



# C.H.R.E.A.A



2023

# ANNUAL REPORT



CHREAA

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## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD



VICTOR CHAGUNYUKA MHANGO

As we reflect on the state of human rights in Malawi, we are reminded of the resilience and courage of individuals who continue to fight for their fundamental rights and freedoms. Despite the progress we've made as CHREAA, we are reminded that human rights are not a destination, but a journey.

As we introduce this year's annual report, we are filled with a mix of emotions. On one hand, we are proud to present our organization's tireless efforts to promote and protect human rights around the world. On the other hand, we are saddened to acknowledge the passing of our dear colleague, Mrs Joyness Dziwani-Maele, who dedicated her life to this noble cause.

Joyness was more than just a colleague she was a true champion of human rights, a passionate advocate for justice, and a shining example of compassion and empathy. Her contribution to our organization and the lives she touched will never be forgotten.

This report is a testament to the collective efforts of our team, and we are honoured to dedicate it to Mrs Joyness Dziwani-Maele 's memory. May her legacy continue to inspire us to strive for a world where human rights are universally respected and protected.

We continue to face obstacles and setbacks, but we also see glimmers of hope and resilience. This report is also a call to action, a reminder that human rights are universal and inalienable, and that it is our collective responsibility to protect and promote them. We urge governments, civil society, and individuals to join us in this effort, to stand up for the rights of others, and to work towards a world where all people can live with dignity and respect.

A very special thank you to CHREAA's dedicated team and partners for their unwavering commitment to human rights, and to the brave individuals who have shared their stories with us and enabled us to help assist them in their fight for justice. Together, we will continue to make a difference.

## ABOUT CHREAA



CHREAA TEAM POSING FOR A PHOTO AT ITS HEAD OFFICE, BLANTYRE

## OUR HISTORY

The Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance (CHREAA) is a non-governmental organisation which was established in the year 2000 and works country-wide in Malawi. CHREAA works towards the promotion of the human rights of vulnerable groups through advocacy, litigation, research, and human rights education. It was officially registered in 2006 under the Trustees Incorporation Act. Since then, CHREAA has been engaged in several projects promoting the rights of vulnerable groups in Malawi such as prisoners, sex workers, women, and children to ensure that their rights are respected, protected and promoted.

## VISION

CHREAA envisions a Malawian society that upholds human rights, justice and the rule of law.

## MISSION

To promote and protect human rights by assisting the vulnerable and marginalized people in Malawi to access justice through civic education, advocacy, legal advice and Assistance.

## LOCATIONS

Blantyre - Head Office

District offices  
Chiradzulu, Chikwawa, Dedza and Mwanza

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of several colorful sticky notes (yellow, green, blue, orange, pink) scattered on a wooden desk. Some notes have handwritten text in black ink. A dark brown horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the main title. At the bottom, there is a white page number and a decorative white corner graphic.

# CHREAA PROJECTS

## MALAWI BAIL PROJECT

The Malawi Bail Project (MBP) is a unique initiative aimed at empowering impoverished individuals facing minor charges with basic legal knowledge to successfully apply for bail. The project seeks to increase the rate of approved bail applications and reduce the prolonged pre-trial detentions and unlawful imprisonment of individuals in overcrowded Malawian prisons. To achieve its goals, MBP employs three cost-effective strategies, including the distribution of informative booklets/posters to legal institutions, the installation of speaker systems in holding cells, and the provision of a toll-free Paralegal Advice Line.



*ParaLegal Clinic (PLC) at Mwanza Police Station*

In 2023, CHREAA monitored the impact of the installed bail audio message systems and distributed booklets in key police stations and courts in Blantyre. Through these efforts, CHREAA reached 7,261 suspects, resulting in 4,928 individuals being granted bail. The organization also collected valuable data on the suspects, particularly in major courts and police stations. Furthermore, CHREAA organized a training session, during which 80 police officers underwent familiarization sessions focused on enhancing their comprehension of bail-related matters. Overall, the project demonstrated success in achieving its objectives by providing essential legal information and facilitating the release of a significant number of individuals facing minor charges.

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY JUSTICE IN RURAL MALAWI



*Community Paralegal Training in Chikwawa*

CHREAA is implementing a project that aims to enhance access to justice and improve its delivery in local communities. The project focuses on empowering communities and bridging the gap between the informal justice system and the formal justice system. The targeted communities for this project are Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Dedza, and Mwanza districts. CHREAA has successfully trained 310 community paralegals and reached out to over 4,421 people through mobile clinics.



