Parents Commend YFM for Amplifying Children’s Voices

Manje Youth Club Finds Gold in Green Vegetables

RLCs urged to fight for the rights of the Underprivileged
Dear Reader,

With great pleasure, I would like to welcome you to this edition of YONECO Voice Monthly Newsletter for June, 2020.

We have stories on our work in youth development, child protection, advocacy as well as governance and human rights. Some of these articles are best practices, promising practices and change stories from our impact areas.

YONECO is religiously observing all restrictions that are aimed at preventing further spread of COVID-19. Such measures include a ban on meetings of more than 100 people, observe social distance and alike. Thus, in this edition, we have articles that depict our activities that were attended by more than 100 people. Please note that such activities were conducted before the restrictions.

Stay safe!

Lemani Makina

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Contents

Executive Director’s Corner .................................................................4
YONECO Intensifies Online Child Protection Amid COVID-19 ..............5
YONECO Introduces Postal Helpline Services .....................................6
CPWs in Mchinji Intensify Efforts In Ending Child Abuse amid COVID-19 7
Parents Commend YFM for Amplifying Children’s Voices .........................8
15 Year-Old Rescued from Forced Marriage ........................................8
Rachael’s Journey to Success .............................................................9
Youths Challenged to Spearhead Campaigns on Prevention of COVID-19 10
Machira Benefits from YFM’s Chitukuko ndi Achinyamata Programme ....11
Area 18 Health Centre Opens Special Room for YFHS Delivery ................12
YONECO Joins the World in Commemorating MHD ..............................12
Manje Youth Club Finds Gold In Green Vegetables ...............................13
YONECO ED Calls for Everyone to Exercise their Right to Vote ............14
Peace Building a Key to Combatting Home Based GBV .........................15
YONECO Trains 78 Members of Staff in Human Rights Advocacy ...........16
YONECO Embarks on Door-to-Door Outreach on COVID-19 ..................17
Mental Health Awareness Week ..........................................................17
Supporting Communities with Essential Services Amidst COVID-19 ........18
Upcoming Events ..................................................................................18
YONECO Re-Strategizes it’s Projects to Cope with The COVID - 19 ..........19
YONECO FM Covers Presentation of Presidential Nomination Papers .......20
RLCs urged to fight for the rights of the Underprivileged ......................21

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June 2020 has come and we need to realize that 6 months have gone since we started the year 2020. There are several things we need to be thinking about. We should be thinking in the context of child protection. The Committee on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has been meeting and will finish the meeting in the first week of June 2020. While the committee is convening, we have a challenge of violence against children continuing in Malawi and in the region as a whole. We need to seriously reflect on how we are protecting the children.

As we continue to reflect, let us remind each other that June 12, 2020 is the World Day Against Child Labour and is commemorated worldwide under the theme “COVID-19: Protect Children from Child Labour, Now More than Ever! The day comes barely after the COVID-19 has created the economic hardship for most families and considering that poverty is one of the drivers of child labour, one fears that this might worsen the child labour situation in Malawi and across the globe. As such, what is required of all of us in Children Rights Forum is to work and understand the situation and support our governments to implement strategies that would help to deal with child labour.

Creating awareness about child labour and COVID-19 will be paramount. Moving around in the evening, you will find young boys doing dirty businesses while some are selling meat, roasted chicken parts and boiled eggs in public entertainment joints. These boys and girls are recruited just to do that. However, Public entertainment places are prohibited from admitting children below the age of 18. What we see is lack of enforcement of our legislations. Very worrying and saddening is the fact that the majority of children who sell these items are recruited by people who know the rules and include teachers, police officers among others. The question is; would you send your child to these places at night? These children are therefore exposed not only to COVID-19, as the situation is, but also to other very challenging situations.

Away from child labour, it is important to reflect on another important day while COVID-19 continues to challenge us all. June 16 is the Day of the African Child. This year, the day will be commemorated under the theme; “Access to child friendly justice system in Africa” which resonates with the aspiration number 8 of the Agenda 2040; “Children benefit from a child-sensitive criminal system”. Agenda 2040 is a key roadmap to restoring the dignity of the African child. As we are getting close to the day, it would be critical to start assessing how our children are being treated in the criminal justice system both as victims and perpetrators.

