

# RE-THINKING DISABILITY IN- CLUSIVE RISK REDUCTION



**HARDLIFE THE ELDERLY ENCOUNTER  
DURING DISASTERS**



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# Addressing needs of persons with disabilities and elderly in floods response

By Lyson Mapanga

Malawi experienced heavy rains starting from Sunday January 11, 2015 as it rained continuously for three consecutive days. Rivers got flooded and about 15 districts were affected with the floods the development that led the state president Peter Mutharika to declare Malawi as the state of disaster. It was registered that three districts of Nsanje, Chikhwawa and Phalombe were the most hit districts. The data shows that 638,000 Malawians were displaced and had lost almost all of their belongings.

According to Kondwani Nankhumwa, Minister of Information, Tourism and Culture in a statement he made at Robins Park in Blantyre on Sunday February 8, 2015 where there were prayers in honor of those who lost their lives in that dubious situation, he disclosed that the preliminary report showed that Malawi lost its 171 citizens as he expressed shock saying the figure is huge and having heard that the number of deaths was increasing by then.

Persons with disabilities and the elderly in Malawi were among the large population of people that were affected by the floods. According to the data that was collected by the Malawi Council for the Handicapped MACOHA, 7,681 persons with disabilities in Malawi were affected by the disaster.

Since the occurrence of the floods, many interventions were undertaken by different institutions to assist the affected citizens. Most of the interventions offered in the camps and communities where the affected lives seem not to reach persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Persons with disabilities and the elderly were not benefitting fully as compared to non-disabled from accessible relief aid such as food aid, Wash facilities or healthcare. There was

need to raise awareness among persons with disabilities as well as the service providers to ensure that persons with disabilities are benefiting from the relief aid. Monitoring of the distribution of relief aid was also crucial. Additionally there was need



to determine the challenges faced by the service providers and persons with disabilities.

Malawi Council for the Handicapped (MACOHA), the Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA) and the Department of Disability and the Elderly Affairs (DDEA) with funding from an international organization CBM partnered in a project to promote disability mainstreaming in emergency response while directly responding to specific needs of persons with disabilities thereby enabling access to basic needs in equitable, dignified and autonomous way

This publication shows cases, the experiences of persons with disabilities, response of FEDOMA, MACOHA and mainstream agencies to the Malawi floods in Nsanje, Phalombe and Chikhwawa districts.

# Player embark on a task to fight against Cholera outbreak: 'promote hygiene' incamp sites



**Medical personnel providing health care service to flood victims at Mguda camp site to prevent the Cholera outbreak at the camp Pic by Bennie Khanyizira**

**By Lyson Mapanga**

**F**ollowing the reports through media that there is Cholera outbreak in camp sites, players who dedicated themselves in providing humanitarian aid to flood victims in most hit districts, have made a team to fight against the outbreak by providing wash facilities to promote hygiene.

The publication has learnt, one of local based organizations, Goal Malawi has embarked on an initiative to come up with well managed water points in all camp sites are to promote hygiene.

Speaking with FEDOMA staff, one of the District Officers for Goal Malawi in Nsanje District has said the organization (Goal Malawi) is doing every thing possible to make sure flood victims are living safely.

Meanwhile, government through the Ministry of Health has strengthened its health care services as it is making sure that its Health Savers are available in all camp sites to provide health care services to flood victims.

The Cholera out break was identified in some camp sites a month after the January floods



**Wash facilities: two buckets containing water placed at the camp site to promote hygiene Pic by Bennie Khanyizira**

# Kandiyero-“Ruubishes” floods as a threaten to her life



**Kandiyero: These floods have threatened my life**

A 73 year old woman Damaalesi Kandiyero has described the recent floods as a threat to her life following the miserable situation she is going through since her house was washed away by such floods.

Speaking in an interview after being visited by FEDOMA staff, Kandiyero says her life is on danger despite losing her house and her belongings being taken away, she is a woman with physical challenges and with visual impairment as she finds it difficult to make her life supported.