*Legal Education Sessions in Mwanza*

## COMBATING TORTURE IN PLACES OF DETENTION.

Since 2021, Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance has been carrying out the 'Combating Torture in Places of Detention Project,' funded by the United Nations Voluntary Funds for Victims of Torture. In the 2023 implementation period, CHREAA, through walk ins at its offices, identified and assessed approximately three hundred and sixty nine (369) victims who experienced various forms of torture at police stations, prisons. The organization provided these victims with diverse forms of support, including psychosocial counselling, medical assistance, periodic cell visits, camp courts, and legal representation. The implementation of this project has resulted in a significant enhancement in the reporting process of torture cases, with victims now able to approach CHREAA to file complaints regarding torture and abuse by law enforcement, facilitating their access to justice. The project's continued efforts are paving the way for long-term reforms, aiming to eradicate torture and ensure humane treatment for all detainees.

## CRITIQUING LEGAL EMPOWERMENT APPROACHES TO ADDRESS POLICE ABUSE IN MALAWI

CHREAA and SALC with financial support from IDRC are undertaking a qualitative research project that aims to explore legal empowerment approaches that can be used to address the issue of police abuse against marginalized groups in Malawi; street connected children, LGBTIQ community, informal traders and sex workers. The project intends to investigate how grassroots initiatives to combat police abuse can be translated into broader improvements in laws, policies, and institutional practices. It will also examine the potential of expanding legal empowerment approaches, along with legal organizing and collective action, to combat the problem of impunity for police abuse.

**FROM PAGE 3**

### TIMES FRIDAY SHAKER

## Bylaws keep vendors, councils apart

fuel day in day out chasing innocent people," Nampeya explains.

He says the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi has provisions that provide for the right to engage in economic activity, as well as to work and pursue a livelihood anywhere in Malawi.

Therefore, Southern Africa Litigation Centre researcher Lantia Chimwete says what has been happening amounts to the violation of human rights.

She adds that since the Constitution grants people the right to engage in economic activity, there is a need for the authorities to address problems that force people onto the streets.

"Most of these people are poor and sleeping there off the streets without an alternative does not add up. We believe that spaces should be identified for the sellers.

"Not only that, there should be a transparent mechanism for ensuring that formal sellers are not abused by these market spaces," Chimwete points out.

Project and Panlegal Coordinator at the Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance, Agasia Mangwana Mhango, observes that some of the challenges are emanating from lack of space in designated places, a problem she attributes to population increase and poverty.

"Research we did under one of our projects showed that there is inadequate space in designated places, a development that forces people to go onto the streets. These markets were constructed in the 70s, when the population was small. We also found that people with spaces in markets let them out to others at exorbitant fees— which most informal traders cannot afford," she points out.

She suggests close monitoring of the situation to check against human rights abuses.

On his part, Blastyre City Council Deputy Mayor Fanny Baliba dismissed allegations that their rangers are violating the rights of vendors.

He says, if anything, city rangers confiscate goods from those that are plying their trade in undesignated places, which he says, is in line with Blastyre City Council Bylaws.

"What we do is law enforcement and it is for their own good because there have been [bad] accidents that have been happening just because one was selling goods in the streets.

"We also do this to make our city clean," Baliba indicates.

He has assured city residents that they are working with Ministry of Local Government officials to ensure that there is no bad blood between city authorities and vendors.

In the meantime, tension continues to be in the air between city fathers and vendors.

**CRYING FOR FAIRNESS—Vendors**

**MANGWANA MHWANGA— There is inadequate space**

Newspaper article on Informal Traders

SALC and CHREAA have critically evaluated and engaged with local communities to assess the effectiveness of legal empowerment approaches and strive to bridge the justice gap. To date, the empowered groups have successfully documented their concerns through various media outlets, engaged in meetings with law enforcement officers, established internal reporting mechanisms, and filed cases in court to address the injustices they experience. Additionally, street-connected children delivered a petition to the Independents Complaints Commission (ICC) and over 50 cases of abuse from the targeted groups have been reported to the ICC, the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), the Ombudsman and senior police officers at various police stations specifically addressing instances of police abuse.



Street Connected Children Delivering a Petition to the ICC

## PRISON EDUCATION PROJECT

CHREAA, in partnership with DVV International and the Malawi Prison Service, are currently implementing an impactful project at Zomba Central Prison. The primary objective of the project is to provide education and training opportunities to prisoners through tailored vocational programs, including Barbering, Carpentry and Joinery, and Tailoring.

The project specifically targets prisoners who express interest in acquiring vocational skills, possess basic literacy skills, have committed minor offences, and are approaching the completion of their sentences. The acquired skills are expected to equip the inmates with the means to engage in income-generating activities once they are released, promoting self-sustainability. In the year 2023, CHREAA successfully graduated 46 inmates.



