rights to dignity and protection.

### Holding hands

Group Village Headman Mwembele of T/A Chikowi during community engagement at Mayaka applauded Lydia Action for introducing a new approach to elderly care.

“The bringing together of guardians to share ideas on how to best take care of our senior citizens will help our communities understand better on how to support our parents” He commented. “This will also empower communities to be self-reliant and take elderly care issues seriously” He added.

### THE PROGRAMME

The elderly care programme aims at establishing 9 elderly care support groups in 9 village development committee areas (VDC's). During the quarter, Lydia Action established 4 elderly care support groups (Maera of T/A Mwambo, Minjale of T/A Chikowi, Mikuyu, and Mayaka of T/A Nkagula) out of the quarterly-target of 5, representing a 80% success rate.

The elderly care programme aims at supporting older persons through the rehabilitation of elderly beneficiary living spaces, supporting the elderly with protection and rights to dignity through capacity building of designated guardians; where they will be trained on how to take care of the elderly to enhance protection and rights to dignity. The guardians through the support groups will also be provided with subsistence farming inputs as a once off startup capital that will be revolved after harvest for continuation of group farming activities after graduation. In addition, the elderly will be protected through advocacy for the rights of the elderly through community faith-based groups and traditional leaders.

### Way forward.

Continued community engagements to finalize the establishment of elderly care guardians support groups in the 5 remaining areas to accomplish the targeted 9 groups will allow for the start of elderly care guardians capacity building trainings and accelerated rehabilitation of living spaces for the elderly.





## Outcome 2: Women's religious and socio-economic welfare is enhanced through capacity building and provision of safe spaces for religious gatherings

### Encouraging prospects

Agness (27) from Malonje village of T/A Malemia in Zomba is a small business owner who has faced enormous challenges in running her business for several years due to lack of business management knowledge and skills.

*"Price fluctuations has affected my businesses for the longest time and I did not know how to plan ahead to deal with such things as a result I was making huge losses" She said.*

"Having learnt about savings, and planning for each order and recording my daily sales, now I know how to plan ahead" she added. "I am glad to receive the financial support from Lydia Action because I know I will give my business the revamp that it needed to be consistent" She explained.



**Agness** from Malonje village of T/A Malemia in Zomba District



**Flossy** from Simeon village at T/A Malemia, in Zomba district

### Renewed strength

Flossy hails from Simeon village at T/A Malemia, in Zomba district. She is a single mother and operates a small business in her village. She sells dried fish and soap tablets. Annet utilizes the profits from her business to support her household, which consists of her five children.

Flossy, like every other Malawian, has been severely impacted by the increase in the cost of living owing to inflation. She can no longer purchase the same amount of soap and fish for her business. This has made it difficult for her to provide for her family and sustain the business at the same time since her business revenues have been on the decline.

*"As a single mother with five children, I did not know how I would continue to care for them," she said. "I was dying inside as I wit-*

*nessed my business approaching a dead end." She explained, "Lydia Action has come at the right time and I am relieved of my stress; the boost to my capital was exactly what I needed in these difficult times; you have saved my family and my life."*

### THE PROGRAMME

During the quarter Lydia Action supported fifty-nine (59) percent (19 women) with zero interest and non-collateral loans out of 32 women beneficiaries targeted for the quarter. The 19 women supported demonstrated knowledge and comprehension of the business workshop that they had undergone, as well as their aptitude to apply the lessons in their different entrepreneurial efforts after final assessments. The 32 targeted women beneficiaries are members of 4 Women Economic groups (Tsogolo lathu, Pindula, Gwirizano, Tikondane) in Malonje village, T/A Malemia in Zomba district.

### Challenges

The programme planned to support 32 women by during the quarter however only fifty-nine (59) percent (19 women) were supported. The remaining 41% (13) of women could not be helped due to their limitations to meet the requirements for establishing viable business.

### Way forward

The remaining 13 women (41 percent) whose businesses did not qualify as viable will be supported through ongoing business mentorship. Lydia Action also plans to support the women economic empowerment groups with subsistence farming inputs capital that will enable the women to have the opportunity to attain capital from the farm produce once harvested as well as a sustainable source of food. The subsistence farming inputs support is a once off startup capital that will be revolved after harvest for continuation of group farming activities after graduation.