“I am a woman with physical challenges and am visually impaired. I lost my house with these floods. Can you imagine, my fellow villagers constructed a grass shelter for me which I am still staying under I don’t believe these floods have put my life on danger I don’t know what to do to make my life supported,” said Kandiyero.

She went on “I attached myself to Malemia camp and I used to have food items from Goal Malawi, Islamic Relief Agency and it used to be enough by then. Now since many relief agencies have slowed down, am having problems in getting food as it is only World Vision who are distributing food items and these are not even regular. Due to my disability, I cannot go out to do some piece work (ganyu) which can give some money for food.

She also complains of wash facilities as for now she uses the bush to answer the call of nature. As a special need, she expressed the need for a wheelchair and the matter has since been referred to MACOHA.

Damaalesi Kandiyero lost her house after it was hit by the floods following the heavy rains that poured the land in the month of January, 2015. Kandiyero hails from Lomase Village Traditional Authority T/A Lundu in Chikhwawa district, has gone back to her original home where she wants to ask well wishers to reconstruct her house.

## Asylum seeker in her own land-Floods own Chathima’s property

By Lyson Mapanga



**Chathima: seeking shelter in somebody’s grass thatched house**

A woman with physical challenge from Kwitcho Village Traditional Authority T/A Mulilima in Nsanje district says she can not make it to the nearest camp to make her life there fearing that with her disability, she would not be comfortable amidst strange people as she insists to continue seeking asylum in her married daughter’s one bed roomed grass thatched house following the floods that have owned her belongings leaving her helpless.

“I do express great worry that I do cause a lot of inconvenience to my daughter and my husband and I myself I don’t feel free in somebody’s house,” said Chathima.

Clocking her life at 55, Sakina Chathima expresses worry as she doesn’t have a wheelchair with such a device, she feels she will be able to move about and fetch and carry for herself.

Sakina Chathima is one of the flood victims need an immediate intervention in the most hit district of Nsanje.



**Rose: I find delight in helping fellow persons with disabilities**

## Charitable work remains an in born state for Rose- her 'disability' matters less

By Ritta Chabwera

The January 2015 Floods have brought about a feeling of bringing humanitarian aid to flood victims in various camps where the victims are seeking shelter as FEDOMA, MA-COHA and other players involved in monitoring of innervations have learnt that a person with physical challenge named Rose Kennedy a Malawian citizens had embarked in a charitable work to provide humanitarian health services to her fellow persons with disabilities who have been camped at Bangula in Nsanje district.

Kennedy is not a flood victim but she finds to wealthy to provide humanitarian aid to persons with disabilities who have been affected by floods.

"It's my work and I help those who have wounds by cleaning their wounds. I am not a flood victim but I just find delight in helping my fellow persons with disabilities," Said Kennedy.

After Malawi was been hit by floods, the Malawi leader Professor Auther Peter Mutharika called both local and international organiza-

tions to come in with various humanitarian aid to all 15 districts which were hit by such floods. This call motivated Rose Kennedy to think about ways she can help her fellow persons with disabilities. It came in her mind as she opted to assist such victims with medical aid. She does her work using her wheelchair.

"I do all my work while seating on my wheelchair and I do prove that disability is not inability. I believe charitable work remains an in-born state and my disability does nothing in my every day work. I was trained to do this work by an international organization called Irish Africa," she added.

It is in Malawi's history for the first time its 15 districts being hit by floods as many players have turned up to make their intervention towards such un expectable moments.