*Graduation ceremony - CHREAA Executive Director handing over a certificate to an inmate*



*A shirt made by a prison inmate from Zomba Prison enrolled under the Prison Education Project*

## STOP TB PROJECT

CHREAA and SALC are collaborating in the fight against the spread of TB in prisons by implementing a uniquely designed rights-based approach project named, Stop TB in Prisons in Malawi. The project seeks to transform the TB response to become rights-based, gender transformative, and people-centred; mobilize and empower the prison communities on TB; update the relevant TB policies on prisons in line with the international recommendations and; ensure that TB is adequately screened, diagnosed, prevented, treated and managed in all the prison stations.



*A Focus Group Discussion covered under the Project at Mzuzu Prison*



## **TRIAL WATCH AND WAGING JUSTICE FOR WOMEN**

Supported by the Clooney Foundation for Justice (CFJ), this research initiative focuses on collecting data concerning the incarceration of women in Malawi and the legal proceedings surrounding cases where women face criminal charges for perceived acts of self-defense in the context of domestic or sexual violence. With CFJ's financial backing, CHREAA has effectively championed the release of 14 women through litigation as part of this project.

## **DECRIMINALIZATION OF VAGRANCY LAWS AND PROMOTION OF RIGHTS OF SEX WORKERS IN MALAWI.**

Since 2014, CHREAA has been actively involved in the implementation of projects focused on two key objectives: decriminalizing vagrancy offenses and promoting and protecting the rights of sex workers. These efforts have been made possible through the generous support of the Open Society Foundations (OSF), Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), and Southern African Litigation Centre (SALC).

The overarching goal of this initiative is to strengthen the protection of rights for marginalized communities and vulnerable groups, ultimately working towards the decriminalization or declassification of minor nuisance-related offenses in Malawi and the broader region. By advocating for legal reforms and raising awareness about the rights and needs of these communities, CHREAA aims to address the systemic barriers they face and foster a more inclusive and just society.

Their ongoing work is crucial in dismantling discriminatory practices and ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their social or economic status, are treated with dignity and respect.

## **PROVIDING PARALEGAL AID ASSISTANCE AT ONE STOP CENTRE (CHILD PROTECTION)**

Providing Paralegal Aid Services at One Stop Centre (Child Protection) is a project that was initiated by CHREAA Malawi with the aim of improving the protection and delivery of justice to victims of sexual abuse in particular children. CHREAA's overall goal in the project is to protect children who have been sexually violated, provide paralegal services, refer the cases to court, follow up on them, and ensure that the culprits are convicted, and the victims receive justice. Once cases are reported and recorded at One Stop Centre, CHREAA's paralegal officers meet the victims and their guardians and give them legal advice on how to handle the cases to secure convictions.

In 2023, the Centre registered a total of 621 cases, with 471 involving child victims. CHREAA paralegals conducted 321 face-to-face interviews with sexual abuse complainants and followed up on 123 cases for which contact details were provided. Of the total cases, 185 proceeded to trial, resulting in 91 convictions, while the remaining 94 are still pending in court.



*Newspaper article on lobbying for funding for OSCs*

A golden scale of justice stands on a wooden desk. The scale is in the center, with two pans hanging from a central beam. To the left, a wooden gavel lies on the desk. In the foreground, there are several sheets of paper, some with a pen resting on them. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The entire image is framed by a blue banner across the middle and a decorative border at the top and bottom.

# LITIGATION



### **EX PARTE MAKEDA MBWEWE (A MINOR THROUGH HIS FATHER AND NEXT FRIEND WISDOM MAHARA MBEWE), THE REGISTERED TRUSTEES OF THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE JUDICIAL REVIEW CASE NUMBER 55 OF 2019**

The Applicants were two Rastafarian children who brought judicial review proceedings in separate courts against the decisions of their respective schools for declining to enroll them because they had dreadlocks. The refusal to register them was based on a policy that all learners in Government schools, including Rastafarian children, must have trimmed hair. The Courts declared that the policy is unlawful, unconstitutional, unreasonable, unjustified and therefore be abolished because it is contrary to section 4(1)(a)(b) of the Education Act which provides for promoting education without discrimination of any form, section 5(2)(i) of the Education Act which places a duty on the government to remove barriers to achievement of equality in education, and was a violation of their right to religion, education and not to be discriminated against on the grounds of religious affiliation as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi in Sections 20, 25 and 33.

The court in its decision, acknowledged that the Rastafarian faith is a recognized religion in Malawi and that dreadlocks are a central part of the Rastafarian faith. The court held that indeed the Applicants had a significant number of their rights violated and that the policy to cut hair without sparing Rastafarian children who keep hair for religious reasons was unconstitutional. The court therefore advised the ministry of education to issue a directive to all Government schools by 30th June 2023 that Rastafarian children should not be stopped from registration and enrollment.

This landmark ruling underscores the importance of religious freedom and equality in the education system, setting a precedent for the protection of minority rights in Malawi. It also calls for immediate policy revisions to accommodate the diverse cultural and religious practices of all students, promoting an inclusive and non-discriminatory educational environment.



