



The Calling

BI-ANNUAL REPORT
2023

CONTENTS

1.	Executive summary.....	3
2.	Institutional drive	4
4.	Elderly.....	7
5.	Women.....	10
6.	Education Support	13
7.	Youth Empowerment.....	16
8.	Cyclone Freddy.....	19
9.	Progress and Finance.....	23
10.	Lydia Ministry.....	24
11.	Vote of Thanks.....	29



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the face of one of the most powerful and longest-lasting storms ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, Lydia Action persevered and made progress in the implementation of its programmes during the first half of 2023 (January-June). Lydia Action responded to the deepening effects of Cyclone Freddy during a period when Malawi, is facing the greatest cost of living crisis and disruption of businesses due to rising goods, food, and energy prices due to current shortages of forex and fuel in the country; coupled by the global economic crisis caused by the war in Ukraine.

Regardless of the various challenges, Lydia Action intensified its response to improving the lives of vulnerable women, children and older people in order to inspire hope and provide the necessary tools for betterment of livelihood of its beneficiaries. Lydia Action further strengthened its support to the youth through accommodation support to vulnerable University Girls that had no place to reside in the current semester.

Lydia Action through Lydia Ministry further supported Baptist Women leaders to attend a three-day Baptist Women Annual Meeting in Mzimba, the Northern part of Malawi. Lydia Action continues to work with Lydia Ministry in spearheading the spiritual component of the Lydia Foundation Vision.

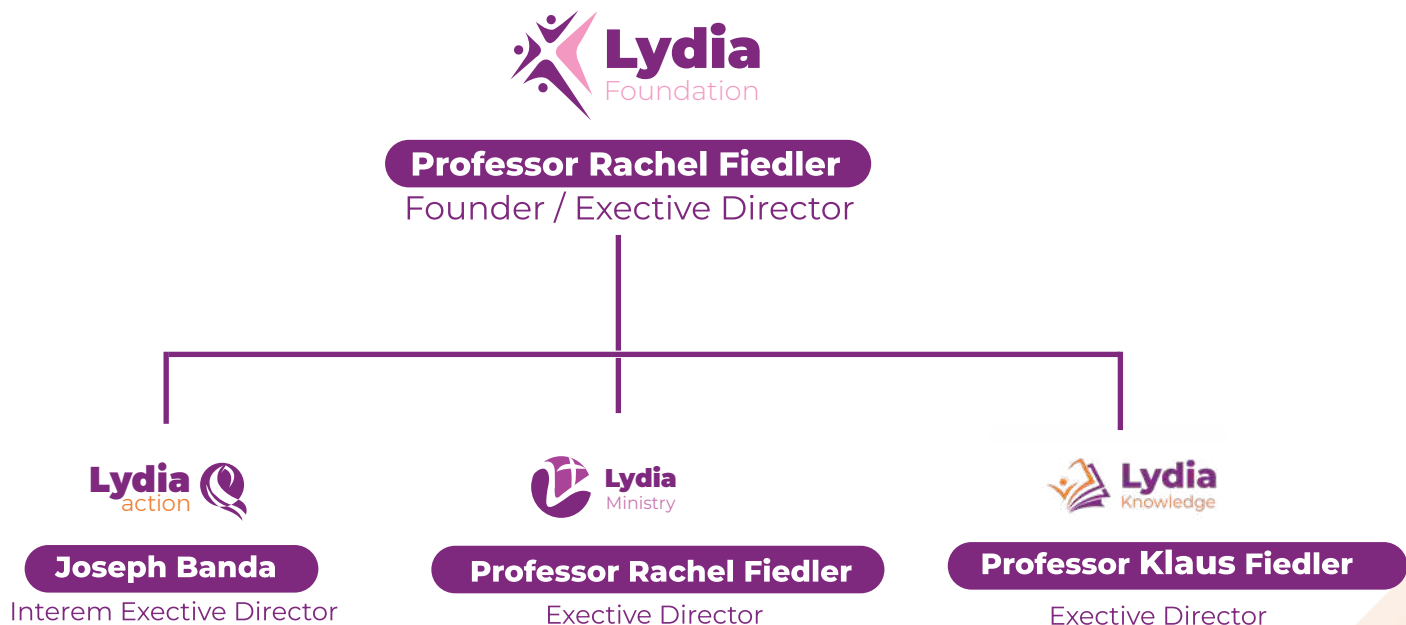
Interim Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JB' with a stylized flourish.

