

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NGOS AND OTHER CHARITIES TO HELP DISABLED PEOPLE IN MALAWI

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In Malawi Disabilities are described as conditions that make it difficult for an individual to function normally. This can be temporary or permanent. But temporary or permanent, they make life hard for the individual affected.

To start with let us classify disabilities

These can be visible (physical) or sensory

VISIBLE DISABILITIES ARE:

AGEING

Blindness, bodily injury or malformation

SENSORY ARE:

Loss of feeling, loss of smell, loss of hearing, loss of taste, color blindness, lack of balance, lack of direction and numerous others.

Other disabilities are: lack of color pigmentation otherwise known as albinism etc. lack of education is a disability too, failure to produce children is even a worse disability which brings ridicule and scorn from many quarters and in the African setting, where a family is failing to produce children, the blame goes to the woman as being infertile. They say the man married a he goat and will with time bring another woman to the man so that they produce offspring and wherever the woman goes, she is joked about as the infertile one bringing embarrassment and discomfort to the woman.

This is unfortunately a problem if it is the man who is infertile. There is what are here called hyenas who are men hired to impregnate wives of infertile husbands. This is however done secretly. There are however dangers inherent with this. There are many sexually transmitted diseases which can be contracted during such arrangements. The hired man can transmit a disease to the woman, who will in turn transmit it to the husband. Similarly, if the woman who is to be impregnated has HIV AIDS, then it means the hired man will contract it and then pass it on to his spouse thereby spreading the virus. With ordinary sexually transmitted diseases, this may not pose a serious problem. But when it is HIV AIDS transmitted, then it becomes a different story. But in hiring someone to act as a hyena, all four of them, the wife, the husband and the hired man understand these inevitabilities and accept the consequences of their actions. It is not however clear if the hired man does seek permission from his own wife.

Some weeks ago there was news on the social media of a man who was happily married or thought so with four children. But as most men are never satisfied with one woman, he got himself a girlfriend. After some time he was surprised that she was not conceiving. Suspecting the girl to be infertile, he took her to a doctor and together they were examined and the medical examination showed that the man could not have children. The man was upset because he had convinced himself that it was the girl's fault

and said he had four children, the doctor told him that that could not be possible and suggested a DNA test on the children and it has been proved that they are not his children. This is a disability nobody notices until such circumstances come into the open. The issue is still going round with no possible solution in sight.

In Malawi the most common forms of disability are blindness, hearing impairment, amputations, physical bodily distortions due to polio and other diseases, and albinism

DEVELOPMENT OF NGOS IN MALAWI.

NGOS are a shortened version of non-governmental organizations. An NGO can be any organization usually nonprofit but not limited to that, that operates independent of government and can be local or international. Their role in the society is to provide unique services that government aid organizations and corporations do not or cannot. They form an important link in the services between the community and the Government services. One very important aspect of an NGO is that they have the power to make instant decisions and take immediate action without seeking higher authority, unlike government agencies which have a lot of red tape to deal with before taking action which is rather hazardous in all aspects. They are supposed to adapt to situations and respond to the needs faster than government. They are supposed to be well organized service providers in critically important issues like medical care, environmental education and advocacy and human rights protection. These are cases of emergency relief, natural disasters, accidents, and other unforeseen occurrences which need on the spot action.

Having briefly explained the role of NGOs, let me go to the situation in Malawi. NGOs in Malawi there is what is called an NGO Board whose function is to register and coordinate the NGOs. This helps in the reduction of duplication of services and confusion because if an NGO comes in to register with the NGO Board with drilling wells or providing safe or potable water in the country and there is already another one doing the same, the NGO Board will tell them that there is already another NGO doing the same job. The Board then can tell the new NGO where they should go and operate to fulfill their mandate without interfering with others. They are therefore expected to register before operating in the country. Those that don't register become illegal and risk being closed when found and may even face heavy fines.

NGOs IN GENERAL

NGOs are viewed with suspicion and distrust in most African Countries This is a result of organizations coming into a country with one known objective while as they have other agenda to pursue. During the Colonial days, we never heard of NGOs. The colonial government did not want too many non-governmental organizations. There were some political parties agitating for self-government and independence from Britain the colonial masters. These were tolerated as it was believed that Malawi as a country without mineral resources and without financial resources was dependent on the other countries and would therefore not really want to be free from the colonial government or even want to stand on its own. This was however proved wrong as it was the same Malawi that led to the end of the grouping called federation of the three countries Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. After the attainment of independence, and on Malawi adopting the one party system of government, NGOs were not encouraged as they were looked upon as instruments likely to be used to voice discontent with government and therefore foment rebellion . With the rebirth of multi-party politics and the freedom of expression, the situation changed. There are now very many NGOs both local and international doing all sorts of things, some good and others bad.

