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CCEI NEWSLETTER

JAN-MAR 2026

STRENGTHENING DISEASE PREVENTION & EARLY RESPONSE



In this Issue: We focus on Strengthening Livestock Development Through Government-Community Partnerships, Disease Surveillance, Climate-Smart Practices, and Inclusive Outreach to Underserved Communities.

Implementation of projects contained in this newsletter have been generously supported by VSF-Netherlands, the Edgard and Cooper Foundation, Wilde Ganszen Foundation and the Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Words from the Executive Director



Gilbert Banda –CCEI Executive Director

Centre for Community Empowerment Initiatives (CCEI), established in January 2020, is a legally registered non-profit organisation and a member of the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi, with full operational licensing from the NGO Regulatory Authority. The organisation was founded with a clear mandate to accelerate the transfer of appropriate and affordable technologies to end-users, particularly smallholder farmers, with the aim of enhancing agricultural productivity, profitability, and overall livelihoods.

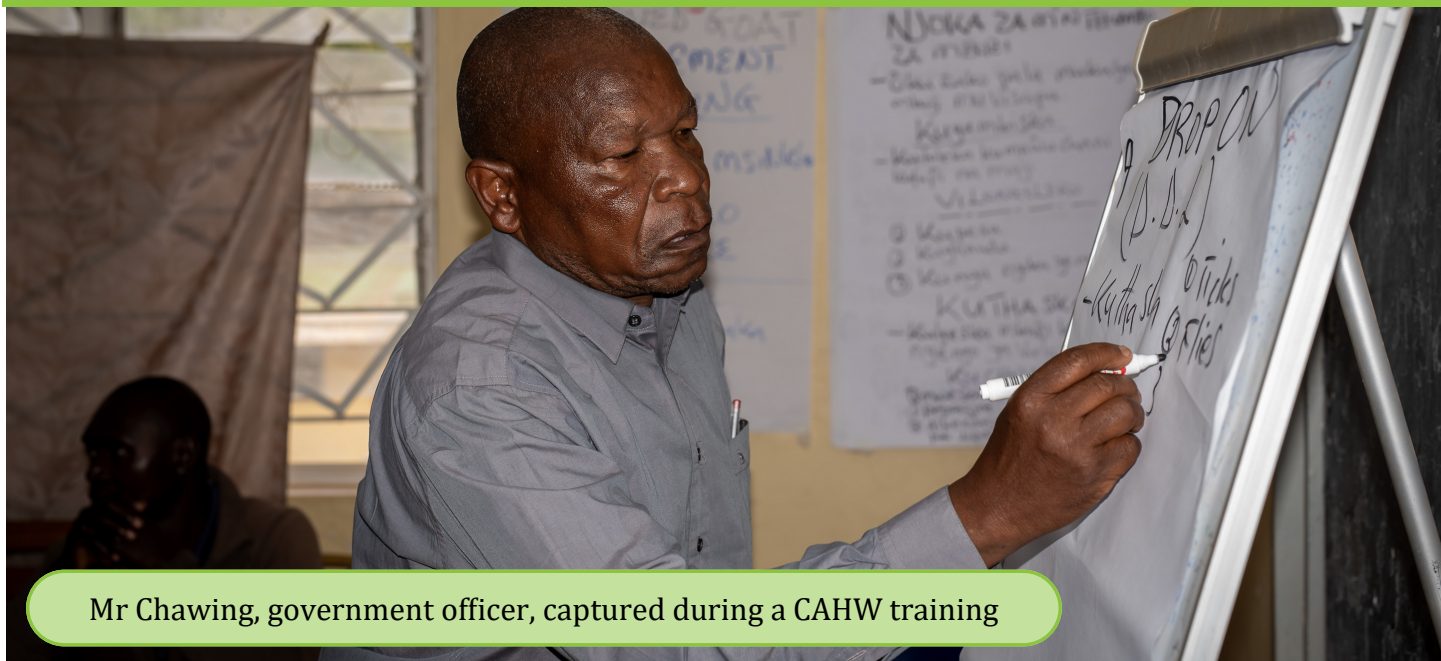
CCEI's strategic focus extends beyond agriculture to include improving household income, strengthening food and nutrition security, creating employment opportunities, enhancing access to water and sanitation, and promoting climate change adaptation, mitigation, and environmental conservation through low-cost and sustainable solutions. During 2025 and into early 2026, the organisation has successfully implemented several initiatives aimed at strengthening livestock extension service delivery, improving agricultural production systems, promoting natural resource-based enterprises, supporting sustainable natural resource management, and enhancing income security. These efforts have been delivered through key projects such as Action Towards the Elimination of Rabies Project (ATERP II), Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET) project, Livestock Innovations for Thriving Communities (LIFT), and Generating Agricultural Income and Nutrition (GAIN).