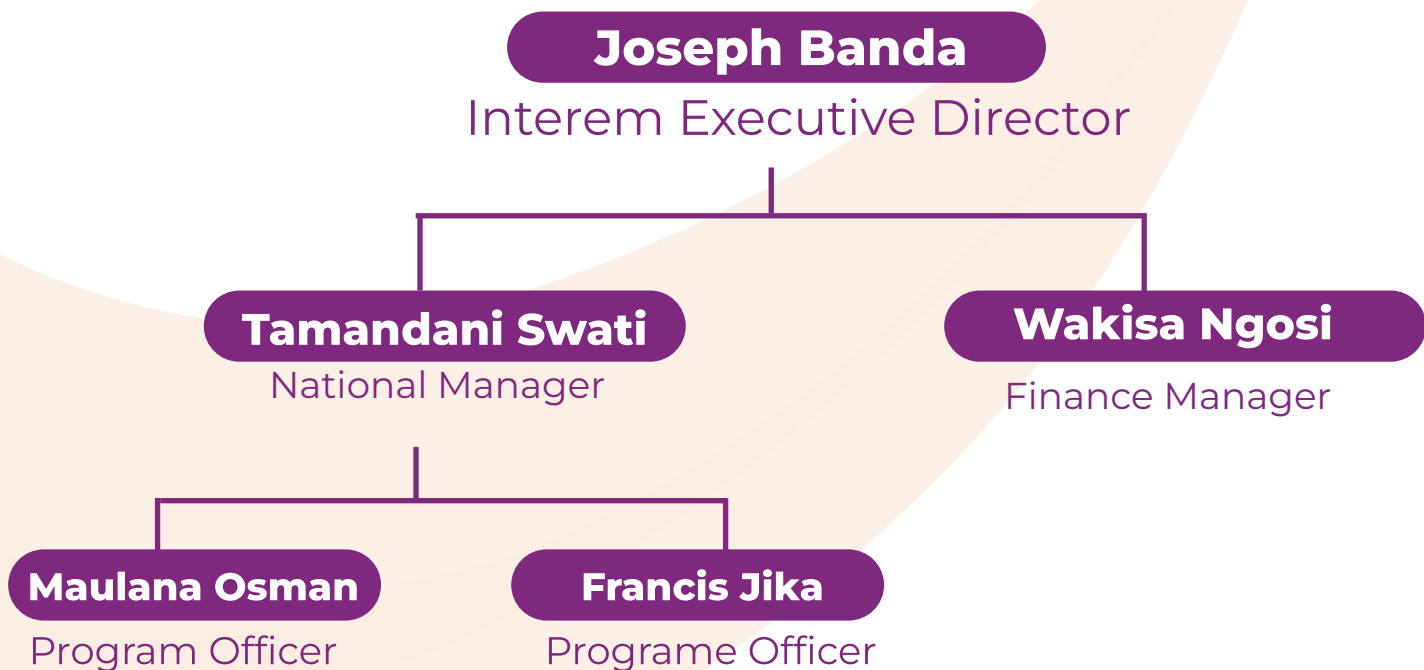
Joseph Banda

2. INSTITUTIONAL DRIVE

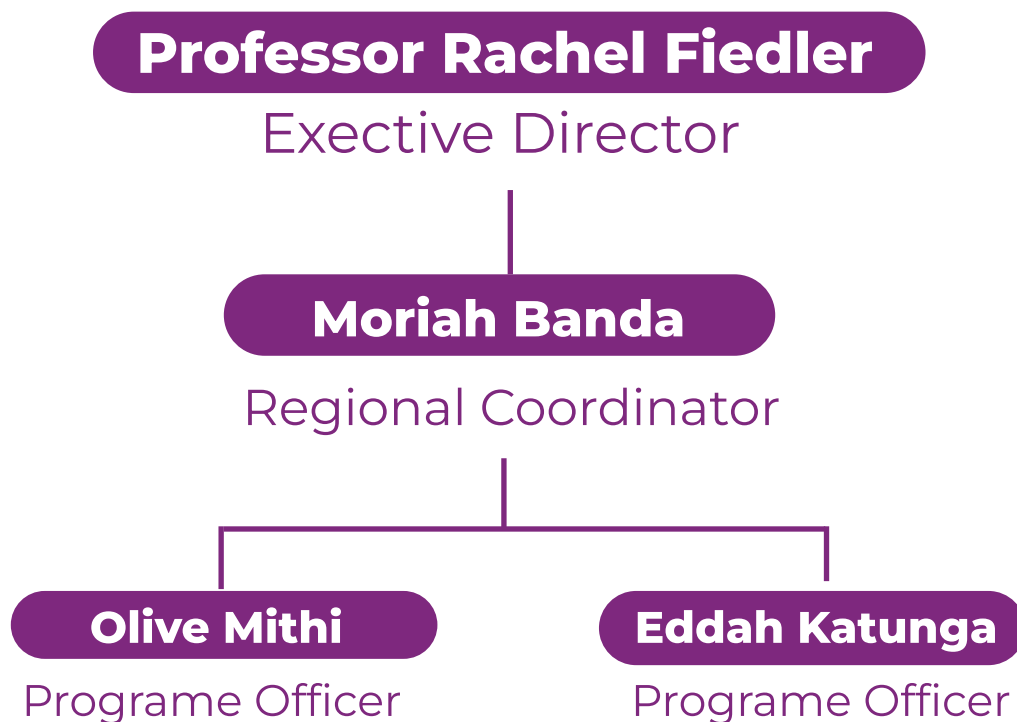
1. Lydia Foundation Organogram



2. Lydia Action Organogram



3. Lydia Ministry Organogram



**Woman founded
and Youth lead**



EUROPEAN BAPTIST MISSION INTERNATIONAL (EBMI)

3 ELDERLY

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



THE GARDEN

In July 2022 Lydia Action and a group of compassionate 10 villagers from 5 villages: Kimu, Namakoka, Jali, kabwele and Khovi-wa all under Group Village Headman Jali of Traditional Authority Mwambo, Zomba district came together with a shared vision to create an Elderly Support Group that would not only provide care and companionship but also ensure the nourishment of 36 elderly beneficiaries.

With funding from EBMI and through Lydia Action Support, the group rented a farm with the intention of growing crops that would be distributed to the elderly upon harvest. Some of the crops would also be sold, with the proceeds going to carter for the beneficiaries.

At the onset of the rainy season in Novem-

ber 2022 the support group pooled their gardening skills, tilling the soil, planting seeds, and nurturing the young sprouts with tender care. In May 2023 the support group harvested six bags of groundnuts from the farm and they are expecting to also harvest at least three bags of Pigeon Peas from the farm in August 2023.

