



INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

# NEWSLETTER

April - June 2024



## VISION AND MISSION

Vision: "A Capable IRDO, Improved Livelihoods and Sustainable Resource Management amongst Tanzania Society".

Mission: "Empowering Disadvantaged Communities in Collaboration with CSOs and Other Stakeholders by Diversifying their Resources Base and Improving their Quality of Life Through Promotion of Better Livelihood Systems".

## OUR CONTACTS:

Integrated Rural Development Organization,  
P.O.Box 160,  
Ileje, Songwe-Tanzania.

Mobile Phone: +255(0)719547460

Email: [info@irdo.or.tz](mailto:info@irdo.or.tz)

 [irdo\\_tanzania](#)

 [www.irdo.or.tz](http://www.irdo.or.tz)

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# ABBREVIATIONS

- **IRDO** - Integrated Rural Development Organization.
- **KVP** - Key Vulnerable Population
- **DREAMS** - Determine, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS free, Mentored and Safety.
- **HIV/AIDS** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- **OCD** - Officer Commanding District
- **RWA** - Rural Women Assembly
- **HJFMRI** - Henry Jackson Foundation Medical Research International
- **UNICEF** - United International Children's Fund
- **GBV** - Gender Based Violence
- **FOSENI** - Food Security and Nutrition Improvement
- **DIC** - Drop In Centre
- **MAT** - Medically Assisted Therapy
- **TACAIDS** - Tanzania Commission for AIDS
- **AYP** - Adolescent and Young People
- **AGYW**- Adolescent Girls and Young Women
- **ABYM**- Adolescent Boys and Young Men
- **PLHIV**- People Living with HIV
- **SMT** - Senior Management Team
- **PrEP** - Pre Exposure Prophylaxis
- **HTS** - HIV Testing Services
- **VMMC** - Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision

# WORD FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to welcome all of you to go through our work in this quarter, following the better moments that we have had in demonstrating what the community should go through for a better change.

Throughout this quarter, we have aspired to be more inspiring, advanced, qualitative and to position ourselves at the top of the development industry. We have developed advanced partnerships, new mobilization mechanisms through Social Behaviour Change Communication in transforming people's minds from for instance taking gender-based violence a normal practice up to a community enemy that should all the time be fought by everyone.

We developed a friendly platform with Tanzania Police Force through Gender Desk and we have taken the initiative to the ground level in researching the best approaches on eradicating this intolerable situation.

This has been a crosscutting matter in all the projects that we are intervening including Food Security and Nutrition Improvement, HIV Prevention, Care and Support as well as DREAMS in Songwe region.

In the context of developing our new corporate identity we have also decided to redesign our organization capacity through HJFMRI technical assessment in all the areas of operations including Finance and Grants, Human Resources and Administration, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning through Communication, Branding as well as Public Relation strategies.

Data management is another area that we have learned as crucial as nothing else when telling our story of achievement.

Moreover, we have taken time to undergo a thorough staff performance appraisal for equipping ourselves with a strong team in the coming future.

All in all, our general performance speaks loudly positive than before, and in this I would like to congratulate every IRDO staff member for effort, devotion and time delegation in making this true.

IRDO, for Better Change!

**Dr. Simon Chiwanga**

***Executive Director.***



# IRDO WELCOMES DISTRICT POLICE OFFICIALS FOR PROJECT VISIT



During the visit, the guests toured several projects, including the DREAMS project, HIV Prevention, Care & Support project, and MAT program. They observed first-hand how IRDO is empowering youth through economic activities such as tailoring and cultivating flower and fruit seedlings.

Dr. Chiwanga also shared IRDO's plans to establish school clubs focused on combating gender-based violence, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS awareness. This initiative aims to foster a safe and informed community, starting with the younger generation. IRDO continues to make significant strides in rural development, and this visit highlights the organization's commitment to collaboration and community engagement.