One can only be blind of the many issues that children face as victims ranging from cases taking longer than expected – some as long of 5 years to be concluded to missing information and poor investigations leading to acquittal of cases that could have led to convictions. It is therefore important that child actors should reflect seriously on the ineffectiveness of the poor justice system. On child offenders, one is greeted with children that have had their cases not heard for long periods to an extent of them being forgotten in the system. What comes to my mind is a child from Kasungu district who was acquitted long ago but has spent 15 years in a reformatory school while the authorities were still looking for his parents. One wonders how the child was arrested and committed to a reformatory school without proper details. This is the situation that we all need to remember as we move with the Day of the African child.

Have a pleasant newsletter reading. Remember to stay safe and protect yourself
YONECO has urged Malawians to report any form of online violence against children amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Acting ICT and Helpline Services Manager for YONECO, Moses Chongoloka Msukwa, said this during a panel discussion which was organized by the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA).

The function was organized in order to raise public awareness about responsible use of internet in this time when the world is battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Msukwa said the pandemic has paralyzed many operations in the country including closure of schools which has led to children spending more time on the internet than before.

“As YONECO, we are committed to go to any level to protect children from abuse during this period,” said Msukwa.

Currently, YONECO is hosting several child abuse reporting mechanisms including Tithandizane National Child Helpline - 116 and Internet Watch Foundation’s (IWF) Online Reporting Portal for Malawi.

“At this crucial time when children are home, there are chances that they will spend more time on the internet where they are more vulnerable to cyberbullying. As such, we need to ensure that they are still protected”, added Msukwa.

MACRA’s Director of Legal Services, Thokozani Chimbe, said parents should also play their part in protecting children from online abuse.

“Parents should have interest in their children’s online activities and monitor them properly,” explained Chimbe.

The meeting which was held at Sunbird Mount Soche Hotel in Blantyre, brought together child protection workers, law enforcement agents, and network providers.
As a way and enhancing helpline support services to all people in Malawi, YONECO through its Tithandizane National Helpline Centre has introduced free postal addresses for reporting Violence against Children (VAC) and Gender Based Violence (GBV).

The approach has been adopted to ensure that the youth, women and children are able to report on VAC and GBV as well as ensuring that the youth and children are being engaged on various issues that concern them like health, climate change and education.

Thus, apart from reporting VAC and GBV cases, young people and the youth can also send their contributions to a quarterly children’s magazine which YONECO produces, YFM radio Programmes as well as give feedback on YONECO’s general programming.

The postal addresses have adopted the short codes for the Child Helpline (116) and GBV Crisis Line (5600). All the letters will be sent for free and YONECO will be covering the costs.

This is a tireless effort in ensuring that economic situations should not hinder people from seeking services or commenting on various issues that affect them.

The postal addresses are; The Manager, Tithandizane Helpline Services, P/Bag 116, Zomba (child protection) and The Manager, Tithandizane Helpline Services, P/Bag 5600, Zomba (GBV).
Enhancing Child Protection and Development

CPWs in Mchinji Intensify Efforts In Ending Child Abuse amid COVID-19

"Our core responsibility is to ensure the children are protected from all forms of abuse. We will always see into it that perpetrators of child abuse are brought to book," said Douglas Kwalira, a child protection worker.

Currently, YONECO offers free on-line counselling services on various issues through the Tithandizane Helpline Services which also has a toll-free child helpline - 116. YONECO is also managing the operations of Internet Watch Foundation’s (IWF) Online Reporting Portal.

The portal provides a platform for reporting cyberbullying whereby abusive video clips or pictures of children that are reported are removed from the internet.

Child Protection Workers (CPWs) in Mchinji district have reaffirmed their commitment to work tirelessly in order to protect children from abuse amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The need to intensify efforts of preventing child abuse have arisen due to some restrictions that have been put into effect to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The restrictions include the indefinite closure of schools which might also lead to various forms of child abuse within the confines of their homes.

In this regard, CPWs from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Zulu, with support from YONECO, conducted a cluster meeting that was aimed at strengthening interventions in child protection as well as monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of the same.

