

# Second Edition Newsletter



CEDEP staff handing over lubricants, Oral HIV self test kits and Anti-retroviral drugs to peer educators during an outreach clinic

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# Foreword

## Message From The Executive Director

### ***Dear Friends & Partners,***

I am pleased to share the second edition of CEDEP's newsletter—our platform for highlighting our journey, achievements, and unwavering commitment to human rights and social justice. This edition arrives during a challenging period, following recent funding cuts from American sources that have significantly affected our operations. The loss of more than two major programs has created substantial hurdles for us, yet it has also strengthened our determination to adapt and persevere in our mission.

Despite these challenges, we remain dedicated to addressing pressing issues such as gender equality, access to justice, and the rights of marginalized groups. Our outreach initiatives continue to raise awareness and empower individuals to advocate for their own rights and those of others. We believe that fostering dialogue and collaboration is essential to building a society that values inclusivity and respect for all.

In this edition, you will find updates on our recent initiatives, inspiring testimonials from individuals whose lives have been positively impacted by our work, and information on upcoming projects that will further our mission. We are actively seeking new partnerships and funding opportunities to sustain our efforts during this transitional period.

We invite you to join us on this important journey toward justice and empowerment for everyone. Your support is crucial as we navigate these challenges together.

Thank you for your continued commitment and for being a vital part of the CEDEP community.

Warm regards,

**Gift Trapence**  
**Executive Director**  
**Centre for the Development of People**





## MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND POPULATION KABUDULA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL



## **Public Hospitals Face Challenges in Integrating DIC Services in Malawi**

**By vitumbiko Gwambaiké**

The Malawian government, through its Ministry of Health, is progressing with plans to integrate services previously offered by Drop-In Centers (DICs) into public hospitals. While this initiative aims to enhance healthcare accessibility for key populations (KPs), significant concerns have emerged regarding the readiness of public facilities for this transition.

KP coordinators have expressed apprehensions about the ability of public hospitals to effectively deliver these essential services. Thokozani Mzumara, a KP coordinator at Mapale Hospital, highlighted, "The reality is that most health workers in public hospitals are not trained to provide KP-friendly services. I fear that clients will face stigma and discrimination, pushing them away from seeking care." Many individuals feel safer in DICs, where they report experiencing less judgment and greater security about their identities. One client echoed these sentiments: "In the DIC, I can be myself without fear of judg-

ment. I worry that in a public hospital, my identity will be exposed, making me a target in my community."

In Mzuzu, the closure of a DIC led to the transfer of over 200 clients to Mapale Public Hospital. Alarmingly, only five out of more than a hundred service providers at this facility have received training on KP-friendly services, resulting in less than 10% of the transferred clients currently receiving the support they need. "It's disheartening to see so many people struggling to get the care they need," noted Mzumara.

Clients have voiced deep concerns about transitioning to public hospitals, fearing exposure of their identities. "We need to trust our healthcare providers," said Amadu. "If we can't feel safe, we won't seek help." Experts suggest that comprehensive training for public health workers on KP-friendly services is essential for successful integration. "Training is crucial," emphasized a public health advocate. "Without it, we risk alienating the very

populations we aim to serve."

Implementing pilot programs in selected hospitals to assess effectiveness and allow for necessary adjustments is also recommended. Establishing a system for ongoing support and encouraging community involvement will foster greater trust and cooperation between healthcare providers and KP clients.

As the government moves forward with its plans, stakeholders warn that a rushed implementation could exacerbate existing issues. "We can't afford to overlook the concerns of the KP community," cautioned a community leader. Engaging with these communities and prioritizing their needs will be essential in creating a truly inclusive healthcare system. While the integration of DIC services into public hospitals presents an opportunity for improved healthcare access in Malawi, it requires careful planning and execution to ensure that all citizens, particularly those from key populations, receive the care they deserve.