*CHREAA, SALC, and the Rastafarian community after a meeting on the judicial review case supporting Rastafarian children's right to education.*

## LITIGATION



### THE STATE VS CHRISTOPHER PHIRI – CRIMINAL CASE NUMBER 667 OF 2023 BEFORE SRM MANGOCHI

The Senior Resident Magistrate Court in Mangochi, sentenced Mangochi based pastor Christopher Phiri to 19 years imprisonment for having sexual activity with a child. The court also sentenced him to 13 years imprisonment for indecent assault. These two sentences will run concurrently and therefore, will be imprisoned for 19 years.

Christopher Phiri took over the responsibility to care for the victim in September 2023 after taking her from his former wife's custody who he divorced when the victim was only 7 months old. The sexual acts happened in the same period of September to November 2023.

In its judgment, the court stated that the convict's conduct was not only against the law but that it was also in total disjunction with his position in society as a leader of a church. The state was being represented by Brenda Khwale, a lawyer from the Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance (CHREAA) with support from Inspector Mwase and Inspector Wisiki from Mangochi Police Station.



*CHREAA lawyer Brenda Khwale with state prosecutors after Pastor Christopher Phiri's 19-year sentence.*



*Community members celebrating a successful case outcome.*

# FELLOWSHIPS

FELLOWS

## WAGING JUSTICE FOR WOMEN FELLOWSHIP

Chreaa with support from the Clooney Foundation for Justice is running a Waging Justice for Women Fellowship programme. The fellowship which spans over a period of one year, stands as a training tool of the next generation of gender justice champions. It is aimed at fighting injustice against women through strategic litigation to reform discriminatory laws and increase accountability for gender-based abuse. Through this initiative, CHREAA is hosting Brenda Khwale as a Waging Justice for Women Fellow.

### LITIGATION

Brenda Khwale has taken on 14 cases. Some of the cases were disposed of through mediation while some have gone to trial. She has facilitated the release of 4 women who were in detention for a long time through a camp court sitting at Blantyre prison. She obtained two child maintenance orders and a protection order and has also facilitated the release of two pregnant women at Nsanje prison on bail. Aside representation in such criminal defence matters, Brenda also joined the prosecution team in the case of R v Christopher Banda; a pastor who was accused of having sexual intercourse with his child. The prosecution brought up irregular charges against him which risked an acquittal but with Brenda's assistance, a prayer was made to amend the charge and secured a conviction and 19 years imprisonment sentence.



CHREAA and state prosecutors after a victorious case.

### ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

#### Advocacy for Mothers in prison

In preparation for Mothers' Day commemoration, CHREAA facilitated the interviewing of women who were in prisons with their children. These children were taken to prisons with their mothers due to their age and some of them were born in prison. The children's ages ranged from 3 months to 5 years. With the prison conditions in Malawi, the women revealed that they face a wide range of problems raising children in prison; dietary, sanitary and general health and welfare of the mother and child. CHREAA funded the publication of the information collected and also wrote a letter to the president seeking presidential pardon of the women. In December, there was a pardon of all women with children in prisons.



Key milestones in the case progress highlighted in the newspaper article



CHREAA's Call for Justice: Advocating for Mothers and Babies in Prison

## MEETINGS AND MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

Brenda has been invited to participate in various events on behalf of CHREAA in meetings and the media. She was also invited as a guest of honor to an event organized by World Vision International to give a motivational speech to Adolescent Girls and Young Women as well as to make a presentation on combatting Gender based violence. She was also invited to participate in engagement meetings with the Nyasa Rainbow Alliance to discuss on the political participation of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women in preparation of the upcoming tripartite elections in 2025.



*Presentation at the Cities against the death penalty event*



*Brenda (middle, in red) with AGYW at the World Vision learning event*

**FRESH MINDS** Season 3  
RADIO PROGRAM  
LIVE TFM 94.7fm RADIO  
94.7fm South | 96.3fm Central | 90.8fm North  
94.6fm East | 104.4fm West  
TOPIC OF DISCUSSION  
UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Dr Steven Mlangiza  
Co founder, Men of Tomorrow (MOTO)

Brenda Khwale  
Lawyer  
Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance

Send your comments to +265 (0) 993 875 578  
Powered by ZURICH Foundation  
Partners: tuto media

*Flier of radio program on the mental health impact of child marriages.*

Presentation at the Cities against the death penalty event was also reported on Saint Egidio website. Scan the codes below to read the article





# DISTRICT REPORTS







*Community Sensitization Meeting in Chiradzulu*

## **CHIRADZULU DISTRICT OFFICE**

Throughout 2023, the Chiradzulu District Office of CHREAA conducted Mobile Legal Clinics, assisting 1854 individuals on legal matters like access to justice and gender-based violence. Sensitization meetings addressed issues such as cash transfers and mob justice. Paralegal Aid Clinics provided practical assistance to suspects, while Justice visits monitored detention conditions. The office distributed legal booklets and attended stakeholder meetings, contributing to legal awareness. Despite challenges like stakeholder resistance and difficulties in reaching remote areas, CHREAA made significant strides in promoting justice and human rights in the district.

