Dear Reader,


I am hopeful that you will enjoy this edition as you have enjoyed our previous editions. In this newsletter, we have also tried our best to share with you success stories, our best as well as some promising practices.

All articles in this edition were captured in the month of July, 2020 but most of the interventions commenced way before last month. As such, most items are the fruits of the seeds we previously sow.

On the other hand, we have also tried our best to present to you some stories that should bring to your attention some challenges which the youth, women and girls face in the Malawi.

Remember, COVID-19 is real, always stay safe!

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Congratulations to the newly appointed cabinet ministers, as Malawians, we are eagerly looking forward to working with you while rendering all the support you may need as you venture into your assigned duties. The expenditure of public funds will now be under your care as such asset declaration is very key for the sake of accountability and transparency.

There is a lot of speedy progress that needs to take place in many sectors, investing in political stances would just be a waste of time and will definitely eradicate the focus at hand which is development. “No sweet without sweat”, we shouldn’t expect things to be handed over on a silver platter just because of the new leadership. Two words, Hard-Work. The change in leadership will have lost its prominence if people do not work hard. Demonstrate your competence and commitment in moving things forward, hence a change will be guaranteed.

12 August is International Youth Day; my thoughts are with the youth especially in these trying times of COVID-19 pandemic, there is nothing getting them occupied since schools are closed, they are at greater risk of contracting Sexual Transmitted Infections (STI’s) and already, many reports are coming in of increased numbers of young girls getting pregnant since many services including Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) have been denied. However, YONECO provides SRHR Information on www.letschill.org mobisite for easy accessibility. Alternatively, one could also get such information by contacting Tithandizane Helpline Services on 5600, 116, 5700 and 6600 toll free lines.

World Humanitarian Day falls on the 19th of August 2020. Let us appreciate the front liners (nurses and doctors) worldwide who are working tirelessly in the fight against COVID-19 and putting themselves at risk and sometimes even lose their lives in order to help others. Their efforts should not go unrecognized.

The increase in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in the country is bringing out major concerns. It is the duty of everyone to stay safe, let us be cautious of our surroundings by protecting yourself as well as your loved ones and this should be everyone’s top most priority. Let us remain vigilant, but one thing is certain, this too shall pass. Enjoy your read, and remain blessed.
YONECO Office in Mangochi district has introduced the use of in-door traditional games as a way of enhancing child socialization amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the country is grappling with the global pandemic and initiating various measures to prevent the spread of the virus including school closure and restricting social gatherings, it is critical to address the challenges children are facing which might affect their development. Most children seem to have been psychologically affected as they are no longer having fun with their friends.

In response to this, YONECO’s district office has initiated in door traditional games using locally available materials such as sand, wood and clay to keep the children engaged as they stay at home. Through the initiative, YONECO among others has taught children how to mould toys such as cars from clay.

The District Manager for Mangochi, Funny Chilembo, said the initiative was conceived after it was noted that children some children were having stress and frustrations. Chilembo stated that this is negatively impacting on the development of children as schools have closed and they are spending more hours at home with limited activities to keep them busy.

“Children are also feeling the impact of the pandemic and this might also have a bearing on their growth and development. This is why we thought of finding ways of keeping them busy.
YONECO Reunites a Child Connected to the Street with His Family

YONECO, through its office in Machinga district re-united a 17-year-old boy with his parents two years after he went missing.

Chimwemwe (not real name) claims that he decided to leave his parents’ house to call the streets his new home in 2018 following what he described as bad treatment from his stepmother. He explained that his stepmother often denied to give him food whenever his father was away.

Chimwemwe further asserted that the more he tried to report the matter to his father the more the situation worsened.

"My stepmother never liked me. Sometimes I went to school with an empty stomach and that really affected my education and mental being,” said Chimwemwe.

While in the street, Chimwemwe got indulged in drug and substance abuse, robbery as well as sexual promiscuous behaviours among other things. Chimwemwe, who used to sleep under a bridge spent his money on the aforementioned habits.

