



Vol 2 Issue 1

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Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of our Newsletter this year.

It's pleasing to note that we have started on a high note, with high spirits and ready to maintain or even beat our track record as a Country Office. 2009 was an incredibly successful year, we accomplished most of our set targets, were green on almost all indicators and above all we were rated the 4th best Country Office in Africa. This is no mean achievement. Congratulations!

UNDP and the UN in general is rediscovering the space that it needs to take in order to support the country's economic miracle and the progress from poverty to prosperity.

There are still quite a number of challenges ahead of us- but we are now nearly fully staffed – we still need a few more people in PRMU and we are bringing in some Young Professionals to bolster the numbers – but managerially and technically we are ready to make a real impact this year.

We will have to focus strongly on the services we provide; the services we provide each other in the office, the services we provide to the Government as a development partner, the services we provide to the donors and the services we provide to UN agencies. The concept of UNDP as a service station for this broad constituency needs to be well understood by all, because the viability of the office stand and falls by it. If we provide each other good services, we can have a good time and work together without conflict or strife. If we provide good quality and timely services to the Government, they will increasingly seek our support in more strategic issues. As we provide good services to UN agencies, our leadership role is confirmed and they will provide us the space we need to grow and do our job.

The recent office retreat was a great success. It was thrilling to listen to the tremendous achievements that each cluster has registered. It has been an incredible privilege to be your leader last year – I have so much enjoyed working with each and every one of you. You have done an incredible job in difficult circumstances and this is widely recognized. I hope that by now you have taken a measure of who I am and I do so much hope that we can make 2010 better and more enjoyable.



Professor Sanchez could not hide his joy upon seeing green maize fields in Gumulira Millennium Village

MVP on track regarding food security- Director

The Director of Millennium Villages Project from the Earth Institute at Columbia University in USA, Professor Pedro Sanchez says despite dry spells during this year's rainy season in the country, there are prospects of good harvests.

Professor Sanchez is also the Director of Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment at the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

In his report after a visit to Mwandama and Gumulira villages which fall under the Millennium

Villages Project, Professor Sanchez said that travelling through Blantyre to Zomba and Lilongwe, he noted that more than half of the country, the fifth maize crop of the Green Revolution looks "great in higher areas and less great in lowland areas.

"About 80% of the fields are dark green (not nitrogen deficient). National production may be lower than last year, but I suspect not by much. In Mwandama and Gumulira Millennium Villages,

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Resident Representative commends staff



UNDP Malawi staff pose for a photograph at the retreat

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UNDP provides vehicles to Malawi Human Rights Commission

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Thursday December 10, 2009 handed over two Prado vehicles worth US\$ 75,000 (MWK 10.5million) to the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC).

The vehicles were handed over to MHRC by UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Programmes) Mr. Ram Shankar at the Lilongwe District Commissioners Office during activities to mark the International Human Rights day which falls on December 10 every year and the 10th Anniversary of the MHRC.

The celebrations were held under the theme "Enjoy your rights, Remember your responsibilities" and started with a march from MHRC Offices to the District Commissioners Office.

In his remarks, Mr. Shankar said UNDP has enjoyed cordial relationship with MHRC since its establishment 10 years ago.

"Through the years, UNDP has supported the institution through its programmes on Capacity Building and Support to Public Awareness on Human Rights. Through these programmes,



Mr. Shankar hands over the car keys to MHRC Chairperson Mr. John Kapito as other MHRC commissioners and MHRC staff look on

Malawi Human Rights Commission has been able to handle numerous efforts in promoting the observance of human rights and addressing human rights abuses. It's for this reasons that the UN system in Malawi and UNDP in particular joins the Malawi Human Rights Commission in this double celebration," said Mr. Shankar

Mr. Shankar was hopeful that the vehicles would assist the commission contribute to the country's development goals.

MHRC Chairperson Mr. John Kapito thanked UNDP for the vehicles and for the support in building the commission's capacity to operate effectively.

Villagers say they are empowered to demand development

Communities in Salima district have testified that they are now more empowered to demand their rights to development than before programmes supported by the Democracy Consolidation Programme (DCP) were introduced in their areas. UNDP, with funding from the Norwegian Government funds programmes on governance run by DCP.

