YONECO VOICE


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Dear Reader,

Wow, here we now releasing the last edition of YONECO Voice Monthly Newsletter for December, 2019. After this, we will meet again in the new year!

Before wrapping up the year, we have a number of stories which we would like to share with you our dear reader.

Malawi is one of the countries in Africa where people struggle with hunger year in year out. In this edition, we have brought you a story about Innovation Systems in Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Training which YONECO in partnership with Transfer Multisort Electronics (TME) organized in Zomba. We are hopeful that the training will result into something big.

Enjoy your read!

Grace Mkwapata

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**About Us...**

**Our Vision**
A self-reliant, healthy, and resilient society that respects human rights and democratic values

**Our Mission**
Empowering the youth, women and children, promoting good health, human rights, and democracy, adapting and mitigating effects of climate change; and conducting research for evidence based programming and advocacy

**Our Values**
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Team work
- Confidentiality
- Respect for human rights and dignity

**Our Programmes**
1. Enhancing Child Development & protection
2. Youth Development
3. Governance and Human Rights
4. Promoting Women and Gender Equality
5. Promoting Good Health, Sanitation & Wellbeing
6. Climate Change & Disaster Management
7. Media, Networking, Collaboration & Coordinating
8. Research, Monitoring, Evaluation, Documentation and Learning

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1st December is the World AIDS Day and the world all over will be commemorating the devastating impact of the epidemic. While it may seem like the epidemic is stabilising, we have seen an upsurge of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among the urban youth especially those who are in the institutions of higher learning.

One wonders where we are going wrong. There has also been an increase in teenage pregnancies which is a clear indication of unprotected sex, more so an increase in the number of cases of child abuse, especially sexual abuse. This is a sad development considering that we are closing the year with such devastating facts happening to our youth.

We are going towards the festive season where the youth are engaged in so many activities that can put their lives at risk; we can only urge them to play it safe. Visit our youth friendly mobisite at www.letschill.yoneco.org. This is a platform for young people, which is interactive and easy to use. The site answers questions pertaining to Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and the youth can also access SRH information through our Youth WhatsApp group called Youth Breeze (+265 888 845 610) and Tithandizane Helpline (116) and Online web chats.

We also note an important day which coincides with the ending of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV worldwide which is the Human Rights Day, on December 10. We are aware that everyone enjoys his/her own rights and we do have fundamental human rights. It is important to have your rights celebrated, enjoy them realising that you also have responsibilities. Rights without responsibilities are useless. Be responsible and respect other people’s rights too.

While this is happening, we would like to recognise those whose rights are being continuously violated; the rights of children living in the streets, orphans and the elderly. It would be important that during this period, we spend enough time thinking of how we will celebrate Christmas and New Year with these groups and bring happiness into their lives.

Finally, young and old, reflect on 2019. It has been an eventful year. A lot has been achieved and a lot has not been achieved as well. The fundamental question is have we achieved our goals? To what extent have we lived within the expectations of the society, friends and colleagues? Have we lived within our values and principles? What are your resolutions as we get into this last month?

While you are thinking of all this, be reminded that the year 2020 has come and ask yourselves about the Vision 2020 as well. Stay blessed.
Malawi Commemorates 30th Anniversary of CRC

Program Support Manager for YONECO - Lilongwe Hughes Munthali, urged young people in the country to report whenever they are faced with any form of abuse.

Munthali said this during the commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC@30) which was held at Bingu International Convention Center (BICC).

Many children are suffering in silence because people who are entrusted with the task of assisting them are, unfortunately, those behind the act. As such, the chances of getting support are minimized.

YONECO has put in place several reporting structures for child rights violations. For instance, YONECO’s Tithandizane Helpline Services operates the toll-free National Child Helpline, Youth and Child Drop in Centres, and the Tithandizane Helpline App where one can report and seek counselling online.

Munthali also stressed the need for duty bearers to provide necessary platforms for children to voice out their rights.

