

**STRENGTH IN
SOLIDARITY**

2023
ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

1. SUMMARY	2
2. INSTITUTIONAL DRIVE	3
EUROPEAN BAPTIST MISSION INTERNATIONAL (EBMI)	
3. WOMEN	7
4. CHILDREN	11
5. ELDERLY	14
6. YOUTH	18
7. CYLONE FREDDY	22
8. PROGRESS	24
9. VOTE OF THANKS	25
10. FINANCIAL STATEMENT	26



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a year of numerous challenges posed by the Cyclone Freddy and high cost of living due to among other things shortage of forex, fuel and devaluation of the local currency, Lydia Action effectively exhibited its adaptability, inventiveness, resilience, and unwavering pursuit for tangible results.

Lydia Action in the final year of the first phase of DREAM30; a 10-year (2021-2030) strategic plan that guides its implementation of interventions successfully achieved key intermediate strategic objectives among others improving its staff capacity, enhancing community support group capacities, enhancing transparent leadership, operationalizing policies, and increasing visibility of the organization's work in communities and amongst district, national and international stakeholders.

Furthermore, the year 2023 saw Lydia Action accelerate the delivery of its programs. One hundred forty-Six 146 (125 female, 25 male) elderly people were provided with care and support packages. Additionally, Lydia Action organized four elderly care training workshops reaching out to forty-three (43) caregivers in recognition of the importance of

addressing the needs of the aging population. Thirty-Five (35) women were trained in Gender Based Violence, equipping them with valuable skills to overcome socioeconomic barriers. Moreover, the organization distributed education support items to seventy-eight (78) children (53 girls, 25 boys), in continuance of its efforts of making positive impact on the lives of marginalized children. Lydia Action further strengthened its support to the youth through provision of accommodation to four (4) University Students (all girls).

Lydia Action also developed policies to govern operations and work processes. This included improvement of decision-making processes, refinement of communication systems and improvement of its Human Resource System. Additionally, Lydia Action maintained its legal standing with the Malawi Government by registering with the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA). Furthermore, Lydia Action strengthened its partnerships with valuable stakeholders such as the donor community and other local NGOs.



Joseph Banda

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

Executive Director

2. INSTITUTIONAL DRIVE



Enhancing **efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, compliance, human resources, resource mobilization, strategic leadership, and partnerships.**

2.1 Sustained and strengthened partnership with Malawi Government

In its operations in South-East Malawi in 2023, Lydia Action collaborated with Zomba District Council, especially the Council's Social Welfare Department. The collaboration led to Mrs. Pauline Zoya an Assistant Community Development Officer from Zomba

DC's Social Welfare department in facilitating a Women Economic Empowerment Gender Based Violence (GBV) training workshop for Lydia Action's beneficiaries in August, and Mr. Winiko also from Zomba DC's Social

Welfare department facilitating three elderly caregivers training workshops in August and September 2023. Furthermore, Lydia Action collaborated with the Zomba District Education Management Office (DEMO) in the implementation of all its Education Support program activities.

2.2 Compliance

In August 2023, Lydia Action fulfilled the legal mandate required by every NGO in Malawi by paying annual fees to The Non-Governmental Organizations Regulatory Authority (NGORA) to register and maintain its legal standing as an affiliate of NGORA. NGORA was established as a statutory body by an act of Parliament, the NGO (Amendment) Act 2022, with the mandate to register and regulate the operations of all NGOs in Malawi. As a government agency, NGORA is under the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare.

2.3 Strengthening Partnership with EBMI

In October 2023, Lydia Action received a donor visit from the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI). EBMI's South and East Africa Regional Coordinator Pastor Fletcher Kaiya and EBMI-Germany Promotion and Fundraising Executive Pastor Lars Muller met Lydia Action's staff and some of the EBMI's Women Empowerment Program beneficiaries on the 3rd of October 2023. The EBMI team heard firsthand on the experiences and challenges being faced by the beneficiaries such as dire economic environment due to the devaluation of the local currency which has posed challenges for women to practically endeavor in viable income generating activities.