Dr. Simon Chiwanga, the Director of the Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO), recently hosted a delegation of police officials from Momba District. The delegation was led by SSP K.J. Msukwa, the District Police Chief (OCD), and included A/INSP M.C. Myumvi, the Majengo Ward Police Inspector, and Sergeant Irene Mtende from the Drug Control Unit.

The visit began at the Drop In Center (DIC) and continued at IRDO's office in Chapwa. The primary purpose of this visit was to gain insights into the various projects IRDO is implementing. Accompanying the delegation were staff members from the Methadone Assisted Treatment (MAT) center, including Dr. Peter Mapunda, the MAT Manager, and Happy Matao KVP Focal Person.



# International Workers' Day Celebrations on May 1st



The International Workers' Day celebrations on May 1st were a great success in the Songwe Region, Ileje District. The event was led by the Regional Commissioner of Songwe, Honorable Daniel Chongolo, and took place at the Itumba Stand Grounds in the Ileje District Council.

The Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO) actively participated in these celebrations. IRDO set up an exhibition booth represented by Ms. Fadhila Sendwa, who thoroughly explained the organization's activities and project objectives. These projects include the Food Security and Nutrition Improvement Project (FOSENI), as well as the agenda and goals of the Rural Women's Platform (RWA) within the Ileje community.

Through these celebrations, IRDO had the opportunity to showcase how it helps improve the lives of Ileje residents through various projects aimed at increasing food security and improving nutrition.

Stay tuned for the next edition of our newsletter to see more pictures and important events happening within our organization.



Photo shows Ms. Fadhila Sendwa from the FOSENI project explaining to the Guest of Honor, Songwe Regional Commissioner Mr. Daniel Chongolo, about the various crops and products produced by farmers in the FOSENI project during the International Workers' Day celebrations.

# TACAIDS and Partners Conduct Supervision Visit to DREAMS Project Sites



Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, conducted a participatory supervision visit to Makambini Dispensary and Makambini Primary School. This school is one of the institutions reached by the DREAMS project. During the visit, they also had the opportunity to meet with the Sistaz girls' group, which is supported by the Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO). The aim of this exercise was to enhance the efficiency of the program implementation.

The delegation commended IRDO for its efforts in assisting the community, particularly in supporting girls who are at risk of HIV infection and empowering them economically through group initiatives.

The girls also had the chance to showcase various products they create as a means of economic empowerment, including batik fabrics, bags, and soaps.



**Photo shows peer educator explaining some of the products made by beneficiaries of the DREAMS project .**

# Strengthening Partnerships with Mzumbe University



We are delighted to share that Dr. Simon Chwanga, Director of Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO), recently hosted a visit from the Department of Business Studies at Mzumbe University. During their visit, the team toured our offices and major key projects, including HIV Prevention Care and Support, DREAMS, and FOSENI II (Food Security and Nutrition Improvement) Projects. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for enhancing collaboration between Mzumbe University and IRDO. The Mzumbe University team expressed great interest and learning from IRDO's projects, identifying several areas for potential collaboration:

- Advising and supporting the market entry of products made by beneficiaries of the DREAMS project, including assistance with copyright ownership.
- Collaborating on educating primary and secondary school students about drug abuse prevention and teenage pregnancies.
- Providing support to drug addicts undergoing Methadone treatment with essential needs like clothing.
- Conducting short training sessions to build capacity within IRDO and its staff.
- Seeking advice from environmental experts, data collection specialists, and other professionals to enhance project effectiveness.

This visit marks a significant step towards strengthening the relationship between IRDO and Mzumbe University, fostering mutual learning and impactful community engagement initiatives.





# Mzumbe Business Day Highlights Youth Empowerment and Partnership Initiatives



Mzumbe Business Day at Royal Tughimbe Hotel in Mbeya City attracted 500+ students and staff from the Department of Business Education. The event focused on investment opportunities with participation from government institutions, private companies, and student groups. Dr. Simon Chiwanga emphasized youth empowerment and the private sector's role in national development. IRDO and Mzumbe University are partnering on capacity building, governance, youth development, and community service. A book launch by a student highlighted talent at Mzumbe University, emphasizing youth empowerment, innovation, and sustainable partnerships for community and economic growth.