Cementing the remarks, Honourable Minister for Gender children disability and social welfare (MoGCDSW) who was also the Guest of Honour to the function, Mary Navitcha promised to advocate for increased budgetary allocation towards the promotion of child welfare and protection.

The Commemoration of the Convention on the rights of Child (CRC) which took place at Bingu International Convention center (BICC) in Lilongwe under the theme Children demanding their rights.
YONECO visited Chiradzulu Primary School to urge learners to report cases of abuse which occur at home or at school using the toll free Tithandizane National Child Helpline number 116.

During the awareness meeting, learners were informed about child abuse and its manifestations, how and where they could go to report abuse. Furthermore, the learners were also engaged in talks about human rights and the meaning of a good citizen.

Speaking during the awareness meeting, the Head Teacher for Chiradzulu Primary School, Grecian Chimerenga commended YONECO for engaging the learners on issues concerning abuse and human rights.

He also mentioned that protecting children is everybody's responsibility hence collaborative efforts are needed to support the teachers in this undertaking.

During the sensitization meeting, YONECO distributed Tithandizane Child Helpline branded pencils to remind them about the toll-free number which they could use to report abuse cases.
YONECO joined the government of Malawi and its partners in commemorating the International Day of the Girl Child at a national event that was held at Dinde Primary School in Nsanje district on 18th November, 2019.

The institution showcased its initiatives towards the promotion of the rights and welfare of the girl child in the country.

Further to this, YONECO covered the event live on its national radio station (YFM). This helped to ensure that a good proportion of the country was able to follow the proceedings of the important event.

The audience was taken through some of the initiatives which YONECO uses to respond to issues that affect the girl child and provide information on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) though the toll-free helpline, SMS, school visits as well as through other web-based platforms.

In her remarks, the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW), Mary Thom Navicha, who was the Guest of Honour commended all stakeholders for their efforts in ensuring that the rights of girls are promoted and respected.

However, Navicha said there is still need to engage an extra gear as Malawi is still registering a lot of Gender Violence (GBV) cases that are perpetrated against the girl child.

“I am impressed with the work that you are doing to make sure that the girl child is protected and empowered. I would say we are on the right track, but we still need to do more”, she said.

Concurring with Navicha was Clara Anyagwe, who represented the UN and she said the country is doing well in protecting the girl child from violence. On the other hand, Anyagwe stated that much focus should also be put in fulfilling all the rights of a girl child.

The International Day for the Girl Child was set aside by the United Nations to raise awareness about various challenges which the girl child faces. The Day is commemorated on 11th October every year.
A 25 Year old man from Chiradzulu district has been sentenced to 13 years Imprisonment with Hard Labour (IHL) for defiling a 16 year-old-girl.

The man who happens to be a brother in-law to the survivor threatened that he will the girl if she tries to tell anyone about the ordeal. After some weeks, the survivor’s mother noticed some changes with her daughter. Upon asking her, the girl revealed what the 25 year-old brother-in-law did.

After some discussions in the family, they came to a conclusion that the girl would be supported throughout her pregnancy but he one responsible should not be reported to the authorities since he was a relative.

A traditional leader for the area got news of this and he launched an investigation which revealed that this was indeed true. The matter was then reported to YONECO.

YONECO refered the case to the police and after thorough investigations, the man was arrested and brought before the law. The brother-in-law was found guilty and got his sentence.

The girl is still being supported by YONECO through psychosocial counselling sessions and she is being prepared to return to school after delivery.

As one way of ensuring that children connected to the streets are protected from different forms of violence and child abuse, YONECO through its Mapale Youth Drop-in Centre (DIC) in Zomba City has embarked on provision of life skills session to children who are connected to the streets using a new training manual titled Moyo Wanga-Kuyambila Pano.

The booklet is full of different stories and activities that children and youths are supposed to utilize for them to properly internalize various skills that help them to make informed decisions. Some of the activities in the book involve reading sessions and responding to various questions based on a particular story which has been read.

