

# YONECO VOICE

YONECO Monthly Newsletter

May 2021

Vol 10

Issue 5



**Executive Director's note**  
4

**What is Let's Chill Mobisite?**  
9

**Mangochi ECD Centre Wears a  
New Face**  
11

# About Us...

Youth Net and Counselling

***Managing organizational rapid growth and success for youth, women and children.***

## VISION

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

## MISSION

**We are a non-governmental organization that is committed to 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.**

## CORE VALUES

**Integrity**

**Teamwork**

**Confidentiality**

**Respect for human dignity**

**Transparency and Accountability**



# Contents

Executive Director's Note .....	4
YONECO Intensifies the Fight against Drug and Substance Abuse in Mangochi.....	5
Simphasi Youth Network Drilled in Leadership Skills.....	5
YONECO Intensifies Menstrual Hygiene in Mangochi.....	6
Youth Club Member Avow to Transform Young People's Lives in Zomba. ....	7
Promoting the Uptake of SRHR Services among the youth Amidst Covid-19.....	8
What is Let's Chill Mobisite. ....	9
Zomba Stakeholders Launch 2021 IDSCC.....	10
Mangochi ECD Centre Wears a New Face.....	11
8 Children Repatriated from the Streets of Ntcheu.....	11
MPS Commissioner Acknowledges YONECO's Child Protection Work.....	12
Government Accredits YONECO to Operate Safe Places in Malawi.....	13
WFP- Malawi Officials Visit YONECO in Zomba.....	14
Participatory Community Theatre, a Tool for Effective SBCC.....	15
Community Sensitization on LSR Programme.....	16
YONECO Appointed to Lead CSO Network in Ntcheu. ....	16
Balaka DC Chairperson Applauds YONECO .....	16
Media Vital in Countering Covid-19 Disinformation.....	17
YONECO Intensifies Women Empowerment Activities in Mulanje. ....	18
Community SKILLZ Coaches Equipped to Promote GBV Prevention.....	18
Namalaka Women Benefiting From VSL .....	19

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## Our Programmes

Youth Development

Enhancing Child Protection and Development

Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

Governance and Human Rights

Media, Collaboration, Networking and Coordinating

Climate Change and Disaster Management

Promoting Good Health, Sanitation and Wellbeing

Research Monitoring, Evaluation, Documentation and Learning



# The Executive Director's Note ... *with MacBain Mkandawire*

The whole world commemorates nurse's week during the first 7 days of the month of May, this makes me reflect on the type of work they are involved in, the conditions they are exposed to besides from putting their lives on the line when serving other people. It wouldn't hurt anyone to support them in any way we can, they are people too and they need all the provisions required for them to carry out their duties effectively.

On the 3rd is World Press Freedom Day, let me commend journalists in the country for striving to put various entities to task. Of late, we have seen the government of Malawi putting to book culprits who squandered COVID-19 resources, that is a very good move Mr. President and may this go far and beyond in many sectors.

That takes me to my next point which is leadership. "To be a leader, you need to start leading yourself", John Maxwell once said. Most people go into leadership positions with good intentions but those often crumble due to the demands and perks of the job. If you want to succeed in leading others and develop a successful career, devote some time and energy to self-leadership. Unfortunately, the most difficult person to manage and lead is yourself because of the ego, wanting to please others, power hungry, gossip and perceptions, poor information flow, lies and not wanting to hear the truth about ourselves. We often tend to think that we are perfect. Always remember that being a leader is like being a parent.

Although the COVID-19 regulations have been adjusted, let us not relax. This does not mean the pandemic is over, other countries are facing a third wave which is more deadly than before and if we don't take care, we risk facing the same. However, this should not be a very hard task to do because at this point we are all aware of how to prevent contracting the Corona virus in terms of what measures we can follow. Love yourselves and loved ones by protecting yourself and in case you got vaccinated, it does not guarantee complete immunity. The fight still continues.

Finally, let us pay attention to the people around us especially our children. Constantly engage with them from time to time. Be invested in whatever they are doing, there are somethings they get into because of lack of information. Unplanned pregnancies are still there, the abuse of drugs and drinking alcohol excessively is still being practiced by the youth. However, all these could be avoided if we continuously monitor their behaviour.