2.4 Strengthening Partnerships with other local NGOs.

During the third quarter of 2023, Lydia Action entered into a partnership with a fellow local, Youth-led NGO, Change4us Malawi. Through the Memorandum of understanding signed by the two organizations, the partnership will mainly focus on efforts to address social and environmental issues through joint initiatives, resource sharing and collective efforts. Additionally, through the help of Zomba District council in the month of August 2023, Lydia Action collaborated with Malawi Network of Older Persons (MANEPO). MANEPO is a consortium of over 60 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) implementing various programs aimed at protecting the rights of the elderly in Malawi. This collaboration led to Miss Maria Masiye, MANEPO's project officer in facilitating the Elderly Care training workshop at Jali on the 16th of August 2023.

2.5 Advocacy for community Engagement and Stakeholder Partnerships

In November 2023 Lydia Action in collaboration with Mzuzu University, Zomba District Social Welfare Office and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) conducted a community-based workshop on Health, Religion, Culture and Disaster Preparedness. The activity aimed at building additional knowledge and evidence towards a Mzuzu University research project funded by Nagel Institute, as well as Lydia Action's commitment to preparing target communities for possible disasters and their effects on women, children and the elderly. The activity was led by Associate Professor Dr. Rachel Fiedler and partic-

ipants mainly included traditional, religious, and cultural leaders.

Furthermore, In December 2023 Lydia Action participated in a one-day Stakeholder Consultative Workshop on increasing Student Internship and Employment Opportunities at Mzuzu University. The workshop was organized by the Department of Theology and Religious studies under the faculty of Humanities and Social Studies. The workshop was aimed at creating and increasing stakeholder partnerships in exploring ways that would help the Department to boost internship and employment opportunities for its students and prepare students for the high unemployment challenge.

2.6 Continued Institutional Strengthening

In its efforts to ensure the realization of Dream30, and effective and efficient delivery of its objectives and goals, the third quarter saw Mrs. Thokozani Mafubza taking up the role of Deputy Executive Director. Furthermore, Mr. Brian Kumwenda joined as a Human Resources Officer on a voluntary basis. Additionally, Miss Thokozani Chitatanga joined the team as a Monitoring and Evaluation officer also on vol-

untary basis.

Lydia Action completed the development of various organizational policies such as the Digital Media Communication strategy. The organization further established guiding principles for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure transparency and accountability in governance and decision making. This was done through the development of Terms of References (ToRs) for the SLT.

2.7 Annual Review

During the last quarter, Lydia Action conducted its second ever annual programme planning and review meeting at its offices in Zomba. The review meeting was aimed at improving the organization's capacity, programs, and performance. The focus areas of review were tailored to enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of processes, relevance of systems and policies, financial compliance, organizational culture, human resources, and strategic leadership.

2.8 Challenges

- Increased organizational operational costs due to deteriorating economic conditions straining budgets and use of resources.

2.9 Way Forward

Continue engagement with strategic stakeholders such as the government, other local NGOs and donors on resource mobilization and partnerships in implementation. To push this agenda, the Deputy Executive Director was appointed as the focal point of resource mobilization efforts for the organization.



Stakeholder Consultative Workshop on Increasing Student Internship and Employment Opportunities at Mzuzu University'



**EUROPEAN BAPTIST
MISSION INTERNATIONAL**
(EBMI) PROGRAMME

3. WOMEN

OUTCOME 1: Women are empowered to exercise their rights freely and safely to be productive citizens of their communities.

AT THE END OF IT ALL, I STILL STAND

In the dusty streets of Simiyoni Village, GVH Chopi under T/A Malemia, Zomba, Malawi, Flossy Adamu a 25-year-old beneficiary of Lydia Action's Women Empowerment program, epitomizes resilience.