"After sometime, I got ill and my friends advised me to go for HIV testing where the results came out positive," he explained.

Chimwemwe further explained that the knowledge of his HIV status compelled him to seek more information about Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) especially on HIV.

Chimwemwe heard about YONECO Youth Drop-In-Centre (DIC) and started frequenting the facility.

YONECO’s District Manager in Machinga, Lauryn Piringu, explained that her office was overwhelmed with the determination and curiosity which Chimwemwe had towards psychological support he was getting from the centre. Thus, Chimwemwe’s parents were summoned from Mangochi which is about 91 Kilometres away from Machinga.

After a lengthy discussion, the gap which existed between Chimwemwe and his parents was finally bridged.

Chimwemwe is now living with his parents in Mangochi and he will be returning to school after the closure that has come about due to COVID-19. Furthermore, Chimwemwe, who lost is biological mother in 2017, is coping well and adhering to Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.
YONECO rescued a 15-year-old girl who was forced into marriage after being impregnated by her 17-year-old boyfriend. The two are from the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Chingawe, Traditional Authority (T/A) Nsamala in Balaka district.

After receiving a tip off from a concerned community member, YONECO followed up the matter and vindicated that the girl was indeed forced into marriage in 2019.

Heartrendingly, all this happened when the girl was in Standard 8 of her primary school studies. Her parents indicated that they did not want an extra mouth to feed and turned a deaf ear to any idea of allowing the girl to return to school after delivery.

However, YONECO engaged various key stakeholders on matter namely Malawi Police Victim Support Unit (VSU), and the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO). Thus, the three institutions, led by YONECO visited the village and facilitated the process of annulling the marriage. The parents of both the girl and the boy were properly counselled and notified about the illegality of marrying off the underage.

Currently, the girl has returned to her home and all the parties agreed that the girl will go back to school after delivery. YONECO is still supporting the girl with counselling through home visits which officers from Balaka District Office are conducting on regular basis.

Child marriage remains one of the challenges affecting young people especially girls in Malawi and other developing nations. Currently, prevalence rate of child marriages is at 46 percent and out of this 9 percent of the girls sign matrimonial vows before their 15th birthday.
26 Year-old Man Gets 8 Years IHL for Defilement

Ntcheu Magistrate Court slapped a 26-year-old-man with a custodial sentence of 8 years Imprisonment with Hard Labour (IHL) for defiling a 13-year-old girl in the district.

The girl reported that the man defiled her on three different occasions but the dooms day came on the last day when the survivor’s father saw the girl coming out from the house of the convict who was also his employee. This is when it came out to the open that the 26-year-old-man coaxed the girl with biscuits to take away the minor’s innocence.

The matter was reported to police and medical tests also revealed that the girl was indeed defiled. YONECO supported the girl with psychosocial support through its Youth-Drop-In Centre in Ntcheu district.

However, when the case was in court, influential relatives and acquaintances of the suspect started threatening the father of the survivor to withdraw the case.

The father and the girl were promised financial support as a token of appreciation for withdrawing the matter from court. This followed some threats on the father’s life for refusing to take the money.

Upon seeking support from YONECO, the father told the father to let the law take its course. YONECO team quickly reported the attempts to abstract justice.

Thus, the Court Users Committee also acted on the intimidation issues and the scam to sway away the arms of justice failed.

After a proper hearing, the Magistrate’s court slapped the defiler with an 8-year jail term. In safeguarding young people’s rights, YONECO through its various district offices provide legal guidance to survivors of various forms of abuse.

In a related development, YONECO office in Ntcheu handled 9 defilement cases within a period of 4 months. However, out of the total, only 3 cases have been concluded.
The story of Fatima, who is now 19 years-old, is one among many incidences whereby the rights of the girl-child have been violated in Chikwawa district. What is needed are proper and timely interventions to ensure that the girl-child should re-write her story.