In this inaugural issue of the newsletter, we present case studies drawn from projects implemented between 2025 and the first quarter of 2026 under the theme “*Strengthening Disease Prevention and Early Response*.” The issue highlights practical experiences and lessons from the field, demonstrating how CCEI is committed to inclusive development by actively engaging government extension staff, empowering women, and reaching underserved and hard-to-reach areas to ensure that vulnerable communities are not left behind.

Gilbert Banda-Executive Director

CCEI'S APPROACH

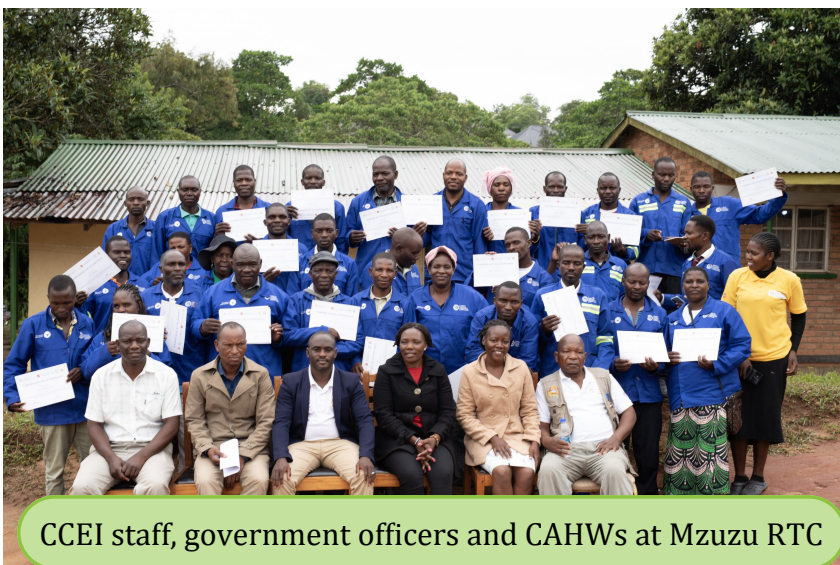
Community Animal Health Worker Approach in collaboration with government



Mr Chawing, government officer, captured during a CAHW training

Livestock production plays a critical role in improving rural livelihoods in Malawi, contributing to household income, food and nutrition security, and resilience against economic and climate-related shocks. For many smallholder farmers, livestock such as goats, pigs, and chickens serve as a source of income, a form of savings, and a safety net during times of hardship. Despite its importance, the livestock sector continues to face significant challenges, for instance, in the delivery of extension and animal health services. One of the major constraints is the limited number of government livestock extension staff. This shortage has resulted in inadequate coverage, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas where the majority of livestock farmers reside. As a result, many farmers lack access to essential services such as disease diagnosis, treatment, advisory support, and information on improved livestock management practices. This gap has contributed to poor livestock productivity, high disease prevalence, and increased mortality rates.

In response to this challenge, Centre for Community Empowerment Initiatives (CCEI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, is promoting the concept of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) as a sustainable and community-driven solution. CAHWs are individuals selected from within their own villages and trained to provide basic animal health services. Their proximity to farmers enables timely response to livestock health issues and improves access to essential services. CCEI conducts intensive two-week training programs for selected CAHWs, equipping them with practical knowledge and skills covering all major livestock species.



