



# NEWSLETTER

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**OUR DEVELOPMENTAL PARTNERS**



**D**ear colleagues, stakeholders and partners in development,

Welcome to our first edition of the Mzuzu E-Hub Newsletter.

We meet in this crucial and trying moment of our lives and careers due to the global pandemic of Covid-19 that has affected our day-to-day operations.

Since inception of the Hub in June 2017, it has been quite a fruitful journey for our mission to building a community of entrepreneurs, creating innovative solutions for their communities to foster job creation and poverty eradication among young people.

We have provided co-working space, business incubation and technical assistance to startup and emerging enterprises over the years, a success that we look back and feel proud of.

All this has been facilitated through skills and knowledge transfer, information sharing and provision to access to resources, opportunities and networking platforms.

As we celebrate four (4) years of Mzuzu E-Hub's existence in June 2021, we present to you this newsletter, to give you our partners in development, a little feel of our journey and appreciate the support rendered over the years towards achieving our goals.

The journey continues and we anticipate a continued cordial working relationship to grow stronger in the coming years.

LITNESS CHAIMA

**J**une 2020 marks exactly 4 years since Mzuzu Entrepreneur Hub was established. But how has been the journey like? The organisation's Founder and Managing Director, **WANGIWE JOANNA KAMBUZI** shares more in this interview:

**When you look back to the time Mzuzu E-Hub was starting, what was your biggest motivation?**

Looking back to the inception period, I can definitely appreciate how time evolves and the motivation remains. Basically, whilst working with FDH Bank in Mzuzu, I started venturing into the business space with an event planning and management startup.

Being an upcoming entrepreneur encountering a couple of challenges at the time and through my observation, I figured it was quite a budding problem especially amongst the youth.

From lack of affordable working spaces, unaffordable business development support services, lack of adequate knowledge on technological tools and resources to support marketing of the business, and unavailability of community of young entrepreneurs, start-ups, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who come together to share best practices and lessons learnt and lack of investment opportunities.

This inspired me highly to set up a platform that would serve as a home for solutions, a platform for a community that comes together to support each other to grow and leverage opportunities for knowledge sharing, investment and networking.

**As the organisation will be clocking 4 years in June 2021, how has**



**We have made tremendous progress - WANGIWE JOANNA KAMBUZI**

**been the journey like?**

It's been an amazing journey with lots of learning, co-creating, adjusting, adapting and collaborating with the community for productivity and progress.

The organisation evolved from being just a co-working facility to a business incubator as well as a technology and innovation hub. Our community including the startups/SMEs, youths, support partners and staff has grown and its lovely to see.

The major milestones under our five-year plan have been achieved including developing impact-oriented programs, developing meaningful partnerships as well as building a valuable team and setting up an office space that sparks creativity and innovation for the community.

To get this far, I am definitely proud!

**What are they key lessons you have drawn over the years, and how have they helped you to keep going?**

Over the years, I have learnt to understand the importance of community engagement in everything we do whether its developing, programming, measuring social impact or storytelling, as this supported us to co-create and to get practical insights to align with our initial ideas.

A community that is engaged contributes highly towards attaining sustainable impact. In line with this, understanding our story and how to tell it to various stakeholders was very crucial. We are still refining this by the

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way, but we are in the right track and our brand visibility has been amazing. Most importantly, collaboration with various stakeholders is inevitable towards development and progression of specific causes.

We have been able to fundraise and implement projects on a collaborative perspective and this supports in learning and knowledge sharing amongst organizations.

**How can you describe the community that you have created for the Hub and their impact to their own and the Hub’s growth?**

Our community has grown into a dynamic and vibrant group full of passion towards contributing to Malawi’s socio-economic development.

With up to 75 youths entrepreneurs reached under the Bizcubation program, with 80% still operational and their enterprises creating up to 105 jobs, 15 startups currently utilizing our co-working facilities, 3000 community members reached through networking events, 150 youths trained in digital skills under the Media Information Literacy Program (MILE), 180 youths and women in 5 com-



munities trained in financial literacy under the Entrepreneurship Education and Outreach program.