# CELEBRATING AFRICA CHILD DAY IN SONGWE REGION



IRDO played a vital role in successful vibrant Africa Child Day celebrations in Songwe Region, emphasizing children's rights and well-being. They showcased projects, distributed sanitary pads to girls for health support, and emphasized the importance of quality education and essential services for children. The event featured the Acting Regional Commissioner stressing empowerment through education and rights. IRDO aims to enhance children's lives and the community through sustainable projects and social support.

# YOUTH BULGE CAMPAIGN IN SONGWE REGION: ENHANCING HIV PREVENTION AND HEALTH SERVICES



HJFMRI had a privilege of hosting Youth Bulge Campaign at Tunduma TC & Momba DC, spearheaded by IRDO, focusing on providing a range of crucial health services. These include HIV self-testing (JIPIME), HIV testing, condom distribution, health education, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) services.

The campaign aimed to bolster community-led initiatives in Songwe, particularly targeting adolescents and young people (AYP), to enhance awareness of HIV prevention, testing accessibility, and service uptake. Key objectives include maximizing the uptake of HIV self-testing, voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC), PrEP, HIV testing services (HTS), condom distribution, and identifying positive cases among youth.

Special emphasis were placed on reaching youth in areas not previously covered, such as bodaboda sites, fishing areas, mining sites, food vendors (Mama lishe), car wash facilities, harvesting areas, garages, parking areas, and small stalls (vibanda umiza). This targeted approach aims to engage AYP effectively as the third quarter concludes. Engaging adolescents and young people in HIV prevention services is expected to significantly enhance program effectiveness and implementation across the region, contributing to improved health outcomes and community well-being.

# PROGRAM TRENDS

## FOSENI II PROGRAM



### IRDO Empowers Beneficiaries with Livestock to Enhance Food Security and Nutrition

Beneficiaries of the Food Security and Nutrition Improvement Project (FOSENI), implemented by the Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO), in eleven villages in Ileje District, Songwe Region, have received chickens from the Project Coordinator, Mr. Gaster Kihwello. The aim of this initiative is to provide these beneficiaries with a source of income through the sale of eggs and chickens, enabling them to sustain their livelihoods.

Through poultry farming, beneficiaries not only improve their income but also enhance nutrition by consuming meat and eggs produced from their farms. IRDO remains committed to supporting government efforts in combating malnutrition in Songwe region.

This initiative underscores IRDO's dedication to fostering sustainable livelihoods and improving food security among communities in rural areas.



# HIV PREVENTION CARE & SUPPORT PROGRAM



## SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AT NYERERE HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVE TRAINING ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, HIV/AIDS, AND DRUG ABUSE

In an effort to educate and raise awareness on crucial social and health issues, IRDO conducted various educational activities for students. These activities included drama performances, poetry recitals, and direct education sessions led by experts.

Ms. Witness Ndunguru, Social Welfare Officer at IRDO, provided education on the meaning of gender-based violence, its types, and signs indicating such violence. She also explained appropriate avenues for victims to seek assistance. Her message aimed to educate students on how to recognize and combat gender-based violence within their community.

On another note, Mr. Johnson Samwel Bilingi, Assistant Inspector at Tunduma Police Station, emphasized that men can also be victims of gender-based violence and urged them not to hesitate to report incidents. He advised students that anyone can experience violence regardless of gender or age, stressing the importance of not remaining silent when witnessing acts of violence in the streets. Additionally, students from Nyerere High School performed a play addressing stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS. This performance aimed to educate the community about the harms of stigma and promote love and equality for all individuals. Furthermore, the students presented a poem highlighting the effects of drug abuse on health and society at large. The poetry aimed to educate and raise awareness about the dangers of drug use.

Finally, Mr. Eliuthelius Lusungu, a Community Change Agent from IRDO and a beneficiary of the drug addiction treatment (MAT) project, provided education on laws related to combating these challenges in their daily lives.