There are those helping in the provision of health services, then those helping with population control, then those helping with disease control like malaria control rabies control HIV/AIDS Control, helping in animal health, environmental control, malnutrition control, price controls and numerous others.

There are however some NGOs which registered for one purpose but are doing things contrary to their registered purpose. These have become political in nature. One example is Centre for the Development of people CEDEP. This organization is pushing for same sex marriages which is taboo in this country and because of this, CEDEP is no longer dealing with developing people but attacking the government for not bowing down to its demands for same sex marriages and its funders who are external organizations are busy pushing hard and for the NGO to be seen to be doing something about the matter therefore, CEDEP has moved from its original focus and started attacking government on anything it does. This NGO has no interest in the disability sector and does not even mention it.

Then there is OXFAM which initially was for famine relief but later started to encourage people to voice out their feelings against the single party system of government. They started this through simple plays organized in the rural areas and people did not know what was taking place until they realized that they were being liberated from mental bondage. OXFAM was the first NGO to join hands with Rotary International and actually made a presentation to the European Union to fund Malawi Against Polio in the fight against polio as well as the rehabilitation of those who had become disabled by the polio epidemic. Their contribution to the disability sector is very large indeed and very much appreciated in the country.

OXFAM has now, with the assistance of the Irish Government, embarked on a project to help women aspiring for parliamentary positions to achieve their aims.

Then there is the Public Affairs Committee PAC, a semi religious grouping consisting of Christian and Islamic bodies. Their role in the society is to be mediators between government and the people in times of need. For example if government introduces a law that is likely to harm the people, then PAC is supposed to come in and talk to the people and ask them to bring out their misgivings about the particular law then PAC is supposed to bring those feelings from the general public to the government and see how they can make the law friendly to all. Unfortunately this organization has now become a political force fighting the government without asking the people's views or consulting them.

Then there is what is called the Civil Liberties Committee. This organization is supposed to protect the people's liberties and ensure that they are not infringed upon. Where there is a likely threat to the civil liberties of the masses, this organization is supposed to step in and talk to government to change its stance on the particular issue. Unfortunately this organization too has become political and is voicing its own opinion and not that of the people. All NGOs are different and some are met with intense criticism for lack of transparency in budgeting and effectual action. The other important criticism NGOs face is that those which are international in nature always employ people from their own countries with just a few locals employed in lower grades. For example an NGO from The Netherlands will have executive staff from the Netherlands thereby losing focus on what is needed in the country as then they will bring ideas of what is needed in the Netherlands because they do not have a good component of local expertise. Fortunately these are not elected groupings and have therefore no one to be accountable to except those who fund them. They may be funded by foreign organizations or local opposition parties who want to enhance their political agenda or bring down the government by highlighting the weaknesses and failures only.

On the Disability front however are the following as examples.

There are also NGOs that are born to deal with a particular problem or occurrences.

The Malawi Against Polio now called Malawi Against Physical Disabilities is one example of such an NGO.

These are what I call Situational NGOS. They get created to meet a certain situation. The Committee Against Gender based violence is one such type of NGOs that are created specifically because something has been found to be amiss. Gender based violence has left people disabled. One woman lost both her arms to her husband's brutality who hacked them off. So, some NGOs get created just because a gap has just manifested itself.

INTERNATIONAL

Most International NGOs come into a country without studying the needs of that country. They will just get into that country and start things that are of little relevance to the people of that country. Worse still they bring in their own employees who do not know the languages or the culture of the country since they get their funding from their home countries, they budget on their own without consulting the local employees. They come with action plans that do not fit in with the local context thereby compromising the original plan of helping a target population's needs. They fail to acknowledge the importance of local expertise in the NGO framework. As an example an NGO can come into a country saying they have come to help people with disabilities. They then go into the work of importing tons of wheelchairs and may be crutches and start distributing them to the people without finding out whether their real need is wheelchairs and what type or size. This becomes a misplaced assistance. Maybe the first thing the people with disabilities want is food security. For such people a wheelchair or pair of crutches is of little help to them. It may be that they want education first and need access to educational facilities before anything else. If they could find out first the needs, they could be making proper budgets and make a better impact on the people.

Because NGO funding comes from developed countries, a particular effective way would be for the international NGO to use local in country staff to plan and implement programs on the ground while leaving a Board consisting of the international staff to focus on raising funds and carrying out strategic planning and monitoring the implementation of their intended objectives.