CCEI staff, government officers and CAHWs at Mzuzu RTC

(from pg2).The training focuses on basic disease identification, treatment, prevention, and husbandry practices. To support their work, CCEI also provides start-up drugs (non-injectables), enabling CAHWs to begin offering services within their communities. Since the inception of this initiative, CCEI has successfully trained over 60 CAHWs in Mzimba North, significantly expanding the reach of livestock extension services in the area. These trained personnel play a vital role in delivering basic animal health services and strengthening the overall livestock support system. CAHWs work closely with government livestock extension officers, creating a complementary relationship that enhances service delivery. In addition, CAHWs conduct animal health surveillance and report any suspected disease outbreak in their communities. This helps government staff to make timely interventions.



Left: Sharon Shawa demonstrating chicken vaccinations. Right: CAHWs practical lessons

CAHW SERVICES

Report on activities conducted by CAHWs

CCEI collected data from 27 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) in Mzimba north and Rumphi districts. From the data, a total of 6,050 livestock treatments were recorded. Administration of drugs (non-injectables) and vitamins, was the most commonly provided service. Goats received the highest number of such treatments (2,383), followed by cattle (1,447) and chickens (1,223), indicating that these species are both widely kept and frequently affected by health challenges. Deworming is another key service provided by CAHWs, with a total of 3,526 cases reported. Goats again account for the largest share (1,242 treatments), followed by chickens (1,066), pigs (678), and cattle (456). Chickens recorded the highest number of wound related treatments (638), followed by goats (480), pigs (181), and cattle (77). Vaccination services stand out as particularly significant, with a total of 6,506 cases, all attributed to chickens. This indicates a strong focus on poultry disease prevention, targeting Newcastle disease, which can cause significant losses if not controlled. Dipping services, primarily associated with controlling external parasites in cattle, accounted for 3,206 cases, all involving cattle. From this data, CAHWs are actively providing a wide range of essential animal health services across multiple livestock species. Through these interventions, CAHWs are contributing significantly to improved livestock health, reduced mortality, and enhanced productivity at the community level.



CAHW providing assistance

LIFT PROJECT

Mzimba North-Social Inclusion



Rosemary Gondwe captured during the CAHW training and when receiving her certificate

CCEI programming strongly promotes social inclusion, based on the belief that both women and men can equally participate in and benefit from livelihood improvement interventions. Under the Livestock Improvement for Thriving Communities (LIFT) project, one of the key activities was the training of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) to strengthen access to basic animal health services at the community level. Rosemary Gondwe is one of the beneficiaries who participated in a 14-day training on the provision of basic animal health services. She is a 52-year-old resident of Daile Village in Traditional Authority Mtwalo, Mzimba District, under the Enqucwini Extension Planning Area.

Rosemary explains that her journey as a CAHW began earlier, in 2014, when she was identified and trained under the Matunkha project. However, in 2025, CCEI, in collaboration with government extension services, provided her with additional comprehensive training covering all livestock species, which significantly enhanced her knowledge and skills. She now considers her role as a CAHW to be her primary occupation.

Over the years, Rosemary has supported more than 500 livestock farmers in her community and has treated hundreds of animals. Through the income generated from providing animal health services, she has been able to improve her livelihood, including purchasing cattle and an oxcart. She acknowledges that this work has had a meaningful impact on her life and economic stability. “Both men and women can work as CAHWs, all is needed is high level of commitment and dedication”.

In her work, Rosemary collaborates closely with government livestock extension staff. While she provides basic animal health services, she refers more complex cases to trained government personnel. Additionally, she contributes to the livestock sector by collecting and submitting data to the livestock department, supporting monitoring efforts and informed decision-making. Her experience highlights the important role that community-based animal health workers, especially women, can play in strengthening livestock systems and improving rural livelihoods.