Life comes but once. Cherish what you have, don't stop dreaming and chasing your goals.

I wish you the best always.



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Every child deserves  
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## YONECO Intensifies Efforts to Fight against Drug and Substance Abuse in Mangochi



*Jalasi Youth Club members during the meeting.*

In an effort to promote inclusive community participation among the youth, Mangochi district office continued to empower the youth by engaging them in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse.

In 2020, YONECO, with funding from the Norwegian Church Aid, implemented a project titled Empowering Young People to Fight Drug and Alcohol Abuse which was targeting young people from four Traditional Authorities (T/A) of Jalasi, Mponda, Nankumba and Chimwala.

One good example is Jalasi Youth Network where young people were equipped with knowledge on how they can easily access improved SRHR services and be able to prevent the spread of HIV and reduce the incidence of GBV cases.

Thirty Four leaders (M10 – F14) from 17 youth clubs were also equipped with knowledge through life skills that can help prevent violence. The skills will help them to make informed decisions and have control of their lives.

## Simphasi Youth Network Drilled in Leadership Skills

YONECO has drilled 20 young people from Simphasi Youth Network from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Simphasi in Mchinji district in leadership skills.

Simphasi Youth Network is among the vibrant networks in the district that champions youth participation hence YONECO was compelled to enhance further the capacity of its members.

The session was facilitated by YONECO Field Officer, Thomas Mvwala, and the exercise is among YONECO’s key generic activities in the district.



*Simphasi Youth Network members posing for a photo.*



## YONECO Intensifies Menstrual Hygiene in Mangochi



*Students listening to a presentation during the menstrual hygiene session in Mangochi.*

Our team in Mangochi district had a menstrual hygiene session with adolescent girls at St Monica Girls Secondary School.

Similar sessions have also been scheduled in other schools across the district.

Menstrual hygiene is part of the broader SRHR package. Sadly, many adolescent girls face a number of barriers in managing menstruation.

Mangochi is one of the districts in Malawi where girls drop out of school due to various Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights challenges. As such, YONECO works tirelessly to complement the efforts of the Malawi government to promote the rights and welfare of the girl child in the country.

YONECO has been conducting a number of sessions on menstrual hygiene as well as organizing trainings for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in making reusable sanitary pads.



## Youth Club Member Avow to Transform Young People's Lives in Zomba



*Goal for Life Youth Club members posing for a photo after the meeting at Chancellor College in Zomba.*

Goal for Life youth club in Zomba has said it is geared to improve the welfare of the youth around Zomba City with various interventions that will help them to become productive citizens.

Speaking during their club's weekly meeting at Chancellor College in Zomba, the secretary for the club, Shira M'bawa, said her club is looking forward to contributing towards positive youth development in the city.

"Since 2019, we have been organizing various community awareness campaigns on issues pertaining to drug and substance abuse among the youth, child marriages, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and

environmental conservation.

We have been engaging young people in various townships like Sadzi, Chinamwali, Thom Aran, Matawale, 3 Miles, and many other areas around Zomba City," M'bawa said.

During the meeting, YFM presenter also recorded Chitukuko ndi Achinyamata Radio Program so that other youth clubs should be encouraged to do their best in promoting youth development.



## Promoting the Uptake of SRHR Services among the youth Amidst Covid-19



*Representatives of Youth Clubs from Zomba posing for a photo after the meeting.*

Young people around Zomba City have been encouraged to keep on accessing Sexual Reproductive Health services (SRH) amid the Covid-19 Pandemic to protect themselves from Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and early pregnancies.

Speaking during one of the SRH awareness meetings at Zomba Central Hospital, YONECO Field Officer, Harvey Finyani, said Covid-19 has affected the youth in many ways because currently a lot of young girls are getting

pregnancies and some boys are engaged in the use of drug and substance abuse.

“As YONECO, we have noted that many young people feel that hospitals are no-go zones due to covid-19. As such, we have intensified awareness campaigns to enhance the uptake of SRHR services among young people,” Finyani said.

Commenting on the matter, a nurse from Zomba Central Hospital Lucy Banda commended YONECO for encouraging the youth to access SRH services and she added that all Covid-19 Precautionary measures are in place at the hospital to protect the youth who will be coming to access SRH services.