“Five bags of groundnuts will be sold and one bag will be kept as seeds of the upcoming rainy season. From the proceeds we expect to have enough funds to rent the farm this year without needing the help of Lydia Action” said Anne Nkwezalamba, one of the volunteers of the support group.

NOT FORGOTTEN



ELADI JAMALI

“I am grateful to Lydia Action for remembering me in my old age...”

Eladi Adaki Jamali 89 is from Chiuta village of group village headman (GVH) Chopi under Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Zomba. Living under the care of his 80-year-old wife Eladi is partially blind and also faces mobility challenges due to his old age.

Like many elderly people in Malawi, Eladi experiences psychosocial trauma owing to (un)intentional neglect, prejudice,

stigma and poverty. “I have three children who want nothing to do with me as they accuse me of witchcraft” “I was living with two grandchildren who were taking care of me but once the rumors of being a witch spread, their parents took them away” he explained.

“However, Lydia Action has not forgotten the old man. I am grateful for the care and the support.” he boasted upon receiving a care package from Lydia Action on 25 May 2023.

3.1 THE PROGRAMME

30 elderlies (22 females and 8 Males) within Lydia Action's 5 target areas in Zomba namely; Naisi, Songani, Minjale, Chinamwali and Maera communities under Traditional Authorities Nkagula, Malemia and Mwambo benefited from Lydia Action's care packages.