MEET PROJECT

Chigwere-Nkhatabay



Chrissy Nyirenda from Chigwere

Malawi continues to face significant environmental challenges, including land degradation and deforestation, which threaten both ecosystems and rural livelihoods. These challenges, though long-standing, have been intensified by unsustainable agricultural practices among communities that rely heavily on farming for survival. In addition, widespread dependence on biomass energy—like through charcoal production and unsustainable timber harvesting—has accelerated the degradation of natural resources. Despite ongoing efforts to address these issues, environmental decline persists, placing increasing pressure on already fragile landscapes and ecosystems. One of the areas most affected is Traditional Authority Nyaluwanga in Nkhata Bay District in northern Malawi. In this area, environmental degradation—especially around Chigwere—has led to declining soil fertility, reduced pollinator populations, and ultimately lower agricultural productivity. These challenges are further compounded by high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, making households highly vulnerable to climate variability and drought.

In response to these challenges, the Centre for Community Empowerment Initiatives (CCEI), with funding from the Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET), implemented a two-year project titled *“Enhancing Soil Health and Forestry Management for Improved Livelihoods of Communities Surrounding Kaning’ina Forest Reserve, Chigwere Area in Nkhatabay.”* The project focuses on promoting sustainable land management practices, restoring degraded landscapes, and strengthening community resilience. One of the beneficiaries of the project, Chrissy Nyirenda (picture above) from Sakalani Village, has experienced notable improvements in her agricultural productivity. Through the project, she adopted improved soil fertility management practices, including the use of organic manure. With support from CCEI, she was linked to sources of manure, which she applied to her maize field. As a result, Chrissy harvested over 43 tins of maize (from a 1.5 acre plot), even during a season affected by drought. She attributes this success to the improved soil moisture retention and nutrient enrichment provided by the manure. As she explains, *“Even though we experienced drought, my maize performed well because of the manure promoted by CCEI.”* Beyond crop production, Chrissy’s household also benefited from additional interventions aimed at environmental restoration and livelihood diversification. She received fruit tree seedlings and beehives, which contribute to both ecosystem recovery and income generation. These integrated approaches not only enhance household resilience but also promote sustainable natural resource management within the community.

ATERP 2 PROJECT

Northern Region

Under the Action Towards the Elimination of Rabies II Project (ATERP II), CCEI in collaboration with government intensified pet vaccination against rabies disease. In the northern region (including hard to reach areas, see map on page 8), a total of 46,258 animals were vaccinated against rabies, with dogs accounting for the vast majority at 44,037 vaccinations. Cats accounted for 2,196 vaccinations, while livestock vaccinations were minimal at only 25 cases. This clearly indicates that rabies control efforts are primarily focused on dogs, which are the main transmitters of the disease. Mzimba District recorded the highest number of vaccinations, with a total of 28,490. This is largely driven by dog vaccinations (26,974), alongside 1,491 cats and a small number of livestock (25). Karonga follows with 5,641 vaccinations, including 5,271 dogs and 370 cats, while Rumphi recorded 4,687 vaccinations, again dominated by dogs (4,536) with fewer cats (151). Chitipa and Nkhata Bay registered lower totals of 3,976 and 3,464 respectively, but both districts show a similar trend where dog vaccinations far exceed those of cats. Across all districts, dogs consistently account for the largest share of rabies vaccinations, reflecting their central role in the transmission of the disease and the importance of targeting them in prevention efforts. Apart from procuring and facilitating vaccinations, CCEI also targeted primary schools. For instance, awareness campaigns were conducted in Chintheche, Nkhata bay where schools from surrounding areas took part in various activities aimed at increase awareness on dangers of rabies and promoting rabies vaccination.



Tionge Chunda from CCEI handing over a gift to a learner in Chintheche

District	Cats	Dogs	Livestock	Total
Chitipa	40	3,936		3,976
Karonga	370	5,271		5,641
Mzimba	1,491	26,974	25	28,490
Nkhata bay	144	3,320		3,464
Rumphi	151	4,536		4,687
Total	2,196	44,037	25	46,258





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For feedback, please contact the Executive Director, CCEI. +265999284908 or visit our website, www.cceimw.org