The awareness meeting is being conducted every Friday at Zomba Central Hospital and representatives from different youth clubs around Zomba City attended the meeting.

# YONECO FM

The Real voice of the youth women and children







## What is let's chill MOBILE SITE ?

**Let's Chill** is a Youth Net and Counseling-YONECO initiative which was established in June 2019 to contribute to the organization's strategic objective number 4 which aims at improving the health and well being of the youth. Let's Chill provides a youth friendly mobile platform for young people to access critical SRHR information and education in Malawi. Through this platform young people will be able to evade various SRHR challenges as they will have information to enable them make informed decisions. The intervention targets young people within the age range of 10 to 25 years of age who live in urban and rural areas.



# Tithandizane Child Helpline **116**

## Marriage, No Child's Play



**REPORT CHILD MARRIAGE CASES**

Call: Toll Free **116**



## Zomba Stakeholders Launch 2021 IDSCC



*Panelists during the live discussion in YFM studios.*

Zomba stakeholders launched the commemoration for International Day for Street Connected Children 2021, through a live panel discussion on YFM.

The program started with children's discussion, which involved two former street-connected children supported by YONECO and Mlambe Health and Social Trust.

Then a panel discussion around policies, interventions and community engagement activities implemented in Zomba in relation to SCC.

The panel also emphasized on the need for collaborative efforts from the public in dealing with the problem of street connected children in Zomba by among other things referring the children to relevant institutions where they could be assisted and supported accordingly.

The panel was composed of YONECO Zomba District Manager, the District Social Welfare Officer, City Social Welfare Officer and MhEST Program Coordinator.



## Mangochi ECD Centre Wears a New Face

Children who attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes at YONECO's new Drop-In-Centre in Mangochi will have more fun as project officers, interns and care givers erected and painted various playing materials outside the centre.

The children will now have access to beautiful swings, see-saws, and other playground equipment.

As YONECO, we are also very grateful to the Officer-In-Charge for Mangochi Police Station who has donated used tires which have been painted and are part of the children's recreational materials.



*YONECO staff painting the playing materials.*



*Making sure the slide is well coated with paint.*

## 8 Children Repatriated from the Streets of Ntcheu

Through our office in Ntcheu district, YONECO has repatriated a total of 8 children who were connected to the streets.

Our officers have engaged community leaders and relatives of the children to ensure that the children are back in school while addressing the factors that

compelled them to identify the streets as their new home.

YONECO works with various key stakeholders including the Department of Social Welfare in the process of identifying and repatriating children who are connected to the streets back to their original homes.

## MPS Commissioner Acknowledges YONECO's Child Protection Work

Malawi Police Service (MPS) Commissioner for the Eastern Region, Happy Mkandawire, has hailed YONECO for its work on protection of human rights.

Commissioner Mkandawire made the remarks when he paid a courtesy visit to YONECO Head Office in Zomba. He said the Malawi Police Service and YONECO have enjoyed cordial working relationship in dealing with human rights abuses.

"After I came to this region on 13th February 2021, I made up a programme on courtesy visits and YONECO was on the list," Mkandawire said.

"There are quite many instances when YONECO has assisted us on many issues to do with violence against women and children."

"YONECO also offered to provide assistance towards construction of Old Naisi Police Unit so we have also discussed on that issue with the Executive Director."

In his remarks, Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, described the commissioner's visit as very significant in protecting women's and children's rights.

"You know at his level he humbled himself to come to have an understanding of what YONECO does and how we can enhance our collaboration".

"We work with the police in a number of areas such as in prevention of gender-based violence, child protection, issues of crime prevention for young people, juvenile justice and on the community policing front," Mkandawire said.



*Commissioner Mkandawire and YONECO Executive Director.*



*Appreciating the Tithandizane National Helpline*



*The Commissioner visiting YONECO FM newsroom*





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# YONECO FM



The Real Voice of the Youth, Women and Children



**103.8 MHZ - ZOMBA**  
**101.6 MHZ - BLANTYRE**  
**97.5 MHZ - LILONGWE**  
**103.9 MHZ - MZUZU**  
**104.6 - THYOLO**





## Government Accredits YONECO to Operate Safe Places in Malawi



*Minister of Homeland Security, Richard Chimwendo Banda presenting the certificate to YONECO Board Chairperson Professor Dixie Maluwa Banda.*

YONECO has become one of the first pioneer organisations in the history of Malawi to receive a certificate of approval to operate designated safe places for survivors of trafficking in persons.