12,000 secondary school students reached with awareness in TEVET opportunities, career and inspirational talks in 60 schools within Northern Malawi, 1 community secondary school constructed in Chipunga, Nkhatabay including two school blocks, a library and information center, staff houses and latrines supporting 52 students under the current enrollment, 1 community health center constructed in Chipunga, Nkhata Bay supporting under five clinic and maternal health related issues and up to 10 jobs created under the team working with Mzuzu E-Hub.

**Where do you see Mzuzu E-Hub after 10 years?**

I personally look forward to seeing communities transform through solutions provided by various enterprises, supporting job creation, livelihoods transformation, access to education and health for all.

Through the tools, resources, information and knowledge that we impart amongst the community, we envision they develop and sustain their personal and business development towards developing their communities.

Mzuzu E-Hub in the next ten years will have attained growth in various milestones including infrastructure development, team building, program reach as well as sustainability, both financially and programmatic.

**Any addition?**

As the journey progresses, we celebrate the four years of existence and the milestones achieved. Many thanks to our support and funding partners, our community of innovators and entrepreneurs as well as youth and women and implementing partners towards the great support rendered to Mzuzu E-Hub thus far.



“A community that is engaged contributes highly towards attaining sustainable impact”

# Promoting Self-Reliance Through Digital Skills



## ICT is recognised as an essential tool for enhancing job creation among young people

In 2015, 195 nations under the United Nations including Malawi agreed that they can change the world for the better.

The countries noted that by bringing together businesses, institutions of higher education and local non-governmental organisations, they can improve the lives of people in their respective countries by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number one agrees on poverty eradication, but Malawi remains one of the poorest countries in the world despite making significant economic and structural reforms to sustain economic growth.

The country is still lagging behind in many development indicators. One of the indicators is youth unemployment, which according to International Labour Organisation report, stands at 21 percent.

As of 2018, 70 percent of the

country's population were youths, yet they are engulfed in a spate of socioeconomic challenges that are also said to be derailing their contribution towards the national development.

Realizing the gap, Malawi government through a grant from the World Bank introduced digital skills training to equip youths with modern technology skills, under the Public Private Partnership Commission, as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is now globally recognized as an essential tool for promoting competitiveness, job creation, sustainable development and overall; job creation.

Mzuzu Entrepreneur Hub could not be left behind and chose also to be part of this noble cause. And in March 2021, under its Media Information Literacy Edu-

cation (MILE) Programme, over 50 trainees enrolled to undergo digital skills training.

The trainees, aged between 23 and 35 underwent digital marketing, videography and photography, data management, website designing, computer programming and end user computing trainings for six weeks.

One of the trainees Temweka Msiska, who was equipped with skills in website designing, digital marketing and graphic designing, says this arrangement will forever be beneficial to him.

“My goal is to establish my own organisation in the coming years and with the skills gained, it means I will be able to

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create a website for the organisation on my own. When I heard about this opportunity, I knew that this will change my life for the better,” he says.

Another trainee Nomsa Ndhlozi says she can now create a computer programme that can solve various problems in the society.

“I have been trained in computer programming. As such I am able to create programmes that provide solutions. It has been an exciting and profitable experience,” she narrates.

Joseph Kumwenda is Mzuzu E-Hub’s Digital Skills Manager. He describes the first cohort of digital skills training as a success and a huge step towards uplifting the lives of young people in Northern Malawi.

“I expect trainees to apply the skills they have gained from these trainings for businesses and employment. Trainees will also expand the knowledge in their respective communities by sharing the skills with their colleagues, who [for some reasons] were unable to be part of the trainings,” Kumwenda explains.

With the world fast changing, it is not a hidden fact that technological advancements are bringing the world together and developing economies.