"In 2022, Lydia Action gave me a chance to dream," Flossy recalls, reflecting on her journey. Supported with a loan under the Lydia Action's Women Empowerment Program, she ventured into the challenging world of small business, selling tomatoes and fish despite economic turmoil. "Every setback is a test of my resolve," she affirms, facing the devaluation of the local currency and shortages of fuel and forex head-on. Yet, with unwavering determination, the wife and mother of three presses forward.

"Lydia Action's support was my lifeline," Flossy emphasizes, acknowledging the program's role in providing not just financial aid but also a community of support and mentorship through the business trainings and being part of women empowerment groups.

Today, Flossy's business stands as a testament to her perseverance. "Against all odds, my small business continues to thrive," she declares, inspiring others with her resilience and determination.



FLOSSY, of Simiyoni Village, GVH Chopi under T/A Malemia, Zomba



FELISINA Malonje Village, GVH Chopi in T/A Malemia , Zomba

ECHO OF EMPOWERMENT

Felisina Njewa, a 45-year-old entrepreneur, found her voice through Lydia Action's Women Empowerment program. A wife and mother of four hailing from Malonje Village, GVH Chopi in T/A Malemia Participated in the August 2023 Gender Based Violence (GBV) training workshop organized by Lydia Action. The training proved to be a turning point for Felisina.

"Lydia Action's workshop opened my eyes," Felisina reflected, her voice tinged with newfound determination. "I learned to recognize signs of GBV and offer support to those in need."

The impact of the workshop extended far beyond Felisina's personal journey. "At home, we talk openly about GBV now," she shared a sense of empowerment infusing her words. "We're breaking the silence and building a safer environment for everyone."

The ripple effects of Lydia Action's workshop are undeniable. "I feel empowered to make a difference," Felisina declared, her eyes alight with purpose. "Together, we're building a brighter future for our community."

3.3 THE PROGRAMME

Malawi has over the past five years been experiencing a multitude of disasters including Cyclone Idai in 2019, Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombe in 2022, and most recently Cyclone Freddy in 2023. Statistics show that disasters often lead to displacement of social norms, and increased poverty, all of which can exacerbate existing risks of violence against women and girls. In a country where 1 out of 2 women experiences physical or sexual violence in their lifetime the situation is dire.

In light of all this and out of the back of having conducted follow ups on 19 of the program's beneficiaries during the first half of 2023, in August 2023, Lydia Action in collaboration with Zomba District Council conducted a two-day Gender Based Violence (GBV) training workshop at Ndangopuma Baptist Church in T/A Malemia, Zomba. Participants at the workshop were 35 women who are beneficiaries of Lydia Action's Women Economic Empowerment program hailing from three (3) villages namely Malonje, Simiyoni and Kuwilalani all under Group Village Headman Chopi.

The main purpose of the workshop was to enlighten the participants on GBV and on how GBV directly affects Women Economic Empowerment as preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) is both a human rights imperative and a multifaceted economic issue; GBV creates barriers for economic opportunities and growth. Participants were trained on the types and main causes of GBV in Malawi.

Furthermore, the participants were also equipped with knowledge of business management in the face of GBV. Lastly, the participants were taught the practical know-how of what to do when one or a group experiences GBV.

3.4 Challenges

- High cost of living in the country: Devaluation of the local currency plus shortages of forex and fuel resulting in rapid increase of transportation, wholesale and retail prices that resulted in depreciation of capital invested.
- Illiteracy: The GBV training program revealed that most participants have low literacy skills, which has an adverse impact on how GBV concerns are understood and also contributes to bad business management.
- Lack of funds: Due to high inflation and depreciation of the Malawi currency the Women Economic Empowerment program is being derailed with lack or little funds to give as business loans to the women groups.

3.5 Way Forward

- Lydia Action will continue to strengthen the Women Economic Empowerment groups.
- Incorporate group loans instead of individual loans.
- Change the program to include other issues facing women such as Gender Equality issues and Sexual Reproductive Health.





Matawale Primary School, T/A Nkagula,
Zomba

4.