The certificate has been awarded by minister of Homeland Security in conjunction with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare at a function that was held at Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe.

Both ministers of Homeland Security and Gender Richard Chimwendo

Banda and Patricia Kaliati respectively have lauded YONECO for a commendable work in ensuring safety of victims of Trafficking in Persons.



*Group photo after the ceremony*

## WFP- Malawi Officials Visit YONECO in Zomba



*WFP Deputy Country Director (In red vest) posing for a photo with YONECO management and staff after the meeting.*

On 22 April, 2021 YONECO hosted a high-powered delegation from WFP which comprised of the agency's Deputy Country Director ( DCD) - Marco Cavalcante, the Head of Blantyre Sub Office - Kiganzi Nyakato and the Head of Finance and Administration Unit Michael Hemling.

The delegation convened a meeting with the Executive Director for YONECO - MacBain Mkandawire and other senior management team members. The group discussed operations of the Integrated Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM) for WFP programmes project, which is being managed by YONECO.

WFP DCD applauded YONECO for being a key partner in ensuring that there is accountability and transparency in WFP programmes by managing toll-free lines which community members use to lodge complaints and provide feedback on the various programmes.

YONECO facilitates follow up and resolution of the complaints with support from various agencies especially the Malawi Police Service, the Department of Social

Welfare Services, District Education and WFP Cooperating Partners in the targeted districts.

The Executive Director of YONECO commended WFP for its dedication towards alleviating food insecurity in Malawi. Mkandawire reaffirmed YONECO's commitment to enhance Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) through the CFRM initiative.

YONECO has been in partnership with WFP since 2016 and is currently implementing the CFRM project in 12 districts: Dowa (Dzaleka Refugee Camp), Salima, Dedza, Neno, Balaka, Mangochi, Machinga, Zomba, Phalombe, Blantyre, Chikwawa, and Nsanje.



*Briefing each other on the progress being made under the CFRM pro-*





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CHILD  
ABUSE  
CALL  
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FOR  
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Every child deserves  
support, protection and  
freedom.

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# Participatory Community Theatre, a Tool for Effective Social Behavioural Change



It is a known fact that COVID-19 has disrupted our ways of life. The citizenry has been overwhelmed by the epidemic, while schools were shut. Various social gatherings were, through a government sponsored gazetted order banned or totally reduced or confined to specific hours.

However, YONECO Cultural Troupe, adapted and adopted new approaches to contribute towards the fight against COVID-19. Ever heard of Participative Visual Street Theatre, PVST? YONECO used PVST to reach out, an approach that allows social distancing but maintains the much-needed interactive approach in community theatre. The performances provided not only a platform for the communities, but also enriched debate and dialogue on COVID-19 as well as child protection.



## Community Sensitization on CFRM

A community sensitization meeting on Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM) during the Lean Season Response (LSR) Programme in the area of Traditional Authority Kachenga in Balaka district. The programme is being funded by World Food Programme (WFP).



*Community members during the CFRM meeting.*

## YONECO Appointed to Lead CSO Network in Ntcheu



*YONECO Ntcheu District Manager, Sewenthe Mahwayo in this file photo.*

Members of various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) that are operating in Ntcheu have entrusted YONECO to take over leadership of the district's Civil Society Organization (CSO) Networks.

YONECO has taken over the mantle from NICE which is now operating as a government Trust.

YONECO is also leading Ntcheu District Education Network and is a prominent member of networks such as District Child Protection Committee, Gender Technical Coordinating Committee, and Ntcheu Court Users Committee among others.

## Balaka DC Chairperson Applauds YONECO

The Chairperson for Balaka District Council, Michael Chauluka, visited YONECO Office in the district as part of his ongoing monitoring visit to various Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that are operating in the district.

The Council Chairperson applauded YONECO for its diligence in promoting gender equality, women empowerment, youth development and child protection.