## **CHIKWAWA DISTRICT OFFICE**

The Chikwawa District Office of CHREAA conducted varied initiatives from January to December 2023, promoting access to justice and human rights. One Court Users Committee meeting emphasized community sensitization. Five Legal Mobile Clinics engaged approximately 4000 individuals, addressing camp safety, bail, and human rights violations. A sensitization campaign at Chikwawa primary school involved 30 participants, focusing on women's participation. Paralegal Aid Clinics assisted suspects with remand warrants and bail processes. A camp court sponsored by the judiciary granted bail to five suspects. Booklets on legal issues were distributed, and stakeholder meetings were attended, contributing to discussions on gender-related and child protection issues.

## **DEDZA DISTRICT OFFICE**

The Dedza District Office of CHREAA conducted Legal Mobile Clinics across various locations, assisting 1721 individuals on legal issues. They actively participated in sensitization meetings focusing on self-defense and gender equality, reaching over 15000 people. Paralegal Aid Clinics provided guidance to detainees, while Justice Visits monitored detention conditions. Booklets on legal guidelines were distributed, and stakeholder meetings addressed human rights and governance. The office made 29 referrals for additional assistance and resolved 71 general complaints. Challenges included the lack of client feedback and stakeholder resistance. Despite obstacles, the office remains committed to promoting human rights and access to justice in Dedza.



*Legal education sessions at Phokera primary school in Dedza*

## **MWANZA DISTRICT OFFICE**

Mwanza District Office of CHREAA undertook initiatives promoting access to justice and human rights, despite challenges. Court Users Committee meetings addressed issues such as tampering with remand warrants and court delays. Thirteen Legal Mobile Clinics reached over 12,000 individuals, discussing unfair distribution of resources and poor health services. Sensitization campaigns covered topics such as gender mainstreaming and child protection. Paralegal Aid Clinics assisted suspects at various locations, and justice visits monitored detention conditions. Booklets were distributed, and stakeholder meetings addressed governance and child protection issues.

**OMPLAINTS**

**OMPLAINTS**

# GENERAL COMPLAINTS

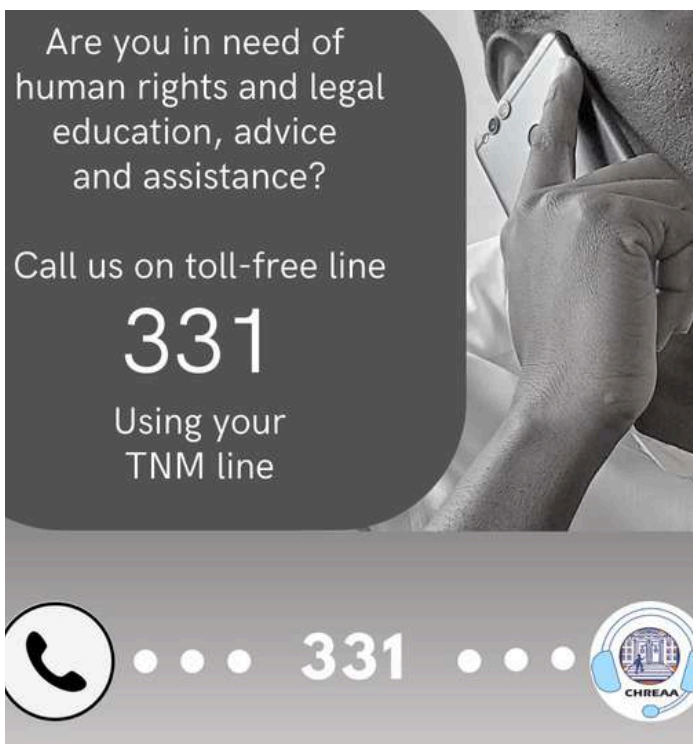
## GENERAL COMPLAINTS

The organization manages a variety of projects and also addresses general complaints from diverse segments of society. In handling these general complaints, the organization employs various mechanisms, including mediation between complainants and defendants, providing legal advice, and referring complaints to relevant Institutions. These Institutions, with whom the organization collaborates to uphold human rights and the rule of law, include the Judiciary, Office of the Ombudsman, MHRC, ICC, Office of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Legal Aid Bureau, Labour Office, Police, District Commissioner's Office and others.