At the age of 14, Fatima was in Standard 7 of her primary school studies. Unfortunately, her dream of sitting for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) the following year was shuttered when her parents forced her to drop out of school and get married.

Heartrendingly, the father forced his fourth and last born child (Fatima) into marriage just to run away from the responsibility of taking care of her. On the other hand, the mother perceived child marriage as a way of ensuring that Fatima should not have a child out of wedlock.

Fatima faced a number of challenge in the marriage that was arranged by her parents. Fatima, who was only 14 years old, spent some days without eating anything. This was the case due to her husband’s failure to bring food on the table.

The man had three wives but his financial muscle was not strong enough to support all of them. Further to this, the man was a bully who used to chase her out of the house in the middle of the night. In times like these, Fatima had no choice but to sleep outside the house.

Fatima’s parents rendered a deaf ear to her complaints and sometimes they simply advised her to get used to whatever she was going through.

A few months later, a concerned citizen reported the matter to Parenting Circle Facilitators who were trained by YONECO. The Parenting Circle Facilitators called Fatima’s parents to a dialogue session where the parents understood the gravity of their action.

Thus, Fatima was successfully withdrawn from the marriage and was given psychosocial and material support to return to school. This year, Fatima’s 19th birthday present was the 19 points she scored in her Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE).

“I am happy that I have attained an MSCE and my next step is to go nursing school. The sky is now the limit,” said Fatima with a very visible grin on her face.

Chikwawa is one of the districts in Malawi with high prevalence of child marriages due to various reasons which include high illiteracy levels, poverty, lack of role models especially to young girls as well as harmful cultural practices among other things.
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&
Freedom

Report Violence Against Children & Neglect

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116
YONECO in Balaka district facilitated a total of 10 session on COVID-19 Preventive measures with young people with emphasis on hygiene and sanitation in order to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

The youth were also urged to preach the same messages to their peers so that caution is taken in order to minimize the spread of COVID-19 among young people.

YONECO District Manager for Balaka, Jacob Phiri, explained that young people need to be targeted with COVID-19 awareness sessions because a lot of young people are not taking the preventive measures of the pandemic seriously.

Phiri added that the pandemic requires serious attention hence his office saw it necessary to engage young people.

“There are a number of myths and misconceptions surrounding the pandemic and such issues need to be addressed as well,” said Phiri.

In total, the sessions reached 65 young people of which 35 were boys and 30 were girls.

YONECO reached 38 connected children with information on prevention of COVID-19 pandemic through a number of sessions which with street in Zomba City.

Zomba, just like any other city in the country, has a many children who are connected to streets and they are often sidelined and they are denied essential services as well as information. Thus, YONECO reached the children with information on how they can prevent COVID-19.

Community Mental Health Nurse for YONECO, Alex Mbewe, stressed that children connected street also form part of the society. Mbewe said COVID-19 infection among children connected to would, either directly or indirectly, affect the general population as well.

Speaking during the session, one child who is connected to street (name withheld), thanked YONECO for sharing information about COVID-19 with children who are connected to the street. The boy admitted that before the session, he had very little knowledge about the pandemic.

"We were just surprised to see people wearing face masks in the streets and washing hands when entering into shops and we thought it was just a new style of living," he explained.

The children who are connected to the streets explained that they will make sure that they are adhering to the preventive measures of COVID 19.

Lastly, Mbewe also reminded the children to seek medical help when they are not feeling well.
Young people in Zomba district were engaged in a clean-up exercise of premises surrounding Mpondabwino Market, a development that has pleased both customers and the business community.

The exercise was facilitated by YONECO Office which mobilized young people from various youth clubs that are within the vicinity of the market.

Harvey Finyani who works for YONECO expressed his satisfaction with the turnout of the youth during the exercise. Finyani also revealed that this will be a continuous exercise which will be conducted every quarter of the year.

