

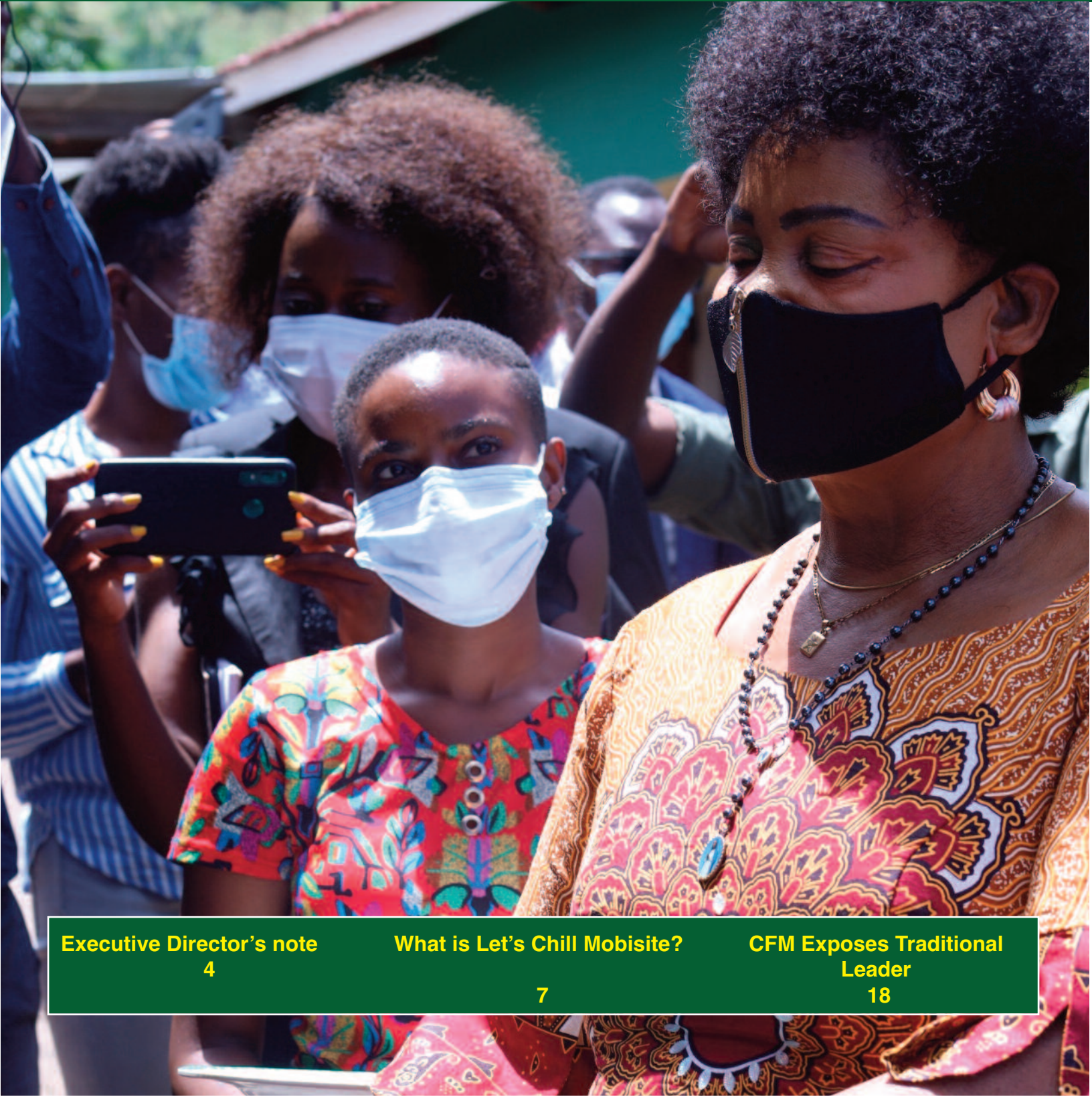
YONECO VOICE

YONECO Monthly Newsletter

April 2021

Vol 10

Issue 4



Executive Director's note
4

What is Let's Chill Mobisite?
7

**CFM Exposes Traditional
Leader**
18

About Us...

