



Lighthouse Newsletter

LIGHTHOUSE

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**“Investment in AIDS will be repaid a thousand-fold in lives saved and communities held together.”
Prof. Peter Piot, Former Executive Director, UNAIDS**

Executive Director’s inaugural welcome



*Prof Sam Phiri,
Lighthouse Executive Director*

Lighthouse Trust is honoured to publish this first quarterly newsletter, which greatly provides a platform for the organisation and members of staff in particular, to share their experiences and milestones achieved in the past three months. The newsletter seeks to inform our partners and the community of the remarkable work being done at Lighthouse and the positive responses as well as challenges we have endured in our

programmes. Through this publication we are wholly optimistic that readers will gain an idea of exactly how Lighthouse Trust is contributing to Malawi’s national response to HIV and AIDS, and the crucial role it is playing in acting as a model in providing a continuum of high quality care and building capacity in the health sector.

It must be remembered that Lighthouse Trust leans towards client-centred care based on three technical approaches, namely: Expand high-quality, integrated HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services (**Service Delivery**); Promoting innovative approaches for HIV

prevention, treatment, care and support through program development, piloting, evaluation and dissemination (**Model Interventions and Operations Research**); and Building and strengthening capacity for HIV and AIDS management in Malawi (**Capacity Building**).

With these approaches in mind, this publication will include articles regarding issues of community work, counselling, clinical integrated services, adolescent services and training, all in response to the issue of HIV/AIDs in Malawi.

We hope that these articles will help you recognise

the influential work Lighthouse Trust is involved in.

I would also like to thank all the staff who have contributed to the production of this newsletter.

On behalf of the Lighthouse team, we hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Important dates

Lighthouse open day;

16 June 2014

Lighthouse Community Home Based Care volunteers get together;

25 August 2014

Candle Light memorial;

25 May 2014

World AIDS day;

1 December 2014

Lighthouse adolescents transition into adult care in style

Tiwale Adolescent Services (TAS) transitioned out thirty adolescents into adult care on 21st December 2013 in a very colorful ceremony held at Lighthouse campus, Kamuzu Central hospital.

TAS, an adolescent service section within the Lighthouse Trust clinic, combined several interesting activities in transitioning adolescents who have

clocked twenty years into the usual adult services provided within the Lighthouse clinics.

Among other activities the adolescents were awarded certificates for completing all sessions planned during their time in TAS.

In her speech, a first year student at University of Malawi, polytechnic, highlighted

**Tiwale
Adolescents
posting cards
on memory
tree**





Lighthouse championing Counselors Networking



A cross section of the counselors in the meeting

Lighthouse hosts the central region counselors networking meeting and the last session was at UNC Conference room on the 23rd December 2013.

The meeting which was attended by fifty five counselors drawn from all central region districts focused much on the new HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC) register.

Taking a lead in the meeting were experienced counselors and

HTC trainers who skillfully used case studies to prompt discussion and solutions on some of the areas in the new registers that seemed difficult to fill by most of the counselors.

The new register, which relates HIV negative clients' current HIV risks with next testing date, has been in use since July in 2013.

Lighthouse HTC Coordinator and chairperson of the network, Dominic Nsona labeled the meeting as fruitful. According to him the network's meetings have always given central region counselors an opportunity to solve common problems and has also been used as a stage to remove counselors' burnout.

Nsona further explained that the network is planning to register as an independent entity so that

it can be fully mandated to advocate for some issues favoring counselors. "Our current concern is advocating for a counselor's cadre within the public service establishment in Malawi." He added.

The network was established in 2007 by Lighthouse with the assistance of Lilongwe district Health office in the quest to improve the quality of HIV and AIDS testing and counseling (HTC) service, an activity that is vital in behavior change, reduction of HIV transmission and an entry point to care treatment and support.

Ever since the establishment, at least two representatives from each central region district and other NGO's providing HTC services attend the meet-

Staff corner

Mr Luciano Billion- Medical Records Officer



Tell us about yourself?