“We want young people to come together and clean up various places. Many young people who participated in this exercise have now began to understand the importance of proper waste disposal,” said Finyani.

In her remarks, a young people’s representative at the event, Emily Wyson, said the turnout of young people is an indication that the youth know their role in the society. Emily added that, what young people need is an opportunity to participate.

One of the business persons who owns a grocery store in the market, Saidi Juma, commended the young people for the gesture describing it as timely and eye opening.

Juma stated that the gesture will go a long way in improving health and sanitation within and around the market premises.
Adolescent girls from Mulanje district have acknowledged a number of social-economic empowerment benefits which they are realizing through sewing machines which they received under the Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Project mid last year.

One Peer Educator from the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Mbiza in the district expressed her contentment with the sewing machines they received. In her remarks, the Peer Educator explained that the girls and young women were initially trained in making hand sewn re-usable sanitary pads.

“With these sewing machines, we are now able to produce more and quality re-usable sanitary pads,” explained the Peer Educator.

Other girls also echoed what the Peer Educator said and added that they are also utilizing the sewing machines to make clothes for people in their designated communities.

In the end, the girls generate some income. Thus, money or other materials needs cannot sway them to have sex with men as they are able to meet their needs.

AGYW Project is funded by the Global Fund through Action Aid and Christian Aid. In Mulanje district, YONECO is implementing the project in partnership with Malawi Guides Association (MAGGA).

The goal of the project is to reduce HIV Incidences among adolescent girls and young women who are within the age range of 15 to 24.
Francis Banda is a 24-year-old Youth Community Based Distribution Agent (YCBDA) who hails from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nankumba in Mangochi district.

Francis was among 15 other young people who were trained by YONECO to support their peers in remote and hard to reach areas with contraceptives as well as counselling on various Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) issues.

Over the years, Francis understood why his fellow young people who had to cover over 15 Kilometres to reach a nearest health facility needed a YCBDA. He provided contraceptives at almost any time of the day and night. He further knew the importance of YCBDAs when he realised that the number of unintended teen pregnancies had gone down.

Today, Francis says he never knew that there will come a time when he would be busier than ever.

Francis stated that the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic has led to an overwhelming demand for SRH services from YCBDAs like him. Young people are now shunning other service delivery points which they feel are usually crowded.

Thus, in the last three months, YCBDAs in the area have provided support to over 10,000 young people with various SRH commodities especially oral contraceptives and condoms.

Among other things, the YCBDAs were supported with pushbikes to ease mobility challenges and transportation of SRH commodities from their designated access point to their communities.

The YCBDAs were trained with support from Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) which is being funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Simavi. The project which commenced in 2016 will phase out in September, 2020.
The Department of Parks and Wildlife has commended YONECO for involving young people in conservation of natural resources saying the development will go a long way in instilling a sense of caring for nature among the youth.

Speaking during a field visit at Linyangwa in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Lukwa in Kasungu district, Parks and Wildlife Officer responsible for environmental education, Mathias Kachepa Elisa, said promotion of mind-set change among the youth to preserve nature would help in environmental conservation.

"The youth should grow up knowing the importance of wildlife and environmental conservation so that they can meaningfully engage their communities in the fight against environmental degradation," he said.

Elisa added that mind-set change on environmental management could graduate into a culture of caring for protected areas.

Village Savings and Loans Agent for Chitsime Village in T/A Lukwa’s area, Margret Kalinga, said the youth in the area are eager to help in conserving trees and wildlife at Kasungu National Park but lack of economic independence has for so long affected their undertakings.

She, however, said they are optimistic that the project’s interventions and approach in empowering the youth surrounding the park will also focus on empowering them economically.

"With support from this consortium of Non-Governmental Organisations, we have already organized ourselves in groups where activities like Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups, livestock farming, irrigation farming and afforestation among others are taking place to make sure that communities especially young people surrounding the park are empowered so that the park should remain protected," said Kalinga.