The villagers told their moving stories during a field visit by Ms. Karin Trydal a representative from the Norwegian Auditor General to Sitima Village in Traditional Authority Mwanza's area in Salima district.

In her remarks, Traditional Authority Mwanza explained that the Radio Listening Club known as Tithokoze (Lets be thankful) has given them an opportunity to demand for services such as schools, health centres, portable water among others.

"Before the Radio Listening Club, we had no clue at all about where and to whom to demand services. We feared authorities and suffered in silence. But now we are enlightened. We can knock on any door and demand services that are lacking in our area." Said T/A Mwanza.

Tithokoze Radio Listening Club (RLC) is one of the 57 radio listening clubs run by the Development Communications Trust (DCT) across the country. DCT's radio listening club project is funded by the Democracy Consolidation Programme (DCP). The aim of the radio project is to empower rural communities to demand their right to development through radio.

Communities analyse and prioritise their right to development challenges and produce what is called a village voice where members of the RLC record development issues/concerns



Ms. Trydal joins members of the Tithokoze Radio Listening Club on the dance floor

they want to be addressed by authorities. The tape is then forwarded to respective duty bearers for attention.

Josetina Kanyenda, a member of the radio listening club explained that their community had no teachers' houses, a development that forced teachers to rent houses in the villagers, sometimes miles away from the school.

She explained that the listening club recorded the concern and forwarded the tape to the District Assembly which later constructed one house at Changoma Primary School which was occupied by the headmaster.

"But the problem of shortage of teachers houses persisted since it was only the headmaster who was housed at the school. We went back to the District Assembly which asked for assistance from Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). As a community, we were requested to provide bricks and sand. Right now we have three beautiful teachers' houses at the school," she said.

Afolo Kasitomu, another member of the Radio Listening Club explained that lack of houses at the village Health Centre led to loss of lives as health workers could not work at night since they lived several miles from the health centre. He further explained that there was no electricity at the health centre.

"We contacted the District Health Officer (DHO), explained to him our plight. As a result, the DHO has constructed one house for the Medical Officer and renovated three for the staff. This is a great achievement and demonstration of our right to demand development," said Kasitomu.

UNDP Assistant Resident Representative (Governance), Mr Fred Mwachangere thanked the Norwegian Government for supporting democratic governance in Malawi. He also thanked Malawi Government for the cordial relationship that exists between UNDP and the Government.

Addressing the villagers, Ms. Trydal said: "I appreciate your success stories. I will convey this to my government. Thank you for empowering women."

Resident Representative commends staff

UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus has commended staff of UNDP Malawi for their hard work, a development he says has led to the successes that the Country Office has registered.

Mr. Dictus was speaking on March 10, 2010 at Club Makokola in Mangochi during the opening of the Country Office retreat.

The theme for this year's Country Office retreat was: "UNDP Malawi towards increased contribution to serving the country's development and its people"

According to the Resident Representative, the Country Office has done extremely well citing the HR balance score card, focused RCA and CRG process, data clean up in programme and finance which has seen the office maintain the green score, exceeded delivery and resource mobilization targets, conducted Implementing Partners (IP) trainings, procurement trainings and improvements on the staffing levels as some of the achievements the office has registered,

"UNDP Malawi is rated 4th best in Africa. This means we are doing extra ordinarily well, it means we are responding to the challenges of Malawi," said Mr. Dictus to the applause of staff.

The aim of the retreat was to discuss common vision, understanding and agreement of goals and objectives, enhanced effectiveness and efficiency and promoting One Team and One delivery.

During the retreat, clusters/units presented their 2009 achievements, key results for 2010 and support measures required to succeed.

At the end of the retreat, the units/departments pledged to ensure that they meet their 2010 targets.

Staff who scored between 1 and 3 in their Result Competency Assessments (RCAs) were also given gifts to motivate them to work even harder this year.

MVP on track regarding food security- Director

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Members of Mwandama Grain bank committee inside the grain bank

the expected yields are high-about 5 tons/ha, except for part of Nambande MV 2, which is in a rain shadow and at lower elevation," said Professor Sanchez.

He further said that this is the first year of the input support programme where serious dry spells have occurred, adding that the well fertilized hybrid maize however, looks much better than in 2005 "drought year" prior to the input support programme.

