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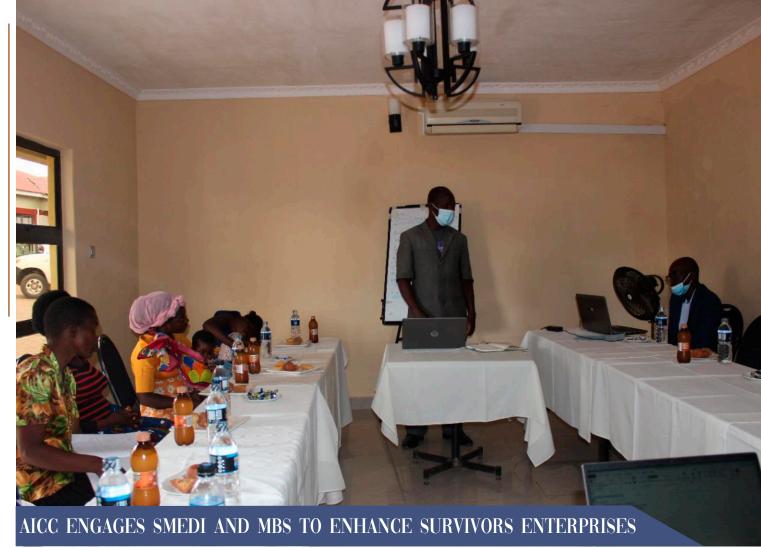
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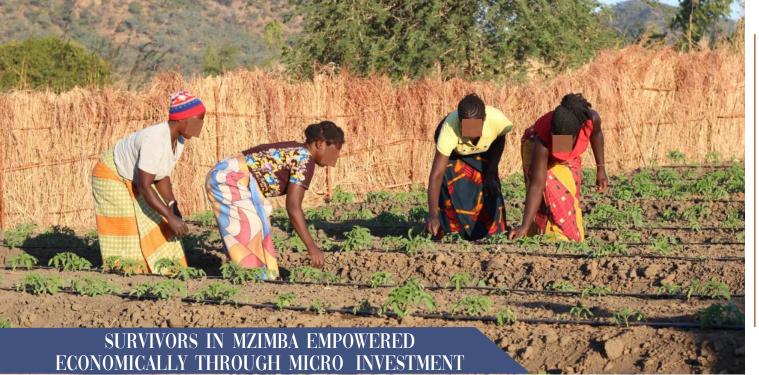


One of the trainings in progress

African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) is building capacity to Gender Based Violence survivors for them to operate rural enterprises as part of empowering them economically. Survivors can increasingly run their own enterprises, but if they are not fully trained, their socio-economic contributions and entrepreneurial potential is likely to be unrecognized and untapped. This is why AICC through its Public Private Partnership (PPP) approach engaged organizations such as Small and Medium Enterprise Development Institute (SMEDI) and Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) to train the survivors as upcoming entrepreneurs to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities in business development skills so that they can manage their small scale businesses on a more sustainable basis.

The training programme has imparted knowledge to the survivors regarding the required standards to satisfy their customers in various products and services. The trainings have also proved to increase survivors' entrepreneurial spirit and skills, and they have provided a platform for self-development and self-directed motivation. To sustain the established enterprises, SMEDI has trained survivors to keep their business records, business plans, in order to convince various funding agencies as part of meeting required procedures to get loans. "I am better equipped for these enterprises. I am thankful to AICC for these professional trainings and I am ready to do more," said Josophine, a survivor from Dowa District.

Following the trainings that have been done in all target districts where the spotlight initiative project is currently being implemented, it shows that survivors have sparks, which can be finned into flames with necessary guidance and mentorship. There are innumerable possibilities for promoting profitable small entrepreneurs who happen to be survivors of GBV and AICC has intensified its efforts to develop this nursery for entrepreneurship through tailor-made trainings.



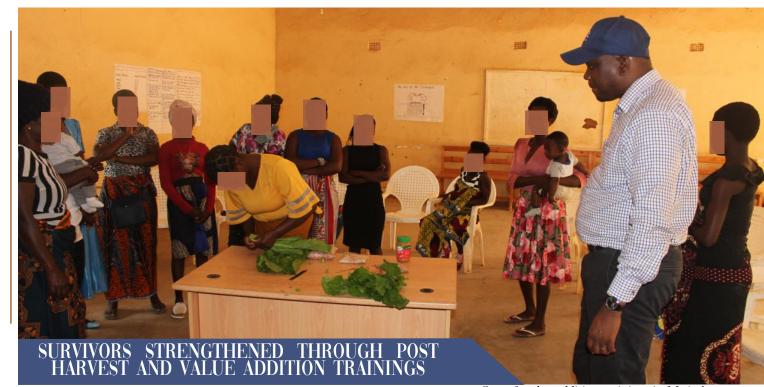
Emlonyeni MI survivor group

Survivors of gender-based violence in Malawi continue to face unequal access to training, resources, and opportunities to adopt new agricultural technologies, grow their businesses, and spend their earned income to improve the well-being of themselves and their families. Economic empowerment is thus key to the recovery process.