The three-year project is being coordinated at national level by Trocaire and is being implemented in Kasungu, Chikwawa and Nsanje districts targeting Kasungu National Park, Lengwe National Park and Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve respectively.

The project is aimed at transform negative coping strategies and building resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change.
YONECO Sponsorship Programme Changes Kitty’s Life

Story of Kitty Kanthunkako who is a social worker by profession currently working with Cycle for Development Initiative Organisation cannot be complete without YONECO in the picture.

Kitty from Balaka district was at the verge of dropping out of school in 2012 due to financial hardships. Her parents could not afford to pay schools fees for her secondary education. She had just started her Form 1 then. Kitty’s hard work and passion about school attracted the attention of YONECO. This marked a genesis of a new chapter in her education, an assurance of her financial stability all way through to Tertiary level. YONECO supported her Secondary school studies education.

From there, Kitty went to Soche Technical College where she successfully obtained her Diploma in Community Development. This was done through YONECO’s bursary program which supports girls Education through financial support to vulnerable children.

Kitty breakthrough further escalated when she was further offered an internship opportunity at YONECO office in Balaka for her to gain hands-on experience. Again, this is in line with YONECO’s Youth Development Programme. As an Intern, Kitty supported various activities related to child protection, youth development and women empowerment where she contributed positively.

Fast forward to 2020, Kitty has now secured a new role at Cycle for Development Initiatives Organisation which is based in Balaka district. Kitty remains one of the cerebrated role models not only in her family but the whole community.

She is an example of how education empowers and protect them from unintended teen pregnancies and child marriages, a thing Kitty says would probably been the case if YONECO did not come to her rescue.

YONECO Mainstreams COVID-19 Awareness Sessions into Adult Literacy Circles

As one way of ensuring that women in rural parts of Rumphi district are able to read and write, YONECO introduced Adult Literacy Circles which have proved to be effective forums for promoting other social-economic aspects of life at community level.

Over the years, YONECO has been able to successfully fuse in nutrition, Gender Based Violence (GBV) as well as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) components in the women’s adult literacy classes. Recently, the programmes team in Rumphi district was challenged to find ways of mainstreaming COVID-19 awareness within the mainstream sessions.

The intervention was piloted with Mlongoti Women Adult Literacy Circle and it instantly proved to be necessary. This was evidenced by a vast knowledge gap which participants demonstrated and this vindicated the need to use the circles as one of the channels for disseminating COVID-19 messages.

The instant increase in levels of knowledge about COVID-19 which participants demonstrated acted as a warrant to scale up the initiative to other forums. As such, the initiative has been mainstreamed in the activities of all Adult Literacy Circles across the district.

Through the circles, YONECO has also managed to distribute a number of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials about COVID-19 that were sourced from Ministry of Health.
Tithandizane Child Helpline 116

Marriage, No Child’s Play

REPORT CHILD MARRIAGE CASES

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has engaged Youth Net and Counselling—YONECO to provide a mechanism for getting complaints and feedback from community members under its Take Home Ration (THR) Programme.

THR is a WFP programme that is aimed at ensuring that leaners are still accessing food rations despite the closure of their schools due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, THR has replaced a school meals programme and WFP through its various partners has now started providing food or money to individual households so as to reach out to the children.

As a provider of Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) for the programme, YONECO conducted a number of community awareness campaigns.

The awareness sessions were aimed at ensuring that community members are responsive to any malpractices that may affect the objectives of the programme.

These awareness campaign sessions were conducted in Salima, Dedza, Phalombe, Mangochi, Nsanje, Zomba and Chikwawa districts. During the sessions, YONECO also encouraged learners not to abandon their school materials as their schools remain closed.

The organization also asked the learners to continue observing all the preventive measures of COVID-19. Further to this, parents and guardians of the programme’s beneficiaries were urged to use the food and money they are receiving for the intended purpose.