Although it may be said that because they do not depend on funding from the local government they can be free from political influence. This may not be completely correct because even in the actual operations they will meet village leaders who may wish certain modes of operation to be changed to suit the particular area. They however have the flexibility to ignore the local politicians and maintain the status quo and pursue what they believe to be important social change.

HANDCAPP INTERNATIONAL

This is an American based organization ranked fifth in good governance and provision of services to the vulnerable people in the world. It works alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations by taking action and bearing witness in order to respond to their essential needs of a particular area of population improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. Together with local partners they develop programs in health, rehabilitation and social and economic integration. They work with local authorities to clear land mines and other debris in order to prevent landmine related accidents in strife torn countries where land mines have become one of the greatest contributors to disability. This NGO therefore advocates for the universal recognition of the rights of the disabled through national planning and advocacy. This NGO is working in Malawi as well.

TILI TONSE FUND

This is not a local organization although it bears a local name. The name means Together let us play our part. The NGO is a multi-donor funded organization providing assistance to local community based organizations that provide various services be it in the field of democracy, governance, health, disability etc. For the small organizations operating in the rural communities, they get amounts of funding suitable to small organizations.

This is an independent Norwegian NGO operating in Malawi. Its main function in Norway is advocating for equal rights and social participation for disabled people. Its main focus is people with physical impairments and ensuring that there is no oppression and discrimination against people with disabilities in Norway.

UNITED FOR A PURPOSE

This is an International NGO whose vision is to create a world where justice, dignity, and respect for all prevail. It was established in 1988 in Malawi to support Mozambican refugees and their hosts in Dedza in the central Region of Malawi which borders with Mozambique. United for A Purpose is helping Malawians by providing potable water in its fight against Cholera.

World Vision International:

This is an Evangelical Christian humanitarian aid and advocacy organization founded by Robert Pierce in 1950 and prefers to present itself as an interdenominational agency and employs people even from other religious affiliations. Its purpose is to serve the neediest of the world and relieve their needs and transform their condition of life from suffering. As an International organization World Vision has opened a branch in Malawi and has joined in the humanitarian work by helping in disaster areas of Malawi and for people with physical disabilities, by providing wheelchairs for their mobility. A part from that they are also helping with digging wells for the provision of clean water to the communities. They are also helping by providing school blocks and other things required by the communities.

American Embassy.

The Embassy of America in Malawi distributed grants to nine organizations that work with people with disabilities across the country by implementing programs which help to promote access to health services to the people with disabilities. In her speech, the American Ambassador to Malawi Virginia Palmer stated that people with disabilities are equal citizens of Malawi and the World who are entitled to the same rights and privileges as all people in terms of education, health, and economic opportunities. No one deserves to be stigmatized by their disability and or their HIV status I believe the innovative initiatives you are starting with these grants will have a significant impact in your communities especially in regard to the empowerment of people with disabilities. Virginia Palmer said.

This is the way the American Embassy has chosen to help people with disabilities in Malawi. They first ask the organization that wants money on the particular project they want to implement and if it does not please them, they will turn it down. So here, we find that they want to see that the project to be implemented is worthwhile in the community. That I commend as the input of the community is sourced for first.

(PEPFAR) Presidents Appeal Fund.

This organization is in the American Embassy and is helping organizations that are dealing with fighting the AIDS pandemic. HIC AIDS being one of the contributors to disabilities therefore I can say that they are helping with disabilities by cutting down one of the root causes.

Action Aid

This is an organization priding itself for being the only International Organization with its headquarters in Africa. The head office is in Johannesburg.

But also has offices in many parts of the world. They help people to use their own power and capabilities to fight poverty and since poverty is said to be synonymous to disability. We can safely say that they are helping in the eradication of disability.

Aqua Aid. Helps in the provision of potable water. On the side however, they also help people with disabilities found in the areas where they are working. They identify people with disabilities and refer them to the appropriate places for help. Where they can they ask the nearest hospital if they do have a rehabilitation person They then send transport to that hospital to bring the rehabilitation person to come and render assistance to the identified disabled people. By bringing water to the people, even those women with disabilities are helped as it becomes easier for them to access water.

CORDAID

Catholic Organization for Relief and Development CORDAID, This is an Organization based in the Netherlands but helping organization of disabled people in Malawi. They have helped MAP through provision of rehabilitation personnel, transport for field operations, operating costs, like fuel and salaries for the personnel, fabrication of mobility appliances like wheelchairs, tricycles, crutches, calipers, walkers for both children and adults and a lot others.