## **Funding Cuts Lead to Alarming 80% Default Rate on Oral PrEP at Nyambadwe DIC**

A staggering 80% of clients in Blantyre District have defaulted on their oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) treatments, primarily due to significant funding cuts impacting outreach services. CEDEP district Coordinator Fyness Jere revealed that the reduction in resources has led to the suspension of mobile clinics, which were critical for delivering treatment to clients.

“Before the funding cuts, our mobile clinics reached many individuals who otherwise wouldn’t have access to care,” Fyness explained. “Now, with limited resources, we’re seeing only 20% of the 2,900 clients who need oral PrEP actually receiving it. This is a crisis waiting to happen.”

The decline in access to PrEP not only jeopardizes individual health but also poses a broader public health risk. “When people stop taking PrEP, we increase the chances of new HIV infections in our community,” she warned. “An 80% default rate is unacceptable and indicates that many individuals are left vulnerable.”



Fyness Jere- Nyambadwe DIC Coordinator

Fyness emphasized the urgent need for renewed support from partners and stakeholders to reinstate outreach activities at the Nyambadwe Drop-In Center (DIC). “The mobile clinics were more than just a service; they were a lifeline for many. We need to bring them back to ensure that at-risk populations can access the preventive care they need.”

In her conclusion, Fyness called for immediate action: “We cannot stand by and watch as our progress in the fight against HIV is reversed. I urge all partners to invest in our outreach efforts. Together, we can turn this situation around and protect the health of our community.”

As Blantyre District grapples with this alarming default rate, the call for action is clear: without renewed funding and support, the fight against HIV and AIDS faces a serious setback

## **Shadows and Second Chances**

A Story from Lirangwe  
by Fyness Jere

In the quiet township of Lirangwe, nestled just outside the bustling city of Blantyre, lived a man named Chikondi. To the outside world, he was a devoted husband and father of two a man who worked hard and returned home each evening to his family. But beneath the surface, Chikondi carried a secret, a truth that weighed heavily on his heart.

Chikondi was bisexual. Though married to a loving wife, he also had a male partner and, more recently, a female girlfriend named Thandiwe.

Their relationship had started casually, but over time, it grew more intimate. What Chikondi never anticipated was the storm that would follow.

In May 2025, Thandiwe discovered that her other boyfriend the one Chikondi didn’t know about was HIV positive. Alarmed, she went for an HIV test herself. The result came back positive. Shaken and full of regret, she called Chikondi with trembling urgency in her voice. “I think you should get tested too,” she said, her voice cracking. “We’ve been sleeping together without protection. I’m so sorry.”

The words hit Chikondi like a thunderclap. His mind raced not just for himself, but for his wife, his children, and his male partner. The fear was suffocating. He hadn’t used protection with Thandiwe, trusting her blindly. Now, everything felt like it was unraveling.

For days, Chikondi couldn’t eat. He couldn’t sleep. He avoided his family, haunted by the possibility that he might have unknowingly endangered them. Depression crept in like a slow fog, and he knew he couldn’t face this alone.

He remembered the Drop-In Centre (DIC) in Nyambadwe, Blantyre, where he had been receiving injectable PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) a medication that helps prevent HIV infection.

Chikondi had started PrEP in November 2024 and had never missed an appointment. In June 2025, he was due for his next injection. But this time, the visit felt different. It wasn't routine anymore it was desperate.

At the DIC, Chikondi sat across from Nurse Grace, a warm and attentive woman who had seen many stories unfold in that small counseling room. With trembling hands and a voice barely above a whisper, Chikondi told her everything. His marriage. His bisexuality. His mistress. The unprotected sex. The positive test result. "I'm scared," he admitted, tears streaming down his face. "I don't want to die. I don't want to hurt anyone."