One of the officers at the center, Yankho Kauwa, commented on the importance of utilizing the booklet to children who are connected to the streets.

"Children who are connected to the street will benefit a lot from the booklet for it contains a set of educative topics that relate to various challenges which the youth face at various levels. Many young people have been adopted delinquent behaviours mainly because they were not equipped with the necessary information," said Kauwa.
Mankhamba Junior Primary School which is in the area of Traditional Authority Kalombo was one of the schools which had serious problems in Ntchisi district. The school had no proper structures and it was not easy for any stranger to recognise the place as a school.

This school existed in an area where YONECO was implementing Child Labour Elimination for Real Change (CLEAR) project which was aimed ending child labour in tobacco growing. Thus, in this project, parents were encouraged to send their children to school and not to tobacco farms.

When the Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, saw this school, he had so many questions in his mind. One of the most difficult ones was on saying children should not work in farms and instead go to school - ‘is this the kind of school we are confidently saying the children should go to?’

This and many other questions compelled MacBain Mkandawile to raise this issue on various platforms. He vowed to mobilise resources for the construction of ‘real’ buildings at the school.

Some months later, the school wore a new face. The teachers had houses and a staff room. The Head Teacher had a a decent office. A move from a grass thatched office to a strong iron sheet roofed building.

During the handover ceremony, the Head teacher for Mankhamaba Primary School stated that the buildings will motivate both the teachers and leaners to work hard.

As a year has passed since the handover ceremony, parents around the school have seen so many changes.

Arnold Magona whose child is now in Standard Four said “the new buildings have really changed how my child used to perceive education. The old structures did not give her any motivation”.

A group of women from area also stated that they prevented their children from going to school during the rainy season as they were afraid that the mud and grass thatched blocks would fall on them.

The construction exercise was fully supported by community members. After the excise, the villagers also came together and agreed that they should mould bricks, buy cement and iron sheets for the construction of more staff houses as well as school blocks.

In his remarks, Group Village Head for the area stated that after seeing the positive changes, community members have decided to give feedback by bringing their resources to add on what was donated.
Every Child Deserves...

Support
Protection &
Freedom

Report Violence Against Children & Neglect

Call: Toll Free 116

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YONECO has trained a total of 24 young people from the area of Chief Kamwendo, Traditional Authority (T/A) Zulu in Mchinji district as advocates in ending Child marriages.

Social Welfare Officer for Mchinji District, Jane Majawa applauded YONECO for the move which she said had come at a right time because the district registers an increase in occurrence of child marriages in the rainy season. Majawa further stated that this is mainly due to the fact this is the period in which most households are affected by hunger.

Thus, Majawa stated that forcing girls into marriages is perceived as a way of reducing the number of children to feed as well as getting support from the son-in-law.

Bridget Mwale who is also a Social Welfare Officer in the district urged the participants in the training to be patient when executing their duties since advocacy is a process and it needs to be consistent in order to achieve the required results.

The participants of the training planned to conduct awareness campaigns in the area of T/A Kamwendo in order to sensitize their fellow young people about the dangers of child marriage.

The training was conducted from 12th to 14th November, 2019 under the More than Brides Alliance (MTBA)- Malawi through a project called Marriage, No child’s Play which YONECO is implementing in is in Mangochi and Mchinji districts.

The project is being funded by the Dutch Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Simavi.
A total of 29 young people from Kamwendo area in Mchinji district have been trained as youth reporters (Y-Reporters) using SMS bulk tool in order to strengthen child abuse reporting mechanisms.

Sarah Munthali, District Information Officer (DIO) for Mchinji commended YONECO for introducing the Y-report initiative which will go a long way in ensuring that the challenges which young people face are reported and being addressed.

The system will also help young people to report incidences of child marriage in their areas as well as presenting their views on provision and quality of Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS).