In his remarks, YONECO CFM Coordinator, Augustine Chikatentha, expressed satisfaction with the way the awareness sessions were conducted in all the seven targeted districts.

“WFP has moved from wet-feeding to take-home ration in order to continue providing a predictable safety net for learners who were benefitting from the school feeding programme. As YONECO, our duty is to promote transparency and accountability in this process,” said Chikatentha.
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
Promoting Adherence to Treatment Among YPLHIV through Peer Expert Clients

YONECO through its District Office in Ntcheu has engaged Young People Living with HIV (YPLHIV) who openly declared their status to inspire their peers to undergo HIV testing as well as encouraging others who are HIV positive to consistently adhere to treatment.

The Peer Expert Clients from Sub-Traditional Authority (STA) Tsikulamowa’s area in the district have managed to trace 11 YPLHIV who were evading HIV treatment. Further to this, the Peer Expert Clients also identified two young couples that had been defaulting treatment for close to a year.

Thus, the 11 young people were initiated to Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs and the couples were also re-introduced to treatment.

“I used to take my ARVs inconsistently and sometimes I could stay for a very long period of time without taking the drugs. However, I have now realized the risks and my role in preventing further spread of HIV,” explained one of the young people who used to default treatment.

Currently, the Peer Expert Clients have linked a number of YPLHIV to various support group groups that have been established in the area. The groups are forums where young people who are living positively with HIV discuss and share accurate information about positive living, HIV and AIDS, uptake of Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and adherence to treatment.

The interventions on YPLHIV are being implemented by YONECO with funding from Egmont Trust under Investing for Impact of HIV and AIDS among young people Project

In Malawi, young people between the ages of 15 and 24 account for about a third of all new HIV infections. Studies have also indicated that about 60% of all young people in the country do not have sufficient about HIV prevention. This calls for deliberate interventions towards ensuring that young people are living healthy and productive lives.
Nkhata Bay DHO Disinfects YONECO Office

As a preventive measure against the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, Nkhata Bay District Environmental Health Office (DEHO) Environmental Section disinfected YONECO Offices in the district as one way of protecting clients from COVID-19 Pandemic.

YONECO Office in Nkhata Bay is one of the centres where community members are accessing various essential services amidst the pandemic.

These include helpline services like child protection and support to survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Furthermore, the office is also a delivery point of various Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services to young people.

Such services include access to HIV self-testing kits, condoms as well as free counselling services.

YONECO staff and community members have thanked the DHO for fumigating the office.
**YONECO Stimulates Health Seeking Behaviours among Mentally Challenged Persons**

Stakeholders have applauded Passing and Supporting; Building Tactics for Community Mental Health Care Project for stimulating health seeking behaviours among people with mental health problems.

This was revealed when YONECO conducted a review meeting with health service providers from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Kalumbu in Lilongwe district. The health care workers noted that health facilities that are in the project’s impact area received more people who went to seek medical support as compared to other health service delivery points that are outside the project’s catchment area.

Golden Chizungu, a Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA) for the area, noted that YONECO is using innovative and effective strategies that are helping to ensure that communities have comprehensive knowledge of mental health issues. Chizungu stated that the interventions managed to demystify misconceptions surrounding mental health problems. The HSA added that this has greatly contributed to the overall reduction of stigma and discrimination against people with mental health problems.

The stakeholders also pointed out that knowledge of various mental health problems is helping people to understand what they are going through and make informed decisions.

YONECO is implementing Passing and Supporting; Building Tactics for Community Mental Health Care Project in partnership with TackleAfrica with funding from Comic Relief. The project is also being implemented in Zomba and Nkhotakota districts.

**YPLHIV Applaud YONECO for Immunity Boosting Food**

Young People Living with HIV (YPLHIV) in Ntcheu District applauded YONECO for supporting them with nutrient-rich food stuffs that have potential of boosting their immunity.

