

Project Title: Investing for the Impact of HIV and AIDS among young people.

Project period: 1st phase 2019 to 2020 and second phase 2020 to 2021

Project Brief

Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) with financial support from Egmond Trust is implementing a project called Investing for the Impact of HIV and AIDS among young people. The project is targeting young people living with HIV ages 10 – 29 in five Group Village Headmen (GVH) of Chikhasu, Manjawira, Matale, Senzani and Mkonde in Sub Traditional Authority (STA) Tsikulamowa, Ntcheu District.

The project seeks to harness and sustain the support towards young people to ensure the prevention of HIV/AIDS, increasing access and uptake of YHFS, provide support for youth living with HIV including adherence to ART.

The project is addressing the following challenges low uptake of YFHS among youth in the area. None adherence to ART among youth. Limited capital, limited access to farm inputs and limited skills in economic activities and poor leadership among youth support groups which the project is targeting.

The project is targeting **550** youth living with HIV **200** males and **350** females as direct beneficiaries, **600** parents of children living with HIV **80** males and **520** females as indirect beneficiaries. In addition for the indirect beneficiaries will reach **3000** youth who are not HIV positive **1000** males and **2000** females who will access YFHS and some will be reached through trained structures.

Project Specific Objectives:

- To increase uptake of YFHS among youth in STA Tsikulamowa, Ntcheu district by October 2021
- To improve ART adherence among youth living with HIV in STA Tsikulamowa Ntcheu district by October 2021
- To improve economic and nutrition status among youth living with HIV in STA Tsikulamowa by October 2021
- To empower youth of STA Tsikulamowa in leadership development by October, 2021
- To enhance strengthening systems to support young people living with HIV in STA Tsikulamowa Ntcheu district by October, 2021

Expected Outcomes

- Increased uptake of YFHS and adherence of ART among youth
- Improved economic and nutrition status among HIV positive youth
- Improved leadership skills among youth
- Strengthening community systems to support young people living with HIV.

Key Successes:

- Following DHM, DEC and ADC meetings, the project implementation was approved and all key stakeholders have been very supportive during implementation of lined up activities.
- Through awareness campaigns and provision of recreation materials, there are increased number of youth patronizing YFHS corner. The project has contributed much for the health facilities to start providing YFHS and reporting on DHIs
- HSAs have proved to be very instrumental in providing family planning methods to young people since they are based in same communities.
- Improved uptake of ART through project intervention, this has been registered during period from Jan 2021 to June 2021 as there is no reported cases of ART default among young people in all youth support groups
- Reduced malnutrition among young people living with HIV as a result of provision of farm in puts. They are no longer beggars of corn soya blend from health facilities since they are able to make their own nutritious porridge from soya and ground nuts
- Most project beneficiaries are owning a phone procured through profits of their businesses which is also helping them to catch their customers easily.
- Enhanced positive parenting through parenting sessions. Parents have seen the goodness of disclosure of their children's HIV status which would have led to none adherence of ART among young people.
- There has been improved leadership skills among youth support groups following leadership training.
- Project beneficiaries are economically empowered as they are able to meet their daily basic needs with the money realised from their businesses. So far 344 youth living with HIV are engaged in VSL 108 males and 236 females in 31 VSL groups with total savings of 16,734,400.00 from January, 2021 to June, 2021. Through profits which they are making beneficiaries have registered the following successes; 50 beneficiaries have managed to buy local chickens as their IGA, 61 bought 89 goats, 6 bought 7 pigs, 3 parents bought 3 cows as their income generating activity and nutrition as well. While some parents have bought a piece of land, paying school fees for their children and 15 parents have constructed descent houses.



Young people busy grading their ground nuts as they are waiting for their grinders to start processing ground nuts flour and packaging it and one of the Parents of children living with HIV in livestock management

Success Story

VSLA Gives Birth to Dairy Farming



Brenda James of Senzani Village in the area of Sub-Traditional Authority Tsikulamowa in Ntcheu District is enjoying fruits of Village Savings Loan (VSL) after YONECO introduced the practice through a project called Investing for the impact of HIV among Young people project which aimed at mitigating the impact of HIV and preventing further transmission among people.

In June this year she managed to buy a milk cow using MK 600,000 which she managed to save together with interests at her VSL group which had a total savings of MK 1 200 000. “The concept of financial literacy and VSL has proved to be a gender transformative concept. I never dreamt of being a livestock farmer especially in milk production. Today I represent women in dairy farming because of VSL” Brenda proudly explained.

She encouraged her fellow parents and guardians living with young people who are HIV to invest in joining VSL’s which can lead to investing in various businesses.

In a related development Gine Kenati aged 52 married with 6 children is one of the parents that have realized benefit of financial literacy and VSL concepts which YONECO implemented in the project. The parent is also a member of the existing Support group and is raising a 20 year child leaving with HIV. The parent also managed to save **MK 200,000** and she was the highest member during share out. Part of her money worth MK140, 000.00 was used to buy a cow.



Through investing for Impact of HIV project, other parents have managed to buy chickens, goats and pigs for income generation.

Financial literacy and VSL savings concepts fight against further HIV Transmission

YONECO through Investing for Impact of HIV and Aids among young people project, provided capacity building to young people in fighting against further HIV transmission among the youth.



The interventions has enhanced financial status among young people's lives. They are able to lead a modern life by dressing in a modern way as compared before the intervention. Young people are individually economically independent through their individual business which they are running as they are able to access soft loans from the youth VSL groups. The poverty level which was one of the factors contributing to HIV transmission among young people has been reduced

because they are economically empowered and has no time to hunt for resources using risky practices in as far as HIV is concerned.

According to one of the youth members representing the Youth VSL groups in the area, Alinafe Katete "the interventions has not only enhanced our financial status, but has tremendously improved our nutrition status as we are able to buy and eat diversified foods", She proudly said. Apart from saving the money, young people discuss and encouraged each other on the importance of ART adherence and the uptake of Youth friendly Health services from facilities of Senzani, Mikoke and Manjawira which YONECO with funding from Egmont Trust supported with recreation materials. The group reserved the startup capital of MK300 000.00 which they received from the project but managed to share MK1 400 000 and the highest went home with MK170 000.00. The group celebrated in style proving that their life has tremendously improved.

Beneficiaries of start-up capital becomes investors in group business

As cases of an employment are increasing, young people are becoming victims as most of them are joblessness.

Young people can safely be employed if they make use of the available resources provided to them as well as skills. The thinking that VSL groups are for adults have drawn back most useful youths who would have progressed and make development both personally as well as in groups. Tadala youth VSL which YONECO established and provided start-up capital amounting to MK300 000.00 has proved that young people have the capacity to run businesses as a group. The group invested the money in buying and selling of maize as a cooperative. This money has been increased to MK590,000. 00 within the shortest period of three month. According to the leadership of the group, they have agreed that the money will be revolving so that other youth groups in the area that did not benefit from the funds



should as well benefit and be safe employed. In a related development, another group of young people Tikondane have a similar business and have employed one youth member from the group who is running the business on behalf of the group. He is being paid on

monthly basis on agreed amount as he is also a group member.

Speaking during the interaction meeting YONECO organized recently, one of the beneficiaries of the Project who also represented the groups said youth living with HIV in the area are happy with the coming in of YONECO. “Being young people living with HIV we used to face a number of challenges and were not considered to access soft loans but the coming in of YONECO intervention in this area has given us strength and we need to demonstrate that we have the potential, being HIV positive is not a limiting factor.”

The group asked for more support to starting investing in different group businesses as they continue fighting against further spread of HIV among the youth.