



ART & GLOBAL HEALTH CENTER  
AFRICA

# Newsletter

Harnessing the power of the Arts

April 2023 - September 2023

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*"Our Job as a church is to preach about salvation and our focus should not be on changing the law....."*

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*"Our health facility has adopted the problem tree analysis approach to deal with root causes of some of the issues...."*

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*"Some laws are initiated and are not properly disseminated. Sometimes officers or stakeholders are not even aware of them."*

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*"I decided to share the message that I got from the performance with my granddaughter after noticing her helpless state....."*

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Art & Global Health Center Africa (ArtGlo) is a Malawian NGO that harnesses the power of the arts to nurture creative leadership, and ignite bold conversations and actions. We envision a world where communities are healthy, open, and active, and people are free to be who they are.

## Executive Director's Note



Dear ArtGlo Community,

As we continue to harness the transformative power of art to drive self-sustaining societal change, we are excited to once again connect with our beloved ArtGlo community and share the remarkable strides we have made in the third quarter of 2023.

Our Social Inclusion and Diversity Program, in collaboration with the Southern Africa Litigation Center (SALC), remains steadfast in its mission to engage primary justice actors. Through the profound principles of Umunthu, we are addressing the primary justice access disparities faced by minority groups, especially our LGBTIQ community members. This project embodies our commitment to ensuring that every voice is heard, every story is valued, and justice is accessible to all.

The Tiyambe project continues to make profound impacts in the Eastern Produce Malawi Estates and surrounding villages in Thyolo and Mulanje. By engaging the massroots, we are strengthening community structures, empowering them to effectively respond to issues of Gender-Based Violence and gender inequalities. Our mission is to create a safe and nurturing environment for all, free from violence, inequalities and discrimination.

In partnership with UNICEF, we have taken active steps to respond to the adverse effects of climate change, particularly on school-going children. We are determined to uncover and address the traumatic experiences that these young individuals have faced. Our efforts aim to prepare them for school and life beyond, in the wake of such devastating experiences.

We are also excited to announce our new partnerships with the University of York and the University of California on Climate Justice and Health initiatives. These collaborations will allow us to further our commitment to creating a more sustainable and equitable world.

Additionally, we are thrilled to have joined forces with UNDP and the Ministry of Youth in the Youth Connekt project. Our Youth Leaders Workshops in major cities across Malawi have been instrumental in nurturing the next generation of leaders. By equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to make a positive impact, we are helping shape a brighter future for our nation.

As we step into the last quarter of 2023, we do so with great enthusiasm and anticipation of even more remarkable strides and inspiring stories. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our stakeholders and partners for embarking on this transformative journey with us. Together, we are changing lives, one person, one community, one nation one step at a time.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and we look forward to the exciting journey that lies ahead.

With heartfelt appreciation and warm regards,

Rodger Kumalire Phiri.

## Young leaders amplify their voices through the Youth Connekt Umunthu Circle dialogues



The UNDP, Ministry of Youth and Sports, in partnership with Art and Global Health Center Africa (ArtGlo), conducted Umunthu Circles that engaged the Youth in leadership positions in Blantyre, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu. The three-day workshops were aimed at providing a platform for the youth to discuss pertinent issues that are stifling youth development in the country. They also envisioned the Youth Connekt platform's role in addressing or removing those barriers to youth participation in different spheres of developmental initiatives....

<https://artgloafrica.org/young-leaders-amplify-their-voices-through-the-youth-connekt-umunthu-circle-dialogues/>

## Primary Justice Actors Workshops



“To be honest, I had always thought that they were Satanists but Umunthu has changed my perspective. I now see them just as human and normal as I am.”

Our SID team has been engaging Primary Justice Actors (PJA) with the main objective of understanding the social climate of LGBTI people, and its interplay with global health, and mental and social well-being. The engagements also aimed to understand and break down social barriers to the enjoyment of rights and free participation of LGBTI people. We engaged primary justice actors both societal and public including; Police Victim Support Unit Officers, Community Policing Officers, Lay Magistrates, and Community and Religious leaders.

Through a workshop in each of the implementation districts of Chikwawa, Dedza, Mchinji and Phalombe, we have managed to reach 70 primary justice actors with support from Southern Africa Litigation Center (SALC). The PJA workshops are among the key initiatives under the Umunthu Inclusive Society Project that seeks to raise awareness of the situation of LGBTI people in Malawi by engaging key stakeholders.