Further to this, the team also ironed out some of the challenges that have been impeding progress of efforts that are aimed at ending violence against children in the area.
There has been an increase in the number of community members who report child abuse cases to YONECO through various channels. This development has led to a number of cases being concluded with perpetrators being brought to book thereby sending a strong warning to other would-be offenders.

In May, 2020 parents of a 15 year-old-girl were reprimanded for marrying off their daughter. Following a tip-off from a concerned community member, YONECO followed up the matter and proved that the girl was indeed married to a fellow teenager from a neighboring village.

The two were forced to drop-out of school and got married when the parents of the girl realized that their daughter was pregnant. The parents of the boy provided a hut for the two within their compound.

The District Manager for YONECO in Balaka, Jacob Phiri, stated that a number of child abuse incidences have been redressed due to the fact that people are now aware of the available reporting mechanism as well as the dangers of Violence Against Children (VAW).

Group Village Head (GVH) Chingagwe from the district also stated that he encourages his subjects to report all child abuse cases through the right channels.

"YONECO has done a lot in terms of publicizing various child abuse reporting channels. Currently, my subjects know where to report such incidences," explained GVH Chingagwe.

In dealing with child abuse cases, YONECO works in collaboration with the Victim Support Unit (VSU) of the Malawi Police Service, District Social Welfare Offices and other key stakeholders.

Parents have applauded YFM’s High Five Radio Programme for effectively engaging children in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Programme is a child-led phone-in programme which, among others, gives a platform to children to engage and interact on various issues that affect their lives.

The programme which is aired every Saturday, provides a platform for the children to deliberate, give opinion and freely express themselves on a given topic of the day.

In her remarks, a Lilongwe based fan of YFM and High Five programme, Astridah Singini, said the programme has enabled her to understand the things which children want and the problems they face.

“The programme impresses me a lot. Children freely express themselves and this has enabled me to understand what my children might be going through,” she said.

Singini also said the programme is helping her children to remain active while indoors due to restrictions on movement due to COVID-19 pandemic.

High Five phone-in programme is one of the six child-led programmes that YFM broadcasts. The programmes are mainly aimed at enhancing child participation in various matters of their lives and of public.

The programmes are co-produced and presented by the children themselves.

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let’s Chill
smart choices on SRHR for young people

letschill.yoneco.org
Rachael’s Journey to Success

Life sometimes could be cruel. Others define life as full of ups and downs and people like Rachael Singano who lost both parents when she was 13 years old attest to that axiom.

After the demise of her parents, life became unbearable as she could not support herself financially. Her grandmother took the responsibility of raising Rachael and her siblings but she could not manage to fend for all their needs due to old age. At school, things were not all that rosy as nobody was there to support her. Schools fees, materials, School Development fund kept on distressing Rachael who was nursing an ambition of becoming a teacher.

At one point in time, relatives tried to force Rachel into marriage but thanks to members of her area’s Community Rights Committees (CRC) which YONECO trained in Child Protection as they came to her rescue. Apart from attempts to force her into marriage, Rachael also survived sexual harassment and managed to pass through all the ordeals.

She paid her tuition fees from the proceeds of her vegetable vending business and pleating her friends’ hair. When she was in Form 4 of her secondary school studies, life became even harder. She was totally unable to raise enough money for her tuition and examination fees. The school authorities notified her that she will not be allowed to be in class and sit for her examinations without the payments - Rachel recalls how embarrassing it was but she did not give up.

Shortly afterwards, a well-wisher introduced her to YONECO in Ntcheu for further support. YONECO started engaging various business owners and other potential sponsors. Lady luck smiled on Rachael’s face when a Former Ward Counsellor who was approached with the issue accepted to pay all the dues for Rachel to continue with her studies. Passing her Malawi Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations was the beginning of her success. Rachael was later secured a place at Emmanuel Teachers Training College.

Rachael is now living her dream. Rachael is now a teacher at Kingdom Aid and Reconciliation Enrichment (KARE) Private School in Thyolo district.

“I want to express my appreciation to YONECO for linking with the people who sponsored my studies. My life has completely changed and I am now a teacher by profession,” said Rachael.

Rachael, who is now 22 years-old, hails from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Njolomole in Ntcheu district. Currently, YONECO has a total of 40 girls and boys from Ntcheu District who are in need of educational support.

letschill.yoneco.org
YONECO has intensified awareness campaigns about COVID-19 in Rumphi district as one way of complementing government’s efforts to contain the pandemic.