# MACOHA- in a leading 'role' rendering care to flood victims

By Our Reporter



MACOHA Community Rehabilitation Worker CRW Raphael Mtiwati (in a T-shirt) giving contractures to Monija Hussein

In an effort to make persons with disabilities get support during the time when thousands of Malawians are suffering following the January floods that hit almost 15 districts of the country, Malawi Council for the Handicapped MACOHA is taking a leading role to give its care to persons with disabilities who are in camps in various parts of Nsanje, Phalombe and Chikhwawa the most hit districts. In one of MACOHA's works, its Community Rehabilitation Workers in all districts are busy giving support to persons with disabilities who have been displaced by the floods. "We are here giving assistance to persons with disabilities. For example here with me is Monija Hussein- an eleven year old girl, she cannot walk, speak but only hears. 'She was born like that' She is an orphan," Said MACOHA's CRW. Monija Hussien uses the wheel chair and Her grandmother ZefferThamusen is the one taking care of her. At first, her grand mother didn't know what to do be-

fore FEDOMA came in. She would lock the child in the house always, thinking that since she can't walk there's no need for her to be taking her out of the house. FEDOMA linked with MACOHA and MACOHA's CRW taught the granny how to do physiotherapy. Now the child is being taken outside to have fun with her friends while on the wheelchair. Her condition is also improving due to the physiotherapy she receives. Apart from health services MACOHA and FEDOMA do work hand in hand with District Social Welfare Officers and Headss of Protection Cluster in a way to find measures that can be put in place to make sure that persons with disabilities are taken care of during the time that they have displaced with the floods.

In their remarks, One of MACOHA officers told this publication that the office will continue supporting persons with disabilities and the elderly in the new location after they have shifted from camps since up to date some have not yet received assistive devices.

We would like to make an emphasis that the office is making every thing possible to make all measures put in place to ensure that persons with disabilities and the elderly are supported during repatriation as well as resettlement in the identified communities. After Malawi was hit by the January floods, several organizations came in to provide support to such flood victims including persons with disabilities who have been camped in various camps.



MACOHA Nsanje District officer Fredrick Mazoko: we will continue giving support

## Khembo: in a worry about the looming hunger-blaming floods



Khembo: I have nothing to do

**By Lyson Mapanga**

A man who will be soon clocking to 70 and is known to have been a victim of Leprosy which he suffered in the early years of 60s, Wilson Khembo has been registered as a flood victim in Chikhwawa district as he adds to the number of persons with disabilities who have lost their belongings following the January floods that stuck the beloved land popularly known as 'the warm heart of Africa'.

Wilson Khembo lost his house and he took shelter in a church which also collapsed later. He then was merely rescued by a canoe man who took him to the dry land on the near side in Tizola village.

Khembo is now worried about the looming hunger as he has no hope as regards to what the future holds for them as people who entirely depend on farming. "We lost everything and there are no crops in the fields. Worse still, I see the government not doing any effort to enable us do winter cropping and the soil is fast losing its moisture," said Khembo. He added "I lost some fingers on my left arm and I lost a foot too.

This happened when I suffered from Leprosy some time back. You can see for yourself, I must be nearing 70 years old. When the floods hit in January, I lost my house and I have nothing to do." Wilson Khembo hails from Chikuse Village on the island of Shire River in the area of Traditional Authority T/A Lundu in Chikhwawa district.

## FEDOMA, MACOHA committed to lobby for inclusive humanitarian aid to flood victims



FEDOMA Staff member Ritta Chabwera

**By Lyson Mapanga**

The mother body of Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) popularly known as the Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi FEDOMA in collaboration with the Malawi Council for the Handicapped MACOHA have confirmed that their commitment is to lobby for inclusive humanitarian aid to flood victims as they (FEDOMA & MACOHA) will make service providers mainstream disability issues in their work.

Speaking in a series of meetings with flood victims lodged in various camps of Nsanje District, FEDOMA's District Assistant Coordinator for Nsanje, Ritta Chabwera says both organizations FEDOMA and MACOHA have embarked on the task to lobby for the relief aid that would benefit persons with disabilities who have been affected by January floods.

"We would like to assure you that much of we know that persons with disabilities have right to access services, it is our duty to lobby for such services and it is also your responsibility to call for such inclusive intervention even in absence of members of staff from FEDOMA and MACOHA," said Chabwera.