All the elderlies received food packages which included items such as maize flour, cooking oil, sugar and Soya while six of the beneficiaries also received blankets. Furthermore, taking into account that some of the elderlies were affected by Cyclone Freddy, 4 of the beneficiaries also received roofing papers for reconstruction of their houses.

3.2 Challenges

Cyclone Freddy effects resulted in the loss of property, crops and livestock owned by the elderly during the storm. There is also continuation of stigma and prejudice towards the elderly which is a common social-cultural challenge faced in Malawi.

3.3 Way Forward

Continual support towards the elderly and sensitization engagements with the communities in matters of human rights and dignity of the elderly. Migration from once-off care packages to more sustainable approaches such as the elderly care groups and gardens.



4. WOMEN

Outcome 2: Women’s religious and socio-economic welfare is enhanced through capacity building and provision tools that will enable them to be self-reliant and safe spaces for religious gatherings

A HELPING HAND

“My husband is a bricklayer and in 2020 with the Covid-19 pandemic jobs were hard to come by. As a mother and wife, I had to do something.”

Thokozile Zambuyo, a 37-year-old wife and mother of three is a native of Simiyoni village, Group Village Headman (GVH) Chopi of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Zomba district. Inspired to help her husband in taking care of the family she started a small business of selling local farm products such as tomatoes and onions in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As one of the members of Lydia Action’s Mgwilizano Women Economic Empowerment group she received a financial boost for her business from Lydia Action in July 2022. She

used the money to grow her business and also venture in selling cooking oil and fish. With the passage of time, the business is steadily growing and her dream of helping her husband is being realized.

“The business is steadily growing and one day I want to own a big business. However, for the time being I am satisfied that from the business I have been able to pay for one my children’s examinations’ fees and also from the proceeds of the business in December last year (2022)m, I helped my husband in buying farm inputs such as fertilizer” Thokozile Zambuyo.

A portrait of Thokozile Zambuyo, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

THOKOZILE ZAMBUYO



NANCY GOMANI

TOUGH TIMES DO NOT LAST

Nancy Gomani, 36-year-old single mother of three hails from Simiyoni village, Group Village Headman (GVH) Chopi of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Zomba district. She runs a small business in her village selling groceries such as cooking oil and soap tablets.

She went through a business training 2021 and In July 2022 she received a financial boost for her business from Lydia Action but things have not been plain sailing. Nancy, like most small business owners in Malawi have been severely impacted by the increase in the cost of living due to inflation owing to shortage of fuel and forex in the country. Even with the boost she can no longer

afford the same amount of goods she used to order for her business.

“With all gratitude to Lydia Action for the support but I am barely making ends meet nowadays. The business is on and off depending on the needs of my family at the time. Sometimes I have had to use the business capital for my family survival” lamented Nancy However, she remains hopeful that with the passing of the rainy season her business will pick up, “With the business knowledge I got from the trainings I still know how to run a business and I will be able to revive the business in time”

4.1 THE PROGRAMME

During the first half of 2023 Lydia Action carried out a follow up exercise of 19 EBMI supported women who were provided with business support in July and August 2022 to gain insights on business progress. The 19 women beneficiaries are members of 4 Women Economic groups (Tsoyolo Lathu, Pindula, Gwirizano, Tikondane) in Malonje Village, T/A Malemia in Zomba District.

The follow up exercise findings indicated that out of the 19 women it was only 8 women who have businesses that are running profitably while the remaining 11 women are finding struggles due to mostly having used their busi-

nesses' capital to carter for emergencies during Cyclone Freddy. However, even from those whose businesses are not currently making substantial profits it was observed that the businesses have had a positive impact on their livelihood as all 19 women indicated that from proceeds of the businesses, they were able to purchase farm inputs for their families in the just ending rainy season. While from the 8 whose businesses are still thriving five have been able to purchase household assets.



4.2 Challenges

High levels of inflation in the country due to shortages of forex and fuel resulting in rapid increase of transportation, wholesale and retail prices that resulted in depreciation of capital invested.

