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Sport for Mental Health demo activity in Blantyre



Our team proudly participated in the ECOSOC Youth Forum Side Event.



Our team engaged with the community on the MATCH Foundation branch expansion.

COMING UP IN MAY

1. **MATCH Foundation to Hosts Elimu Fanaka Organization from Kenya**
2. **A New Chapter for Girls' Leadership – Lilongwe District Launch**

MATCH Foundation's Growing Impact in Blantyre



Potential beneficiaries in a demo sports activity

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller's words came alive on 16th -17th April in Blantyre, where MATCH Foundation transformed Zingwangwa Youth Centre (ZYC) through collaborative action. Over two dynamic days, with the first day dedicated to meeting potential program beneficiaries, site seeing and building rapport with the Zingwangwa youth network and the last day dedicated to a sport for development activity. Our team is eager to shape youth opportunities through sport, education, mentorship, and community development in Blantyre.

This expansion comes as a strategic move to implement one of the 2022 - 2025 strategic objective, which indicates that MATCH Foundation would be able to implement its programs in Blantyre. The foundation plans to begin with the 'Play and Stay Project' which will use existing facilities such as the netball court and the football ground that are already there. This aligns with the Foundation's commitment to long-term impact and community empowerment.

The meeting's significance brought enthusiasm of the potential users of the center to create safe, empowering spaces for youth growth. 'Play and Stay' resonated deeply because it addresses fundamental community needs: structured environments where young people develop athletic abilities alongside essential life competencies as well as life-changing opportunities.

Momentum built during the "Sport for Mental Health" demonstration session under the Achinyamata Ojaka Mental Health Project, engaging 42 youth and 3 coaches in Basketball, Football, and Netball activities. These sessions fostered important conversations about challenging gender expectations and promoting mental wellness—crucial topics affecting youth development.

MATCH Foundation enters this new chapter powered by trusted donor support, community support, youth-centered programming, and a clear vision that shows how thoughtfully structured sports programming creates social change with impacts extending beyond the playing field. As we continue engaging various stakeholders for this new chapter, the community can anticipate meaningful growth opportunities for its young people—the best is yet to come.

Building Bridges: MATCH Foundation's Parent Meeting

On 15th April, 2025, parents of the beneficiaries under the Play and Stay Project gathered at Bingu National Stadium for a crucial meeting about their children's progress. Edward Luwanja, the Programs Coordinator, explained: "we're not just coaching tennis players; we're shaping futures through reading activities, scholarships, and mentorship."

The meeting was also graced by the BNS Police Inspector who addressed the parents on the importance of raising children with love, the discussion evolved into a deeper conversation about shared responsibility. "It takes a village to raise a child," the inspector emphasized. "Character building happens at courts, in classrooms, and especially at home."

What began as a routine update became a meaningful dialogue about collective guardianship. As the meeting concluded, parents recognized their crucial role: MATCH Foundation isn't just developing athletes—it's cultivating character through partnership.

MATCH Foundation attends the ECOSOC Youth Forum Side Event

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum is an annual initiative where young people can contribute to policy discussions at the United Nations through their collective ideas, solutions and innovations. On April 17th, 2025, the future of Malawi was present at this year's ECOSOC Youth Forum in Lilongwe. Our team, eager representatives, was immediately drawn into the vibrant conversation surrounding the Malawi side event's theme: "Inclusive Youth Economic Empowerment: Leveraging Science, Technology and Innovation in Malawi."



Our team at the ECOSOC Youth Forum Side Event.

Mr. Isaac Katopola, the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Youth and Sports opened the proceedings. His words set the tone for a day where young people were empowered as change makers and policy influencers. Despite widespread poverty and unemployment, Malawi's youth were already proving their innovative spirit.

Keynote speaker, Emmanuel Banda didn't shy away from harsh realities—limited access to education, underdeveloped skills, limited digital infrastructure. His words emphasized the potential of youth in Malawi, who are innovating and building solutions in various sectors, including agriculture, education, and health: "Youth don't need charity, they need investment," he called for investment in youth, not just as recipients of aid but as creators and innovators.

The forum's energy peaked during panel discussions featuring both established experts and emerging innovators. Malawi University of Science and Technology Vice Chancellor Professor Address Malata spoke of academia's role, while a Youth Innovator Mr. Staff Nyoni demonstrated his assistive technology for visually impaired students, bringing theory into practice before everyone's eyes.

A powerful moment came when Gracious Chipofya, our Digital and Communications Officer who highlighted the prohibitive costs of innovation tools, especially for disabled youth. This sparked crucial dialogue about inclusive access and governmental support through partnerships with the National Youth Council and the Malawi Council of Disability Affairs.

As participants departed, Malawi peeked not just its future, but its present strength unfolding through its most valuable resource – the bright minds of its youth.