A lack of economic independence can be a huge barrier to every woman in reporting and leaving abusive relationships. There is need to increase access to economic opportunities in order to help women to break free of this cycle of dependence. A key part of the recovery process is raising awareness and understanding of women's rights, and how to exercise these rights. It is against this background that AICC conducted a baseline survey to assess the needs, background training, skills and interests, and then train them on how to create, set up and manage a small business. Listening to survivors of GBV is a critical success factor to identify their needs and together work out how best to respond to those needs. GBV survivors in Mzimba come forward to receive livelihood support to guarantee economic empowerment after adopting a Micro Investment (MI) concept: an intervention that uses and promote horticultural production through drip irrigation technology. Survivors are supported with the MI kits which comprise the drip kit, fertilizer as well as quality seedlings. The major goal of the intervention is to boost production and productivity to an extent where a survivor can use some of the profits to re-invest in other kits for further growth.

A group of survivors who are in the age range of 25- 40 years old, formed a group in Emlonyeni area Traditional Authority Mtwalo, in Mzimba District. A lot of them were chased out of their parents' home and were forced into early marriage when they were only 17- 21 years old. They were later abandoned by fathers of their children and they have been suffering psychological and different sexual assault. The survivors came to know about the work of AICC under spotlight initiative from a Community Women Protector, who has been engaging the survivors to be part of the spotlight initiative project. "The AICC project Officer in Mzimba requested us to form a group and adopt the MI technology." the survivors explained. "Since we already knew how to cultivate horticulture crops using the traditional way of cultivation. We were given MI kits to help us start cultivating horticultural crops using the drip Kit irrigation. As a group we started using the kits and we have grown tomato which we are expecting to realize money not less than MK100, 000.00 per bed after 2 months and we have agreed to further re-invest in MI kits so that we can have more kits to cultivate various horticultural crops in large quantity even during dry season.

We are ready to sell the produce to people within our community and we are discussing with the school head teacher at Emlonyeni Community Day Secondary School to allow us supply tomato to their students who are self-boarders at the school. The survivors are having a dream to save up some money and open an outlet in the community, where they can trap more customers and earn more money.



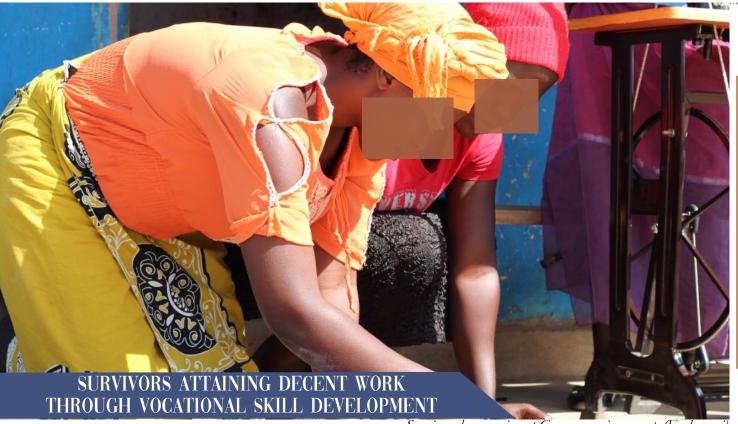
One of value addition trainings in Mzimba

A frican Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) under the spotlight initiative project is considering survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV) as key important players in the development of Malawi as they can play an important role in agriculture value chain and other vocational enterprises. AICC's philosophy is inspired by the principles of non-violence and self-reliance. Self-reliance refers to economic or financial self-sufficiency as well as collective self-reliance. With collective strength, the survivors will be able to combat the outside exploitative and corrupt forces like unscrupulous traders and other market competitors. Often, survivors are chronic victims of poverty and are more vulnerable to external shocks. Every misfortune leaves them increasingly powerless and takes them into deeper poverty. For AICC, only work and a steady source of income can break this cycle. Though they might be involved in small scale farming, they often do not own their tools of production. This is why AICC places these survivors at the center of its strategy against poverty and as part of building resilient communities.

