

Journos train to report on non-communicable diseases

By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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Thirty journalists from across Malawi grouped together in Salima where they are undergoing training in reporting on diabetes and non-communicable diseases (NCD).



Christopher Bauti

Christopher Bauti, the executive director of Journalists Against HIV and AIDS (Journ-AIDS), the media body that has organised the training programme, said NCD and diabetes are a growing threat to Malawi's socio-economic development.

"Journ-AIDS is using advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building to bring diabetes to the attention of Malawians through the media, policy makers, local communities, schools, government and NGOs at large," he said.

Journalists challenged

Malawian journalists have been challenged to take up the responsibility of packaging information on such diseases in form of radio programmes, news and feature items for different publications.

"Let me mention here that the country is having a prevalence of 5.6% of diabetes which is very serious and cannot longer be ignored," he said. The training was organised for media practitioners to learn and take the messages to assist combatting this disease.

The training is part of a three-year long Primary Diabetes Prevention Project which is being funded by the Danish-based World Diabetes Foundation (WDF). As part of the project, Bauti said they are collaborating with College of Medicine, Diabetes Association of Malawi and the Ministry of Health as well as privately owned Zodiak Broadcasting Station.

"Today, non-communicable diseases, mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes

represent a leading threat to human health and development," said Bauti.

The media organisation hopes that since Malawi has no national plan for action to deal with NCD and diabetes the media is supposed to fight for its quick establishment to ensure that NCDs are stopped as early as possible.

Lazarus Juziwelo, Maternal and Child Health co-ordinator for Lilongwe District Health Office said there is a lot of ignorance that is making the NCD take control of societies and killing many people.

Creating awareness

"Non-communicable diseases are silent killers and it is up to the media to even take a step further by not only depending on their traditional outlets like the radio stations or newspapers, but use social media networks like Facebook and Twitter to even spread the messages further," said Juziwelo.

He said Malawi can be built to become a vibrant nation by getting rid of NCDs.

After the training, the 30-member media team will elect a committee that will help in scaling up of the awareness of NCD and diabetes by putting down a media strategy on the matter.

ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on gregorygondwe@gmail.com. Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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