Others argue that this is

## Digital skills can spur economic growth



perhaps one of the worst of times to be a young person in Malawi due to high unemployment rate, but digital skills offer another opportunity for youths to be self-employed and reliant.

Vincent Kumwenda is Chief Executive Officer for MHub, and has strong passion for technologies. In one of his articles, he states that to drive growth and remain relevant in the 21st century, Malawi needs to advance technology knowledge.

For this to materialise, he says, there is a need to create a generation that is able to use digital tools efficiently and creatively.

He thinks this is because the demand for ICT specialists,

such as data scientists and web developers is growing for organizations, both within and outside the technology sector.

“Providing employment alone is not enough. Youths need a path to develop themselves as a means to build skills and capabilities in the long run. Investment in human potential has a transformative effect not only for the youths but also for their families and communities,” he suggests.

The Digital Skills Training is supporting Malawi’s Development Growth Strategy III which includes creating jobs for youths through self-reliance, thereby contributing towards the country’s developmental agenda.

The Digital Skills for All project is fully sponsored by the World Bank through the Malawi Government under Public Private Partnership Commission’s Digital Malawi Project.

Mzuzu E Hub is providing these trainings in Mzuzu City, Mzimba, Nkhatabay, Chitipa, Rumphi and Karonga with a target of 500 youths in 2021 and 2022.



## Minister of Information launches Luntha ndi Chuma Project



Mzuzu E-Hub Programs Manager Austin Moyo (second left) explaining to Kazako (third left) during the Minister's tour

Minister of information, Gospel Kazako, launched the Digital Skills and Innovations grants under the Digital Malawi (Luntha ndi Chuma) project, which is set to benefit over 3000 youth and women across Malawi with digital skills trainings.

Speaking at the opening ceremony held at Mzuzu Sunbird Hotel on 4th June 2021, Kazako described the project as a crucial element in developing the country's economy as these digital skills are a catalyst for job creation and entrepreneurship among the youth who compose over 60% of the county's population.

The Minister said time has come where young people need to focus on ways of bettering their lives through meaningful channels of acquired knowledge and utilize

existing platforms that support them towards self-reliance.

"You will notice that many young people have the will to create jobs and employ others but waste much energy in circles that do not benefit them. We want to breed young people into thinkers. Knowledge will be easier spread if we have young men and women who are optimistic of achieving a lot in the digital sector," explained Kazako.

With government's agenda of creating 1 million jobs, Kazako said the 6 tech Hubs are complementing government's efforts in imparting employability skills to young people and share the same vision and passion to dominate the need for having a vast platform of young people that have digital skills that are marketable.

Kazako gave a stern warn-

ing on misusing the grants money and echoed the need for these Hubs to channel the funds to its intended purpose which is to reduce the literacy gap that is there especially among young women that are in the rural areas.

"This is 2021 and we still have that huge gap. We want to bridge this gap and we are doing anything possible to make sure that we move away from the business-as-usual attitude that has been in our system which includes corruption and theft.

We have wasted several years with politics, instead of focusing on development. Basic literacy in digital skills among

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# Minister launches World Bank funded digital skills

the citizenry has also made the country lag behind in terms of development,” explained Kazako.

The grants channel, Public Private Partnership Commission’s Chief Executive Officer Patrick Kabambe said the six implementing tech-hubs namely M-Hub, Mzuzu E-Hub, Dzuka Africa, Growth Africa, Techno Lab and NTHA Foundation will share \$2 million from World Bank to reach out to the beneficiaries.

“We want to see the targeted groups in both urban and rural areas benefit from this project. We believe giving an equal opportunity to all the young people in the country is the best way of closing in on the digital skills gap that exists in the country. Our main role will be monitoring and assessing the implementation and progress of the program with the tech-hubs to make sure that they are in line with our agreement and target at the end of the project which runs until June 2022,” said Kabambe.