AICC is currently supporting survivors to achieve full economic and social self-reliance so that they can move their families out of poverty. AICC puts survivors in groups to promote social cohesion, offer capacity building easily in the areas of marketing, business management, group dynamics, value addition and processing, among others. AICC is helping different groups of survivors in Dowa, Ntchisi, Mzimba and Nkhatabay on how they can operate small businesses at the same time meeting the required standards of their services and products. Groups have been trained on how to add value to some agricultural produce like groundnuts, horticultural produce and livestock. The survivors have been supplied with necessary machinery as well as equipment for this cause.

AICC is giving survivors the tools to become leaders and entrepreneurs and to decide about their own future. Every activity is accompanied by a training of trainers and leaders at grassroots levels. As entrepreneurs, survivors are learning to manage and control their own groups. They are learning how to save money, strive for financial sustainability, express their needs and make decisions based on their capacity. In addition, AICC is building the capacity of poor and illiterate survivors to engage and reach the highest levels of leadership in their groups and society. In this process, survivors are building their self-esteem; they are aware that poverty is not a fate; and they are receiving the knowledge, capacity and resources to act.

"Now I know that I have the right to grasp skills, the right to freely express my opinion and that early marriage is not a solution – thanks to AICC, because it has made me aware of my human rights."



Survivors busy sewing at Gonera survivor group (Emlonyeni)

Decent work is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment. AICC is helping survivors with technical and vocational skills that will help the survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV) to be engaged in decent work. AICC is reinforcing the soft and technical vocational skills to survivors of GBV through a comprehensive outreach effort that provides proven technologies and a menu of agricultural vocation training and opportunities to survivors in Mzimba. The vocation development skills that are promoted are expected to empower survivors economically and with skills that build their self-esteem, resilient, and enable them to make their own choices.

One of the group of survivors that is benefiting from this intervention is Gonera survivor group that contains 35 survivors and it is found in Traditional Authority Mtwalo in Mzimba District. The group has been established by AICC under the Spotlight Initiative project and has been supported with brand new sewing machines, pieces of clothes and all the equipment a group can use to start grasping tailoring skills. The group members are attesting that they have renewed their hope for achieving them full potential as they are now imparted with tailoring skills at the same time understanding how to make

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informed decisions about the future they wants. An 18 year old survivor who is a member of Gonera group disclosed that "Now I know, that I have the right to grasp skills, the right to freely express my opinion and that early marriage is not a solution – thanks to AICC, because it has made me aware of my human rights." The Spotlight Initiative project targets the most at-risk groups with focused efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), and harmful practices such as child marriage.

Due to different training conducted by AICC, survivors have come to realize that early marriage is not a good thing as one can easily get childbirth complications associated with early childbirth. Getting adolescent girls and young women out of vulnerable situations, where their rights and choices are limited or not accessible, is the cornerstone of the spotlight initiative project. The project is helping survivors to understand that early marriage is not a good thing as one can easily get childbirth complications associated with early childbirth, such as fistula or even maternal death. Girls are taught life skills about their human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and how to refrain from negative social behaviors. These have brought positive results to the communities, as girls can now able to speak out and challenge negative social norms that drive harmful practices, such gender-based violence, child marriage and teenage pregnancy.



Rahema covering herself with wrapper and looking down

Survivors of gender-based violence and harmful sexual practices are endangered with enormous traumatic experiences. Unfortunately, these experiences have long lasting negative effects on the lives of the survivors. Such being the case, survivors fail to negotiate with reality properly and start living life normally, thus impoverishing personal development and national development at large.

It is of no question in this regard that most survivors continue to live in hardships and their lives are mostly wanting. Economic empowerment for these survivors therefore cannot yield results if the psychological impacts that they face are not dealt with at the onset or amidst of any empowerment initiative. Looking at this state of affairs, AICC took a deliberate slant to engage psychosocial practitioners to assist in dealing away with the traumatic experiences of these survivors for its economic empowerment initiatives to produce desired outcome.

Whilst cases of this nature are voluminous under Spotlight Initiative, Rahema Phiri's case is worth singling out. Different from peers of her group, Rahema has had high low self-esteem and she has been struggling to associate with others. Rahema has been facing challenges to participate in most interventions and she could rarely avail herself to the public. "I always feel like someone is going to attack me or use any word I can utter against me," revealed Rahema when she was asked why she does not usually participate. "I have always been fought for voicing out in my former marriage and thus I am afraid of raising my ideas," she added.