4.3 Way Forward

Lydia Action plan to give financial boost to the 11 women whose businesses are struggling in the next quarter. Furthermore, Lydia Action also plans to put in motion last year's plan of providing the women with farm inputs that will enable them to attain capital from the farm produce once harvested as well as a sustainable source of food.

5. EDUCATION SUPPORT

Outcome 3: Children are empowered through educational support and provision of psycho-social needs

ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS



Imurani Hassan

Imurani Hassan is a 16-year-old standard eight student at Matawale Primary School living in a small village of Kalupe, Group Village Headman Machilika of Traditional Authority Nkagula on the outskirts of Zomba City. He is the fourth born in a family of six being raised by his parents, who work long hours to make ends meet. Despite his parents' best effort Imurani and his siblings live in poverty and his grades have always been affected due to lack of basic school materials that was until one day in July 2022, Imurani's head teacher informed him that he had been selected as a beneficiary of Lydia Action's Education Support Program.

When Imurani was selected into the program he had only one exercise book in which he was writing all his school work. The Program provided Imurani with exercise books, pens, Mathematical instrument and pencils. He started attending

classes regularly and soon began to see a marked improvement in his grades.

Over the next months, Imurani's grades continued to improve steadily. He has improved from an average student to currently being the best student in a class of over 60 students. This year Imurani in his Government Examination Zone which comprises of 7 Primary Schools and over 400 students finished as number 7 top pupil.

"I am determined to make most of the help I have received from Lydia Action because without this help I would have probably dropped out but now I am confident I will be selected to a Government Secondary School" Imurani Hassan

CROOKED STICKS DRAW STRAIGHT LINES



Suwema Davison is a 15-year-old former one student at Masongola Secondary School in Zomba City but hails from a small village of Katete, Group Village Ntologo in the Traditional Authority Malemia on the outskirts of the City. She is the third born in a family of six being raised by her single mother.

Suwema was a bright student before she lost her father in 2016 while she was in standard four. With the death of her father Suwema lost her main source of support which led to her missing classes and examinations due to lack of financial support.

In 2021 Suwema was selected as one of the beneficiaries of Lydia Action's Education Support Program while she was in standard 7 at Songani Primary School. As a beneficiary of Lydia's education, Suwema was provided with basic education materials such as notebooks and pens and the program also covered her examinations fees. The support allowed Suwema to complete her primary education.

Within months of receiving support, Suwema's performance improved tremendously. By the end of 2021 she was the best student in her class and upon sitting for the nationwide Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations in 2022 she was selected to Masongola Secondary School. "My father's passing caused so much mental distraction that I dropped out from being top of my class to just an average student. The support from Lydia was more than just the materials, it was also morale boost to me. Now look at me" lamented Suwema

SUWEMA DAVISON

5.1. THE PROGRAMME

During the first half of 2023 the EBMI children's programme supported 40 needy students. Out of the students supported, 20 percent were males while 80 percent were female. The students supported are from five primary schools namely, Matawale, Ndangopuma, Ntonda, Chikupira, and Songani under three T/As namely Malemia, Nkagula and Mwambo in Zomba District.

The students were supported with a package of learning materials that included Exercise's books, a set of mathematical instruments, pens, and pencils. Furthermore, 20 female students were supplied with menstrual pads.

5.2. Challenges

Despite receiving school supplies, the majority of the students were observed to be putting on worn out uniforms. Some of the students were observed to be lacking school shoes as they were bare footed.

5.3. Way Forward.

Lydia Action in collaboration with Lydia Ministry will engage a local tailor to provide school uniforms. Furthermore, Lydia Action will include school shoes in its future Education Support packages



6. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Outcome 4: Prospective university students are equipped with practical knowledge, skills, and tools to meaningfully contribute to the humanitarian and development sector.

CARRYING THE TORCH

22-year-old Patience Chimulu of George Village, Group Village Headman Kapeni, T/A Kapeni, Blantyre is one of the four students at University of Malawi who have benefited from youth program in 2023. The second year Bachelor of Education in Mathematics student was selected to the university in 2020 but due to the Covid-19 pandemic she started her studies in 2021.