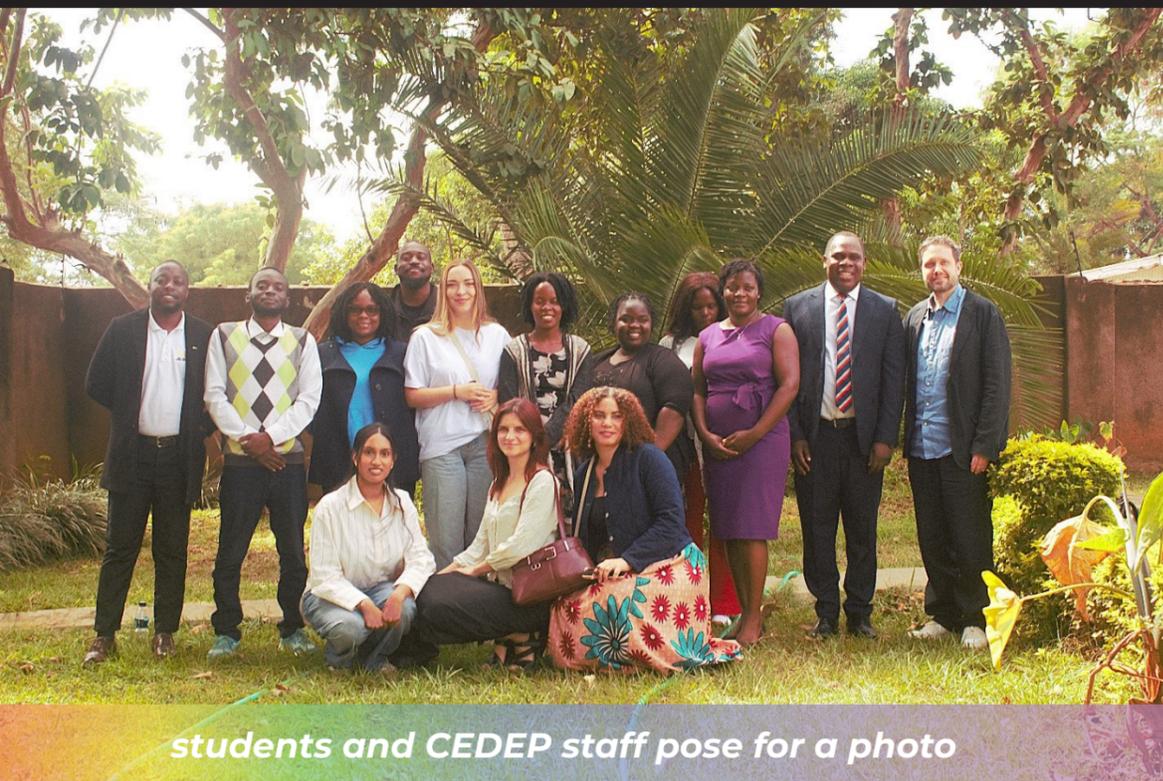
Nurse Grace listened without judgment. She offered him tissues, then gently explained the testing process. She reminded him of the protection injectable PrEP offers, but also the importance of regular testing and honest communication.

Chikondi agreed to be tested. The minutes felt like hours. He sat in silence, staring at the floor, replaying every moment with Thandiwe, every lie he told his wife, every risk he took. Then Nurse Grace returned, holding the results. "Chikondi," she said softly, "you tested negative."

He broke down in relief. The weight lifted. He wasn't HIV positive. The injectable PrEP had done its job. It had

protected him in the shadows of his choices. That day, Chikondi didn't just receive his next injection he received a second chance. He left the DIC with a renewed sense of purpose. He knew he had to make changes. He began counseling sessions, committed to safer practices, and started the difficult journey of being honest with himself and those he loved.

Chikondi's story shows how important it is to get tested, use protection, and talk openly. It also shows that PrEP can save lives even when mistakes are made.



*students and CEDEP staff pose for a photo*

## **Loughborough University Master's Students Visit CEDEP Officers in Lilongwe**

*By Vitumbiko Gwambaika*

Lilongwe, Malawi – A group of master's students from Loughborough University, led by Associate Professor Magalasi, a drama lecturer at the University of Malawi, recently visited the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) in Lilongwe. The visit aimed to foster collaboration and exchange ideas on community development and social issues.