## LGBTQI+ Persons Converges with their Family and Friends at Nchalo, Chikwawa District



Being an LGBTQI+ person in Malawi is challenging. LGBTQI+ persons are subjected to different forms of discrimination when they want to access social services. The Marriage Divorce and Family Relations Act of 2015 coupled with the Penal Code sections 153, 154, 156 and 137A are the legal instruments that are usually referred to in legitimizing any form of discrimination. Cultural and religious beliefs and values also have had a huge impact in perpetrating the discrimination mostly evidenced in the denial of services that range from health and justice.

Art and Global Health Center Africa (ArtGlo) with support from Southern Africa Litigation Centre is implementing Umunthu Inclusive Society project in a bid to address access to justice systems which also has a connection to access to other social services.....

<https://artgloafrica.org/lgbtqi-persons-converges-with-their-family-and-friends-at-nchalo-chikwawa/>

## Were anti-LGBTI protests necessary?

The legality of homosexuality continues to be a topic of interest and actions from those that are pro and against continue to make way to the public domain. As the LGBTQ cases brought by a Dutch national and transgender woman from Malawi who are challenging the constitutionality of the country's laws on homosexuality are in progress, the local Catholic Church backed by other religious groups organized mass demonstrations. These were held simultaneously in the major cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba. Other districts such as Mchinji, Phalombe, and Dedza also held demonstrations.

Our recent interactions with a number of religious leaders, local chiefs, and the LGBTI people to share their views about these demonstrations, have both questioned the timing, and basis as well as uncovered some inconsistencies in the relevance of the protests. The demonstrations were characterised by hurtful speech, threats, and mockery against the LGBTI people.....



<https://artgloafrica.org/were-anti-lgbti-protests-necessary/>

## Umunthu Healthcare Workers Project spurs innovation and inclusion in the Health sector



In 2016, Art and Global Health Center Africa (ArtGlo) under the Social Inclusion and Diversity program began implementing the Umunthu healthcare workers project whose primary focus was to deal with health access disparities by fostering understanding and empathy towards LGBTQ+ individuals within healthcare systems and the broader community. Apart from creating a conducive environment for LGBTQ+ people to access health services without fear and discrimination, the Umunthu Healthcare Workers Project facilitated the introduction of new innovative ways of improving quality and inclusion for all.....

<https://artgloafrica.org/the-umunthu-healthcare-workers-project-spurs-innovation-and-inclusion-in-the-health-sector/>

## Umunthu Healthcare Workers Project empowers the LGBTI people in Malawi: The case of Dedza and Chikwakwa Districts.

The LGBTI community in Malawi is among the key populations exposed to various forms of abuse and discrimination. The Umunthu Healthcare Workers project was set to minimize some of these burdens with a key emphasis on changing the attitudes of healthcare workers so as to create a conducive environment that is free of discrimination regardless of sexual orientation in health service provision. The workshops that this project has utilized, have not only empowered healthcare workers to champion and uphold access to health services for all but also the LGBTI to defend and fight for their rights within and beyond the health sector.

Representatives of the LGBTI people were encouraged to revamp or form networks where they would regularly meet to unearth some of the issues impeding their access to health services in their areas.....



<https://artgloafrica.org/umunthu-healthcare-workers-project-empowers-the-lgbti-people-in-malawi-the-case-of-dedza-and-chikwakwa/>

## Unicef Back to School Campaign



As part from unprecedented damage to housing, public infrastructure and loss of lives in Southern Malawi, Tropical Cyclone Freddy has worsened the vulnerability of children including threatening their right to education. Through the UNICEF Back to School campaign, we engaged key champions of child protection in Mulanje and Blantyre using the Umunthu Circles dialogue to ensure a safe return of learners to school. These interactive sessions were held in six primary schools in each of the districts to unpack critical issues on child protection and GBV.

We have also delivered Social Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) messaging to combat these critical issues as well as encouraging learners in flood-affected areas to go back to school using participatory arts approaches. During the launch of the campaign in Mkananda Primary School, we showcased a drama performance that highlighted the underlying issues we found in the area recently through the Umunthu Circles Dialogue and TfD performances.