CHILDREN

Outcome 2: Children withstand barriers deterring them from fulfilling their educational potentials.

JOINING HANDS IN EDUCATING THE FUTURE LEADERS

In the outskirts of Zomba City in the Traditional Authority Nkagula lies Matawale Primary School, a humble institution that stands as an inspiration of hope for its community amidst the challenges of poverty and limited resources. As most schools in rural areas in Malawi, Matawale Primary School struggles to provide for its underprivileged pupils, facing insurmountable odds in the pursuit of education. However, since 2021, a transformative partnership with Lydia Action has breathed new life into the school's corridors, illuminating the path to a brighter future for its pupils.

In 2021, eight (8) pupils at Matawale Primary School were selected into Lydia Action's Education Support Program. The pupils selected received school materials such as pens, pencils and notebooks. The children were also supported financially for their school development fund contributions.

Headmaster Mr. Kwatambala, a steadfast advocate for his students' well-being, reflects on the impact of Lydia Action's support with sincere gratitude.

"Lydia Action's continued support has been crucial to the success of the children," he remarks, his voice echoing with pride. "Lydia's dedication has empowered our pupils, igniting within them a flame of possibility that transcends their circumstances."

In May 2023, three (3) beneficiaries of the Lydia Action's education support program at Matawale Primary School sat for the National Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) and in August it was announced that all three had passed the examinations and were selected to Government Secondary Schools. Among the beneficiaries stands 16 year old Ernest Tchale hailing from Jali Village, T/A Mwambo, Zomba now in Form 1 at One Heart Secondary School; a determined young pupil whose dreams are soaring high. With a gleam of determination in his eyes, he recounts his journey with heartfelt sincerity. "Before Lydia Action, my dreams felt out of reach," he confides, his voice resonating with newfound confidence. "But now, with their support, I believe that nothing is impossible. I can see a future where I can make a difference."



LEADING THE WAY FOR A CHILD



In the bustling corridors of Ntonda Primary School in Zomba, Malawi, 11-year-old Andrew Maulidi in standard four stands out among his peers. With a spark of intelligence in his eyes and a determination that belies his young age, Andrew a fourth born in a family of five coming from Chikuni Village, GVH Chauya, T/A Mwambo is a sign of hope in a community filled with adversity.

Born into a life of poverty, Andrew's journey has been fraught with challenges. Yet, amidst the hardships, his spirit remains unbroken, fueled by a relentless thirst for knowledge and a dream that burns brightly within his heart. As a beneficiary of Lydia Action's Education Support Program since 2021, Andrew's world has been transformed with the support of learning materials such as pens, pencils and notebooks from Lydia Action. No longer burdened by the weight of school materials constraints, he now has access to the tools and resources he needs to thrive academically.

"With Lydia Action's help, I can focus on my studies without worrying about how my parents will afford school supplies," Andrew shares with gratitude for the opportunities that have been bestowed upon him. "I want to be a lawyer one day," Andrew declares. "I want to fight for justice and stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves."

Although still a very long way to go but through Lydia Action's support, Andrew has taken his first step to fulfilling his dreams.

Andrew Chikuni Village, GVH Chauya, T/A Mwambo, Zomba

4.3 THE PROGRAMME

In a country where 90% of primary school-age children have access to primary education, but only 51% of girls and 52% of boys complete their primary education, Lydia Action continues its efforts in combatting barriers that deter children from fulfilling their educational potential. In 2023 Lydia Action through the EBMI children's programme supported seventy-eight (78) needy pupils. Out of the 78 children supported, 53 (68%) are girls and 25 (32%) are boys from 7 primary schools; namely, Mbindi and Namisisi Primary Schools in Mikuyu; Ndongopuma Primary School in Malonje; Matiti Primary School in Mayera; Ntonda Primary School in Jali; Chikupila Primary School in Chinamwali; and Songani Primary School in Songani, across four T/As namely Malemia, Nkagula, Chikowi and Mwambo in Zomba District.