During their visit, the master's students engaged in discussions with CEDEP officers about various initiatives focused on health, human rights, and community empowerment. The students expressed a keen interest in understanding the local context and the challenges faced by marginalized communities in Malawi.

Associate Professor Magalasi emphasized the importance of such interactions in enriching the students' learning experience. "This visit not only allows our students to learn about the vital work being done by CEDEP but also provides an opportunity to explore how art and drama can play a role in advocacy and social change," he noted.

CEDEP officers shared insights into their ongoing projects, including health promotion, advocacy for the rights of people living with HIV, and initiatives aimed at combating stigma and discrimination. The discussion highlighted the critical role of education and community involvement in addressing these issues.

The master's students were particularly inspired by CEDEP's commitment to inclusivity and empowerment. They expressed a desire to explore potential collaborations that could leverage their skills in drama and performance to raise awareness about social issues in Malawi.

The visit concluded with a tour of CEDEP's facilities, allowing the students to witness firsthand the impact of the organization's work in the community. Both CEDEP and the Loughborough University delegation left the meeting with a renewed sense of purpose and the potential for future partnerships. This visit marks an important step in strengthening ties between educational institutions and community organizations, fostering a spirit of collaboration that can lead to meaningful change.

# From Waste to Wealth

**CEDEP Empowers Communities Through Glass Recycling Training**  
By Vitumbiko Gwambaika



In a remarkable initiative aimed at waste management and community empowerment, the Centre for Development of People (CEDEP) recently conducted a transformative training program for peer educators in Blantyre. This program focused on the innovative reuse of wasted beer bottles, turning them into beautiful glass cups that can be sold for income or used at home.

The training brought together a diverse group of participants who were eager to learn how to creatively repurpose discarded glass. Under the guidance of experienced trainers, attendees engaged in hands-on activities, mastering the art of glass cutting and design. Each participant was provided with a complete set of glass-cutting tools, enabling them to confidently create their own unique products. This not only enhances their artistic skills but also fosters a sense of ownership and pride in their work.

Pempho Simkanda, a representative from CEDEP, emphasized the importance of this program: "By equipping our peer educators with practical skills and the necessary tools, we're fostering a culture of sustainability and entrepreneurship within the community. This training is a step towards reducing waste and creating economic opportunities." CEDEP's innovative approach aims to instill a sense of responsibility towards waste management while also promoting self-sufficiency among participants.

One participant, James Gondwe, expressed his enthusiasm about the training: "I never thought I could turn wasted beer bottles into something beautiful and useful. With the tools provided, I feel ready to start my own small business and sell my creations." His excitement reflects a growing sentiment among participants who see the potential for entrepreneurship in their newfound skills. The initiative not only addresses the pressing issue of waste management but also provides participants with the skills and resources necessary to thrive economically. By transforming waste into wealth, CEDEP is making significant strides in promoting sustainability while uplifting community members.

As the program continues to gain traction, CEDEP plans to expand its reach, providing further training sessions and support for those interested in exploring the world of glass recycling. This initiative serves as a powerful reminder that with creativity, determination, and the right tools, communities can turn challenges into opportunities for growth and prosperity.

## **Closure of DIC Leaves LGBTIQ+ Community Vulnerable to Violence in Mangochi**



The closure of the Drop-In Center (DIC) in Mangochi has led to a troubling surge in gender-based violence (GBV) against the LGBTIQ+ community. With funding for LGBTIQ+ initiatives reportedly exhausted, perpetrators feel emboldened, believing that victims have nowhere to turn for help.

“Since the DIC closed, we have seen a dramatic increase in violence and harassment,” said John Bongo a peer educator. “Many individuals feel unsafe and unprotected. The message from the community is clear: they believe they can act with impunity.”

One client shared a harrowing experience after reporting an assault to the police. “I thought I would be safe going to the authorities, but instead, I felt dismissed and ignored,” he recounted. “I left the station feeling more vulnerable than before.”