Regarding the grain bank at Mwandama, Professor Sanchez explained that the bank is huge and full of food and fertilizer.

Professor Sanchez however suggested that the grain bank has a huge metal sheet roof which should be equipped with gutters and storage tanks for rainwater harvesting.

He said the huge metal sheet roof is large to fill a pond, which can be used for life saving gravity irrigation.

The MVP Executive Committee in Gumulira Millennium Village in Mchinji district has constructed a multi-purpose hall that will be used for among other things, meetings, trainings, warehouse for inputs such as fertilizer and seeds

The committee's Chairperson Mr. Martin Ignatsio told Professor Pedro Sanchez, Director of Millennium Villages Project from the Earth Institute at Columbia University in the USA that the community contributed bricks, sand, identified and paid a contractor, while MVP office provided them with cement, nails, roofing materials, timber, window and doorframes.

"Our plans are that we should rent out the hall for weddings and meetings. We also want to use one room for computer lessons for our youths. Another room will be for extension workers who come to the villages to provide different services, while another room will be for agro- inputs to be sold to farmers to save them from travelling long distances to buy inputs," he said.

According to Mr. Ignatsio, one room would also be used for his committee to meet and brainstorm on development challenges in the communities and how they can solve them. The multi-purpose hall has a total of seven rooms.

Gumulira MVP committee constructs Multi-purpose hall



Professor. Sanchez congratulates Gumulira Village Executive Committee Chairperson Mr. Martin Ignatsio for purchasing a truck in Lilongwe.

Professor Sanchez who is also the Director of Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment at the Earth Institute at Columbia University in USA, congratulated the committee for the multi-purpose hall, saying it's a good idea as most Millennium Villages do not have it.

at a cost of MWK 2.5million.

There is a committee that over sees the operations of the truck.

In a bid to solve the transport problem especially of building materials, the Gumulira Millennium Village Executive Committee purchased a truck

The truck is also hired to transport tobacco belonging to the community and business persons outside the village to the Auction Floors

In addition, the truck occasionally serves as an ambulance to ferry critically ill patients to the main hospital in Mchinji.

All in all the truck has allowed the community to generate extra income for the development endeavours in the community.

School enrollment in Gumulira impresses MVP Director



A community volunteer working on the school block at Chandawe Primary School



Communities in Gumulira village which falls under the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) in Mchinji district have embarked on a campaign to ensure that all children attend school. Their campaign seems to be bearing fruits, as manifested by the equal number of boys and girls attending school. In some cases, girls school attendance surpasses that of boys.

Village in Mchinji district. Dr. Schez is also the Director of Tropical Agriculture and Rural Environment at the Earth Institute at Columbia University in USA.

Chairperson of the Gumulira Millennium Village Executive Committee Mr. Martin Ignatsio explained to Professor Sanchez that his committee in collaboration with the village chiefs embarked on a door- to- door campaign asking parents to send their children to school.

This was revealed during a visit by Professor Pedro Sanchez, Director of the Millennium Villages Project from the Earth Institute at Columbia University to Gumulira Millennium

According to Mr. Ignatsio, parents who do not

send their children to school are fined, a development he said has led to almost all parents in the villages sending their children to school.

"The campaign has yielded fruits. Almost all children are in school, except for the young ones who are not of school going age," he said.

He explained that a total of 1, 217 children attend school at Chandawe Primary School. He further explained that the increase in school enrolment implied that there was need for more classroom blocks.

Mr. Ignatsio further explained that his committee agreed with the village chiefs to contribute bricks. Each community was asked to provide 10,000 bricks and a total of 120,000 bricks were made available for the school blocks expansion project.

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In the last three years, Mwandama Millennium Village (MV1) in Zomba has witnessed the escalation of more iron sheet roofed houses.

Group village headman Mwandama has attributed the development to the introduction of the Millennium Villages Project in his area.

“People in my village have harvested enough maize in the last three seasons. Thanks to the Millennium Villages Project which provides the farmers with fertilizer, seed and advice on good farming techniques. Because of this, they (villagers) have surplus to sell and buy necessities of life,” said village headman Mwandama.

The group village headman said generally, the standard of living has greatly improved in the village, adding that child malnutrition is also a thing of the past.