Throughout 2023, a total of 270 complaints were registered, with the highest number pertaining to Labour and Contractual Matters (67 cases), followed by Land and Property Grabbing (61 cases), Access to Justice (48 cases), Child Maintenance and Family Matters (45 cases), Gender-Based Violence and Child Abuse (26 cases), and the fewest being Criminal Matters (23 cases).

In addressing Labour and Contractual Matters, a total of 67 complaints were handled, with 40 cases referred to the Labour Office and Industrial Relations Court. Notably, 17 cases were successfully settled through mediation, resulting in employees receiving their terminal dues. Additionally, 6 cases were resolved with complainants advised to demand their terminal dues, all of which were paid. Presently, 4 cases are ongoing, with employers continuing to make payments to the employees. In the realm of Child Maintenance and Family Matters, out of 45 complaints, 28 cases were referred to the Child Justice Court and Legal Aid Bureau for legal representation, as defendants failed to comply with agreed resolutions during mediation. Furthermore, 13 cases were successfully resolved through mediation, while 4 cases were dropped. Regarding Land and Property Grabbing, of the 61 complaints received, 1 case couldn't be pursued due to its historical nature. However, 42 cases were referred to complainants' respective Traditional Authorities and District Commissioners, and 18 cases were resolved through offering legal education on land and subsequent mediation.

In cases of Gender-Based Violence and Child Abuse, all 25 cases were referred to relevant policyholders, such as the Victim Support Unit, Courts, and Social Welfare. In Criminal Matters, 1 case received legal advice, while 22 cases were referred to the police and Legal Aid Bureau for legal representation. In matters of Access to Justice, out of 48 complaints, 17 cases were referred to the Legal Aid Bureau for legal representation, 25 cases were resolved through bail education, mediation, and legal advice, and 5 cases were handled by the court after follow-up. Finally, in Civil Matters, 1 case was resolved after CHREAA engaged with the defendant, who admitted to the claim. Ongoing cases are being monitored and managed accordingly, ensuring comprehensive resolution and accountability in our efforts.



Are you in need of human rights and legal education, advice and assistance?

Call us on toll-free line

# 331

Using your TNM line

331

CHREAA



# RESEARCH



## RESEARCH

Research is one of the core components of CHREAA work and it is vital because it is the key in unearthing various human rights violations and gaps in the laws and policies. Findings from research work are used as a key tool in informing our advocacy strategies towards legal reform and/or policy, as well as identifying cases for strategic litigation. In the year 2023, we undertook the following research;

### CHREAA/CFJ TRIAL WATCH AND WAGING JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

CHREAA in partnership with CFJ undertook a research project aimed at gathering data on women incarcerated in Malawi prison and how courts in Malawi handle cases in which women are criminally prosecuted for apparent acts of self-defence in the context of either domestic violence or sexual violence. This is ongoing and the final report is yet to be released.