Speaking on behalf of the tech-hubs, Oganive Chingakule of Growth Africa, emphasized on the hubs commitment in reaching out to young men and women to utilize this opportunity to advance skills acquired into businesses that will lead them to financial independence.

“We are optimistic that the skills that these trainees will acquire are a base for building sustainable businesses and knowledge that will be utilized in various places of employment. We acknowledge the digital skills gap and we will effectively provide trainings that have a lasting impact on them,” said Chingakule.

Before the launch, Minister Kazako visited Mzuzu Entrepreneur



Hub – Mzuzu E-Hub, one of the six tech-hubs implementing the Digital Malawi Project to appreciate their office space and training rooms.

The trainees will receive attendance certification and internship opportunities upon

completion of the trainings.

The Digital Skills and Innovations grants is from the World Bank through Malawi Government’s Public Private Partnership Commission – PPPC’s Digital Malawi project.

## “Cyberbullying on the rise worrisome”



### Availability of social media platforms has fueled cyberbullying

The rise of cyberbullying in Malawi is a cause for concern and Mzuzu Entrepreneur Hub, believes the situation is on the rise is due to lack of civic education on the digital rights and digital infringement among the citizenry.

Realising the knowledge gap, the organisation had a workshop targeting tech start-ups, media managers and media practitioners and students, with an aim of imparting knowledge about freedom of expression and right to privacy.

This brought together representatives from Nkhatabay Community Radio, RFP Media, Save the Children, students who are currently freelancing and staff members of Mzuzu E-Hub.

Coordinator for the initiative, Austin Moyo, who is also

Mzuzu E-Hub’s Programmes Manager, said this was a huge step towards the organisation’s dream to see cyberbullying coming to an end in a shortest period possible.

“We observed that knowledge of the laws that govern digital interaction and regulation was minimal. Most of the individuals were not aware that cyberbullying is a serious crime and they did not know how to strike a balance between freedom of expression and respect to one’s privacy on social media.

“Being part of this initiative gives us an opportunity to sensitize the media who in turn disseminate and educate the masses on these laws and rights. We look forward to the day when issues of cyberbullying and ignorance on digital rights laws will

come to an end,” Moyo explained.

During the workshop, participants were taken through presentations on respecting privacy and free expression, meaning of privacy and free expression, legal obligation as an individual and a business and ensuring freedom of expression and privacy are properly balanced.

Sometimes cyberbullying is fueled by the increased availability of social media platforms which some say affects the mental and emotional well-being of the victims, most of them being women and girls.

Last year, Government Spokesperson, Gospel Kazako said government will amend the Communications Act of 2017 to deal with cyberbullying in the country.

## Mzuzu E-Hub partners VOL on outreach programme

Mzuzu E-Hub in partnership with Voice of Livingstonia Radio (VOL) are sensitizing youths and the general community about entrepreneurship education through a radio programme called “Youth on the Move.”

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, government gazetted strict measures to curtail further spread of the pandemic, by among others limiting number of people on public gatherings.

Furthermore, schools were closed and this called for a need to find an alternative way of implementing the programme and VOL agreed on a partnership.

Mzuzu E-Hub Programs Manager Austin Moyo lamented that most of the organisation’s activities, including Secondary School Entrepreneurship Classes could not be implemented due to Covid-19 restrictions and the radio was a more ideal platform to reach out to youths that were just staying at home.

This arrangement with VOL is a huge sigh of relief to the project. It continues to register impact on the students despite that schools are now open, with many of the program’s audience still listening and giving feedback.

Consequently, on 19th March 2021 the first recording of the program aired, with an overview of the Entrepreneurship Education Outreach - EEO program and a brief highlight of Mzuzu E Hub, the programs it runs and why it is specifi-

cally targeting youths with entrepreneurship education.

“The programme is aired under the name ‘Youth on the move’. It is a 30-minute programme, which comes every Saturday from 5:30pm and is repeated on Mondays from 4:30pm on 93.0 Megahertz in Mzuzu and surrounding areas.