## Outcome 3: Needy children are provided with financial and in-kind educational

### Ready for success

Faith (14) of Mwendakale Village, T/A Malemia is a standard eight (8) female pupil at Matiti Primary School. She is one of the pupils about to sit for her Primary School Leaving Certificate.

“As a candidate who is about to write examinations I had no clue where I could get the necessary learning items to help me better prepare for my exams” She commented.

I stay with my grandmother who cannot afford to buy this for me, as she can barely manage to support our household and my academic needs at the same time” She added. I am very grateful to Lydia Action for the mathematical instruments set, exercise books and ball pens as they will help me prepare better for my exams” She cheerfully explained.



**Faith** of Mwendakale Village, T/A Malemia, at Matiti Primary School in Zomba District

### Seventh heaven

Lukiya (15) of Malonje village T/A Malemia in Zomba, is a standard seven (7) female pupil at Ndangopuma Primary School. She nearly dropped out of school due to lack of academic support as she lives with her single mother who is unable to provide for their family due to lack of stable source of income generation.

“I nearly gave up on school as it has been hard to receive proper support for my education” She lamented. Receiving this kind of support from Lydia Action has rescued me from forfeiting my future for this I am thankful and I hope they will not stop with me but also help my friends that lack the same support” She added.



**Lukiya** of Malonje village T/A Malemia at Ndangopuma Primary School in Zomba District.

## THE PROGRAMME

During the quarter the EBMI children’s programme supported 76 needy students in the quarter with support from the EBMI children’s program. The two (2) remaining students were not supported as a result of absenteeism owing to lack of school materials. Out of the 76 students supported out of the quarterly target of 78 students representing a 97.4% success rate. Out of the students supported, 44.74 percent were males while 55.26 percent were female. The students supported were from five primary schools that were targeted in the quarter namely, Mbidi, Namisis, Ndangopuma, Matiti, Chikupira, and Songani. The students were supported with a package of learning materials that included Exercise books, a set of mathematical instruments, pens, and pencils.

### Observations

Despite receiving school supplies, the majority of disadvantaged primary school students enter classes on an empty stomach, making it difficult for them to concentrate. The pupils also lack basic hygiene basic needs such as soap, and clothes.

### Way forward

Accelerated implementation of the education support to identify 22 additional Zomba primary school students from three prospective schools and support the remaining two students that were not reached during distribution during the quarter. The organisation aims to reach 100 primary school students by 2022 and has had a 76 percent success rate so far (76 students reached). Lydia Action will continue to engage with disadvantaged primary school students, their parents, and their schools to prioritize support based on their ever-changing needs.



## 5. PROGRESS

# 110

Women benefitted from self-tailored socio-economic activities through zero interest and non-collateral loans.

# 4

Elderly care guardian support groups established in Zomba.

# 76

Primary school pupils benefitted from school learning materials support in Zomba.

# 33

Prospective university students benefitted from youth development and leadership capacity building workshops.

## 6. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### PROGRAMME EXPENSES

| PROGRAMMES            | AMOUNT               |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| ADMINISTRATION        | 5,335,098.16         |
| CHILDREN              | 2,257,035.51         |
| ELDERLY CARE          | 2,023,835.54         |
| WOMEN                 | 6,390,835.50         |
| YOUTH                 | 2,544,835.51         |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>18,551,640.20</b> |

Please note that this statement is abbreviated.  
All monetary references are in Malawi kwacha (MK)

## 7. VOTE OF THANKS

Lydia Action is ever grateful to its donors and partners for their support that has transformative power vital to our work and growth aspirations. The support rendered continuously enable Lydia Action's programmes to transform the lives of children, women and the elderly in the most impoverished communities in Malawi. Lydia Action extends its gratitude to the Bakat family in Germany for its unwavering support of its programmes, the Baptist Convention of Malawi, particularly the resources provided by the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI) and the continued and strengthened partnership with the Malawian government.



**Hebrews 11:1**  
Now *faith* is the *assurance* of *things hoped for*, the conviction of things not seen.

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A better world  
for **everyone.**