YONECO is conducting campaigns that are aimed at sensitizing communities and promoting adherence to the COVID-19 preventive measures that have been prescribed to prevent its further spread.

The move is mainly targeting youth groups, chiefs, religious and community leaders as they are agents of change and influential at community level.

During one of the meetings, Group Village Head (GVH) Chigwero appreciated the support from YONECO and the engagement of young people which the organization is emphasizing on.

GVH Chigwelo said that the youth have a critical role to play in ensuring that community members are protected from the pandemic.

He also said that young people need to encourage their peers to always follow the recommended COVID-19 preventive measures.

YONECO’s Field Officer, Wongani Mfune, said that people should realize that the fight against the pandemic is everyone’s responsibility hence the need to engage the communities on the same.

Apart from Community awareness meetings with various community structures, YONECO is also conducting door-to-door sessions.
Machira Benefits from YFM’s Chitukuko ndi Achinyamata Programme

Achinyamata ndi Chitukuko radio program on YONECO FM has brought a smile to Edwin Machira. Machira, a man with a disability who is currently pocketing K15,000 every month from a well wisher who pledged to assist him after listening to the program.

The program’s producer and presenter caught up with Edwin Machira at Kabwanzi Village in Traditional Authority Makwangwala in Ntcheu District and he explained the genesis of his disability:

“I was not born like this but I lost my all legs when I was 23 after being bitten by a snake on my left leg in the year 2003 in Mwanza District and by the then I was staying with my uncle who was a farmer and my duty was to look after cattle. The snake bit me as I was coming home from herding the cattle.” Machira said in the program.

Later on, in 2005 Machira was admitted at Zomba General Hospital where his left leg was amputated and in 2012 the right leg was also amputated at the same hospital.

Thereafter, Machira’s life was completely changed because at first he was a self-starter but due to this disability things were different.

“However, although things were changed I can tell you that I manage to do things on my own and you cannot believe if you see me doing works like building houses, farming, digging pit latrine and many other works and I never think before about going in places like Blantyre, Lilongwe and even Ntcheu town to start begging, the way my fellow people with disabilities are doing because to me it’s a matter of wasting time.

“In addition, I was doing business but due to economic challenges, I lost the capital and for now I do wish if well wishers can assist me with capital in order to revamping my business.” Machira said.

Shortly after the program was aired, a lady from Lilongwe area 47 namely Mrs Kamwendo called the producer of the program for further details of Edwin Machira and after few days the lady communicated with Machira and she pledged to assist him with K15,000 every month as a capital to revamp the business.

Achinyamata ndi Chitukuko is a radio program on YONECO FM, which focuses on various youth initiated activities in their communities. The aim of programme is to highlight youth participation in development with an air of improving their lives, families and communities.

The program is aired every Tuesday at 1:30pm and is produced by Richard Mbaka and Deogratius Mwalamoyo.
Area 18 Health Centre Opens Special Room for YFHS Delivery

Under Connect Malawi project, YONECO empowered young people from area 18 in Lilongwe City to make an assessment on the quality of Youth Friendly Health Service (YFHS) provision in their area using Community Scorecard Methodology.

Among the issues that transpired, include young people’s dismay over the lack of a Youth Corner at Area 18 Health Centre which is their nearest YFHS delivery point. The young people explained that this is a critical component that helps to promote privacy.

During a Scorecard Interface Meeting between the young people and service providers, the Matron for the facility, Monecka Zoto Kapusa, promised that a room will be secured to ensure that young people are accessing the services in a youth-friendly environment.

As a response to the concern, the Matron, in liaison with facility management team, finally spared a special room for the provision of YFHS. After mobilizing resources and other necessary equipment including recreational materials, the room is now operational.

“We decided to respond to the concerns of the young people who have, unfortunately, been neglected for so long. We are hopeful that this will contribute positively towards reducing various Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) challenges which the youth face in this area,” explained Kapusa.

YONECO Joins the World in Commemorating MHD

Menstrual Hygiene Day (MHD) is an annual commemoration that falls on 28 May. The Day brings together people from all walks of life to highlight the importance of good Menstrual Hygiene Management.