Looking at Rahema's case, AICC project Officer for Spotlight Initiative in Ntchisi, Fanny Nkhunda, engaged psychosocial experts from Ntchisi District Hospital to assist her psychologically. The hospital checked her mental status and found that she was disturbed mentally. The hospital also found that her family had a trajectory of mental illness and thus the harmful practices she was exposed to accelerated her psychological instability. A special and spot-on treatment was proposed therefore. Since that time, Rahema has been under the watch of Ntchisi District hospital to make sure that she regains her mental stability and that she participate positively in economic empowerment activities under AICC in the Spotlight Initiative. The district hospital recommended mental medicine which AICC procured on her behalf to make sure that her condition improves strategically. Rahema is checked periodically to register the changes in her status for the hospital to determine appropriate levels of treatment for her case. Currently, Rahema is improving and is expected to be one of the role models for survivors who have been negatively impacted psychologically.



Testing of machines for various enterprises in Dowa

Can now see a bright future for myself and my child," said Joana Kabowa, a gender based violence survivor from T/A Dzoole Dowa. "I had no hope for a better future but the Spotlight initiative has transformed my hopes," added Joana. For her and other youthful girls, getting into marriage was becoming a talk of the community and fashionable since parents were forcing them. It has been a practice for the parents to extend sources of income as tobacco (popularly known as green gold) market which has been a great source of finance to people of her area continues to falter. Left with no better options for generating income, parents started to view their girl children as gold in disguise.

Youthful girls have therefore been exposed to early marriages and this has been having a psychological as well as physical effect on the girls. Joana is one of the youthful girls whose case is captivating. She was forced into early marriage at the age of fifteen. Coming from school one day, she was surprised to find a man waiting for her, who had already paid money to her parents and her uncle. "After taking lunch when I just arrived from school, I was told to pack my things to go into marriage. I had no idea where I would be living and I did not know who this man was." Explained Joana. "I told my mother I was not ready but she said that everything was already arranged and that I was just required to pack my things and leave with the man. I wept but my tears yielded to nothing." she added.

After getting into marriage, Joana was being subjected to different harmful practices including being fought and being taken as a servant at her husband's farm. "It was hard for me to accept him as my husband but I had no choice. When I fell pregnant for the first time, I miscarried. Instead of being comforted I faced the heat. I was branded as a witch and my husband could slap me regularly. However, I had no chance to flee his house as I would not be accepted by my parents." she narrated. Through the Spotlight Initiative, Joana was targeted and she finally had a chance of being taken out of her marriage. At this time, she was seventeen and had a five months child. She lost hope of her future.

"Through the District Gender Officer, I was linked to African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) where I met Olivia Mkolokosa, a Project Officer for Spotlight Initiative. Olivia asked me of the enterprise that I would be interested in and I chose tailoring. We have now received the machine and I believe we will be making money through it. My child and I have renewed our hope for a better future," recited Joana. AICC through the Spotlight initiative has procured tailoring machines and distributed them to survivors like Joana who have had interest in this enterprise. On top of the machine, AICC provided essential start up materials such as scissors, needles, tape measures, threads, buttons, spare parts just to mention a few. AICC is implementing this initiative to empower the survivors economically for them to have few chances of being subjected to gender based violence and harmful practices again. Joana is among 128 survivors that AICC is working with in empowering them economically through various rural enterprise development in Dowa.



66 My greatest worry has been how we can attract more customers to our enterprises," said Joyce Lowani when we visited her. "The enterprises are good but I have had fears that our produce may not be purchased," she added.

Joyce was not the only survivor who has had these fears in area of Traditional Authority Mtwalo in Mzimba. Coupled with segregation as well as stigma in the community, survivors of gender based violence and harmful practices have had low self confidence and self-esteem. This thus has a significant bearing on how the survivors can benefit from the rural enterprises. Noting this challenge, African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) has conducted various trainings to build and boost confidence as well as self-esteem of the survivors. AICC has been using the Survivor-centred approach which is based on principles of safety, confidentiality, respect and non-discrimination to boost the confidence of the survivors.

AICC has been engaging the survivors for them to realise that despite their background, they can be respected and they can be safe in their business endeavours. "I did not know how to market produce and I thought that if I become very active in my community I can expose myself to more harm," contended Joyce. "I had no idea that marketing can be done in different ways as we have been taught by AICC," she added. Speaking after one of the marketing trainings, Chawezi Banda, project officer for Spotlight Initiative at AICC revealed that marketing is one of the initiative that they have intensified. "We know that without marketing the products of their enterprises, the survivors will not benefit from these enterprises. We thought it wise therefore to instil marketing skills to the survivors for them to be able to make more sales for their economic empowerment," said Chawezi. Marketing skills instilled in the survivors are expected to increase awareness of produce of the survivors and will benefit them in terms of competitiveness on the market.



The success stories in this booklet have used pseudo names.

They are not real names of the survivors.

Empowering Survivors gives them the opportunity to define their own reality,

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