The Chairperson also hailed YONECO for its ability to work in partnership with various stakeholders both at district and local levels.



*Balaka District Council Chairperson during the visit.*

# Media Vital in Countering Covid-19 Disinformation



*Benson Nkhoma Somba (Facilitator) giving his presentation during the training session.*

YONECO has stated that journalists have a critical role to play in countering disinformation on Covid-19 issues.

The Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, made these remarks at the sidelines of a media training on Covid-19 reporting which was facilitated by the organization with funding from the International Media Society.

Mkandawire stated that Covid-19 has had an impact on different services among them, mental health and education therefore journalists are better placed to share information on where people can get help.

“There has been a lot of misinformation on Covid-19 where people think when they have gotten the Covid-19 vaccine then you compromise your religion and there are also things that have got to do with pressure on people, the mental health aspect,” he said.

Mkandawire cited the provision of information to young people, social media campaigns and counseling as some of the interventions the organization has implemented amid Covid-19.

“Using the systems that we have, the Tithandizane Helpline we are getting a lot of information to the young people through our SMS system but also allowing young people to call in and ask for more information about that,” he said.

The training was attended by reporters from the following media houses; Radio Maria, MBC, Nation Publications, Times Group, YONECO FM, MIJ FM, Chanco Community Radio, Kulinji.com, Radio Islam, Ufulu Radio, Dzimwe Community Radio, Capital FM, and Radio Lilanguka.





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Psychosocial support  
Referral support  
Youth Drop-in Center  
Facilities

## YONECO Intensifies Women Empowerment Activities in Mulanje

Our team in Mulanje conducted an economic empowerment session with women from Sazola Village. The session targeted members of Sazola Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA).

YONECO facilitated the establishment of the group in 2019.

Currently, the group has a total of 20 members and it has facilitated the establishment of other VSLAs in the area.



*Sazola VSL members during the session in Mulanje.*

## Community SKILLZ Coaches Equipped to Promote GBV Prevention



*SKILLZ Community Coaches during the training.*

The training was conducted in a curriculum that uses football language, metaphors, and other activities to address key behaviors that drive the spread of HIV, such as unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and GBV.

This assisted young people to have meaningful and relevant discussions about their daily life, taking small steps to achieve their goals, remain positive and protecting themselves from any form of GBV.

In an effort to strengthen Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and post-violence care services, YONECO has trained 20 Community Coaches on how to deliver evidence based SKILLZ HIV and GBV primary prevention curriculum to OVCS around Traditional Authorities Mlumbe, Malemia, Kuntimanji, Chikowi, and Mwambo in Zomba District.

YONECO has implemented the initiative with support from Grass Root Soccer (GRS) and 20 Coaches (10 males and 10 females) have been trained on how to report GBV cases through YONECO toll-free lines; 116, 5600, and 5800.



## Namalaka Women Benefiting From VSL



*Some of the Members of Namalaka VSLA.*

Women from Namalaka Village Traditional Authority (T/A) Chikowi in Zomba district have started reaping the fruits of being members of a Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) initiative that was introduced by YONECO in 2018.

According to the chairperson for Namalaka VSLA, Chrissy Maonga, the group was introduced to economically empower women as one way of preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child marriages.

“From 2018, a lot has been done and we have managed to transform our community. As women we have stood up against GBV and prevented our husbands from marrying off our young daughters,” Maonga narrated.

Commenting on the matter, Field Officer

for YONECO in Zomba district, Harvey Finyani, it is pleasing to note how the initiative has transformed the lives of women and their community atlarge.

“Currently, the problem of child marriage and GBV has been minimized at Namalaka because these women are working tirelessly to fight against such malpractices,” Finyani said.





**TITHANDIZANE NATIONAL HELPLINE SERVICES**



Kuzembetsa ufa wa phala pa sukulu ndi mlandu. Ndi udindo wa aliyense kuonetsetsa kuti ufawu ukugwira ntchito yake yoyenera.

**Nenezani aliyense ozembetsa ufa wa phala wa pa sukulu poimba foni mwaulere pa **116, 5600** komanso **5800****





**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE**

**5600**

Report any form of gender- based violence by  
calling our toll-free line number

Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)  
May, 2021