I was born in 1974, at Chokumbira village in Kasungu. I am married and have four children, two boys and two girls. I started my education at Mavwere Primary School and later selected to Mchinji secondary school where I got my Malawi school certificate of education in 1997. I had to discontinue education because of some challenges I was facing then.

In the same year I started working as a patient attendant at St. Gabriel Hospital where I was trained and worked for two years as a TB officer. In 2001 I joined the Lighthouse as a receptionist with the help of the PROTEST Project which I partly worked with at St. Gabriel.

Any accomplishments we should know about?

Well I was one of the first Lighthouse full time employees who also established the clinic filling system which is working very well now.

Please tell us about your memorable moments

I never forget the day I was promoted to be the Lighthouse Medical Records Officer

Lighthouse adolescents transferred , continued

the significance of TAS in her life. "Previously I thought all was gone, but after joining TAS, sharing experiences with fellow adolescents and after undergoing several trainings at TAS, I realized that there is a lot I can do and I see myself as an achiever already." She said.

Taking centre stage on the day was the memory tree activity led by Camp Hope facilitators. In the activity all the three hundred adolescents receiving services in TAS wrote successes and challenges faced in 2013 as they received services from TAS, tied them in a tree within the Lighthouse campus.

The climax of the whole activity was when Prof Sam Phiri, Lighthouse Executive Director shared with the adolescents his own

road to success; from humble village life in Thonje—Dowa district through mere Clinical Officer to an Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA in addition to heading the Lighthouse Trust.

In addition Baylor launched an extension of Teen Support Line allowing Lighthouse adolescents to be counseled on challenges they face, confidentially.

TAS takes care of about three hundred adolescents at a given time. The adolescents are seen over the weekend to avoid disturbing their studies.

Clinical services, health educational sessions, livelihood training, sporting activities and exchange visits are some of TAS activities.

Currently Lighthouse is still searching for ways in which TAS would possibly support all the 854 adolescents attending Lighthouse clinical services .



Layout Benefits from Lighthouse Professional Development System



Layout Gabriel Kachere

Mr. Layout Kachere, one of the senior clinicians at Lighthouse was in October 2013 given an opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies in Public Health with the University of London, funded by Lighthouse with support from United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (US—CDC).

According to Layout, who is based at Martin Preuss Centre at Bwaila Hospital, he requested for this course during one of his staff appraisals and his great

level of experience in the public health field, particularly at Lighthouse, played a huge role in him being selected for the course.

Moreover he chose to further his studies because he believed it would help him with his work at Lighthouse.

Since Lighthouse is interested in innovative activities, Layout believes his studies will enhance his innovative skills regarding issues such as TB, HIV and AIDS and STI's which will greatly benefit Lighthouse patients and the institution as a whole.

Equally important in Layout's course is that it will enrich his knowledge regarding public health, heighten his research skills as well as provide him more experience to critically analyse research papers.

In his comment, Layout also spoke highly about the course, of course highlighting challenges as well. "I find the course very interesting, and en-

joyable despite that it is challenging since it consists of Distance Based Learning (DBL). It requires a lot of hard work however it plays a massive role in gaining further knowledge to assist HIV clients. I am also receiving great support from management which I am very thankful for," Layout said.

The duration of the course is 2 to 3 years, and by the time Layout is done, Lighthouse will proudly have yet another member of staff who can effectively contribute to the work done in the organisation.

As a matter of fact, in 2013 Lighthouse with support from US—CDC, sponsored several staff to pursue tertiary education in a number of areas such as monitoring and evaluation, counselling, health systems, transport and logistics, journalism and others. Such staff development is definitely a positive phenomenon as it will undoubtedly play a role in the advancement of the institution.

Go together, know together



Opinion of Bisweck Tembo (senior counselor)

Couple HIV Testing and counseling (CHTC) enhances trust between sexual partners and also influences positive behavior change regardless of test results.