The DIO warned the young people against abusing the system. She clarified that despite the system being free of charge, young people should take full responsibility to ensure that the system is serving its purpose.

Gwyneth Makondetsa, Assistant District Youth Officer echoed the DIO’s sentiments and urged young people to show commitment in utilizing the Y-report system.

One of the participants, Idah Thawale, expressed her satisfaction with the Y-report System saying the mechanism is easy to use and has a simple directory which will help young people to access information they need.
Marriage: No Child’s Play

REPORT CHILD MARRIAGE CASES
Call: Toll Free 116

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The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) applauded YONECO for its efforts in promoting young people’s Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nankumba’s area in Mangochi district where the organization is implementing Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) project.

The coordinator for Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health in the Ministry, Hanz Katengeza, commended the institution during a field visit to the GUSO implementing area which was organized as part of activities during this year’s Alliance Week for the Malawi Sexual Reproductive Health Rights Alliance which has six members including YONECO.

Addressing the audience, Katengeza said he is well convinced that YONECO is doing a great job in the area as evidenced by the frequency of calls demanding for more information about SRHR as well as contraceptives such as condoms among the youth in the area.

“I have received several calls from the youth in this area demanding for more condoms and other services, a clear indication that our youth are now aware of their rights and can boldly demand them”, he said.

“I am also pleased with the response from the youth in terms accessing SRHR and youth friendly health services. This is the way to go and am sure if we keep going at this pace, we will make the country a better place for everyone”, he added.

In his remarks, one of the beneficiaries of the GUSO project, Mphatso Chisale, commended YONECO for the initiative saying it has helped him to realize his rights.

Chisale said the project has linked him and his peers to health facilities where they access Youth Friendly Health Services (SRHR) without any difficulties which he said has also contributed to reduced cases of unintended pregnancies.

The Alliance, which is a consortium of 6 organizations including YONECO, organized an alliance week to appreciate various initiatives which the organizations are doing under the GUSO project which is being implemented in Mangochi and Chikwawa. YONECO gets is funding from Simavi.
Despite having a strong legal framework which protects and promotes women’s rights in Malawi, some detrimental ethnic laws are still prevalent, especially on ownership of land, and these male chauvinistic norms affect women a lot. Amina Matemba and Mary Alick, who hail from Kanyenda village, which is in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Kadewere in Chiladzulu district, were involved in a serious land dispute with their uncle. The uncle wanted to grab the piece of land which the two women owned.

The uncle told the women to stop cultivating on the land and they were threatened with various sanctions which the uncle said will be imposed on the two for failure to comply. Despite various interventions from family members and traditional leaders on the matter, the man refused to let the land go until the women reported the matter to YONECO Office in the district. YONECO officers facilitated a meeting and reported the issue to the District Council. The matter was resolved in accordance to the laws of Malawi and in favor of the women.

According to some ethnic traditions which the uncle based his argument on, women do not own land. Women are expected to marry and cultivate on a piece of land which their spouse’s parents give him. However, not still becomes a problem when the women are divorced or widowed.
On 12 May, 2006, residents of Masamba village in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Zomba district, breathed a sigh of relief when YONECO donated a Bicycle Ambulance to transport patients from their respective residential areas to a nearest health facility.

This gesture was employed as a strategy to confront deaths which used to occur in the area as a result of delays in dealing with emergency health cases. This was due to the fact that the area had no reliable means of transportation.

According to Peter Chapola, who is the chairperson of the village’s Tikondwe Development Club (TDC), which also looks after the ambulance, the donation was made following a call by the villagers to have a form of transport to ferry patients and expectant women to hospital. Chapola further explained how the ambulance has helped to transform and improve the lives of people living in Masamba as well as neighboring villages for over a decade.

Commenting on the same, Group Village Head (GHV) Masamba explained how his people struggled to go to a nearest health facility (Domasi Hospital) for treatment. “This village is separated by the Domasi Hospital by a 16 KM journey and before the bicycle ambulance which YONECO gave us, many people were losing their lives from treatable illnesses. Expectant women used to deliver on their way to hospital and many lost their lives and babies,” explained GVH Masamba.