The pupils were supported with a package of learning materials that included Exercise books, a set of mathematical instruments, pens, and pencils. Furthermore, twenty (20) female pupils were supplied with menstrual hygiene pads.

Out of the 78 children that were supported, 97% graduated to the next class; One pupil dropped out of school to enter into an illegal child marriage while another opted to repeat even though he had met the requirements to graduate to the next class. Of the pupils who graduated, 11 (64% male, 34% female) completed their primary school education.

4.4 PSLCE RESULTS & CHILD EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

In May 2023, eleven (11) beneficiaries of the Lydia Action's Education Support Program sat for the national Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE). On 15th August 2023, it was announced by Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) that out of 267,330 learners who sat for the PSLCE in the country, 234,644 passed, representing an 87 percent pass rate. All 11 Lydia Action beneficiaries who sat for the PSLCE passed the examinations representing a 100 percent pass-

ing rate, and furthermore, 10 of the 11 (91%) were selected to Government Secondary Schools (2 Boarding, 8 CDSS).

In realizing that the 11 pupils come from underprivileged homes, Lydia Action in October 2023 launched a Child Education Fundraising campaign aiming at raising funds that would help to cover the financial costs associated with beginning Secondary School Education. Through the funds raised in the campaign Lydia Action in November 2023 successfully paid first term school fees for nine (9) out of the 11 students.

4.5 Challenges

- Despite receiving support, it was found that most pupils lack imagination for a brighter future mainly because they have not been exposed to much in life. Most of the pupils were born and are being raised in rural locations, and the only role models they have are Police officers, teachers, and chiefs. As a result, the pupils have low expectations of what they can accomplish in life.
- One of Lydia Action's beneficiaries at Namisisi Primary school dropped out of school and entered into an illegal Child marriage at the age of 15.

4.6 Way Forward

- Lydia Action will continue to support the underprivileged pupils. There is a need to include other essential school material such as school bags and school shoes.
- Explore opportunities to partner with other organizations and stakeholders to provide school trips for the pupils to expose the pupils to a world beyond their remote locations.
- Introduce activities that are aimed at protecting girls from child marriages and other forms of violence abuse and exploitation including training women groups identifying issues of child marriage, awareness campaigns and facilitation of referrals for child marriage and other protection issues to relevant authorities.



5. ELDERLY

OUTCOME 3: Older populations in communities realize their rights to dignity, respect and socio-economic participation.



A BEACON OF STRENGTH FOR THE ELDERLY

For over two decades, 53 Year old Agness Mizele coming from Kamowa Village, GVH Mwebele in the Traditional Authority Chikowi has been the unwavering force behind Lydia's Elderly Care Program in the rural outskirts of Zomba District, Malawi. Firstly, working with Lydia Foundation from 2000 before joining hands with Lydia Action in 2021, her commitment to serving the elderly is not just a duty; it's a calling etched deep within her heart. "Every wrinkle tells a story, and every gray hair is a testament to a life lived. The elderly deserve our respect, our care, and our love," Agness often says, her voice resonating with passion and conviction.

From the humble beginnings of volunteering, Agness has become the linchpin of community mobilization in elder-

ly care. Through Lydia Action's Elderly Care Program, Agness and the Mayaka Elderly Care Support Group have transformed lives in her area. They among several duties distribute food supplies, and create safe spaces for the elderly to socialize and share their wisdom. She organizes community gatherings, raises awareness about the challenges faced by the elderly, and rallies support for Lydia Action's programs.

"I do it because I believe in dignity for all ages. No one should feel abandoned or forgotten, especially in their old age. We are all bound by our humanity," she emphasizes, her eyes reflecting the empathy that fuels her mission.. "Lydia Action isn't just changing lives; it's restoring hope and dignity to our elders. It's about showing them that they are valued members of our community, deserving of love and care," Agness explains.



Agness, Kamowa Village, GVH Mwebele
T/A Chikowi, Zomba

A photograph of an elderly man with grey hair, wearing a blue polo shirt with a logo, sitting in a chair. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with some peeling paint. A window with a wooden frame is visible in the upper right corner.