OXFAM, This is a relief organization based in Britain but with a branch in Malawi and has helped MAP in its initial stages by providing a co funding together with the European Union. This is the organization that put MAP on its feet and funded it for six years.

THE EUROPEAN UNION.

The European Union helps Governments in their development work and seeing that even people with disabilities are a developmental issue they accepted to provide co funding to organizations like MAP in order to help them assist people with disabilities.

Rotary International. This organization helps in the provision of vaccinations against polio in many countries of the world. It was there when MAP was fighting the polio epidemic together with the government of Malawi. Its branches worldwide are still helping organizations like MAP in providing rehabilitative treatment to people with physical disabilities. This is being done by the local Rotarians.

The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind with its roots and headquarters in Hay words Heath in United Kingdom. This organization mainly focused on assistance to the blind by training specialist teachers, creating schools for the blind and some other functions.

Christoffel Blinden mission with its headquarters in Bensheim in Germany. This organization also initially focused on helping the blind but also later extended its focus to all other disabilities.

SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND.

This organization is said to have been founded in the United Kingdom by Eglantine Jebb in the United Kingdom. Although it started there, it now has branches in almost all the countries of the world including Malawi. SAVE THE Children does whatever it takes every day and in times of crisis to give the children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm like transforming their lives to enable them share in the future. As they say they believe that every child deserves a future.

With this Save The Children Malawi has been helping to ensure that even children with disabilities are enabled to have a bright future. In Malawi alone, there is Save the Children USA, Save the Children UK, Save the Children Malawi and many others. This just goes to emphasize the importance of children in the world. When crisis strikes, children are the most vulnerable The Save the Children say they are among the first to respond and the last to leave. They ensure that children unique needs are met and that their voices are heard. Vulnerable children therefore include disabled children so while helping able bodied children, disabled children also benefit.

COMIC RELIEF.

This is a relief organization in the United Kingdom which focuses on disabled people a voice in making decisions that affect their lives. The motto "Rights, not Charity" has become their watch word. They have now opened an office in Malawi with the same view and are advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. MAP makes mobility appliances for people with disabilities. There are times when the people with disabilities accept them but when they get home they throw them away. This is because they have never been consulted and their voice is not there when making the items. This NGO is helping people with disabilities to stand up for their rights and teaching service providers not to forget to consult the consumers of their services before implementing them, This is an important lesson.

Cheshire Homes founded by Captain Leonard Cheshire of the United Kingdom

Beit Trust

This is a trust created by the will of Alfred Beit who in his will decided to use his wealth for the development of the vulnerable and marginalized people in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi. Tis trust has helped in the establishment of the Beit Cure International hospital in Blantyre which is providing orthopedic surgery to children with physical disabilities.

Motivation Africa.

This is a British based charity improving providing wheelchairs to African Countries. Some of them have come to Malawi and been distributed to hospitals and even MAP has benefitted from them which in turn has distributed to the communities.

Population Services International (PSI)

This is an NGO providing population control services worldwide. It is known that in the African context, people bear children without regard as to what will happen to them, how they are going to be fed, how will they be educate etc. PSI therefore provides information on how to avoid having a large family that will end up impoverishing the parents and render them in capable of taking care of the children and as already said poverty and disability go hand in hand. By preventing poverty in any setting, any children

born with a disability is likely to receive better care and attention than if he were born in a very large family.

MEDICINES SANS FRONTIERS. (Doctors without Borders) Doctors without Borders' S F

This is an International humanitarian medical NGO based in France. It provides care for people with advanced HIV AIDS especially in the villages.

CADECOM Catholic Development Commission.

CAMFED, Campaigns for the Development of Female Education.

This is an NGO campaigning for the education of females, in past papers; we learned that immunization against killer diseases like polio and others is done more successfully if the mothers are properly educated and knowledgeable. With education they understand issues and by understanding them, they become receptive and accept them. educated mothers. By encouraging female education therefore this organization is helping in the prevention of disabilities in the country.

ADRA Malawi.

This is an American humanitarian religious organization known as Adventist Relief and Development. Its purpose is to provide humanitarian aid and relief in times of disaster, poverty and community development. Though International is a Malawian organization and helps with disabilities by providing funds for providing disability aids.

Agriculture Development and Education.

Agriculture Cooperative Development International

International Disability and Development Consortium IDDC

This is an NGO whose focus is on networking various disability Organizations influencing them to include people with intellectual disabilities in their policy and planning at country level and to connect the members of the group.