Another case highlights the alarming treatment faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals at the hands of law enforcement. A client was bullied by police officers who were doing patrols in Mangochi town simply for speaking in a manner perceived as feminine. “They mocked me and made me feel ashamed of who I am,” he said. “Instead of feeling protected, I felt targeted.”

Dunker Kamba chair for Diversity Forum is calling attention to the urgent need for renewed support and protection for the LGBTIQ+ community. “With the DIC closed, many are left without access to resources or safe spaces,” he explained. “We need immediate action to ensure that these individuals receive the protection and support they deserve.”

As the situation in Mangochi deteriorates, the LGBTIQ+ community is left grappling with fear and uncertainty. Without adequate support and resources, many face increasing violence and discrimination, highlighting the critical need for renewed funding and protective measures to safeguard their rights and well-being.

## CEDEP Participates in Constitution Review Conference in Blantyre



*Bernard William Mbalati Second from left with fellow presenters*

**Blantyre, Malawi – CEDEP** participated in the Constitution Review Conference held on May 26 and 27, 2025, at Mount Soche Hotel, Blantyre. This significant event, titled “Reflections on Three Decades of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,” aimed to address critical constitutional issues that impacted the lives of Malawians. As stakeholders celebrated 30 years of Malawi’s constitution, the conference provided an important platform for reflection on the achievements and challenges that shaped the legal landscape. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, focusing on how the constitution could better serve the needs of all citizens, particularly marginalized groups.

A highlight of CEDEP's involvement was the presentation of a pivotal paper titled “The Constitutional Dilemma on Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender, and Intersex Rights in Malawi.” Authored by Executive Director Gift

Trapence, along with Bernard William Mbalati and Aniz Mitha, this paper critically examined the legal and societal challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in Malawi.

The presentation aimed to shed light on the constitutional provisions affecting LGBTQ+ rights, advocating for a more inclusive interpretation aligned with human rights principles. As the discourse surrounding these issues evolved, CEDEP committed to pushing for reforms that ensured equality and justice for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. During the conference, participants engaged in robust discussions, shared insights, and collaborated on strategies to address the gaps in the constitution. CEDEP believed that an inclusive approach was vital to fostering a society where everyone’s rights were respected and protected.

# CEDEP Continues on HIV Testing and Counseling Sessions for Early Diagnosis and Treatment

The Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) has launched on going HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC) sessions aimed at promoting early diagnosis and ensuring individuals are linked to essential healthcare and treatment services. This initiative underscores CEDEP's commitment to improving health outcomes for those at risk of HIV and combating the stigma surrounding testing.

Early diagnosis of HIV is crucial for effective treatment and management. By identifying HIV-positive individuals sooner, CEDEP aims to ensure they receive the necessary medical care and support, leading to better health outcomes and reducing the risk of transmission to others.

**The HTC sessions will provide a safe and confidential environment for participants to access:**

## Rapid HIV Testing

Participants will receive quick results, allowing for immediate counseling and support

## Counseling Services

Trained counselors will be available for one-on-one discussions, addressing concerns and providing emotional support.

## Linkage to Care

Those who test positive will be referred to healthcare facilities for further testing and treatment.

CEDEP emphasizes the importance of community engagement in the fight against HIV. The organization will collaborate closely with local leaders and organizations to promote these sessions and ensure accessibility. Community members are encouraged to participate and help raise awareness about the importance of HIV testing.

"We invite individuals and families to take advantage of these free HTC sessions," a CEDEP representative stated. "Together, we can break the stigma surrounding HIV and work towards a healthier future for all."

For more information about the upcoming sessions or to find out how to get involved, individuals can contact CEDEP directly.

