

Event Report: Global Day of Action “Extending the nutrition momentum: Fostering sustainable and equitable scaling-up of nutrition in all sectors”

What was the event about?

Under the theme “*Extending the nutrition momentum: Fostering sustainable and equitable scaling-up of nutrition in all sectors*”, this year’s Malawi Global Day of Action (GDA) open day event aimed to showcase nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions implemented by CSOs across the country. Preceded by a series of activities which included a press briefing, the GDA did not fall short in generating hype, visibility as well as opportunity for different stakeholders to interact and network. With several opportunities for engagement existing on the global level, locally, Malawi held its first ever tripartite elections on May 20th 2014. The elections could not have come at an opportune time for CSONA. It gave a chance for CSONA to step up advocacy on nutrition to ensure that the visibility of nutrition is high on the political agenda in the run up to elections and that it achieves traction in the national development framework after the elections. It gave an opportunity to lay the foundation for post-election advocacy so as to follow-up and influence aspiring candidates to make traceable commitments to address a set of clearly laid out nutrition issues. Aspiring candidates therefore signed pledge forms that committed them to prioritize nutrition and ensure equitable resources are allocated to nutrition.

Where did the event take place?

Besides identifying key public platforms/debates/forums to raise nutrition issues through 4 key questions and to stimulate interest for the GDA, CSONA organized two major events;

- **Press briefing**
 - The press briefing was purposely held on the eve of The World Press Freedom Day which is centered on the theme: *Reaching New Goals: Free Media Fortifies the Post 2015 Development Agenda*. The aim of the press briefing was to explore how different media houses, both print and electronic, can raise visibility of issues to do with nutrition. CSONA called upon media houses to give nutrition a voice and visibility as a quest for nutrition to reach on the new development agenda post 2015. The press briefing had an attendance of 16 journalists from different media houses who committed to give nutrition a platform in the media. Journalists were also urged to attend the open day event so as to see what CSOs are implementing.
- **Open day event**
 - The open day event was held in collaboration with World Vision International Global Week of Action. Held at Walilanj, Simumbe Village in Mchinji District the open day event showcased nutrition sensitive and nutrition specific interventions by CSO as a way of contributing to national nutrition efforts. The event was attended by
 - Principal Secretary (PS) for the Department of Nutrition HIV and AIDS (DNHA) Mrs. Edith Mkawa (as the Guest of Honor)
 - District Executive Committee for Mchinji (8)
 - Journalists from different media houses (9)

- Civil Society Organization Nutrition Alliance (CSONA) members (30+)
 - Grassroots CSONA members (10)
 - Councilors (8)
 - Extension workers (30)
 - School children (100)
 - Women groups (20)
 - Entertainment groups (8)
 - Community Leaders - chiefs and clergy (50)
 - 1,000+ community members (Men, women and children)
- Activities for the event included inspection of a model village that presented the integration of agriculture and elements of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) into nutrition, inspection of marquees of 11 CSONA members setting out their nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive strategies and practices, entertainment by community, including performance of a theme song that was written and produced by a local Malawian band called Jerere, and speeches from stakeholders and the guest of honor.
- CSONA asked every invited guest to make a pledge within their capacity towards nutrition during the open day event. In their speeches the PS for DNHA Mrs Edith Mkawa as a high level government official made a commitment to work closely with the Ministry of Gender to revive deployment of home craft workers to assist people in the rural areas to deliver nutrition messages and best practices. The District Welfare office made a commitment to ensure that the 2% budget allocation for nutrition in Mchinji to be spent specifically for nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions. Community-based organizations committed to working with organizations to deliver nutrition interventions through partnerships. Community leaders pledged to continue to use different village meetings to raise nutrition awareness. Eight aspiring councilors signed CSONA pledge forms to ensure that nutrition is prioritized in the district implementation plans and to ensure that equitable resources are allocated to nutrition at district level.
- **Engagement and Visibility**

To facilitate the two major CSONA events, the following activities were carried out

 - Development of IEC materials (posters and banners) to increase the visibility of nutrition during the time of elections and encourage people to vote for leaders that included nutrition in their agenda. The IEC materials were used during the week of activities that lead up to the GDA open day event.
 - Production of theme songs and jingle to played on different radio stations and performed during the open event. Two videos covering the GDA open event and stunting in Malawi were also produced.
 - CSONA developed 4 key nutrition questions for aspiring candidates that were used at national level debate/forums to highlight nutrition as an economic issue. Alongside the key asks were pledge forms that aspiring candidates signed

committing themselves to nutrition once elected into office. CSONA attended 3 out of the 4 national level debates where the key nutrition asks were tabled.

- **Outcomes**

- Following the press briefing CSONA was featured in 8 articles and programs which included 3 print Medias, 2 electronic Media and 5 national radio programs. A national radio station who hosts a regular “Round table Live” programme on Sundays has tentatively agreed to host a programme on nutrition where we will discuss the governments commitments to nutrition
One of the articles of CSONA e.g. <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2014/05/02/end-malnutrition-in-malawi-candidates-asked-to-sign-nutrition-pact/>,
- Two videos were produced. Please follow link below
GDA open event video CSONA stunting in Malawi
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7esrhuvih610zy2/AADoZn8C8Cnue53ghR7RUtmC_a

- **Lesson Learned**

What went well	What needs to be strengthened
Good coordination and contribution from CSONA members	Roles and responsibilities of CSONA members contributing to the event should be clearly defined and adhered to before and after the event.
Engagement with the media prior to the event creates momentum towards the event and sparks interest of all stakeholders.	Time limitations of the event
Great participation from CSONA members which allowed for networking	Simple fact sheet and ensure that CSONA members agree in advance
Well planned activities with relevant messages	Ample planning time. Being a major global event, the planning process should be done early as possible and commitments for resource allocation should be established well in advance
The event raised awareness of CSONA and cemented the team spirit among members	A proper line of overall decision making and arrangements should be in line with the taskforce’s mandate.
There was a good mix of pavilions i.e. both nutrition-sensitive and nutrition specific which conveyed comprehensive messages to the villagers	Early advertising prior to the event is needed to ensure that there is both coordination, collaboration and visibility of all activities
Filming of the event and the production of two videos	There was little coordination with DNHA and development partners. Coordination with the SUN taskforce and the Multi-sectoral platforms ensures that there is more publicity and commitment amongst members.
Taking advantage of already existing platforms/campaigns/actions elevates the contribution from members financially and in kind.	Attendance of top-management staff from CSONA members.
The event was covered by local and international media	