### CHREAA/LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

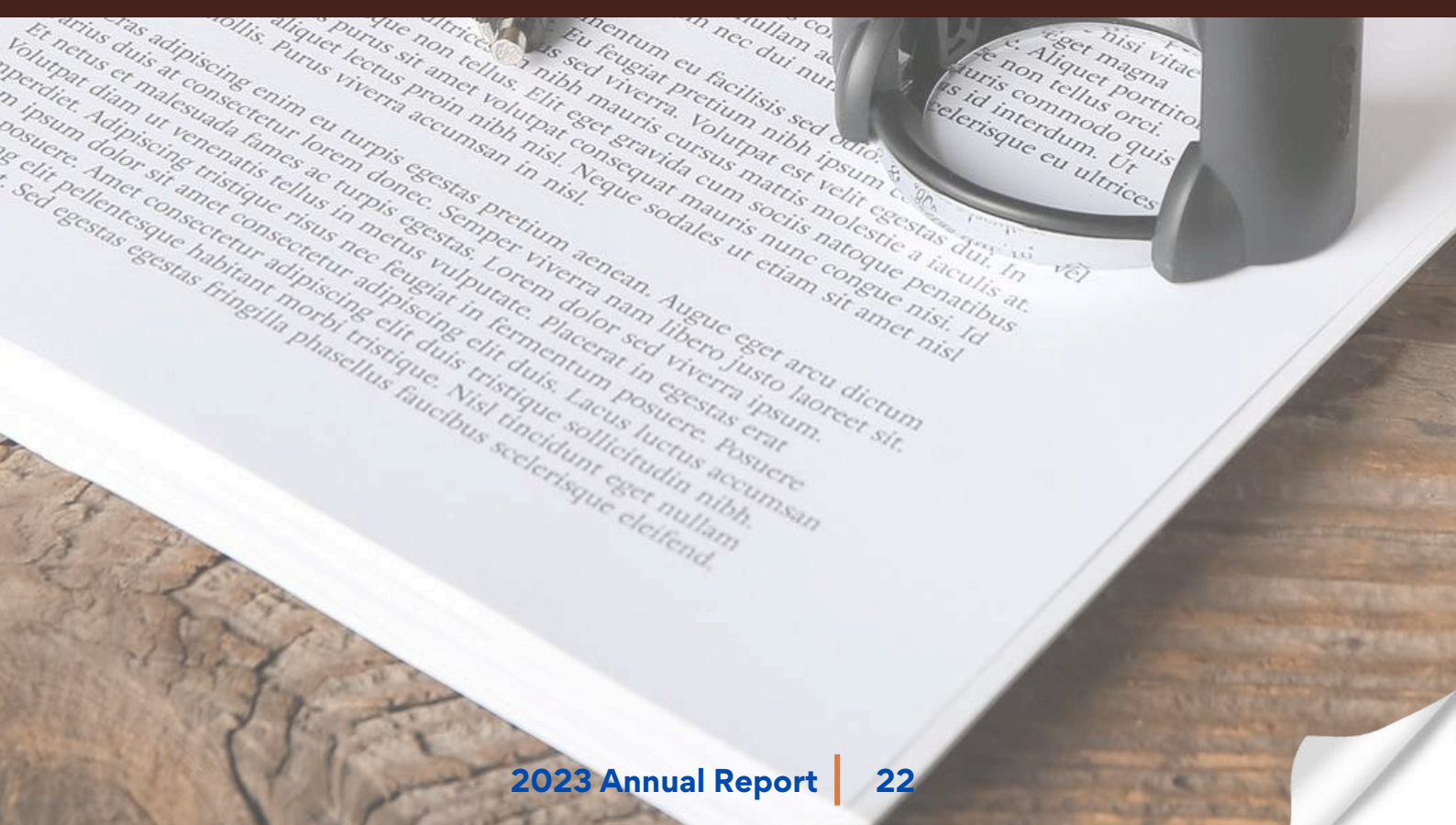
LJMU is one of CHREAA's longest partner in undertaking research work projects, mainly regarding prisoner's rights. Reports from such work has been vital in informing advocacy for policy and legal reform towards promotion of prisoners' rights. Under 2023 annual year, we managed to undertake several research works. These included research on; "Understanding sexual behaviour and responding to related harms in the Malawi prison" and "Navigating the complexities of the mentally ill and mentally incapacitated in the criminal justice system in Malawi". One of the other projects that took off in 2023 was "Understanding the impact of climate change on the Malawian Prison System", which will be finalized in 2024.

For all published research work that CHREAA has undertaken in, refer to the "Published Works" section.





# PUBLISHED WORKS



## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

1. Van Hout, MC., Kaima, R., Magweyani, C., Kasunda, V., Nyson, K., Khoviwa, P., Phiri, M., Mhango, V., Kewley, S (2024). “Prison life can make you go crazy”: Insights into the situation for people with a mental illness in the Malawi prison system. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2024.2338429>
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10. Chivandikwa, N., Gadama, L., Thakwalakwa, C., Mula, C., Mhango, V., Banda, C., Mhlanga-Gunda, R., Kewley, S., Van Hout, M C. (2020). ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’: Advancing a human rights based approach to upholding health rights in a Malawian women’s prison. *Journal of Sustainable Development: Africa*. 22 (2); pp1-17.
11. Van Hout, MC, Hope, V., Pillay, N., Parker, S., Rusakaniko, S., Mhlanga-Gunda, R., Javangwe, G., Chivandikwa, N., Chimbga, D., Mahaso, S., Banda, C, Mula, C., Ganda, L., Mhango, V. (2019). Promoting positive sexual and reproductive health and accessible HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support (PTC&S) services for women prisoners in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Public Health Institute, Liverpool John Moore’s University, Liverpool, United Kingdom.

# Applications

# Grants

## GRANTS





## **GRANTS**

**2017**

**Promoting positive sexual and reproductive health and accessible HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support (PTC&S) services for women prisoners in Zimbabwe and Malawi.**

**Global Public Health Partnership Award, Medical Research Council (MRC).**

**2020**

**A situation assessment of multi-stakeholder experiences, prison system preparedness and health, penal and judicial measures taken to mitigate COVID-19 in Malawian and Zimbabwean prisons.**

**Global Challenges Research Fund.**

**2021**

**Understanding sexual behaviour and responding to related harms in the Malawi prison system.**

**QR Policy Support Fund**

**2023**

**Navigating the complexities of the mentally ill and mentally incapacitated in the criminal justice system in Malawi.**

**QR Policy Impact Fund**

TOGETHER  
EVERYONE  
ACHIEVES  
MORE

# CHREAA TEAM



# MEMBERS OF STAFF



Victor Chagunyuka  
Mhango  
Executive Director



Sipiwe  
Malihera  
M & E Manager



Timve Kabichi  
Finance & Admin.  
Manager



Ruth Thoko Kaima  
Litigation &  
programs Manager



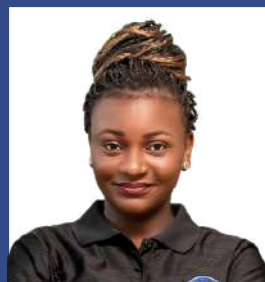
Thokozani Chisale  
Administration  
Officer