According to the village headman, the successes that his village has achieved have driven members from neighbouring villages to trek to Mwandama for settlement, especially those seeking to marry girls from his village.

Mr. Matias Rajab a villager in Mwandama and a proud owner of a grocery shop located near the grain bank says he initially grew cabbages and used proceeds to open the grocery.

The grocery stocks basic commodities such as sugar, cooking oil rice, salt, tea, coffee soap, among others.

Mr. Rajab explained that the profit from his grocery business enabled him to build a house and buy a TV set. Because there is no electricity in the village, Mr. Rajab uses a rechargeable battery to operate his TV

Mr. Rajab thinks his dreams have not yet been accomplished. He says he wants to go back to school and complete his secondary education

“I dropped out of school in From 2 because I



A cross section of iron roofed houses in Mwandama village

More iron roofed houses in Mwandama Millennium Village



Mr. Rajab poses for a photograph besides his TV set

could not afford school fees. So my plans are to work hard and get enough money to

pay for my secondary education,” said Mr. Rajab.



A girl draws water from a recently constructed borehole in Mwandama Millennium Village

Apart from iron roofed houses and small scale businesses, the village also has a number of boreholes. Millennium Villages Project Water and Sanitation Coordinator Mr. Emmanuel Mjimapemba said so far a total of 62 boreholes have been drilled. He said the communities have also been trained in management and maintenance of water points.

Area mechanics have also been recruited to rehabilitate and maintain the boreholes. Communities contribute a minimal fee which they pay the mechanics for every maintenance or rehabilitation work done. The money collected is also used for buying worn out spare parts.

Mwandama Millennium Village grain bank stocked with plenty food stuffs

Following good harvests in the last three growing seasons, the grain bank at Mwandama Millennium Village (MV1) in Zomba district currently stocks 18,000 bags of maize, 324 bags of beans and 700 bags of soya. 500 bags were sold to farmers in the village.

The grain bank committee chairperson Mr. Byson Katsonga explained to Programme Officer at the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security Mr. Max Schott that last year, they realized K22m from sale of maize and that the money is kept in a community account.

Mr. Schott was in the country to visit several projects that the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security funds.

"This year, we have witnessed some dry spells unlike the last three growing season. However, we are not worried because we have enough



Mr. Schott (left) being briefed by Millennium Villages Project Business Coordinator Mrs. Flora Kaluwire as Agriculture and Environment Coordinator Ms. Phelire Nkhoma and Mwandama grain bank committee chairperson Mr. Katsonga listen attentively

stocks at the grain bank," said Mr. Katsonga.

He added that the committee plans to purchase a truck to ease transport problem. He said the committee spends millions of Malawi Kwacha to transport food items from the villages to the grain bank.

Apart from that, the committee also intends to open a grinding mill at the grain bank, but just awaiting installation of electricity.

Asked how his committee has managed to keep the grain bank running, Mr. Katsonga said that as chairperson he emphasizes on discipline and commitment.

"You know this job is a volunteer job, so I tell the members to be dedicated and committed," he said

Mr. Katsonga advises other communities to replicate their idea of a village bank describing it as a gateway to food security.

Mwandama Villagers reward chief with house

To show appreciation for steering their community from poverty to prosperity, villagers in Mwandama Millennium Village have built a modern house for Village Headman Mwandama.

Millennium Villages Project Agriculture and Environment Coordinator Mrs. Phelire Nkhoma said the villagers constructed the house at the cost of MWK 750,000

Village headman Mwandama could not hide his joy: "I am very excited with my people's gesture. This is my retirement package," said the Village headman.

The House is located adjacent to the grain bank.



The house Mwandama villagers constructed for Village Headman Mwandama (inset)



UNDP conducts training on Integrated Sustainable Waste Management (ISWM)

Stakeholders from both the public and private institutions participated in a three days training from 9-11 December 2009 on Public Private Partnerships for Integrated Sustainable Waste Management (ISWM), as an instrument for planning and implementing the Lilongwe Waste for Wealth Project and other waste management initiatives in their respective organizations.

The three-day workshop which was conducted at Lilongwe Hotel also aimed at introducing the Pro Poor Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach as an instrument to improve basic service delivery at the local level in Malawi.