Persons with disabilities have been complaining of inaccessible service delivery sitting an example of the pit latrines in some camp sites which are not accessible to them. In reaction to this challenge, one of the players in provision of relief aid, Goal Malawi has pledged to construct disability user friendly pit latrines in all camp sites in Nsanje and Chikhwawa districts.

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Assistant Commissioner of Police for Nsanje Kirby Zebediya Kaunga: security is tight in all camps

## Malawi Police: in 'a full support' to flood victims-Kaunga discloses

Malawi Police Service has said apart from rendering security to the citizens of Malawi, the law enforcers say they have a great deal to render their support to flood victims especially persons with disabilities. The Publication has learnt.

Speaking in an interview with Ritta Chabwera of FEDOMA, Assistant Commissioner of Police Officer In charge for Nsanje Police Station Kirby Zebediya Kaunga says the police is in its role to make sure there is maximum security to flood victims especially to persons with Albinism following the rise of recent cases of abduction and brutal murdering of persons with Albinism in the country.

He said "as police, we are also in the protection cluster where we do put measures in place for person with disabilities and the elderly including those with albinism as they resettle".

The comment has come at a time when persons with disabilities especially persons with Albinism in the camps are in fear of being abducted if the security will be loose. Persons with Albinism are in a fear as cases of abduction are rampant and people have asked the police to tighten security in all camps where there are persons with albinism.



Sub-Group Village Head Wilson (standing) expressing his feel on the recent floods

By MACOHA

In an effort to relief pain to flood victims especially persons with disabilities in Chikhwawa district, Sub-group Village Head Wilson under Group Village Head Chikuseni of Traditional Authority T/A Makhuwira is noted for his effort in rescuing some persons with disabilities and elderly who were abandoned by their colleagues as they fled away from flash floods.

"I managed to organize canoe-trips to ferry the stranded people onto high land in Tizola village in T/A Lundu's area. Group Village Head Chikuse comprises 17 villages and the area was totally submerged with water when Shire River overflowed its banks in January and let me tell you that through my own experience, it was so hard," said Sub Group Village Head Wilson.

He showed great concern when he talked of the tendency by humanitarian agencies of untimely cutting food aid to the occupants of Chikuse evacuation camp before the people have been repatriated to their home-sites and have started producing their own.

Citing an example of World Vision, GVH Wilson said the agency brought only 40 bags of 10kg of flour last time they came and that it was the previous month; and these were to be distributed among 1,387 people.

"My concern is with persons with disabilities. You know what, all the time I do speak to people those persons with disabilities and the elderly should not scramble along with their able-bodied colleagues fighting for the very limited foodstuffs," said Sub GVH Wilson. Chikhwawa district was one of the districts most hit by the floods where people were displaced.

# 'In oneness agenda to provide humanitarian aid', local & international organizations teamed up to make it successful



**Organizational representatives: teamed up to provide relief items to flood victims in 15 districts**

By FEDOMA

In an effort to make their missions manifesting on the ground following the country being stuck by the floods, Goal Malawi, Evangelical Association of Malawi and The Red Cross are among of the organizations teamed up to render humanitarian aid to flood victims in 15 districts of the country which were hit by the January floods.

An international body, Red Cross is among the players in the flood response programme. Among other activities, the organization is preoccupied with providing shelter to flood victims especially in the communities as opposed from those in the camps.

Although there was no deliberate policy that would ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities and elderly in their aid, both FEDOMA and MACOHA advised Red Cross to start mainstreaming disability in its humanitarian services that vulnerable groups should be given preferential treatment thereby making persons with disabilities, when viewed as a vulnerable group, benefit from the undertaking.

In her remarks, FEDOMA's Assistant District Project Coordinator in Nsanje, Ritta Chabwera says after counseling Red Cross that their support should be inclusive to persons with disabilities and the Elderly, Red Cross has now improved as it tries to mainstream disability in its services.

She said "I can tell you that the Red Cross has now improved in its services as the organization is putting the lives of persons with disabilities at heart.

This is an overwhelming to us as an organization. It's our appeal to all players that they should consider persons with disabilities when providing humanitarian aid".