In most rural parts of Malawi, girls drop-out of school due to inadequate or lack of sanitation facilities and failure to access menstrual hygiene materials.

As YONECO, we have been working tirelessly to ensure that adolescent girls should remain in school by training them to make re-usable sanitary pads using locally available materials.

This year, MHD recognizes that periods do not stop for pandemics and will continue to drive home the idea; ‘It’s Time for Action’.

This year’s theme highlights the urgency for the collective work needed to both change the negative social norms surrounding menstruation and also catalyze progress toward empowering women and girls to unlock their educational and economic opportunities.

Did you know: The 28th was selected to acknowledge that 28 days is the average length of the menstrual cycle.
YO NECO Voice - Monthly Newsletter
June 2020

Manje Youth Club Finds Gold in Green Vegetables

YO NECO has been introducing various agribusiness enterprises to young farmers in Nkhata Bay as one way of reducing the rate of unemployment among the youth in the district.

The intervention reaches out to young people through their designated youth clubs. One of the youth clubs that have benefitted from the agribusiness initiative is Manje Youth Club which is based in the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Kalonga, Traditional Authority (T/A) Nyaluwanga. The group opted for poultry farming and raised broiler chickens which, seven weeks later, sold like hot cakes. After selling the flock, the group realized MK 912,000

One of the youth clubs that have benefitted from this initiative is Manje youth club from the area of GVH Kalonga TA Nyaluwanga in district, which took on poultry farming.

With the proceeds they got from poultry farming, the group have also diversified. Thus, apart from raising chickens, the group has also ventured into horticulture.

The group has proclaimed to have hit a jackpot as they have a good market for their vegetables and the proceeds are supplementing the financial needs of other business ventures including the poultry farm.

A number of young people are currently benefitting from the initiative. Some youth club members are now venturing into other small scale businesses using the money they get after sharing profits.

YO NECO has been supporting the youth club with technical expertise through its District Field Officer.

A woman buying vegetables from Manje Youth Club Farm

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a Human Rights Violation

Report GBV cases to:

GBV CRISIS LINE

CALL

5600
Toll Free
Every Child Deserves...

Support
Protection
&
Freedom

Report Violence Against Children & Neglect
Call: Toll Free

POSTAL ADDRESS:
The Executive Director
C/O Youth Leadership Development Centre
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+265 1 525 674

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Tithandizane Child Helpline
YONECO ED Calls for Everyone to Exercise their Right to Vote

YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire has expressed the need for Malawians to exercise their democratic right of choosing the country’s leaders in the forthcoming Fresh Presidential Elections.

Currently, Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) has been conducting voter verification exercises in which Malawians who registered to vote in the May 2019 Tripartite Elections are verifying if their names are still in voters' register.

"Bad leaders are chosen by those who do not vote. This is the reason why YONECO is working tirelessly to ensure that all people who are registered voters are taking part in the voter verification exercise" explained Mkandawire.

Mkandawire has also urged all politicians to desist from using hate speeches during the campaign period. The Executive Director for YONECO explained that hate speeches breed violence of which the effects are heavily felt by the youth, women and children.

Further to this, Mkandawire also asked for the competing parties to observe COVID-19 Precautionary measures.

Mkandawire stated that most parties are still holding mass rallies which are attracting very huge crowds so much so that social distance is not being observed a thing which is contrary to the advice from health experts.

Malawians will go back to the polls this year following a Constitutional Court ruling which nullified the May 2019 Presidential Elections results because of irregularities.
The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, has called on families to foster peace and tolerance as most people are working from home as a measure of preventing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 has compelled employers to request their employees to work from home as a way of preventing traveling and crowded places which are among the key preventive measures of the disease.

Much as this is a good development amidst COVID-19, the stay at home niche might subject some individuals to abuse as people are now spending more time with others who might perpetrate Gender Based Violence (GBV).

“What I would advise is that people should find a way of avoiding conflicts. You easily detect when a conflict is about to happen and it is better to avoid than to deliberately pursue it,” said Mkandawire.

He also went on to advise people to seek counselling if they sense any tension by visiting their nearest YONECO offices or calling YONECO toll-free Helplines on 5600 (GBV crisis Line) and 166 (Child Helpline).

