

# BULLETIN BOARD

NKHANI ZATHU

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Fleeing conflict and persecution, years spent in a camp. Patiently waiting for a place to call home and a chance to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

## NKHANI ZATHU

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An hour's drive west of Lilongwe, 11,841 men, women and children live within the confines of an area of land exclusive to them. They wake every morning with similar aspirations as millions of Malawians - to have enough to eat, education for the children, clean water to drink and bathe, shelter to protect them from the elements, a doctor, a sense of security, an opportunity to earn and thrive. They are real people with real needs, just like the rest of Malawi, but the difference is they are all hundreds of miles away from home. They are displaced and stateless people, who fled conflict and persecution.

The World Refugee Day is marked on 20 June to remind the world of the millions around the world facing the same predicament. This year's theme "Real People, Real Needs" is to ensure that despite the uncertainty of the global economic meltdown, refugees are not forgotten.

Despite the best efforts of the UN High Commission for Refugees with UN agencies, governments and charity organizations, these basic needs are not adequately met. Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa District faces similar challenges to refugee settlements worldwide. There is need to improve nutrition and water supplies, primary health care, child protection programmes, living conditions and sanitation facilities.

The refugees are mainly from Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Angola and Zimbabwe. Despite some tragic tales of what brought them to Malawi, they all live in anticipation of rebuilding their lives, peacefully and productively. Some of the day's events demonstrated this, in exuberant song, dance, drama and a football match with the local district team, which the refugee team won 3 - 0. The team is also participating in a regional league.

Recalling the situations they fled, the refugees applauded the Government for the protection they



## Real People, Real Needs

provide, UNHCR and its partners for the social services. Apart from passing a Refugees Act, Malawi acceded to both the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Issues in Africa. Refugees at Dowa however are appealing to Government to reconsider the existing legal framework, which limits their freedom of movement, restricting access to business or other livelihood to within the camp and does not allow naturalization of refugees.

The three durable solutions that UNHCR seeks for refugees are voluntary return to their countries of origin, resettlement to third countries and local integration whenever possible. In the last year, UNHCR assisted 100 refugees to return to Burundi and Rwanda whilst 38 were resettled to third countries in Europe. This year, UNHCR is processing the return of 95 refugees to Congo DR, Burundi and Rwanda.

The day was a definite departure from recent headlines, which featured reports of animosity between the refugees and the local community. More prominently has been incidents of asylum seekers mostly from the horn of Africa apprehended attempting to enter Mozambique after short stays at Dzaleka. They are believed to be heading to South Africa, which is considered the region's economic powerhouse. According to UNHCR, this makes it difficult to maintain up to date records of people requiring protection, but also corrodes the favourable asylum regime provided by the state.

Internal Affairs and Public Security as the guest of honour, local authorities and a number of diplomatic missions. A Ministry of Health band provided lively entertainment with public health messages.

Dzaleka exhibits the character of an ordinary remote village. You find the queue at the health centre and hear the cheer of



*Children receive their daily porridge at the primary school*

playful children at the school. Women attend to household chores, men bake bricks, small gardens are tilled, a brood of chicken peck at the dust and goats bleat away. A few entrepreneurs display their wares at the buzzing market place, against a backdrop of the chatter from the rudimentary food kiosks and triumph of 'bao' winner.

As the sun sets on Dzaleka, the chickens come to roost, smokes rises from cooking fires, children are called in, a mother cuddles her child, a man checks the latch to the door, and life settles into the nightly routines.

Knowing some of their stories, you cannot help think that their thoughts and dreams are as diverse as their homes are distant, but perhaps sharing a similar hope of rebuilding their lives in a place they can call home.



*Top: Market Day at Dzaleka  
Above: Caleb Gahembe from Burundi*

The commemoration was graced by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of

# Wills and Inheritance, Sex, Condoms, Cancer *candidly*

UN Cares Malawi, a United Nations wide workplace programme on HIV and AIDS, held the woman-to-woman and man-to-man sessions as another initiative to encourage staff interaction and discussion on issues and challenges that are affecting their daily lives.

On 13 June, WHO Representative Dr. Felicitas Zawaira hosted a lively and informative afternoon for UN women together with spouses and friends of UN men folk. UN Cares has organized the woman to woman for a third consecutive year.

UN Cares was applauded for a very participatory, interactive and well attended event. A presentation on cervical cancer was excellently received without the antagonism of medical jargon or a clinic. Discussions on wills and inheritance stirred animated response as women gave grim experiences of women and families after the demise of husbands and fathers without a will. Learning how to use a female condom evoked many amusing anecdotes and talk on positive living was regarded as very empowering.

A few women interviewed after the session concurred that though all the topics were very useful and relevant, the discussions on cervical cancer and Wills and Inheritance stood out as being the most significant. As much as women may be interested in learning more about cervical cancer for example, reproductive health issues are often considered rather private to discuss and many people do not know where to get the information.

The event was a unique platform for women to understand how to prepare their wills, and share existing frustrations in the absence of wills. "It became clear during and after the presentation that there is a lot of information about wills and inheritance that we don't know as women regardless of how educated we can be," said Siphwe Kandiero. While there were rich presentations and discussions, Mrs. Monique Dictus agreed with the other ladies that "just the idea of women gathering together to discuss issues that are important and

relevant to women, learning from each other's experiences interacting and getting to know one another is what made this session a good initiative".