## Stakeholders identify gaps in child protection

“Some laws are initiated and are not properly disseminated. Sometimes officers or stakeholders are not even aware of them.”

Kenneth Mbalati, Blantyre District Social Welfare Officer.

Collaboration has the power to broaden perspectives, approaches and to encourage critical thinking and innovation. We brought together different stakeholders from eight Traditional Authorities (TAs) each in Lilongwe and Blantyre to collaborate and develop awareness campaign plans on ending VAC, VAW, and GBV in their respective areas.

We have engaged representatives from One Stop Centers (OSCs), Police Victim Support Units (PVSUs), Community Victim Support Units (CVSU's), Area De-

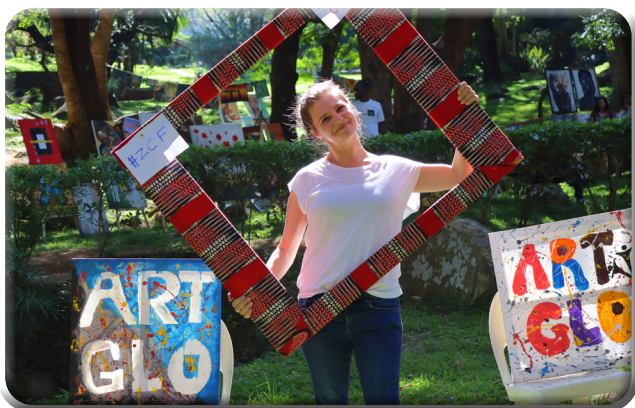
velopment Committees (ADCs), Blantyre Social Welfare Office (SWO), Child Protection Workers (CPW), and a TA Clerk.

They further mapped out key contributors of violence, its forms, impacts, laws, and policies in preparation for the campaigns that now started in Blantyre with support from UNICEF Malawi.

Meanwhile the campaign has commenced in Blantyre and we have managed to reach out to 3,227 people.

## Zomba City Festival Gallery

At ArtGlo, we believe that society develops through the creativity of its members. The third edition of the Zomba City Festival provided a platform to celebrate and promote a wide variety of art forms as well as tourism since activities were spread across 8 different venues from the 28th of April to the 1st of May 2023. We were privileged to have participated in this year's edition running under the theme, 'Carnival', organized by Zomba Arts Platform.



## Commencement of 2023 Tiyambe TfD Performances



**D**ramatization of real issues that happen in the community has the power to ignite bold conversations and actions toward social change. During the TfD performance that ArtGlo with support from Eastern Produce Malawi Limited organized, community members from Nsenga village in Mianga Estate, Thyolo, confirmed that some men have a tendency of defiling their stepdaughters as showcased in the play. Apart from raising a number of questions during the performance, they were further put into focus groups to discuss the issues raised as well as to develop action points at the end. This is where the police and other stakeholders further strengthened the participants' understanding of the proper structures for reporting GBV cases.

Our Tiyambe team has so far engaged all the target four communities and one community in Mianga and Masawa estates in Thyolo respectively. For Mulanje, we have interacted with three targeted communities in Chinsambo Estate. Tiyambe project seeks to promote gender equality and tackle sexual harassment in tea and macadamia growing communities in targeted areas of Mulanje and Thyolo through TfD as a civic education and community engagement tool as well as platform.

## Tiyambe Project shares best practices and lessons at a National conference



**T**heatre for Development (TfD) is a powerful participatory arts methodology that seeks to transform both the individual and the community towards a common goal. Our Tiyambe Project Officer, Esther Harawa, shared some of the practical lessons and recommendations at the Best Practices Conference on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that was jointly organised by the Ministry of Gender, Malawi, and Malawi Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence between the 1st and 2nd of August 2023 in Lilongwe.

Harawa presented on, 'Effectiveness of Theatre for Development in Facilitating Dialogues on Ending GBV and Achieving Gender Justice in Rural Areas in Malawi'. This is where she drew her experiences from the Tiyambe Project that is being implemented by ArtGlo with support from Eastern Produce Malawi Limited (EPM) in ending GBV-related violence in the communities surrounding EPM's Tea and Macadamia Estates of Mulanje and Thyolo districts.