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**Chabwera: Relief aid organizations are improving**

Chabwere also highlights that with the intervention FEDOMA and MACOHA are doing, organizations and well wishers both local and international are trying to consider persons with disabilities. She sighted an example as persons with disabilities do not stand for long time on the line to receive food items as they are treated first before the able bodied people.

Goal Malawi is another humanitarian organization which is playing a very important role in the relief effort for flood victims. Goal Malawi mainly looks into water and sanitation services. The local based organization constructs latrines and bathrooms in the camps and FEDOMA interacted with them to some depth so as to have them make the wash facilities disability user-friendly for people with various disabilities.

Another organization that shows its interest is Evangelical Association of Malawi. This organization makes an effort on their own to make their sanitation facilities accessible by persons with disabilities. However, they were very much concerned with how a person with disability would get into the latrine and not whether the person would be able to use the latrine once he/she gets in. In this light, the local based organization constructed pit latrines in many parts of Chikhwawa district which have rumps that enable people on wheelchair to enter the latrines.

## Stands brave to voice out: calling for respect to PwDs in camps-Abena



**Abena: we deserve to be respected we are human beings**

**A**beno Makoka a woman with visual impairment hailing from Medramu village Traditional Authority T/A Mulilima in Nsanje district, says openly mentioned about ridicule she is facing from fellow members of the camp whenever the toilet is soiled as all fingers pointed at her as the culprit just because she is blind.

Abena is in her mid-30s and, due to the January floods, she and her mother, who acts as her caretaker, had their house damaged and they sought shelter at Medramu Camp. Abena, who speaks with much confidence, was brave to voice out her concern as a visually impaired person staying in a camp.

“Am one of persons with disabilities here at the camp too am one of the flood victims. Since I came here, my fellow flood victims have been now and then pointing fingers at me when the toilet is soiled saying that am the one behind the scene simply because am visually impaired. This really pains me I am a human being and we deserve to be respected,” said Abena.

She went on saying “am also complaining about lack of space at the camp where I am seeking shelter. I often bump into and step on my fellow camp occupants and their belongings and this makes me always live with guilt”.

Abena also voiced out the problems she was getting when it came to accessing water point which out of the camp’s vicinity as her mother, who acts as her assistant and is quite old herself, could not always fetch enough water for both of them.

As opposed to the tendency by many people with disabilities affected by the floods and living in the camps of not speaking out their concerns, Abena’s spirit of not suffering in silence yielded a lot. Sometime down the line after her voice was let heard by various humanitarian actors.

“I believe not to remain silent especially at a time when we are in pains of floods which swept all of our belongings. I know by doing this my voice can be heard by those people high profile,” she said.

Abena expresses satisfaction if she would have shifted to a family tent where she would be comfortable in her own shelter, with only her mother as a partner. She can be assured of her privacy and she would be free to carry out some of the household chores without fear of bumping into somebody or step on or knock over some people’s property.



Some of the pit latrines constructed by Goal Malawi after being advised to construct disability user friendly latrines  
Pic by Bennie Khanyizira

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## **Implementing partners and their roles**

### **MACOHA**

**Identify and map flood affected persons with disabilities and elderly people**

**Assess basic needs of persons with disabilities affected by floods**

**Provision of assistive devices**

**Document experience of persons with disabilities and elderly people in access mainstream humanitarian aid**

**Mapping of humanitarian actors**

### **FEDOMA**

**Support persons with disabilities and elderly people to engage in the monitoring activities within the camps**

**Document experience of persons with disabilities and elderly people in access mainstream humanitarian aid**

**Lobbying for Improved accessibility of camp sites**

**Mapping the humanitarian actors**

**Monitoring the work of humanitarian actors**

**Sensitization of humanitarian actors and persons with disabilities on disability mainstreaming**

### **DDEA**

**Monitoring at national level**

**working with technical sub-committees of 7 clusters to promote ageing and disability mainstreaming in emergency response**

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