Pastor Dickson, Halare Village, GVH Kwapwepwe,
T/A Malemia, Zomba

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Pastor Dickson Malilo, 84 years old living in Halare Village, GVH Kwapwepwe in the Traditional Authority Malemia, Zomba District is the shepherd of Songani Baptist Church in Zomba, Malawi, who carries the weight of his calling with grace and profound faith. For three years, he has not only tended to the spiritual needs of his congregation but also leaned on the support of Lydia Action's Elderly Care Program.

In the quiet moments of reflection, Pastor Dickson remembers the times when his shelves were bare, and his spirit weary. "There were days when the burden felt heavy, and the journey seemed long," he confides with gratitude for the support he has received.

Through Lydia Action's Elderly Care Pro-

gram, Pastor Dickson has been a beneficiary of food items and other essential materials such as roofing papers easing the strain of daily life and allowing him to focus more fully on his ministry. "Lydia Action's help has been a lifeline, not just for me, but for the entire community. Their compassion has nourished not only our bodies but also our spirits," Pastor Dickson reflects.

With the burdens of scarcity lifted, Pastor Dickson's calling as a gospel preacher has been fortified. He stands before his congregation with renewed vigor, his sermons infused with the warmth of gratitude and the power of faith. "Through the darkest nights and the fiercest storms, God's light shines brightest. Lydia Action's support has been a testament to His love and provision," Pastor Dickson proclaims.



5.3 THE PROGRAMME

During 2023 Lydia Action under the Elderly Care Program responded to the effects of Cyclone Freddy on its beneficiaries in the first half of the year, equipped its support groups with knowledge and skills in taking care of the elderly. In the last two quarters of 2023, Lydia Action swiftly responded to the devaluation of the local currency and high cost of living.

In February through July 2023, forty-six (46) elderlies (30 females and 16 Males) within Lydia Action's five (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, considering that some of the elderlies were affected by Cyclone Freddy, four (4) of the beneficiaries were given roofing papers for reconstruction of their houses.

In the month of August 2023 in collaboration with Zomba District Council and Malawi Network of Older Persons' Organization (MANEPO), Lydia Action conducted four Elderly care givers training workshops reaching out to four Elderly care support groups: Minjale, Chinamwali, Mayaka and Mikuyu Support groups in four (4) T/As namely Malemia, Mwambo and Chikowi. In total, forty-three (43) care givers were trained of which 81.3 percent were women and 17.7 percent males. The training was aimed at providing the participants with knowledge on how to manage their groups through leadership skills. Participants were also trained on how to provide short and long-term care to older people, promote age-friendly environments, and combat the effects of stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and human rights violations against older people.

5.4 ECONOMIC DISASTER RESPONSE

Lydia Action with financial support from the Fiedler family on 16th November through 19th November 2023 purchased and distributed relief items to hundred forty-six (146) elderlies and 13 elderly care support group volunteers of which over 80% were women. The distribution exercise reached out to all Lydia Action's elderly care beneficiaries in nine (9) areas: Mayaka, Mikuyu, Naisi, Maera, Chinamwali, New Hope, Songani, Malonje and Minjale across four (4) T/As; Nkagula, Mwambo, Chikowi and Malemia in Zomba. Each beneficiary received 10Kgs of maize flour.

The distribution was done in response to the economic crisis that the country is currently facing mainly due to the 44% devaluation of the Malawi's local currency on 8th November 2023 which has had a negative effect on the already majority poverty-stricken population in the country including Lydia Action's beneficiaries and volunteers.

5.5 CHALLENGES

- Cyclone Freddy: most of the elderlies lost property, crops, and livestock in the storm.
- Ill-treatment: Continual stigma and prejudice towards the elderly
- Illiteracy: low levels of literacy amongst the caregivers which negatively affects the comprehension of their roles as care givers
- Coordination: Less coordination at the local level between the Support Groups and local government structures

5.6 WAY FORWARD

- Support towards the elderly
- Linking the support groups with local government structures, especially Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs), Area Development committees (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) in their respective areas.
- Intensify Elderly care trainings for the support groups.