One of the beneficiaries of the ambulance, Donex Master of Lupale village in the same area, concurred with the GVH Masamba’s sentiments. “I could not have been talking to you today if it was not for this bicycle ambulance,” stated Donex while smiling.

“It was during the night of the 15th December, 2017, when a heavy stone which was used to balance the roof of my house abruptly slipped down and hit my head. The stone left a deep cut which bled profusely. My head started swelling and pounding. I could have bled to death. Thereafter, my wife informed the TDC Chairperson about the incident who immediately instructed his colleagues to take me on the bicycle ambulance to the hospital”. Said Master.

Patrick Chigumula, a Health Surveillance Assistant (HAS) at Domasi hospital, applauded the ambulance. Chigumula said since the donation, the hospital has registered very few cases of patients dying due to long distances between their village and the hospital.

In addition, Chapola said that the ambulance is also used as a hearse to carry corpses from the mortuary back to the village. However, Chapola called on YONECO and other organizations to donate more bicycle ambulances to other remote and rural parts of the country.
45 CBO Members Trained in Innovation Systems in Agriculture and Entrepreneurship

22 November, 2019 shall forever remain a day to remember among residents of Traditional Authority (TA) Malemia’s area in Zomba district when they saw a total of 45 members from three Community Based Organizations (CBOs) graduating from an Innovation Systems in Agriculture and Entrepreneurship training course.

The training imparted the necessary knowledge and skills in agriculture and entrepreneurship among the 45 who are expected to contribute positively towards the development of their communities. The 45 graduates are also expected to ensure that their expertise is trickling down to other community members as well.

One of the participants, Maggie Mtogolo, could not hide her joy but expressing how the certificate will transform social-economic welfare of all people in her community. Maggie applauded the training by saying that it has opened doors to a sophisticated area of farming.

“The new technological farming systems which we have learnt will simplify the work and help us to cultivate more and increase our yields. I will work tirelessly to ensure food self-sufficiency at household level in my community,” explained Mtogolo.

The training which was provided for free by the Transfer Multisort Electronics (TME) with support from YONECO also got praises from traditional leaders from the targeted villages. In his remarks, the traditional leader for the area, T/A Malemia praised the two institutions for the training exercise which he described as ‘a game changer’. The traditional leader stated that with the current changes in rainfall patterns and other harsh climatic conditions, farming communities need to adopt innovative ways of cultivation.

TME Education Ambassador, Chisangalalo Kanthema, said the program was aimed at promoting and popularizing electronic and technology-related knowledge in the regions where the access to proper training and exposure to technology is limited. He further pointed out that T/A Malemia was one of the most outstripped areas in Malawi which have a huge deficiency in technological innovations.

‘I was very impressed with YONECO’s proposal for us to provide this training in this area and I am hopeful that it will go a long way in improving the being of all in this community,” said Kanthema.
You can report GBV through a Toll-free line

CALL

5600

WHY WE ARE: The GBV Crisis Line -5600 is a Toll-free Line that was established in 2014 to respond to issues pertaining to Gender Based Violence. The GBV Crisis Line is one of YONECO’s innovative approaches that are used to enhance the rights and welfare of the youth, women and children. The GBV Crisis Line came into operation as a direct response to the needs of communities and reducing traffic from child helpline.

Our Services

Through our GBV Crisis Line, we provide the following services:

- Free telephone counselling on GBV issues
- Making GBV Case referrals
- GBV Case Management and follow ups
- Provision of places of safety to survivors of GBV
- Face-to-face counselling on GBV issues
- Providing GBV response mechanisms in emergency situations
- Raising awareness on prevention of GBV

Our Partners and Key Stakeholders

- Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare.
- Malawi Police Service – Victim Support Unit
- Judiciary
- Trocaire
- Simavi

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