This is a global confederation of fourteen countries working together in ninety four countries seeking hope, tolerance and social justice in the world. And works with the world's poorest.

LOCAL

Press Trust:

This is a Trust that emanated from the will of the first President of independent Malawi late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. He created this Trust to help the people of Malawi in times of need of any kind. They assisted Malawi Against Physical Disabilities for over five years through the provision of funds for the

production and manufacture of mobility appliances MAP was producing for the disabled persons. Over thirty thousand people with disabilities benefitted from this Trust.

Community Health and environmental Care Trust (CHECT) from Lilongwe,

WOMEN OF SUBSTANCE MALAWI CHAPTER

This is a grouping of women who have their own economic power and decide what they want to do with their money without having to consult husbands. In their meetings they decide from time to time what they want to do or where they want to help. They help hospitals and other places where there is need. Recently they raise eleven Million Malawi Kwacha to help our Rehabilitation Centre purchase some treatment equipment.

Embangweni Mission Hospital,

This is a rural mission hospital set in the most remote areas of Malawi in the Border with Zambia. It provides normal treatment facilities like any other hospital in the country. It receives people with physical disabilities and passes their needs to MAP for action.

Nayuchi AIDS, Network Services in Machinga, This is an agency for networking with other HIV AIDS organizations in the country but working in one district only.

This is a small grouping of people volunteering themselves in the fight against HIV AIDS. This is only the entry point towards getting assistance from the main HIV AIDS funders National AIDS Committee.

Foundation for Community and Capacity Development in Nkhotakota

Ntchisi Evangelical Churches for Social Services

PARTNERS IN HEALTH (Neno) District.

This organization is externally funded and helps in one of the Districts of Malawi in providing health services but at the same time helps in the provision of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in that area.

Music Against Malaria.

This is a real and proper local NGO formed and run by local Malawians with no external interference. It is funded through local fundraising activities. Malaria is one of the major causes of disability especially in children. Children get Malaria and if not properly treated in time the malaria causes cerebral palsy in the children resulting in disability and needing disability assistive devices like corner seats, standing frames, baby walkers and maybe wheelchairs. By joining in the fight against Malaria and spreading awareness through music, they are helping to fight disability. People in Malawi receive mosquito nets to protect them from mosquito bites. But instead they use the mosquito net for catching fish. This just shows lack of understanding about the malaria problem.

Sue Ryder Foundation in Balaka,

This NGO is based in one of the districts of Malawi called Balaka and identifies people with disabilities and since it has a few physiotherapists and rehabilitation Technicians, it provides rehabilitative

treatment and when they need mobility assistive devices, they source for funds and requests MAP to manufacture for them after covering the costs of production.

Feed the Children in Blantyre.

This organization came into existence after Cheshire Homes as an organization headquarters failed to agree on matters of principle with the Board there. The principal funders Cheshire Homes itself pulled out. The organization was going into the out skirts of Blantyre City picking mothers and their disabled children to the premises where Cheshire Homes was working from. They employed an occupational therapist and since the children brought there were children suffering from cerebral palsy, they were therefore being treated by this therapist. This was helping the mothers and the children with disabilities as well. When the funders pulled out, the program phased out. Another agency however came up with the idea of feeding the children with disabilities from the same premises. Those who could be brought to the Centre by their mothers were put on a feeding program to bolster their health as some children were getting disabled due to malnourishment. They extended the project to providing bags of rice to be distributed to the mothers of malnourished children so that the feeding could continue in their own homes. Unfortunately, the system fell into abuse. The program Managers used the rice to buy political favor in their areas and got voted into parliament to the detriment of the children. Again the funders pulled out for this reason. It is still operating though at a very low scale.

DIWA Disabled Women In Africa.

It is expected that one thousand three hundred women with disabilities will benefit from this organization. Its focus of activity is empowerment, enabling them to stand on their own.

DOSSANI TRUST

This is a Trust left in the will of late Khmji who left his money in the hands of Trustees to manage and assist those in need applying for help. MAP as an organization has received funds from this trust in order to produce and distribute mobility assistive devices. They also have donated towards the fencing of the Kachere Rehabilitation Centre. Although late Khmji was of Indian origin, he left his money in Malawi to help Malawians in need.