Recently, YPLHIV from the area of Sub-Traditional Authority (STA) Tsikulamowa received soya beans, groundnuts, as well as orange fleshed sweet potatoes from YONECO.

Speaking after making the donation, one of the YONECO Officers in the district, said they thought of making the donation having realized that the food items have potential of helping in building human immune system which is very essential to people who are living with HIV.

Among the beneficiaries is a 13-year-old-girl who received five kilograms of soya beans as well as fleshed sweet potatoes. The girl got the support after her parents disclosed her HIV status following parenting forum sessions that were conducted by YONECO in the area. Speaking after receiving her pack of soya beans and orange fleshed sweet potatoes, the girl commended YONECO for the support. “These items will help in boosting my immunity,” she said.

“I will be able to eat soya porridge twice a day. This will help to safeguard my health so much that I will be able to do various activities like farming, playing as well studying because I will be in good health,” the girl added.

Another beneficiary, a young boy said the donation will help in ensuring adherence to Antiretroviral (ART) drugs which he said is mostly defeated by lack of food. “ARVs are very strong hence we sometimes fail to take them on an empty stomach,” he said.

YONECO made the donation with funding from Egmont Trust and has since expressed its commitment to continue supporting young people living with HIV in the district.
YONECO GIRLS EDUCATION FUND (YOGEF)

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

YOGEF

Be a driver of change by joining the Initiative. Send Your Donations to the following bank details:
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FOR MORE INFO:
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 joined the rest of the world in commemorating the World Population Day (WPD) on 11th July, 2020.

Commenting on the progress made to control the population of Malawi, the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire who is also a seasoned human rights activist said COVID-19 has affected the progress and there is need to scale up efforts that should help to ensure that the country’s population is manageable.

“This year’s commemoration has come at a time when many countries, Malawi inclusive, have been challenged with COVID-19 pandemic,” said MacBain Mkandawire.

Mkandawire added that the situation has affected delivery of services including Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) commodities.

“The challenge on uptake of SRH services is currently being evidenced by reports on increased cases of unintended teen-age pregnancies.

Mkandawire urged various stakeholders to join hands in protecting girls and women so that they also participate in the social-economic development of the country.

This year’s World Population Day was commemorated on the 11th July 2020 under the theme; putting the breaks on COVID-19: How to safeguard the health and the rights of women and girls.
WeCare Youth Organization Engages YFM in Radio-Chats Project

Radio-Chats Project which the broadcaster will be covering COVID-19 interventions.

The Radio programmes will commence in August, 2020 and they will target the general public with a particular focus on the youth and adolescents living with HIV.

According to WeCare Youth Organization, the initiative has come as a response to a call from Pediatric-Adolescent Treatment Africa on COVID-19 Emergency Response.

The agreement was signed by the founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of WeCare Youth Organisation, Blessings Banda and the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire.

Community Members Reaffirm their Commitment to End Child Marriage

Community members from Mlomba in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mabuka in Mulanje district have pledged to support interventions aimed ending child marriages in their locality.

The community members reaffirmed their commitment during a follow up sessions which YONECO conducted in the area.

During the session, it was noted that due to suspension of various socio-economic activities in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, a number of harmful practices that had been eliminated started creeping back into the society.

Further to this, community members also stated that the closure of schools as a preventive measure of the pandemic has given some parents an excuse to marry off their daughters.

A review of action plans that were previously agreed on earlier in the year, indicated that various community protection structures are operating but they need to up their game in order to properly challenge the emerging trends.

In his remarks, T/A Mabuka strongly condemned parents who abdicate from their responsibilities and marry off their young daughters.

The traditional leader further urged his subjects to desist from all forms of child abuse.
**GBV Crisis Line**

You can report GBV through a Toll-free line

**CALL**

5600

**WHO 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**

Min. of Gender, Children, Disability & Social Welfare
Malawi Police Service - Victim Support Unit
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