The woman-to-woman session has been suggested to be held more frequently, at least twice a year and to include topics on marriage, managing finances, raising teenagers and even sharing recipes!

On 19 June, the men held their session at the residence of UNICEF Deputy Resident Representative, George Cooke. Richard Banda UN Cares Co-Chair and Dickson Mchiliko, UN Cares Coordinator facilitated the session.



The men discussed wills and inheritance, leaving positively, how to use the male and female condom and male circumcision. Male circumcision was rated the 'hottest' topic. Issues revolved around the significant evidence of circumcision in helping the prevention of prostate cancer, promoting male hygiene, preventing infections and its effect on the intercourse!

Also, very captivating was the discussion on leaving positively. Mr. Nyoni gave his testimony on leaving with the virus, when and why he decided to go for testing, how he broke the news to his wife and how he has lived with the virus since. The talk generated a heated debate about revealing ones status to their spouse, which, in some instances has resulted in separations, property grabbing, and the spouse's refusal to go for testing or accepting their status. Couples are strongly encouraged to go for counselling and testing together as one way to avoid dealing with these issues.



The men were in agreement with the women on the Wills and Inheritance session. It is a very significant topic and requires in depth discussions.

The staff also agreed to introduce sporting activities like soccer, volleyball and basketball.

By Villa Ezala



*Participants at the events in discussion groups including getting each step right in using female and male condoms.*

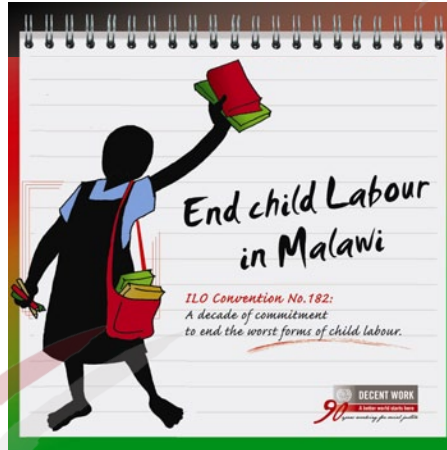
# Give Girls a Chance

Given the chance, girls have the same potential as their male counterparts and citizens around the world place particular consideration to enable all girls attend school.

The World Day against Child Labour was commemorated worldwide on the 12 of June. In Malawi, it was commemorated in various districts and the national event at Kakule Primary School in Chinsapo area of Lilongwe District, organized by the District Child Protection Committee through ILO sponsorship. The area is a poor suburb of Lilongwe and a source of child domestic labourers. Increasing reports of child commercial sex exploitation in the area are very disturbing.

This year's theme, "Give Girls a Chance", was selected this year to highlight the hidden nature of the work done by girls especially in homes, its impact on school attendance and performance for the few who manage to attend school and the high level of vulnerability of all the girls in child labour.

Given the chance, girls have the same potential as their male counterparts and citizens around the world place particular consideration to enable all girls attend school.



Schoolchildren, community child labour committees and the official band composed drama, songs and poems imploring the intervention. The children also had a quiz competition on child labour knowledge. The event attracted a large crowd from the community.

Speaking at the event, the Deputy Secretary for Labour, Mrs. Eunice Chipangula emphasized on the need to take girls education earnestly if the girls are to develop to their full potential and participate in nation building and contribute significantly to Malawi's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

A staggering 1.4 million children are estimated to be involved in some form of child labour in Malawi. In 2007/2008, the ILO has supported 6,300 to return to school or attend vocational training and 1,040 families provided with support for economic empowerment.

This year ILO supporting 750 between 14 and 17 years, who have been withdrawn from child labour in Mulanje and Kasungu by providing them with vocational skills. Over 900 children in primary schools are also being supported to ensure that they remain in school.

7 June - Walk the World in Lilongwe. The annual global event was held for its fourth consecutive year in Malawi.



## END HUNGER Walk the World

On 7 June 2009 the UN family, development partners and people from all walks of life joined the annual global walk to support the campaign to end hunger. The walk raises funds and public support for the national school feeding programme in Malawi.



In its fourth consecutive year, the 2009 Walk the World in Malawi set a new record with 67,000 people participating in 23 simultaneous walks across the country. The walks took place in the 14 districts where WFP implements the national school feeding programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology.

WFP's Global walk received support from the private sector including express delivery company TNT, consumer goods company Unilever and nutrition and life-science specialists DSM.

Around the world, 300,000 people were part of 200 walks in 70 countries in 24 hours.

## School feeding, nutrition, HIV and AIDS programmes receive US\$ 5 million from Japanese Government

The Government of Malawi through the World Food Programme has received US \$5 million from the Government of Japan in support of School Feeding, Nutrition and HIV and AIDS programmes. US \$1 million will go towards supporting the School Feeding Programme and US \$4 million to support nutrition and HIV and AIDS activities.

The School Feeding Programme is supporting 642,000 pupils each month in 679 schools in 13 districts. Nutrition and HIV/AIDS programmes support an average of 45,000 and 100,000 beneficiaries respectively each month.