Abwenzi pa za Umoyo

This is an NGO bearing a local name but it is not local at all. It is operating in one of the districts of Malawi. It goes into the outlying areas of the district providing health services to the people there who are not able to travel to the hospital as the roads there are very bad and transport is very hard to find. As they go into the outlying areas, they take with them the rehabilitation person who is placed in the district and this organization also imports wheelchairs, so where the rehabilitation person finds a person with a physical disability in need of a wheelchair, he will issue one if one is readily available or bring it at the next visit. This organization is therefore apart from helping in the health work of the country, it is also helping with the rehabilitation of people with physical disabilities too

NANZIKAMBE

This is a local cultural group funded by New Zealand through the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO. It is working on local talents through converting local folklore or stories and converting them into stage plays or film or cinema. One of its focuses is the advocacy of equality of women to men or gender equality. Priority is access of women to education.

This is a NGOs registered in the country with its main task as advocacy in any field. They work through creative and educative stories which are then enacted into play and it is through these plays that the general communities learn how to conduct themselves in given conditions.

NATIONAL WOMENS LOBBY GROUP For Lobbying for women's empowerment

Malawi Business Coalition Against HIV AIDS. Business people fighting HIV AIDS

Malawi Human Rights Resources Centre MHRRC.

Malawi Network for AIDS Services Organization MANASO.

CEDEP (Centre for the Development of People.

Muslim Association of Malawi MAM

CCAP Blantyre Synod Health and Development.

Catholic Relief Services CRS

PAKACHERE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH.

This NGO was originally part of another NGO called Population Services Malawi (PSIM) but delinked itself and became an independent NGO with focus on building one love for all and became the first ever alliance for female sex workers. One of its tasks is to empower Malawians especially the unreachable ones to choose and sustain healthy behaviors in the evidence based health and development communication, social mobilization and advocacy.

GABLE. Global Alliance for clean cook stoves.

Rumphi Development Trust.

Partners in Health

Passion Centre for Children

National Aids Committee NAC.

This is the main organization dealing with fighting the HIV/AIDS Pandemic in the country and being a national organization, it plays the lead role. It is the one through which the Global funds for the fight against HIV/AIDS. Any organization that wants to participate in the fight and needs funds from NAC submits an application to this National AIDS Commission which then screens the application and makes its decision whether to fund it or not and if it is found that the area the application is being made for is already covered by another service or that the service being asked for is not on the priority list of NAC, it will be turned down.

MANEPO (Malawi National Organization for Elderly People).

This is an organization that is fighting for the empowerment of older people in the country to be considered for a pension that will ensure that they do not fall into the poverty trap which results with ageing due to lack of income. Ageing also results in disability as mostly people who are too old fail to look after themselves properly, feed themselves properly and therefore need the assistance of others and without income, it is not easy to find people to help them.

NAPHAM National Association for People Living with HIV AIDS in Malawi

This is an NGO formed by people living with HIV AIDS in Malawi. It is a membership organization covering all twenty eight districts of the country. It aims at promoting and advocating for quality treatment where the needs of its members is not being met and fights against discrimination of people living with HIV AIDS in the country.

Malawi Council for the Handicapped MACOHA This is a parastatal organization which was created to be a regulator of Disability activities. It was created by an Act of Parliament in 1971 to look into issues affecting people with various disabilities, seeing how they can be assisted and creating programs for their assistance. It created Sheltered workshops for people with disabilities in Blantyre and Lilongwe. It also created a vocational rehabilitation Centre in Chiradzulu District which trains people with various disabilities in various skills like carpentry and joinery, general tinsmithing, accounting and also horticulture. It also created tailoring workshop in Luchenza Mulanje District for the training and employment of people with disabilities. , it created blind farmers resettlement schemes in all the regions of the country and created a training and evaluation estate in Ntcheu to train people with disabilities in farming. Instead of concentrating on its oversight role, it has become a Government implementing agency on disability issues and seems to have left its oversight responsibilities on disabilities.

Malawi Against Physical Disabilities MAP. This one was born in 1979 as Malawi Against Polio. At its inception it was supposed to provide help to people who had become disabled by a polio epidemic. Its main responsibilities were to create an agency that would provide surgical services to those in need of them after the polio attack, provide physiotherapy treatment to those in need of them in order to work on the residual strength in the affected limb in order to bring as much function as is possible to the affected limbs., provide occupational this treatment is intended to retrain a person into doing whatever he was doing before the disability so that he can be in a position to carry out the functions he was carrying out before. Take a woman in Malawi, washes clothes, cooks food for the family goes to the garden, mends clothes for the children etc. This treatment allows her to be able to cook, wash etc. regardless of the disability. MAP as it is commonly known in the country, has created a Rehabilitation Centre where people who have recently become disabled through accidents at work, on the roads, been attacked by thugs, people who have been gender based violence victims, people who have suffered from diseases like tuberculosis of the spine, people who have suffered strokes arising from high blood pressure and those with HIV AIDS. All these are admitted in this Centre and receive intensive rehabilitation treatment to enable them to go back to their work places or to engage in other activities that can help in them in their lives. The services people with newly acquired disabilities receive in this Centre cannot be given to them in any other hospitals as this is the only referral Centre receiving patients from all hospitals Government and Private in the whole country and employs rehabilitation specialists. It is pleasing to find that some people come with complete paralysis of the lower extremities after accidents but they get discharged fully recovered. Others with too severe injuries stay on