For Patience, an orphan who depends on her unemployed grandmother, college life has been a nightmare,” from the first day I arrived on campus I have been in lack of basic necessities such as food and accommodation. The government gives us loans for tuition but I have had to use some of the loan money for accommodation and food. In order to survive I started a business on campus selling clothes to female students but that ended up negatively affecting my studies as I was spending more time doing business than school, so I ended the business. In order to pay for accommodation, I have had for most days to go on a single meal per day and serving whatever else remains”

Patience is immensely grateful for the help she has received from Lydia Action “To know that this semester I can concentrate on my studies without worrying about accommodation is a blessing”, and she hopes one day to carry Lydia Action’s legacy “whatever your organization {Lydia} has done for me one day I will repay by helping someone else in need”



PATIENCE CHIMULU

A BELIEVING HEART

Chisomo Chalamanda, is a 21-year-old Bachelor of Arts in Sociology third year student at the University of Malawi (UNIMA), Chancellor College. The first born in a family of three hails from an impoverished neighborhood called Chikapa Area 7 in Machinjiri town in the outskirts of Blantyre City. After completing her secondary school studies in 2017 she was selected to continue her studies at UNIMA starting in 2019.

College life has been tough on Chisomo. With her father currently unemployed, Chisomo's main source of financial support is her mother who is a primary school teacher. Her mother has had to take several loans to settle Chisomo's tuition and Chisomo has from time to time had to depend on well-wishers for her meals otherwise there

have been days she has gone without eating. On top of that she has to pay for accommodation

“College life has been hard and extremely stressful. There are days I would pick a book to study and I would instead just start crying from wondering where my next meal will come from” lamented Chisomo

However, she is grateful for every help she is getting and is confident that she will complete her studies “God takes care of me. My landlord has for some months out of his good heart let me stay for free and now Dr Yankho Kaimila with the help from Lydia Action has paid for my accommodation,”



CHISOMO CHALAMANDA



6.1. THE PROGRAMME

University of Malawi students face accommodation challenges as only 1,200 out of about 11,000 students have their accommodation within the institution's campus. The University's Vice Chancellor Professor Sajidu told the Parliamentary Committee on Transport and Public Infrastructure on 11 June 2023 that about 75% of the students due to lack of finances reside at Chikanda in Zomba, a place not conducive for students.

In response to the accommodation challenges during the first half of 2023, Lydia Action in collaboration with one of University of Malawi's prestige lecturers Dr Yankho Kaimila paid for accommodation of four female students at University of Malawi, Chancellor College. The payment covered for the students' accommodation up to the end of the current semester in June 2023.

6.2. Challenge

The issue of accommodation is so critical and is among the cause of concern in terms of mental health of the students. The Chaplain of the University thanked Lydia Action saying "I write to echo the words of Dr Yankho in appreciating your timely donation towards our students who are having challenges in terms of basic necessities among them on the issue of accommodation. just to put in perspective we have about 9,500 students and only

less than 1,500 are accommodated on campus. The rest find accommodation outside of campus in nearby communities around the University. The issue of accommodation is so critical and is among the cause of concern in terms of mental health of our students. A significant number are stressed. The girl child (our students) need a lot for their wellbeing and personal security and to find a secure place for the girl child is in itself a hustle largely due to costs.

6.3. Way Forward

Lydia Action will embark on resource mobilization in order to raise funds for the program, Furthermore, Lydia will continue to work with various stakeholders including the Chaplain's office at the university of Malawi in response to accommodation challenges

7. CYCLONE FREDDY

BABY STEPS



RHODA MAJAWA

19-year-old Rhoda Majawa of Chipanda Village, Group Village Headman Nsokho, T/A Chikowi, Zomba is one of the Cyclone Freddy survivors camping at Namilambe Primary Camp. The mother of a seven-month old baby whose house collapsed on the evening of 12th March 2023 forcing her to seek shelter at Namilambe camp on 13th March 2023 lamented of the horrific ordeal she has gone through “The rains started in the morning of 12th March and by the evening our house had partially collapsed but because it was night time we (herself, husband and a then 5 months baby) still took shelter in a room in the same house. Unfortunately, in the early hours of 13th March the room we were in also collapsed with my baby sustaining leg

injuries in the ordeal. After receiving medical treatment at Piritimiti Health Centre that’s when we sought accommodation at Namilambe camp”

