

September 2022

# MALAWI YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



## September Events

This edition we feature Drug Fight Malawi (DFM) and we hear from DFM Executive Director.



### A Warm Welcome

This month's newsletter highlights the implementation of Drug Fight Malawi's (DFM) outreach program. We cover the essence of the project and highlight the need for partners to facilitate program delivery to achieve DFM's project goals.

[Drug Fight Malawi](#), a local Non-Governmental Organisation working to combat substance abuse has rolled out an outreach campaign amongst young people in schools. DFM's Executive Director, Nelson Zakeyu, said the campaign seeks to inform young people from secondary and primary schools on the truth about drugs, particularly raising awareness of the dangers of substance abuse. "Young people who have never used drugs should never try to experiment with any forms of drugs because they are like a trap that is difficult to get out of. Cannabis Sativa popularly called 'chamba' remains a drug that is mostly used amongst Malawians, both young and old" he said.

DFM is implementing this campaign with assistance from [Drug-Free World](#). The campaign has already started at Lilongwe Girls, Bwaila, Chipasula, Tsabango, and Chilambula Community Day secondary schools, reaching out to about 300 to 400 students. DFM intends to take the campaign nationally ([click link for more information](#)).

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**DFM**  
IN ACTION



There is no adequate information on the dangers of using drugs in Malawi. There are a lot of myths that corrupt the youth into believing drugs are just normal commodities. For example, some youth say it is better to take cannabis than alcohol, believing one is better than the other. This initiative is there to deepen knowledge around alcohol and drugs to eliminate any confusing ideologies. The campaign is being done on a voluntary basis, and has started in schools near the DFM offices as currently there is no donor supporting this program financially.

In our interview with Mr Zakeyu, he shared the main points that are being relayed to students within DFM's campaign:

- alcohol and drugs like cannabis, heroin, cocaine are poisonous and bad for your health. On top of that, there is an emphasis that these drugs are extremely addictive. These points are explained using various real-life examples and situations.
- students are told that it is better for them to abstain from alcohol and drugs, and if they already take them, it is best for them to stop.
- Cannabis which contains more than 400 chemicals takes a longer period to get detoxified out of the body compared to alcohol which only has the chemical ethanol but the end result is still the same. Cannabis has other carcinogenic chemicals that are present in tobacco which makes it even more dangerous.
- Some drugs put users into a trance of false reality to temporarily numb pain but when this effect wears off, one's problems are still there and you can even end up with additional problems brought by the drug use.

Based on DFM's recent school visits, Mr Zakeyu says they get many questions from students during these seminars. From the questions being asked, DFM volunteers are learning a lot. A common question is "how can one quit drugs while they are already an addict?" In some instances, DFM volunteers can tell that the students asking this question are already hooked on drugs. Another question commonly presented is about sibling drug use with students complaining about their sibling's oblivious smoking behaviour in their compound and infringing the rights of fellow members that live with them. So, students ask for advice on how they can help their siblings to stop smoking and be respectful of the environment they live in.

This is an ongoing project. Since this is the first year of its implementation, there is still a lot to be done in the coming years. Partners will be especially useful in helping to disseminate evidence-based information to as many youths as possible in Malawi. Interested partners will need to engage in an online course covering 14 substance use related topics. On course completion, individuals will receive a certificate and they can be incorporated in championing the fight against substance abuse with DFM. DFM is also looking for support from partners in terms of resources essential to keeping the project going. These are transport to move freely to schools, lodging and food. Other important things are internet access or airtime to aid planning and communication, including information sharing between them and the various project stakeholders. Partners are also needed to help in various areas of expertise like app development and assessment techniques like evaluating effectiveness of this project. Therefore, DFM are appealing to anyone interested in this initiative to contact them and help them with implementation of this important initiative. To express your interest, please contact Mr Nelson Zakeyu using this email [drugfightmalawi2002@gmail.com](mailto:drugfightmalawi2002@gmail.com) or this number +265 999 930 740.



## Research Funding Opportunities

### Project TEAM

CONTACTS

#### Global Innovation Fund (GIF)

Improving lives through social innovation- GIF believe that innovation (any solution that has potential to address an important development problem more effectively than existing approaches), can come from anyone, anywhere. GIF accept applications from teams working in any sector in any developing country and from any organisation.



Funding stages: Pilot (up to \$230,000), Test and transition (up to \$2.3 million), Scale (up to \$15 million). For more information, [visit link](#)

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#### United States Agency International Development



This scheme supports development innovations that improve the lives of people living in poverty in the developing world. The scheme provides tiered funding to pilot, test and transition to scale innovations that demonstrate evidence of impact, cost-effectiveness and the potential to scale.

Innovation ideas across all countries and development sectors in which USAID operates, including health, education, water, energy and economic development considered.

Funding stages: Stage 1: Pilot (up to \$200,000), Stage 2: Test and transition (up to \$1.5 million), Stage 3: Scale (up to \$5 million). For more information, [visit link](#)

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#### Master's Studentships in Humanities and Social Science

Apply to one of these Master's programmes in the United Kingdom if you want to develop humanities or social science research skills and train in an area of health. The application can be done before graduation under the condition of obtaining your degree (or equivalent) before taking up the award. Each Master's Award is for one year. Support includes a student stipend and approved tuition fees, according to the rate charged by the training university (approx. studentship stipend scale of £16,000 if based outside London and £18,000 if based in London). Please note, funds are provided at rates charged to UK/EU students rather than the overseas student rate.

For more information, [visit link](#)