## TfD exposes and ignites action against poor leadership



**D**ramatization of real issues that happen in the community has the power to ignite bold conversations and actions toward social change. During the TfD performance that ArtGlo with support from Eastern Produce Malawi Limited organized, community members from Nsenga village in Mianga Estate, Thyolo, revealed that poor leadership was the root cause for increased violence in the area.

In response to this, Sub T/A Mulenga partnered with ArtGlo to organize a two-day training for all Group Village Heads (GVH) and Village Heads (VH) under the Mulenga Chieftaincy. This special training focused on the themes of leadership and governance, and GBV in relation to leadership to strengthen their knowledge about their duties, roles, and responsibilities.

The training session yielded a positive outcome, as it became evident that some leaders were previously unaware of their responsibilities, which had contributed to ineffective leadership and consequently fueled instances of violence. Additionally, some leaders lacked a comprehensive understanding of the concept of violence, leading to a lack of support or engagement with community awareness.

A notable achievement was the fostering of improved relationships between GVHs and their VHs. These leaders not only acknowledged the importance of their collaboration but also committed to working collectively to combat and eradicate gender-based violence.

## TfD empowers community members to report abuse of power and GBV



**T**he impact of TFD approach has been remarkable, extending even to our partners. One notable example involves a man who had been engaging in extramarital affairs with married women for an extended period without facing any consequences. However, when the drama club members initiated their awareness campaigns, a courageous individual came forward and reported the situation to the manager of Mianga Tea Estates. The individual comes from Njobvu village.

Later, Mianga Estates manager conducted an investigation and concluded that the man, who was a supervisor, had been abusing his authority to engage in relationships with married women in exchange for their employment in the tea plantation. As a result of this misconduct, the Mianga Estate made the decision to terminate his contract and prohibited him from working at any other EPM tea and Macadamia Estates. This decision was made with approval from the villagers, who found it to be a fair decision.

## How a TfD Performance rescued Beatrice and her Children from abuse: Gotha Estate Case



A majority of women are trapped in various forms of gender-based violence due to a lack of knowledge on where to seek help. Some known reporting structures have either proven to be more oppressive or ineffective due to corruption. This is the road that 24-year-old Beatrice (not her real name), a mother of two, had to go through. She started experiencing various forms of economic abuse perpetrated by her husband after she came back to Malawi from South Africa where they both went seeking greener pastures. She had nowhere to go but suffer in silence.....

<https://artgloafrica.org/how-a-tfd-performance-rescued-beatrice-and-her-children-from-abuse-tiyambe-project-gotha-case/>

## Limbuli Drama Group partners with UNDP to curb Human Trafficking: Limbuli Estate Case

Malawi has been recording an unprecedented increase in cases of Human Trafficking that has robbed the nation's youthful and productive citizens. The vice has also left deep scars on both families and survivors. Rising unemployment among a majority of youth in the country has left them in this trap. The Human Traffickers use this type of desperation and sugar-coat job opportunities to lure more people. The tricksters promise them better work conditions which is contrary to what youth find when they cross the borders with or without proper documentation.

Due to the impact that Limbuli Drama Group, a Tiyambe Project TfD group, left in Mulanje district, TA Njema recommended the group to assist in civic educating communities in the UNDP funded Anti-human trafficking project....



<https://artgloafrica.org/limbuli-drama-group-partners-with-undp-to-curb-human-trafficking-tiyambe-project-limbuli-case/>

## Climate Justice Experts visit ArtGlo Offices



ArtGlo was privileged to receive experts from the University of California Irvine and York University who came to familiarise themselves with our work and contributions toward climate change mitigation. Our team from various programming areas took turns in presenting some of the impactful initiatives. Together with LEAD Southern and Eastern Africa, we hope to collaborate with these experts to indepthly explore and assess critical issues with regards to climate change and health within the lake Chilwa basin.

## ArtGlo staff training on Climate change

During this year's Earth Overshoot Day which fell on August 2, it was disclosed that humanity currently uses 75% more than what the planet's ecosystems can regenerate. With that mind, an internal staff training was organized to strengthen our team's knowledge about green actions that can be used to minimize carbon footprints. The training was facilitated by our Climate and Social Justice Advisor, Aaron Mahamah, WUSC - Malawi Volunteer.





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