6. YOUTH

OUTCOME 4: Prospective youth become young leaders and drivers of development work that benefits their communities.





Bridget, Halare Village, in Liwonde township, T/A Liwonde in Machinga

THE NEW GRADUATE

Bridget Ziwaya, a 2023 graduate at the prestigious University of Malawi was accustomed to tough times during her stay at the University. Coming from a poor background in Liwonde township, T/A Liwonde in Machinga District, the twenty-six (26) year old could barely afford accommodation throughout her studies at the University.

Lydia Action came to her aid during her final semester at the University by paying for her final semester's accommodation during the

2nd quarter of 2023. With the help, Bridget focused on her studies. "I was determined to graduate," she said.

Despite the challenges, she completed her BSc in Mathematics in June and graduated in October 2023.

"Lydia Action's support helped a lot" Bridget reflected. Now, with her degree, she aims to help others facing similar struggles. "I'm grateful for the chance," she said, ready to make a difference.

THE COST OF ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE

25-year-old Charity Kangola of Makwale Village, Group Village Headman Makata, T/A Makata, Blantyre is one of the four students at the University of Malawi who benefited from the youth program in 2023. The second year Bachelor of Arts in Humanities student was selected to the university in 2021 and started her studies in 2022.

For Charity, a first born in a family of four who depends on her unemployed parents, college life has not been plain sailing, "from the first day I arrived on campus I have been in lack of necessities such as food, clothes and above all else accommodation. The government took care of my tuition through tu-

ition fees loans, but I have had to carter for myself when it comes to food and accommodation. I have been helped by some of my classmates and some other well-wishers including female janitors at the college who sometimes share with me their meals".

Charity who apart from having her rentals paid in June and September 2023 also received a package of Maize Flour courtesy of the Fiedler Family in June is immensely grateful for the help she has received from Lydia Action "it may seem little to others but to me what your organization (Lydia Action) did assisted me to complete my first-year studies."



Charity, Makwale Village, Group Village Headman Makata, T/A Makata,

6.3 THE PROGRAMME

The 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 11th June 2023 that about 75% of the students due to lack of finances reside at Chikanda (village) in Zomba, a place not conducive for students.

In response to the accommodation challenges being faced by UNIMA students during the first half of 2023 Lydia Action in collaboration with one of the University of Malawi's prestigious lecturers Dr Yankho Kaimila paid for accommodation of four female students at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. The payment covered for the students' accommodation up to the end of their semester in June 2023. Furthermore, Lydia Action also paid September rentals for two (2) of the students. Three (3) of the four (4) students supported graduated to the next class in September 2023 while the other student completed her undergraduate studies obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics.

6.4 Challenge

- Lack of funds: The youth program has currently no funds allocation as it was previously being funded under the Bakat Project which phased out in 2022.

6.5 Way Forward

- Lydia Action will intensify resource mobilization to raise more funds for all its programs including the Youth Program. The organization shall do this by implementing a robust Resource Mobilization Strategy that shall be spearheaded by the Deputy Executive Director under the Executive Director's Office
- Partner with other interested local stakeholders including NGOs.





7. CYLONE FREDDY

THE WINDS OF FATE

Atupele Laston a 14-year-old standard six student at Namilambe Primary school of Binali Village, T/A Chikowi, Zomba was living with her grandmother when her grandmother's house collapsed on the 13th of March 2023 due to the heavy rains caused by Cyclone Freddy. Upon the house collapsing, Atupele and her grandmother took shelter at Atupele mother's house. Unfortunately, on the 14th of March Atupele mother's house also collapsed leaving her and her family homeless. During the night of the 14th, they took refuge at Tigwilane Manja CBCC Camp.