This initiative is a significant step toward enhancing public health in Malawi and ensuring that those affected by HIV receive the care they need



# CEDEP Hosts Successful SOGIE Curriculum Review Workshop

The Centre for Development of People (CEDEP) is dedicated to advocating for the rights of key populations and promoting social justice in Malawi. Through collaborative efforts and innovative programs, CEDEP strives to create a more equitable society for everyone. On June 19th and 20th, the Centre for Development of People (CEDEP) hosted a highly productive two-day SOGIE Curriculum Review Workshop at Chiko Hotel in Mponela. This pivotal event was made possible through the generous funding from the Global Fund via World Vision and aimed at strengthening the integration of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) issues within various programs across Malawi.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including four key population-led organizations: Nyasa Rainbow, Gender Collective, Centre for Key Population Rights, and Optimum Foundation. Participants also included representatives from the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS Commission (NAC). The collaborative effort aimed to review existing SOGIE frameworks and work towards adopting a unified curriculum to promote consistency, shared understanding, and contextual relevance in addressing SOGIE issues.

Maria Ngulube, CEDEP Chief of Party and one of the workshop facilitators, emphasized the necessity of standardization in her opening remarks. She stated, "Using different SOGIE frameworks creates confusion and undermines our collective efforts in advocating for the rights of key populations." Ngulube's insights highlighted the critical need for a unified approach to ensure effective advocacy and meaningful engagement with communities.

A representative from the NAC echoed this sentiment, stressing the essential connection between SOGIE issues and the fight against HIV. "By standardizing our SOGIE frameworks, we can enhance our efforts in combating HIV," they noted. "A cohesive approach will improve access to services and support for those most affected, ensuring that no one is left behind in our fight against this epidemic." This perspective underscores the importance of integrating SOGIE considerations into health strategies to better serve key populations.

The workshop featured dynamic discussions, collaborative exercises, and expert-led sessions focused on identifying best practices for SOGIE integration. Participants shared experiences, challenges, and successes, fostering a spirit of unity and collaboration among organizations committed to advocating for the rights of marginalized groups.

The outcomes of this workshop are anticipated to have a profound impact on advocacy efforts across the country. By aligning SOGIE frameworks, CEDEP and its partners aim to create a more inclusive environment where the rights and needs of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, are recognized and addressed.

As we move forward, CEDEP is excited about the potential outcomes of this collaboration and the positive impact it will have on our advocacy efforts. Together with our partners, we are committed to fostering an environment that promotes equality, respect, and dignity for all.



# CEDEP Empowers Communities with Tree Planting Training to Combat Climate Change



In a significant step towards environmental sustainability, the Centre for Development of People (CEDEP) has empowered a passionate group of peer educators across several districts with essential training on tree planting. This initiative represents an impactful solution in the ongoing fight against climate change and aims to restore and enhance the natural environment.

Participants in the training program received a diverse selection of trees valued at an impressive 5 million Kwacha, including grafted varieties known for their higher yield and resilience. This initiative not only focuses on reforestation but also aims to create sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

Charles Gona, CEDEP's Project Coordinator, elaborated on the initiative's dual benefits: "By restoring our forests, we're not only enhancing biodiversity but also creating sustainable livelihoods. These trees will provide fruits for sale, many of which will start producing in just one or two years, helping communities adapt to climate impacts." His insights highlight how the program bridges environmental restoration with economic opportunity, ensuring that communities can thrive while contributing to the planet's health.

The training emphasized practical skills in tree planting, nurturing, and management, empowering educators to share their knowledge with their communities. By equipping these individuals with expertise and resources, CEDEP is fostering a grassroots movement against deforestation and environmental degradation.

The benefits of this initiative extend far beyond the immediate impact of planting trees. Improved air quality, enhanced biodiversity, and increased resilience in local ecosystems are just a few of the positive outcomes anticipated from these efforts. Trees play a vital role in sequestering carbon, combating climate change, and providing essential resources for communities.

In addition to helping the environment, this initiative encourages community engagement and awareness of climate issues. As local residents witness the tangible benefits of tree planting, they are more likely to adopt sustainable practices and advocate for the protection of their natural surroundings.