Mkandawire stated that people can also report such cases to other structures like the Police Victim Support Unit or District Social Welfare Office.
YONECO has trained 78 members of its staff on human rights to help them effectively deliver as they advocate for essential services from duty bearers as well as dealing with other human rights violation cases.

The members of staff were, among other topics, drilled in the constitution of Malawi, human rights monitoring and various international human rights instruments.

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, said the training was aimed at imparting the participants with a philosophical foundation and knowledge of human rights.

“We have human rights violation reporting mechanisms which are handled by YONECO through the Tithandizane Helpline Service. As such, it is necessary to ensure that the team is fully equipped with knowledge and skills for handing such cases,” explained Mkandawire.

One of the participants, Esnarth Priminta, who is also a Deputy Chief Reporter for YFM, described the training as an eye-opener. Priminta added that the training will enable her to effectively contribute towards enhancing socio-economic welfare of the youth, women and children in Malawi.

YONECO occasionally conducts capacity strengthening sessions for its staff as one way of enhancing the quality of service delivery.
Marriage, No Child’s Play

Report Child Marriage Cases
Call: Toll Free 116
YONECO Embarks on Door-to-Door Outreach on COVID-19

YONECO has embarked on a door-to-door outreach campaign with the aim of sensitizing community members on how they can prevent COVID-19 pandemic.

Mangochi is one of the districts in the country that is highly populated hence the need to sensitize people on the dangers of the pandemic and how community members could prevent COVID-19.

The government of Malawi has currently set precautionary measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and YONECO staff in the district are working hand in hand with various government departments in distributing Information and Education Materials (IEC).

So far, 150 households from the areas of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda and Nankumba have benefited from the door-to-door outreach activities. The activities commenced on 8th May, 2020 and more households in other T/A will be reached as well.

Mental Health Awareness Week 18-24 May, 2020

“One thing people should know is that it’s perfectly okay to admit that you are not okay... Talk to someone when you feel overwhelmed with school, work, family, life, or any other issue.

It’s really okay if you fall apart sometimes. Your mental wellbeing matters!”

Mbanandi Saka Mental Health Project Coordinator

During the mental Health Awareness Week, we engaged young people through various social media tools.

We facilitated discussions on how young people understand mental health issues as well as demistifying various myths and misconceptions surrounding the issue.
LET'S JOIN HANDS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The most common types of human trafficking are sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage.

SAY NO TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FOR HELP CALL 116

#140DaysCampaigninEndingHumanTrafficking&Migration
Nkhata Bay is one district in Malawi that has not been spared from the COVID-19 pandemic mainly due to the number of people who travel from the district to other countries for various business enterprises.

So far, the district has registered a total of 5 positive COVID-19 cases and all the individuals are business persons who had earlier travelled to Tanzania and some of them used uncharted routes.

This development compelled YONECO to join the Malawi government and other partners in raising awareness about the pandemic. YONECO has incorporated COVID-19 activities into its generic interventions on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

The activities are being conducted in line with the current prevention measures that have been stipulated by the government through the Ministry of Health and Population. Furthermore, YONECO is also working in collaboration with Nkhata Bay District Public Health Forum.

Among other things, YONECO has been distributing a number of awareness raising activities through door-to-door sensitization campaigns and distribution of approved Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. Currently, YONECO has reached community members in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nyaluwanga, Mkumbira and Mankhambira.

During this period, YONECO office in the district is also supporting young people with various Sexual Reproductive Health Services (SRH) including the provision of condoms, HIV self-testing kits and counselling services through its Youth Drop-In-Centers. Furthermore, women and children have also been able to access paralegal services from Nkhata Bay district office.
Outreach programmes are very essential as people who live in remote and hard to reach areas are mostly hit by many socio-economic problems.

For instance, people who live far from health facilities find it very hard to cover long distances on foot to get contraceptives or undergo HIV Testing and Counseling Services (HTS).

As such, community members from such areas only visit their nearest health facility when they have a critical illness.

However, this being the case, most of YONECO’s programmes have not come to a complete standstill due to COVID 19. Instead, there have been innovative ways of completing planned tasks during this time when it seems impossible to get the work done.