In her opening remarks, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative (GMDGs), Dr. Agnes Chimбири said local assemblies and Government cannot meet the continually growing demand for urban services by acting alone.

She said there is need for support from other sectors of society, citing the PPP as one of the most promising forms of such collaboration.

"Based on recognition that both the public and private sectors can benefit by pooling their financial resources, know how and expertise to improve the delivery of basic services to all citizens, PPPs combine the advantages of both sectors-social responsibility, environmental awareness and public accountability of the public sector and finance, technology, managerial efficiency and entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector," she said.

Dr. Chimбири further observed that about 67% of the population in Lilongwe city has poor access to basic services, therefore initiatives that focus on introducing or improving basic urban services to the urban poor would contribute significantly to the attainment of the MDGs in the country's cities.

In his remarks, Lilongwe City Assembly Director of Health and Social Welfare Services Mr Vitto Mulula said cities in the country face many challenges, among them, waste management.

He explained that the Lilongwe City Waste for Wealth project has come at an opportune time when the city is facing serious challenges in dealing with waste using the conventional approaches which are now seriously challenged by the scale of the problem. He noted that the knowledge and skills gained from the workshop would therefore help come up with solutions to the problem.

The training was conducted by UNDP technical partners on waste, WASTE of the Netherlands and UNDP Regional Office and facilitated by UN-HABITAT.



Participants pose for a group photograph with Dr. Chimбири and Mr. Mulula

Participants were drawn from Lilongwe City Assembly, Lilongwe and its project partners (CCODE, SWAM, Bunda, Four Seasons), Blantyre, Zomba and Mzuzu City Assemblies, Mangochi Town Assembly,

Malawi Entrepreneurial Development Institute (MEDI), ministries of Local Government and Rural Development, Irrigation and Water Development, Lands and Housing and Urban Development.

School enrollment in Gumulira impresses MVP Director

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MVP provided cement, while communities provided labour for the construction of a two classroom block.

Regarding secondary school education, Mr. Ignastio said that the community only has one secondary school which cannot accommodate all primary school graduates.

At Mwadzamira Junior Primary School in the same village, a total of 500 children are enrolled in the school with 4 teachers. The school also has a beautiful kitchen where porridge for the school feeding programme is prepared.

A look at the daily attendance on the blackboard in one of the classes showed that 38 girls attended classes on the 15th of February 2010, while boys were 20.

Group Village headman Kambwemwe said before the school was constructed, pupils used to learn in a shack and absenteeism was high,

especially during the rainy season.

He explained that the community provided bricks and sand while MVP provided cement and a contractor. He attributed the high attendance of girls to a campaign urging parents to send all children to school

"We tell parents that these days all boys and girls must be in school. Days when girls were retained at home to do house chores are over," he said.

He however said that lack of teachers' houses was a big challenge.

Professor Sanchez said he was impressed that children in the villages go to school, adding it's important that those who complete primary school enroll in secondary schools.

"It's great to see improvements in infrastructure and to see that children are in school. The fact that there are more girls than boys attending school is even more impressive," said Professor Sanchez during a briefing session to MVP Gumulira staff after a field visit to projects in the village.

You Shine Awards

In November last year, the Staff Association and Senior Management Team (SMT) introduced the You Shine Award scheme. The scheme is aimed at promoting an office culture of staff-to-staff recognition to encourage a supportive atmosphere and highlight the positive contributions of colleagues in an immediate and public manner. The exercise was initially scheduled to be conducted monthly. However, staff agreed that the scheme should be administered quarterly. Winners' photographs are displayed on the Wall of Fame in the conference room to shine for others. Winners are also given a certificate and offered a one-day lunch at a venue of their choice. All members of staff are given cards at the beginning of each quarter to recognize individual colleagues or teams that have in one way or another made a positive impact on their work life. **The pictures below show the winners so far.**



Procurement Assistant, Susan Mkwandire receives her You Shine certificate from the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus



The PRMU team poses for a photograph with the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus



The Finance team poses for a photograph with the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus



Administration and Learning Manager Harriet Mariani poses for a photograph with the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus



The drivers pose for a photograph with the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus



The Governance Cluster team poses for a photograph with the UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus

Focus on UNV Deputy Coordinator's visit to Malawi

UNV Deputy Executive Coordinator Mrs. Naheed Haque visited Malawi in November 2009 to appreciate the work of volunteers in different sectors. She visited Dzaleka refugee camp in Dowa district, Kasungu District Hospital, Mzuzu Central Hospital and FLIRD project in Nkhatabay. Below are some highlights of her visit.