Like many school children in the affected areas, Atupele's education aspirations were thrown into turmoil due to suspension of classes "with all I have gone through I am no longer looking forward to going back to school. I am mostly just sad nowadays" she lamented. Upon receiving the relief items from Lydia Action, Atupele expressed her gratitude saying, "Thank You Lydia Action for being the first organization to visit us and for the food stuffs we have received."



Atupele, Binali Village, T/A Chikowi, Zomba



Abraham, Maluwa Village T/A Chikowi, Zomba

GUARDING THE STORM

Abraham Hassan, a 65-year-old watchman of Maluwa Village. T/A Chikowi, Zomba, in the early hours of 13th March 2023 was coming from his watchman duties when the disaster struck. During the previous night, he had left to attend to his duties with nothing to worry about, but heavy rains poured during that night causing extensive damage to his house. Upon his return home, he found that his house had partially collapsed on one side. Worrying for his ageing wife and three children, he was frightened and overwhelmed. To his relief his family was safe, but they were still in danger as the side of the house they were hiding in was in danger of collapsing as well.

As Hassan and his family were still contemplating what to do next, the rest of the house collapsed whilst they were still in it on the same day, 13th March. Although no one was harmed in the collapse, all the household items were extensively damaged. With nothing else to do, Hassan and his family braved the storm at night and went to the Chuluchosema Camp.

Upon receiving relief items from Lydia Action, Hassan had only a few words to say, "I for the donation especially the food items as my family and I have not eaten anything in the past two days".

7.3 THE RESPONSE

Cyclone Freddy, one of the most powerful and longest-lasting storms ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, made landfall in southern Malawi on 12th March 2023, causing heavy rainfall, floods, and landslides. It affected fourteen (14) of the country's twenty-eight (28) districts, displacing more than 500,000 people and killing over 500. The cyclone caused severe damage to 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 the 14th of 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, with generous support of emergency funding from EBMI, Lydia Action in collaboration with the Malawi Government District Offices, 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 Five (5) T/As of Zomba: T/As Ngwelero,

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 2,003 women of which 46 were pregnant and 232 lactating, 45 people living with disability and over 900 children.

7.4 Challenges

Despite the generous support from EBMI, there were still 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)

7.5. Way Forward

- Strengthen Lydia Action disaster risk and preparedness capacities.



8. PROGRESS

Elderly

146

ELDERLIES REACHED

43

CAREGIVERS REACHED

Relief (CYCLONE FREDDY)

30

CAMPS REACHED

5,615

BENEFICIARIES REACHED

Women

35

BENEFICIARIES REACHED

Youth

4

BENEFICIARIES REACHED

Children

78

BENEFICIARIES REACHED

9. VOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of all the communities as well as our government and non-government counterparts, Lydia Action thanks all private donors, well-wishes and most importantly the European Baptist Mission International (EBMI) for the financial support that enabled us to make positive impacts in the lives of many.

Lydia Action further expresses gratitude for the additional EBMI emergency funding

that was rendered to us in responding to the devastating impacts of Cyclone Freddy that hit several communities in our region of implementation. The support was a testament to EBMI's commitment to bringing justice, restoration, and hope to the communities of Malawi.

We look forward to our continued partnership in serving the most vulnerable people in need.



“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”

– Baha’U’Llah

10. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Balance brought down	347,682.78
Donation Received from EBMI	30,953,000.00
TOTAL	31,300,682.78

EXPENSES

ADMINISTRATION	5,753,162.31
CHILDREN	3,230,625.00
ELDERLY CARE	3,029,700.00
RELIEF/Emergency	8,246,059.25
WOMEN	3,015,500.00
Staff - Gratuity	3,012,925.44
SALARIES	4,078,790.98
LYDIA MINISTRY SUPPORT	920,000.00
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT	493,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	31,286,762.98

EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURES	13,919.80
BALANCE AT THE BANK	13,919.80

- 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)

www.lydiaction.org

**A better world
for everyone.**

 @lydiactionmw

 Lydia Malawi

 Lydiaction

 Lydia Action