As CEDEP continues its mission for a greener, healthier planet, we invite everyone to join us in this vital effort. Whether through participation in future training sessions, supporting local tree planting initiatives, or simply spreading the word about the importance of reforestation, each action contributes to a collective impact. Together, we can combat deforestation, improve air quality, and foster resilience in our ecosystems. Are you ready to join our mission for a greener, healthier planet?



By Vitumbiko Gwambaika

## **CEDEP and MANET+ Engage Political Parties on Earmarked Taxes and Health Funding**

On April 3, a pivotal meeting took place in Zomba, organized by the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and the Malawi Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MANET+). The gathering brought together general from all political parties represented in to discuss the urgent need for earmarked taxes and the prioritization of health funding in party manifestos ahead of the upcoming elections.

The meeting emphasized a collaborative approach to addressing the critical challenges facing Malawi's health sector. CEDEP and MANET+ highlighted that earmarked taxes are essential for establishing a sustainable funding mechanism for health initiatives. Mr. Lawrence Khonyongwa, Executive Director of MANET+, stated, "Earmarked taxes are essential for creating a reliable financial foundation for our health services. We urge all political parties to commit to this approach in their manifestos."

Participants also discussed the importance of incorporating clear health funding strategies into party platforms. Such commitments would not only demonstrate the parties' dedication to improving health outcomes but also reassure voters that health is a top priority.

In addition to earmarked taxes on items like cigarettes, motor insurance, and alcohol, the meeting explored potential collaborations with

organizations such as the Kabaza Association, which could contribute to health funding through annual fees. CEDEP and MANET+ advocate for a comprehensive approach to financing health services through these partnerships.

Linda Limbe, Secretary General for AFFORD, expressed gratitude to the organizers for engaging political parties on this critical issue. She emphasized the necessity of finding alternative funding sources for the health sector, particularly in light of the freeze on donations from development partners like USAID. "As political parties, we need to prioritize health because all development depends on the health of the people," she remarked.

A significant point raised during the meeting was the need to engage the National Planning Commission to ensure that political parties prioritize domestic resource mobilization for health. As the Commission certifies party manifestos, early engagement would encourage parties to include domestic strategies for health funding.

With all political parties now committed, there is hope that health funding will take center stage in their manifestos as the electoral process moves forward, paving the way for a healthier future for all Malawians.

## **CEDEP and MANET+ Call for Increased Health Budget Allocation in Parliamentary Engagement**

On the night of March 11, 2025, the Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and the Malawi Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MANET+), in collaboration with the Network of Journalists Living with HIV (JONEHA) and the Civil Society Advocacy Forum (CSAF), engaged with the Parliamentary Committees on Health, Finance, and Budget. The meeting focused on the urgent need to address the 2025/26 health budget allocation.

Lawrence Khonyongwa, Executive Director of MANET+, voiced his disappointment regarding the government's allocation of only 9.2% of the total budget to health, falling significantly short of the 15% target established by the Abuja Declaration. He pointed out that the recent withdrawal of funding from USAID, a historically significant contributor, should serve as a wake-up call for the government to prioritize health funding.

Khonyongwa proposed several measures to enhance domestic health financing, suggesting that the Ministry of Finance implement levies or taxes on tobacco, alcohol, and insurance. These funds could provide a much-needed boost to the health budget.

Honorable Mathews Ngwale, MP and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee, echoed Khonyongwa's concerns, emphasizing the necessity for the government to take control of its budget,

particularly in light of diminishing support from development partners. In addition to the revenue-generating proposals from civil society organizations, Ngwale suggested the introduction of optional paid services in public hospitals as a potential revenue source.

The engagement highlighted a collective call for sustainable health funding, with participants urging the government to take decisive action to ensure adequate resources for the health sector. The discussions underscored the critical importance of health financing in maintaining and improving health outcomes for all Malawians.

As the dialogue continues, advocates are united in their mission to ensure that health remains a top priority in the national budget.



Honorable Mathews Ngwale, MP

Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee



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