Malawi comprehensive HIV Testing and Counseling Training Manual indicates that the goal of testing couples is to create a shared vision in which the couple accepts HIV realities and empowers them to prevent further acquisition and transmission of HIV.

In my opinion most couples shun CHTC services hopelessly thinking that they might be HIV infected due to past risky behaviors.

This fear is normal, but it should not discourage couples from getting tested because that is the only way to settle one's uncertainties and is also a crucial step towards keeping oneself, the partner and others healthy.

After all, CHTC can reduce transmission of HIV by 60% among couples who share different HIV test results. In addition it reduces the burden of disclosure in the sense that partners learn their HIV status together which in turn eases positive living.

Finally, it is high time for HIV testing providers to sensitize the masses on the benefits of CHTC in an effort to promote dual behavior change among couples.

Twelve CBOs on the Road to Sustainability

Twelve community based organisations (CBO) working in partnership with the Lighthouse added their opportunity of becoming self sustainable in December 2013 when they received MK1, 500, 000 grant each, from National AIDS Commission (NAC).

The CBOs which includes Kaliyeka one and two, Chimoka, Area 50, Kawale 2 and others, applied for the grants through Lilongwe City Assembly following an expression of interest which was advertised in the news papers last year.

Speaking about the grants Zelina Mwambe, a volunteer from area 50 CBO said that the grant will assist

Some of Area 50 CBO volunteers





Lighthouse Enhances leadership skills in CBOs

Lighthouse In October 2013 went an extra mile in enhancing leadership skills of Community Based Organisations (CBO) it works with, by conducting a leadership skills training session specifically for all CBOs' board members.

The training, conducted at Lighthouse training centre, was aimed at teaching board members their roles in CBO's leadership, resource mobilization as well as their role as an advisory body.

Speaking after the training Mr Nguluwe, a board member for Fumbe CBO, high-

lighted that the training has assisted Fumbe board members separate their responsibility from that of the CBOs'. "Before the training we were meeting together with CBO members and even sorting out issues raised in these meetings but this training has made our board realise that we are not a direct leading team of the CBO. Currently we meet on our own as a board and whenever we have issues to be communicated to the CBO we do so through the group's chairman and vice versa." He said.

The training focused much on enhancing decision making skills, problem solving abilities, managing staff discipline as well as knowing the importance of effective communication in the manager's job.

Lighthouse is distinctively known for holding a variety of training sessions concerning issues surrounding the topic of HIV, in the workplace and communities at large.

Twelve CBOs on the Road to Sustainability, cont'd

their organisation fulfil their vision.

"We have had plans to start a nursery school for orphans and organise HIV sensitisation sessions among youth in our community, this money will help us achieve that." She said.

The grants have come at a time when Lighthouse is in the process of advocating for self sustainability to the CBOs it has been working with for several years now.

Deputy coordinator for the Home based care Department at Lighthouse, Micrina Mwandeti, stressed the significance of the grants. "We have come a long way trying to help CBOs understand the importance of being self reliant and this is a very big step towards achieving that." She said.

Adding that Lighthouse expects the remaining six CBOs to learn from this success story.

Lighthouse works with nineteen CBOs who are based in its catchment areas, Lilongwe north and south. All of these CBOs have established their own board of trustees and are registered with Lilongwe City Assembly AIDS Committee (CAAC) as well as National Association of People living with HIV in Malawi (NAPHAM).

Staff corner, cont'd

What are your hobbies outside of work? I enjoy playing and watching soccer, praying at home and church and chatting with friends

Do you have any advice for new employees?

Very simple, they need to know their abilities, show commitment when given a chance and use the challenges faced at the work place as stepping stones.

I would also encourage them to respect their superiors.

Lighthouse Trust

Vision

To be a recognized leader in the provision of high quality HIV services and to improve the lives of people affected by HIV

Mission

The Lighthouse trust contributes to Malawi's national response to HIV as a model in providing a continuum of high quality care and building capacity in the health sector

Core Values

Compassion Confidentiality
Equity Integrity Innovation

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