UNHCR Officer briefs Mrs. Haque and UNDP Resident Representative/ UN Resident Coordinator Mr. Richard Dictus on the operations of the camp



Mrs Haque admires egg plants that one of the refugees sells at Dzaleka refugee camp in Dowa district



TVM Journalist Herbert Mtuwa interviews Mrs. Haque after her tour of the Dzaleka Refugee Camp



UNV Doctor Elizabeth Muviri briefs Mrs. Haque about the work of UNV doctors at Kasungu District Hospital



UNV doctors and officials from Mzuzu Central Hospital take Mrs. Haque around the hospital premises



UNV Dentist at Mzuzu Central Hospital demonstrates to Mrs. Haque how patients are handled

Focus on Christmas Party



Merina and the Dictus family pose for a photograph



Agnes having fun



Simeon, Ernest and Merina on the dance floor



Hudson, Ayman and Atupele having fun



Frank, Roy, Clemence and Daudi



Kondwani and Terence enjoying themselves



Simeon, Thierry, Richard and Roselyn on the dance floor



UNDP social football team poses for a photograph before the start of the inaugural game

UNCARES introduces social football

Work Without play makes jack a dull boy, goes an old adage.

In line with this, UNCARES in December 2009 launched a social football tournament to encourage social interaction among UN agencies in Malawi and promote awareness on HIV/AIDS issues among staff.

The inaugural match was played on December 19, 2009 between UNDP social team and World Food Programme (WFP). UNDP thrashed WFP by 3 goals to 1.

The guest of honour during the inaugural match was Mr. Ram Shankar, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Programmes).

The second game was played on December 12, 2009 between UNDP and

UNICEF. Again, UNDP thrashed UNICEF by 2 goals to nil.

The third game was played on December 19, 2009 between UNDP and Evelyn Court (UNFPA, UNAIDS FAO), and keeping with its winning record, UNDP won by 2 goals to nil.

The final game was played between UNDP and WFP. WFP won by 2 goals to 1 and were crowned champions. They were also awarded a trophy. UNDP was named second best team in the tournament and awarded a trophy.

UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Richard Dictus presided over the trophy presentation ceremony.

Malawian triumphs in UNDP/Olympus Corporation/AFP photo contest



UNDP Resident Representative Mr. Richard Dictus presents a state-of-the-art camera to Caesar Kachale, one of the winners in the Picture this Caring for the Earth photo contest (Amateur category) which was organized by UNDP in partnership with Olympus Corporation and the Agence France-Presse (AFP) Foundation. The contest was aimed at profiling ordinary people working to preserve the environment and reduce the effects of climate change in their communities. Caesar's winning photograph was about three school girls in Phalombe district grafting a tree. He took the photo during one of his field visits as a Project Officer for the Food and Agricultural Organisation FAO (Malawi) to a project in the district that works to provide livelihood skills to Malawi children through the tending of a school garden. The project established learning gardens in primary schools and youth club centres. Participants graduated with the skills needed to make similar gardens at home. The other winners were from Kenya, Morocco, Cameroon, Lesotho, Senegal and South Africa.

Focus on retreat



Lunch time: Josef, Hariet, Ethel, Siphwi and Jacqueline enjoy a delicious meal



Dickson, Kondwani, Doreen and Janet discussing



Marius and Jan walk along the beach



Serious business: Roy, Harlod, Noud, Patrick, Grace and Clemence in a group discussion



After a long working day, Venge Nkosi takes time to enjoy the nice breeze of Lake Malawi



Group discussions



The facilitator Mr. Koffi Kouakou spices up the discussions with a drama presentation



ZAIN Malawi Managing Director Mr. Fayz King presents a payphone to Traditional Authority Mavwere.

ZAIN donates to Gumulira Millennium Villages Project

In a bid to improve communication in Gumulira MVP, one of the country's mobile phone service providers ZAIN Malawi on February 14, 2010 donated telephone booths, payphones and handsets to the community in Gumulira village.