Furthermore, Rhoda expressed how living at the camp has negatively affected her life “I was doing a small business with a hope that one day it will grow into a big business through which I will be able to cater for my family”. However, she received the items from Lydia Action with gratitude “With the coming in of the food items my husband may now concentrate on rebuilding our house instead of fetching for our daily needs”

A HEROINE WITHOUT MAKE UP

As Cyclone Freddy was battering most parts of the Southern Region in Malawi from 12th March 2023, local authorities designating campsites as temporary shelters for the cyclone victims, one of the victims at Tigwilane Manja CBCC Camp in Zomba, Grace Kamwendo, ached for her fellow victims.

Grace Kamwendo, 37 of Nampala Village, Group Village Headman Maluwa, T/A Chikowi, Zomba had just arrived at Tigwilane Manja CBCC Camp on the morning of 13th March 2023 after her house had collapsed the previous night when she volunteered to take charge of the campsite. The wife and mother of three knew that with limited resources organizing the campsite and

providing for the needs of hundreds of people would be a daunting task but she was undeterred.

“When I arrived at the camp, the scene was disheartening, spirits dampened by the disaster and supplies were scarce. I knew I had to act swiftly otherwise the campsite would have turned into another disaster. I organized a system of distributing the little supplies we had, making sure that the little food we had was properly distributed and not put to waste” explained Grace as she thanked Lydia Action for being the first organization to visit the campsite on 14th April 2023.



GRACE KAMWENDO

7.1 THE RESPONSE



Cyclone Freddy, one of the most powerful and longest-lasting storms ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, made land-fall in southern Malawi on 12 March 2023, causing heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides. It affected 14 of the country's 28 districts, displacing more than 500,000 people and killing over 500. The cyclone caused severe damage on infrastructure, including power lines and telecommunication structures; flooded houses and roads; and destroyed bridges, schools, and health facilities. The cyclone also led to crop and livestock losses, affecting livelihoods. On 14 March, the Government of Malawi declared a state of emergency in the ten hardest-hit districts which included Lydia Action's impact district, Zomba.

In response to the cyclone, Lydia Action in collaboration with funding from EBMI

and in collaboration with the Malawi Government, DODMA, , Lydia Ministries and other well-wishers in March and April 2023 purchased and distributed relief items to 30 campsites of cyclone Freddy victims in 5 T/As in Zomba: T/As Ngwele-ro, Nkagula, Mwambo, Malemia and Chikowi. In the 30 campsites Lydia Action reached out to 5,615 beneficiaries with maize flour, cooking oil, salt, sugar, soya pieces and soap which were distributed per camp. In addition to the aforementioned items Lydia Action distributed 210 Menstrual pads in 10 of the 30 camps reaching out to 105 women mostly being girls still in school. Amongst the 5,615 beneficiaries reached, there were over 2003 women of which 46 were pregnant and 232 lactating, 45 people living with disabilities and over 900 children.



7.2 Challenges

Limited resources to adequately respond to the emergency. Furthermore, the cyclone compromised delivery of Lydia Action's anticipated results i.e women economic empowerment, (e.g. Washing and lodging of crops), education support (e.g. Damaged schools and learning materials, and elderly care (e.g. Damaged houses). The response was further affected by the flooding and washing away of roads to access several camps.

7.3 Way Forward

Engage stakeholders including government and donors on reallocation exercise of the victims. Lydia Action will further make efforts to mobilize resources in the recovery process for the affected populations. It will also advocate within it's networks to agree on a recovery plan or strategy as victims return to their washed away homes.