Shedding more light on this is the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Donald Kamthunzi, who says due to the pandemic, programmatic and project plans have been reprogrammed so as to fit into the directives that have been put to prevent the spread of COVID – 19.

“Our efforts have been redirected to support interventions that could still be carried out within the context of the prescribed guidelines of preventing COVID-19” said Kanthuzi.

Among other things, YONECO has also intensified the use of remote platforms as a way of observing social distance.

“We have utilized online activities and have scaled up awareness campaigns using SMS channels, social media, mobisite and the radio,” commented Kanthuzi.

To ensure that staff are also protected from the pandemic; members of staff and volunteers are being supported with protective gear as well as hand washing facilities.
YONECO GIRLS EDUCATION FUND (YOGEF)

YOGEF’s Scholarship Program focuses on increasing enrollment of girls into secondary schools and upper primary schools in Malawi.

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Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)
Youth Leadership Development Centre
Along Zomba Lilongwe road,
Next to Calvary Church,
P.O. Box 471, Zomba, Malawi
Email: girlseducation@yoneco.org
YONECO FM covered live the presentation of presidential nominations papers ceremony to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) which was held at Sunbird Mount Soche hotel in Blantyre in preparation for the forthcoming presidential polls.

The ceremony which was held on 6th and 7th May, is one of the core procedures in the electoral process.

In his remarks, the Manager Media Advocacy Networking and Communication (MMANC) Benson Nkhoma Somba, said as a radio station we are obliged to provide our listeners, with up-to-date news and information that is factual, balanced, and ethical in order for the masses to make informed decisions. That’s our major contribution to enriching democracy in the country.

“it is mandatory for us as a radio station to diligently serve our target audience and update them on issues of public interest especially elections,” he said.

“in every election, the public is a key stakeholder. Hence, the need for them to be updated on everything including the manifestoes of their candidates, so that they are able to make proper decisions when exercising their right to vote. And voting should not

On her part, one of the listeners that followed the proceedings on YONECO FM, Mercy Manzie, praised the media outlet for bringing the event live to the masses.

“I did not attend the event physically but through YFM I was able to follow through all the proceedings which has helped me to start preparing and deciding on who to vote for”, she said.

Out of the 13 aspiring candidates who collected nomination papers to compete in the forthcoming presidential election slated for 23rd June this year, only three were confirmed by the electoral body.

The three include Dr. Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika of the governing Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Peter Kuwani of the Mbakuwaku Movement for Development (MMD).

YONECO FM has also been conducting public awareness and sensitization through its radio programs in regards to the forthcoming presidential polls.
YONECO has established 16 Radio Listening Clubs (RLCs) under the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) Project which is being funded by the World Food Program (WFP).

The establishment followed training sessions that were aimed at orienting club members on how best they can capture and report the challenges people face when accessing relief items in their communities.

During one of the sessions, Phalombe District Information Officer (DIO), Sam Majamanda, urged the clubs to take a leading role in protecting rights of the less privileged individuals in the district.

He said most cases in the district go unreported because people are afraid of reporting their oppressors while in some instances they are not aware of the available reporting channels.

“We have had cases in the district where beneficiaries of Lean Response Interventions (LRI) were being forced to share their relief items including money with others,” explained Majamanda.

Majamanda further urged the RLC members who attended the trainings to share the knowledge and skills with their fellows at community level. Majamanda explained that this will help to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention.

In his remarks, YONECO’s CFM Project Coordinator, Augustine Chikatentha, said the RLCs will sensitize other community members on the available reporting channels for malpractices that might be observed during the distribution of humanitarian items.

“We believe that the skills gained through these training sessions, would also help members of these clubs to conduct research to unearth underlying causes of lack of accountability to the affected beneficiaries in all the four core WFP programmes namely; Resilience, School Meals, Nutrition and Lean Season Response,” Chikatentha said.

One of the participants, Jennet Munyowa, of Chiwalo RLC described the training as an eye-opener and timely.

“We have had cases of well-deserved people missing from the list of beneficiaries but we couldn’t do anything. But through this training, we now know where to go,” explained Munyowa.

The 16 RLCs have been established in Balaka, Chikwawa, Phalombe and Nsanje with an equal distribution of four clubs per district.
You can report GBV through a Toll-free line

CALL

5600

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

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