The donation included 4 telephone booths, 7 payphones and 19

handsets to Traditional Authority Mavwere Group Village headmen, Village headmen and the chairman of the Executive Committee) in order to ease communication.

The telephone booths will among other things be used for charging mobile hand sets by the

community, sale of top up cards and other ZAIN products such as sim cards.

Speaking during the official handover ceremony, ZAIN Fayz King said his company would continue to work with the people of Gumulira through the Millennium Villages Project in order to achieve

the millennium development goals (MDGs) and ensure that communication is not a privilege but a right to all Malawians.

Discussions are underway between MVP team in Mchinji and ZAIN Malawi to improve on the network coverage in the village by erecting a tower within the MVP cluster.

UNDP conducts procurement training for Implementing Partners/ staff

In a bid to continue building staff capacity, UNDP organized procurement training from 23rd to 26th November 2009 at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe to improve knowledge of both UNDP and Implementing Partners (IP) staff to enhance implementation and delivery of UNDP supported projects

Speaking during the opening of the workshop, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Programmes) Mr. Ram Shankar said UNDP management found it necessary to support staff training courses in response to a number of issues and challenges which were raised during IP quarterly review meetings.

"In these meetings, a number of issues have been raised including insufficient understanding of UNDP programmes and project management modalities, issues of delayed funding and disbursements, financial reporting and asset management as well as issues pertaining to lengthy and delayed procurement processes," said Mr. Shankar.

According to Mr. Shankar, the main objective of the training was for the IP and UNDP staff understand better UNDP standard operating procurement procedures in order to bring about improvements in procurement of goods and services and logistical supply management. Mr. Shankar further said the training would also provide a forum for exchange of experiences and generate lessons to improve the quality of

partnership between UNDP and its project Implementing Partners, improve staff skills to prepare and implement procurement plans and undertake the entire supply chain management more professionally and effectively.

"It is important that all staff implementing UNDP supported projects understand and follow proper procurement procedures and standards as a prerequisite to effective and efficient logistics and supply chain management," he added.

Mr. Shankar said while acquisition standards of the past only focused on lowest prices, UNDP procurement procedures emphasize not only on value for money but quality, delivery period and interest of the organization as key principles of procurement.

He added that it was important that every organization that manages UNDP projects follows internationally acceptable procurement standards and have a viable procurement and logistical chain supply management if it is to properly manage and account for UNDP finances.

Topics discussed at the training included procurement facts and definitions, UNDP procurement procedures, roles and responsibilities of Advisory Committee on Procurement (ACP), preparation of procurement plans, formulation of procurement specifications, evaluation of procurement bids, management of contracts and procurement records.

Orphans benefit from volunteerism in Ntcheu district

Volunteerism's element of social cohesion is making strides in the lives of many vulnerable children and their respective families in Ntcheu through orphan and vulnerable children support programs.

The Chitungo Community based organization, with 70% active participation of women is working to support orphaned children and other vulnerable children due to HIV/AIDS or maternal deaths to meet their social and economic needs.

The initiative supports primary school children with school fees, uniforms, toy making for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and books.

The CBO is currently engaged in a modern housing construction project to boost its income generating base to respond to the growing number of children interested to pursue secondary education but with very limited financial support.

The CBO has already constructed a Community based Care Centre for early childhood development programs. The families that provide

care to such children are supported with basic food necessities such as maize and beans from communal gardens.

The same communal gardens provide income generation to the most vulnerable women. The CBO has other main income generating activities such as goat and pig rearing, construction of modern houses for rent and maize meal.

During the UNV monitoring mission to the CBO on 8 February 2010, Chairperson of the CBO Mrs. Dorothy Chatuluka welcomed the Government and the UNV team to the beneficiary household

Katsitsi. Lupiya, a 12 year girl, narrated that "I now have hope for the future because of the initiatives that this CBO is setting up to support my education and food".

Social Welfare Officer for Ntcheu district Mr. Mike Makalanda said that the support programmes that UNDP is funding in the capacity development of the Assembly's Social Welfare Department are making significant social development marks on the ground. Presence of a UNV as a technical adviser on OVC programs has as well boosted the programming and the diligent work of data collection and database maintenance in support of services to the OVC.