# DREAMS PROGRAM

## Empowering Youth: DREAMS Project Graduates Sewing Training

Beneficiaries of the DREAMS project (aged 15-24) have successfully completed their sewing training at the training center in Chapwa-Tunduma TC. The training, which commenced on February 7, 2024, concluded on May 7, 2024. Facilitated by the Integrated Rural Development Organization (IRDO) as part of the DREAMS initiative, the program aimed to equip young participants with sewing skills for economic self-reliance.

Throughout the training period, participants were immersed in comprehensive sewing techniques and business management essentials. This initiative underscores IRDO's commitment to fostering economic independence among youth, empowering them to contribute positively to their communities. The successful completion of this training marks a significant milestone for these young individuals, paving the way for future opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.



### Economic Empowerment Training for Adolescent Girls and Young Women

IRDO, with funding from HJFMRI, facilitated Economic Empowerment Training for adolescent girls and young women (aged 15 to 24) in Majengo Ward, Tunduma Municipality, Songwe Region, through the DREAMS project.

During these training sessions, participants acquired skills in making powdered soap, shea butter, and baobab oil. These efforts aimed to enhance their economic status through various entrepreneurial opportunities.

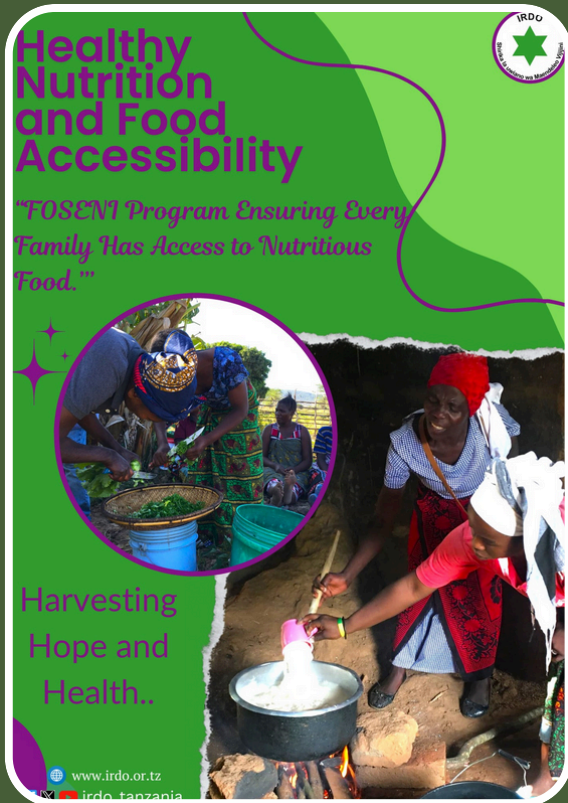
The initiative underscores IRDO's commitment to equipping young women with practical skills that empower them to improve their economic circumstances and contribute positively to their communities.



# PROGRAM POSTERS

## DREAMS PROGRAM

## FOSENI II PROGRAM



## HIV PREVENTION CARE & SUPPORT PROGRAM



## SPECIAL THANKS:

This newsletter would have not been successful without team cooperation and support from our esteemed Executive Director, Communication Unit together with all IRDO staff members. Lets keep the spirit of hard working.

Our special thanks also goes to:

- The Government of Tanzania through Songwe Regional Administration, Ileje and Momba District Administrations.
- Public & Private Hospitals.
- HJFMRI through PEPFAR Funding.
- DKA/Wealthus.
- DCEA.
- Mzumbe University





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Produced by IRDO Communication Unit  
Editor: Gloria Msaki, Gaster Kihwello &  
Eufrasia Malocha  
Design & Layout: Gloria Msaki  
Ileje-Songwe, Tanzania.

Email: [info@irdo.or.tz](mailto:info@irdo.or.tz)  
[www.irdo.or.tz](http://www.irdo.or.tz)

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