rehabilitation for a long time and either return home able to carry out activities of daily living which before the rehabilitation they were unable to do. Where necessary they take with a wheelchair for home use on discharge.

Malawi Disability Sporting Association MADISA This one was formed seeing that many people with disabilities were left out of sporting activities. Its work is therefore to agitate and ensure that people with disabilities take part in sporting activities they can manage.

Federation of Disability organizations in Malawi FEDOMA a regulator of organizations of the disabled. It is meant to provide guidance to organizations of the disabled and also to act as a voice for people with disabilities. Unfortunately like many other organizations, it has forgotten its role in the country and has become an employment agency for those employed there and its mandate of speaking for the disabled has been eclipsed by wages and allowances, with the result that mostly it is on seminars and workshops which gives little relief to the people with disabilities. They do not even speak for people with disabilities as a result of which each disability group is forming their own voice group like

The Association for People with Albinism, (APAM) This one was formed after it was found that people born with albinism were being persecuted and even being killed. There are myths going around in Malawi that if one can find a body part belonging to a person with albinism, he will get a lot of money for that body part. As a result, people with albinism are being hacked losing arms or legs to unscrupulous people who think they will get rich by selling these body parts. There are even some who are going to the extent of exhuming bodies of people with albinism just to get parts. The people born with albinism are therefore suffering without anybody speaking for them. The result is that it took the whole state president to speak against this barbaric act and to impose stiff punishment against perpetrators of any such criminal acts. This is just because the organizations that are supposed to be speaking for them are not doing their work.

NGOs HELPING WITH DISABILITY ISSUES.

SOS Children's Village,

This is a German organization that has created Centres in some places where children with disabilities are cared for. They employ a house mother who is left in charge of a number of children, and ensures that they are clean and are fed at the right times. They also employ some rehabilitation personnel to help in mobilizing the limbs of the children. SOS is therefore really helping the country in providing some rehabilitation to children with disabilities.

PODCAM

It is said that every day a child with a disability is born. Parents of disabled children in Malawi Association are NGO funded by Norway and brings together mothers of children with various disabilities. They learn from each other's experiences on how they can deal with their disabled child. This brings an oneness to the mothers but as a group they lobby for government to train more special needs teachers. As an organization helping with disabilities in Malawi, I can say they are doing well and need to be encouraged.

Sanji Rehabilitation Centre. This is a small rehabilitation Centre operated by people who are former employees of MAP who decided that there is money to be made from treating children with disabilities. They are helping the children with disabilities at a fee from their parents and are making money for themselves because whatever the case maybe, they have to live.

Beit Cure International Hospital.

This one is located just next to the main Rehabilitation Centre of MAP and provides rehabilitation services to children born with various bodily deformities like club feet, knock knees etc. This hospital employs orthopedic surgeons who carry out surgery on the children to correct the malformation. This is done at no cost to the children with disabilities but I can say they are doing a very good job of it.

They have also started helping adults who have worn out hip bones and are replacing them. They are also helping people who have arthritis of the knees which is bringing disability to them. After treatment in the Cure Hospital they are going home healed. The only drawback with this Centre is that adults are charged exorbitantly for the knee operations. They are charged millions which are beyond most Malawians.

OPERATION SMILE

This is an NGO helping children and adults in Malawi with cleft lips which is another disability. Doctors repair the torn lips and make them look normal. There have been women who thought they would never find a husband due to their cleft lips but after the operation they got married. This is very good and commendable in the disability field. Nobody has yet thought of forming an NGO particularly to voice the concern of such people. Federation of Disabled people in Malawi has not yet considered them as disabled.

CONCLUSION.

We can write about all the NGOs in Malawi and fill pages with what they do. The purpose here is to see what some of them do like we have just done. There is one big problem however. The NGOs are welcome to help in any of the work or services in the country, but what guarantee is there of their sustainability. We have seen that most of the NGOs are funded from external sources. Once the external organization disagrees with some policies of the country, or if a board does not accept the conditions given them, we find them pulling out and leaving the organization and its beneficiaries in dire straits.