Organizations' like Concern Universal together with the district Welfare Office have helped to build the Capacity of the CBO in social mobilization skills, record keeping, proposal development and Report writing.

"The work being done by the Chitungo community based organization is true volunteerism and by understanding that Chitungo means sweat I am certain that there is more sweet things coming because of this sweat" an impressed UNV

"I now have hope for the future because of the initiatives that this CBO is setting up to support my education and food".

Programme Officer Mr. Dimitri Lermytte confessed in a progress review discussion with the CBO leaders.

The community based organization has brought together youths and adults to work for the good of the community without expecting economic rewards rather creating opportunities for the OVCs. The presence of UNV in the district is a bonus in advocating for volunteerism at grassroot level.

The CBO also has a Youth Club which helps the vulnerable families and children in psycho social support initiatives aimed at bringing hope and resilience for their being well.

Village Rights Committees performing wonders in Nkhotakota

Village Rights Committees (VRCs) in Nkhotakota district are doing a commendable job of sensitizing people about their rights. The sensitizations have led to communities acquiring development projects such as schools, health centres, boreholes, among others.

The VRCs were formed by the Nkhotakota Youth organization, which is funded by the Democracy Consolidation Programme (DCP).

The VRCs shared their successes with Ms Karin Trydal, a representative from the Norwegian Auditor General's office in January during a field visit.

Chimwemwe Nkhoma, a member of Kawongozi VRC explained that his committee went around the community, assessed the problems villagers were facing and noted that shortage of staff at the community health centre was affecting delivery of services.

"There was only one clinical officer at the health centre. The building used for Under-five was a dilapidated one. We approached the Member of Parliament for the area who renovated the Under Five building. We further went to ESCOM and asked for the electrification of the health Centre and they obliged. As I am speaking now, there is power at the Health centre," said Nkhoma.



Village Rights Committee members performing the Ingoma dance

A member of Chivumu VRC explained that his committee realized that children were not attending school. In collaboration with chiefs in the area, they embarked on a door-to-door campaign to force parents to send their children to school.

He said that the chiefs imposed a penalty on parents who do not send their children to school.

Nkhotakota Youth Organization Executive Director, Robert Mbaya explained that his organization aims to promote citizen participation and development. He explained that the work is done through VRCs and Community Based Educators (CBE).

UNDP commends CONGOMA for MDGs campaign

UNDP Deputy Resident Representative (Programmes) Mr. Ram Shankar has commended the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA) for its contributions towards the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs).

Mr. Shankar made the remarks during a Civil Society MDGs campaign National Planning Workshop held at Crossroads Hotel on 10th February 2010.

According to Mr. Shankar, the success of development and participatory governance depends on both a robust state and active civil society with active levels of civic engagements.

“UNDP is committed and will continue to work with civil society, the Government and Development partners in order to achieve poverty reduction and bring about growth and development,” said Mr. Shankar

Mr. Shankar also mentioned that following recommendations from the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), Malawi has been chosen as one of the countries to implement the Project Accelerate.

The Project among others aims at empowering African national coalitions to speed up poverty eradication and implementation of the MDGs



Participants pose for a group photograph

by advocating for G8 and African leaders to deliver on their commitments and end poverty.

He then said that the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations therefore have a key role to play in the achievement of the MDGs through advocacy, lobbying, popular mobilization and monitoring.

The workshop was organized to among others review progress of the MDGs campaign activities and ensure that policies are properly designed, implemented and monitored to achieve the MDGs targets by 2015 in line with the Project Accelerate objectives.

Farewell friends



Elizabeth Lyfors started work on October 15, 2007 as a Programme Analyst (Governance). She left on 12 February 2010 after successfully completing her two year service with UNDP. She now works for UNDP Audit Office in Dakar Senegal.



Solrun Olafsdottir started work on September 30 2007 as Programme Analyst (Capacity Development). She left on December 30, 2009 after successfully completing her two year service with UNDP. She is currently working with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Lilongwe.



Yvonne Kamphantengo started work on 7 September 2009 as Operations Analyst. She left UNDP in March this year.

Welcome to UNDP Malawi



Marius Walter joined UNDP in January 2010. He is working as a Programme Analyst (Governance)