Apatsa Mangwana  
Paralegal & Projects  
Coordinator



Trensfore Chizenga  
Finance and Admin.  
Officer



Lisa Tembo  
Project Officer &  
Media Manager



Kondwani Banda  
District Coordinator  
Chiradzulu



Bertrand Mtileni  
Driver and Transport  
Officer



Dave Karter Kanjiwa  
District Coordinator  
Dedza



Vivian Kasunda  
Legal intern



Boxten Kudziwe  
District Coordinator  
Mwanza



Chisomo Mwasinga  
Project Officer



Kesten Nyson  
Project Officer



Temwa M. Mataya  
District Coordinator  
Chikwawa



Peace Khoviwa  
Administration  
Intern



Malumbo Phiri  
Paralegal  
Intern



Brenda Khwale  
CFJ Fellow

# GOVERNANCE

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Ms. Alinane  
Khonje  
Board Chair



Mr. Albert  
Dambula  
Board Member



Dr. Richard  
Nyirongo  
Board Member



Fr. Rev. John  
Ng'oma  
Board Member



Mrs. Rose mabel  
Wawanya  
Board Member



Mr. Emmanuel  
Gondwe  
Board Member



Mrs. Gladys  
Mwale  
Board Member

The Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance (CHREAA) operates in Malawi, with governance overseen by a Board of Trustees. Ms. Alinane Khonje serves as the Board Chair, bringing her expertise as the Country Director at ACCA Malawi. Mrs. Gladys Mwale, the Chief Executive Officer of the Malawi Institute of Procurement and Supply (MIPS), contributes as a Member, alongside Mr. Emmanuel Gondwe, a Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in auditing and financial management. Father Rev John Ng'oma, a priest within the Anglican Diocese of Southern Malawi, and Dr. Richard Nyirongo, a Senior Lecturer and Deputy Dean of Education at Chancellor College, also serve as Members, offering diverse perspectives to the board. Additionally, Mrs. Rose Mabel Wawanya, a Human Resources Management and Development Specialist, and Mr. Albert Dambula, the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Internal Auditors Malawi, bring their respective expertise to further enhance CHREAA's endeavors. Mr. Victor Mhango, with 16 years of experience in project management and human rights advocacy, holds the position of Secretary and serves as the Executive Director of CHREAA since 2006.



## **IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR PROGRAMS MANAGER-JOYNESS DZIWANI MAELE**

**Who worked with us for 17 years-March 2007 to January 2024!**

**A beacon of light in the realm of human rights, Joyness Dziwani Maele graced the corridors of CHREAA with her unwavering dedication and boundless passion. She worked with us at CHREAA for 17 years and rose through the ranks of a paralegal officer, project coordinator to programs manager. As Programs Manager, she stood at the forefront of numerous access-to-justice projects and initiatives, tirelessly advocating for the well-being of the marginalized and the oppressed.**

**At CHREAA she was a colleague and a mentor to everyone; selfless, level-headed, hardworking, and ready to take on challenges at all times. We shall always cherish her immeasurable hardworking spirit which is what immensely built CHREAA into what it is today.**

**With a heart filled with compassion and a mind brimming with innovation, Joyness embarked on her mission to bring about tangible change in the lives of those in need. Her leadership was marked by a rare blend of empathy and determination, inspiring all colleagues, partners, and stakeholders around her to strive for justice and equality.**

**Through her diligent efforts, Joyness left an indelible mark on the landscape of human rights, touching countless lives and weaving a tapestry of hope and resilience. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of those who had the privilege of knowing her and in the enduring impact of her work. Though she may no longer walk among us, her spirit of advocacy and her commitment to justice continue to guide us strongly move forward.**

**In honor of Joyness Dziwani Maele, let us all renew our resolve to stand up for what is right and to champion the cause of human dignity for all.**

**Rest in power, Joyness. Your light will forever shine bright in the fight for justice!**

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND MANAGEMENT OF CHREAA**



**CHREAA**

### HEAD OFFICE



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### DISTRICT OFFICES

#### CHIKWAWA

Chikwawa Magistrate Court  
M3 Road  
Phone: +265-882-728-907

#### CHIRADZULU

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Next to District Council Offices  
Phone: +265-888-702-738

#### DEDZA

Red Cross Building  
Close to DC's Offices  
Phone: +265-993-924-958

#### MWANZA

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