There are so many NGOs in Malawi at the moment. In one district alone, there are over fifty NGOs doing various activities. Once a service is started, it is not easy to close it. The result is that the NGOs rush to government for financial assistance once their finances have dried out. Government with its numerous woes cannot take on board all the NGOs plying their trades in the country. The result is many NGOs are dying a natural death as soon as their funders have withdrawn. This is where the NGO Board needs to work on to ensure that at any time an NGO is making an application to register itself to provide services in the country, they must provide concrete plans of their sustainability and guarantee that they will not pull out at every possible excuse. And that should they be forced to withdraw, there must be back up plans.

There is also a problem of porosity in that there are many un registered NGOs making control impossible. NGO Board demands that the NGOs should declare their modes of funding. The NGOs see this as interference in their affairs but this is good in that it acts as an indicator that the NGO is comfortably funded.

The proliferation of many NGOs that partially help in the rehabilitation of the disabled is important in the country as no organization can manage to provide all the services required by the people with disabilities. It is therefore fine even if an NGO can only help five or six people in a place; it still reduces

the number of people in need of help. There are many of this kind in the country. Very small organizations working in an area of about five to ten kilometers radius. These are essential in that they may be placed in places where the bigger NGOs may not be able to reach due to various factors. There also very many small NGOs that are providing medical rehabilitation services in some parts of the country. These NGOs are manned by people trained by MAP. We therefore rest assured that they know what they are doing as they have the desired training and experience. The same problem though is inherent in these as well because even if they are charging for their services, the money they get cannot sustain their work At the end of the day therefore, there will be services that have been started but have died on the way which is not good. Just like President Obama said at one time, it is easy to start a war but difficult to stop it. Once a service has been started it gets into the system of the community and therefore needs to be permanent in nature. If it fails to continue then either some other NGO must pick the pieces and continue or Government gets forced to come in and continue with the project thereby putting government to unnecessary pressure financially. A simple example of this is a place in the rural areas where there is no maize milling facility then someone brings a maize mill. That someone will have brought a very essential service which will mitigate peoples suffering in the area. Then suddenly the service stops doe to various problems the person may be facing in continuing with the service. The people of the area will suffer more than the time they had no service.

THE END 21st May 2018.

Malawi Union for the Blind

This is another local NGO that came up due to the failure of the main organizations in AFEDOMA, MACOHA to fully lobby for their rights with government.

Malawi National Association for the Deaf MANAD. This is the Malawi National Association for the Deaf and also born of the frustration after failing to advance their grievances to the authorities of the land, they are now fighting for their rights on their own.

Malawi Association for the Physically Disabled in Malawi.

This is a newly established organization wanting to voice the challenges facing people with physical disabilities in Malawi.

CRECOM.

CCJP Catholic Committee for Justice and Peace.

MHRC (Mental Health Resource Centre)

This organization is dealing with mental health in the country as there are very few organizations dealing with mental health. This one is playing a prominent role in sensitizing the public that mental health can be dealt with effectively.

BILAL Trust

Care for Victimized women and Children

CEPA Centre for environmental Policy

Christian Service Committee.

NAPHAM National Association of people living with HIV AIDS in Malawi

New Life Behavior in Malawi.

PACENET

Big Brother Concern

BEMORE.

Chikondano Women and Allied Services.

Citi Hope International.

PSI Population Services in Malawi

Project Hope Passion Centre for Children

Zambezi Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Public Affairs Committee.

Independent Schools in Malawi

Bedir Education and Medical Trust

Malawi Interfaith AIDS Association.

FIND YOUR FEET FYF.

This is a local NGO dedicated to working with poor rural communities to create lasting solutions to poverty. Born in 2004, its mission is the creation of a world in which everybody has a right to build a future free from hunger by promoting use of local resources. It intends to mobilize local knowledge and skills and promote ownership and use of natural resources by poor communities in finding sustainable and lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and discrimination. This is one of the very concepts that affect people with disabilities. If they could be made to take ownership and learn to use locally available natural resources and try to end poverty and hunger, that would help end their discrimination.

Which are the main enemies of people with disabilities?

FEET FIRST.

This an NGO operated by a British Surgeon who once worked in Malawi. The main focus of this organization is providing corrective surgery to children who are born with club feet. The feet are operated on and put in plaster casts as they heal and after sometime become very close to normal in that the children can then wear shoes and walk to school with little hardship. This too is a good NGO that is helping with disabilities in Malawi.