We opted for VOL because of its proximity. VOL opted for a slot in already existing programmes, since it was not paid for.

However, we are still delighted we were accepted in the end,” said Moyo.

Mzuzu E-Hub’s Facilitator for the Entrepreneurship Education Outreach - EEO Programme Kate Kumwenda says since the commencement of these program series, there has been great progress and is confident it will continue to serve its intended purpose.

“The radio programme at VOL has been progressing well and it is my appeal to the youths to listen and get the necessary knowledge that will be useful in their day-to-day lives,” she explained.

The EEO program takes entrepreneurship education to secondary schools in Mzuzu, Nkhatabay and surrounding districts and encourages students to also consider establishing their own businesses as a way of financial sustainability in an event where employment is not available.



## Mzimba, Nkhata Bay communities trained in financial technology

Following growing reports of fraudsters using technology to swindle money from mobile phone users, Mzuzu E-Hub has been engaging youths in Mzimba and Nkhata Bay districts on how to beat the scammers' trap.

Some Mpamba and Airtel Money operators and individuals have been falling victims of such syndicates and have been duped

thousands of kwacha in the process.

The initiative, dubbed Media Information and Literacy Education (MILE) is being implemented in the northern region districts under Digital Skills for All project.

Facilitators of the project have also been enlightening youths on steps to be followed when they

want to venture into mobile money transfer business by becoming Airtel Money and TNM Mpamba agents.

In Mzimba, Mzuzu E-Hub implemented the project in Ekwaiweni, to youths under Tafika Youth Organisation.

Joseph Kumwenda is Digital Skills Trainer for Mzuzu E-Hub.

He says it has been an exciting journey for MILE so far, as it has seen several young people in the northern region of Malawi to have access to digital skills training.

Its main aim, he says, is to see a generation that is building an economy through digital skills.

"Usually, young people through the program acquire knowledge and skills that support income generation. Under MILE, Mzuzu Entrepreneur Hub is currently running a Digital Skills for All projects.

"The project is offering trainings in digital marketing, videography and photography, data management, website designing, computer programming as well as end-user computing.

The project seeks to build a community of responsible tech users through awareness and media workshops," he says.

One of the members of Ekwaiweni Tafika Youth Organisation, Mary Moyo who was part of the session, described the engagement as an eye-opener.

She says despite having little knowledge about mobile money transfers; she had no idea on what to do to become a mobile money transfer agent.



Mzuzu E-Hub Trainer Vincent Chikwembeya (Standing) having an audience with a community in Nkhata Bay



A participant in Ekwaiweni in Mzimba going through steps on how to become a TNM Mpamba Agent

# Hatch Start incubation commences



**Mzuzu E-Hub Programs Manager, Austin Moyo briefing entrepreneurs on the programme**

The Hatchstart Incubation Programme officially started in May and will see over 90 incubates undergoing capacity building trainings in various modules that supports their businesses and ideas.

The project, which is being run by a consortium of Mzuzu E-Hub, ACADES and M-Hub, has taken a total of 91 trainees on board.

According to Mzuzu E-Hub Communications and Engagement Officer, Litness Chaima, the trainees will undergo 9 modules including skills in Change Leadership, Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Business Ideation.

Other programmes include Business Planning and Modeling, Strategic Planning, Financial Management, Measuring Social Impact,

Story Telling and Market Research.

“295 applicants applied through Google forms, 45 applied through our hatch start email inbox and 20 applied by hand in all three hubs, bringing the total number of applications to 360.

“We had shortlisted 75 trainees but in the end it was agreed that the number should be increased. So ACADES will have 31 incubates while Mzuzu E-Hub and M-Hub will each have 30 incubates,” she explains.

Due to Covid-19, the trainings are earmarked to be delivered virtually, with a few being mentored physically for at least 3 hours once a week.

After a successful orientation with the incubates on 21st May 2021, the incubates ex-

pressed optimism on the program layout and delivered and were eager to embark on the capacity building trainings.