8. PROGRESS

30

ELDERLY
BENEFICIARIES
REACHED

19

WOMEN
BENEFICIARIES
REACHED

4

YOUTH
BENEFICIARIES
REACHED

40
CHILDREN

BENEFICIARIES
REACHED

5,615

Beneficiaries , 30 Camps

PROGRAMME EXPENSES

DONATION RECEIVED	EBMI	CYCLONE FREDDY RELIEF	JUN-23
Balance brought down	347,682.78		347,682.78
Donation Received	10,028,500.00	8,400,000.00	18,428,500.00
TOTAL DONATIONS	10,376,182.78	8,400,000.00	18,776,182.78

PROJECTS EXPENSES

ADMINISTRATION	5,972,757.67		5,972,757.67
CHILDREN	676,500.00		676,500.00
ELDERLY CARE	2,343,625.00		2,343,625.00
CYCLONE FREDDY RESPONSE		8,246,059.25	8,246,059.25
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT	402,500.00		402,500.00
LYDIA MINISTRY SUPPORT	786,000.00		786,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	10,181,382.67	8,246,059.25	18,427,441.92
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURES	194,800.11	153,940.75	348,740.86
BALANCE AT THE BANK			348,740.86
BALANCE TO BE CARRIED FORWARD			348,740.86

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



Lydia
Ministry

LYDIA MINISTRY

Women's Annual Meeting



Lydia ministry works with leaders of the women's union in its operations. Here Executive director with some of the leaders at the conference

This year Lydia ministry continued to support women church leaders to gain much needed spiritual direction, through invaluable lessons that they picked up at a three-day seminar held in Mzimba beginning on 1 June 2023 and ending on 4 June 2023.

Lydia Ministry, Lydia Action EBMI funding managed to sponsor 7 Baptist women to attend the Event. Lydia Ministry provided registration and transportation as well as emergency funding for the journey and meeting so that these seven women, from the South

East Region of Malawi, could attend. The seven women were one Lydia Ministry staff member, a Lydia Ministry volunteer/ chapter leader, 4 widowed pastors' wives and one pastors wife.

The theme for this major event, in the Baptist calendar was entitled 'Walking in Christ's Life towards a victorious Christian life'. The seminar was divided into at least 3 major lessons. The following are lessons that they were taught at this event.



Lesson Number 1: What is BACOMA

Through this seminar, the women were taught about what the Baptist Convention of Malawi is and what it should mean to them as Baptist women church leaders. Many women, even though are Baptist members did not or do not know what BACOMA is or what it stands for. The aim was to explain their roles and expectations from BACOMA as church leaders representing the Baptist faith.

Lesson Number 2: How may Baptist women ably use the Baptist women's uniform and the conditions that come with wearing the women's union cloth

Baptist women were given lessons through a lay that showed and explained the manner in which a Baptist woman should conduct herself when putting on the cloth. Women were also informed on the repercussions that could be met in not wearing the cloth appropriately as expected by the church guidelines.

Lesson 3: How the Christian Life and day to day Life of mankind should work together

Under this lesson, the question of how members of the church should conduct themselves was looked into. The issue is how Church members should apply the spiritual lessons that they have attained in the Christian journey and work to use and impart their knowledge beyond Christian life but also in their day to day living. Among other things, this lesson sought to teach leaders on how best they can sensitize young adults, both young men and women to be pillars of hope in the church as well as in their community. Lessons like this were taught from the book of Genesis and Psalms. The lesson left the attendees with a major question of reflection that they needed to keep in their hearts as they returned to their homes, which was how best can the Baptist Church Member put God first in His or Her endeavors of spiritual life to put God first.

In all, Lydia Ministry achieved the further training of its women church leaders to be able to train their fellow church members and others alike of God's message through the lessons that they were taught at the seminar. Lydia Ministry contributed a total of Mk340,500 towards transport, registration and emergency money for the seminar. The Ministry is confident that that it was a resounding success.



Women were privileged to be ministered by very experienced women leaders



**“Even If I’m in a place
where light can’t sweep
through, God’s grace will
reach me and save me.”**

— Luffina Lourduraj



**Let us hold unswervingly
to the hope we profess, for
he who promised is
faithful. *Hebrews 10:23***

9. VOTE OF THANKS

Lydia Action thanks the European Baptist Mission Intentional (EBMI), in proactively releasing funds to respond to the unprecedented disaster of cyclone Freddy while still supporting the regular Lydia action programmes. We remain committed to accomplishing the EBMI mission and vision in Malawi.



www.lydiaction.org

A better world
for **everyone.**



A better world
for **everyone.**