“I am looking forward to start the trainings. I am anticipating the change leadership module the most because my business will employ other people and I would really want to grasp important ways on how I can be an effective and efficient leader,” said Akuzike Moyo who is based in Neno.

Hatchstart Incubation Programme is one of the projects being run by Mzuzu E-Hub and other partners with financial and technical support from World University Service Canada.

# Mzuzu E-Hub donates to Chipunga School, Clinic



Kondowe (Front-left) receiving the chairs from Mzuzu E-Hub's Kate Kumwenda as students look on

As part of Good Deeds Day Celebration April 2021, Mzuzu E-Hub made a donation of furniture to TX Chipunga Community Day Secondary School and Chipunga Health in Nkhata Bay, a gesture that the community will always cherish.

The organisation donated 26 plastic chairs, seven office chairs and two office tables to TX Chipunga Day Secondary School and Chipunga Health Centre.

Mzuzu E-Hub noted that the Ministry of Health had given Nkhatabay District Health office a nod to open Chipunga Health Clinic, which is one of the health centers in the remotest part of the district.

But lack of basic equipment to start with, the center delayed to open its doors for services to the community.

The area's Village Devel-

opment Chairperson, Alex Msiska commended Mzuzu E-Hub for the gesture and said the equipment goes a long way in assisting the clinic's staff and patients at the clinic.

"We are desperately waiting for the opening of the clinic as they are only providing under 5 services and one of the concerns we had was lack of materials like furniture.

We will have a head start with the furniture donated to the clinic through Mzuzu E-Hub," he said.

On his part, TX Chipunga Community Day Secondary School Head Teacher, Starling Kondowe, who said the materials will be utilised in the library applauded the gesture and said students will now sit on chairs while studying unlike last time when

students could not utilize the space due to lack of chairs.

"This will not only help students, but also motivate our staff here. As a school, we are delighted that Mzuzu E Hub responds to our concerns time and again and we are forever indebted to them for the school and equipment that they have brought this time around," Kondowe explained.

The donation was part of Mzuzu E-hub's Entrepreneurship Education and Outreach programme.

TX Chipunga Community Day Secondary School and Clinic were constructed with funding from an international-based charity organisation, TX Foundation.

# OUR NEW OFFICE SPACE

## THE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE TEAM TERRITORY



## INSIDE THE SOCIAL SPACE



## INTERIOR OF THE MIND EXPANSION MANSION



## CREATIVE AREA (CONFERENCE ROOM)



## What you need to know about Mzuzu E-Hub...



**M**zuzu E-Hub is a social enterprise registered under company's incorporation Act TMBRS 1010145, and is based in Mzuzu, Malawi.

It was established with aim of building a community of entrepreneurs, creating innovative solutions for their communities to foster job creation and poverty eradication.

We provide co-working space, business incubation and technical assistance to start up and emerging enterprises by linking them to a network of services for growth and success. We facilitate this through skills and knowledge transfer, information sharing and provide access to resources, opportunities and networking platforms.

Mzuzu E-Hub strives to develop young people (aged 18-35), women, children, small and medium enterprise owners, startup and early stage businesses, towards self-reliance, independence, and achieving their full potential that enhances the potential of the communities.

### MANAGEMENT TEAM



The organisation has a team of 10 staff members led by the Founder/Managing Director, Miss Wangiwe Joanna Kambuzi. Programs Manager-Business Development is Austin Tebogo Moyo; Finance and Administrative Officer, Sibongile Ngonga; Communications Officer, Litness Chaima; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Sylvester Kapondera; Digital Skills Trainer, Joseph Kumwenda and Program Officer-EEO, Kate Kumwenda; Program intern Bizcubation, Kingsley Chimaliro; ICT Support officer, Vincent Chikwembeya and ICT support Intern, Hamida Denis.

#### TO REACH OUT OR SUPPORT OUR WORK, PLEASE CONTACT:

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