Youth Net and Counselling

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

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 Trains 33 Girls Trained in Self-defense.	5
Sports for Change Initiative Reaches 1,500 Young People.....	6
What is Let's Chill Mobile Site?	7
Reducing Youth Unemployment through Poultry Farming.	8
Malawi participates in International Learning Event on Child Marriage.	9
DREAMS Facilitators Receive Aflatoun Session Manuals.	10
YONECO Facilitates Establishment of 5 Village Savings and Loan groups	11
Irish Ambassador and Minister of Gender Launch Counselling Block	12
NAC Visits YONECO Head Office in Zomba.	13
YONECO Takes Over CSO Network Leadership in Ntcheu	14
WFP's Assistant ED Visits Balaka.	15
CFM Exposes Traditional Leader.	15
YONECO ED Gets COVID-19 Vaccine	16

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

Happy Easter holidays, it is very unfortunate that this time is mistaken for recklessness among many young people. Each celebration should not be associated with immoral behavior like abusing drugs and drinking irresponsibly. These events are bleeding grounds for consequences that could have a bearing on us for the rest of our lives like unplanned pregnancies and contacting sexually transmitted infections.

World health day falls on the 7th of April, at a time when the whole world is battling with the COVID-19 pandemic. My heartfelt gratitude should go to all front liners risking their lives to take care of others on the expense of their own lives and families. This has been a very difficult time for everyone, we have lost loved ones, friends and families, jobs and life in general has been unbearable. Now that vaccine is being administered, I urge you to go and get your jab. For one, I got vaccinated and I am doing quite fine until date

28th April is world day for safety and health work. This is a time that we also need to reflect on the safety in our work and business places. We should consider, how are we protecting ourselves as well as the people we are interacting with on daily basis? While other countries are experiencing the third wave of the pandemic, let us do all we can to keep numbers of new infections on the low. Observe the health precautionary measures at all times and we should not relax.

On the other hand, YONECO is pleased to announce a newly built counselling center at the head office in Zomba which will now accommodate clients from different walks of life. The Minister of Gender, Community Development and social Welfare Hon. Patricia Kaliati together with the Irish ambassador to Malawi Seamus O'grady handed over the building officially to YONECO on the 18th of March 2021 and has been functional ever since.

YONECO shall continue to work hand in hand with the government of Malawi in dealing with issues of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and abuse and also by providing psychological support to survivors on the same. If found in unpleasant circumstances and you need to report any form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) please write a no fee attached letter to The Counselor, Tithandizane Helpline Services P.O. Box 5600. You can also report any form of child abuse to our free helpline postal service to the following address; The Counselor, Tithandizane Helpline Services P.O. Box 116, alternatively call 116 and 5600 toll free numbers on any network.

Remember "Most obstacles melt away when we make up minds to walk bodily through them" Orison swett Marden once said.

Good luck in your everyday tasks. I wish you happiness always.



**REPORT
CHILD
ABUSE
CALL
116
FOR
FREE**

Every child deserves
support, protection and
freedom.

YONECO Trains 33 Girls in Self-defense



Graduates posing for a photo showcasing their certificates.

A total of 33 girls from various parts of Zomba district have graduated as Impower facilitators after an intensive three-weeks training program in self-defense against various forms of sexual abuse.

The 33 participants mastered a wide range of abuse avoidance techniques. These skills include boundary setting and diffusion tactics, verbal assertiveness and negotiation and physical self-defense skills.

The activity was conducted under Ana Patsogolo Activity (APA) Project which is being funded by USAID. The activity contributes to Malawi Government efforts for HIV epidemic control and the 95; 95:95 goals.

In his remarks, YONECO Program Manager for Ana Patsolo Project, Daniel Chikathenta, urged the graduands to ensure that the skills and knowledge which they acquired from the training should have a ripple effect in their communities.



Mr. Chikathenta looks on as a graduate receives her certificate.



Showcasing what they have learnt.



Tithandizane Child Helpline

Sports for Change Initiative Reaches 1,500 Young People



A netball session in the area in Zomba district

YONECO has intensified the use of sports to promote social change among adolescent boys and girls in a number of communities across the country.

Among other things, the sessions are used as platforms for discouraging young people from indulging in drug and substance abuse. The sessions have also been used to promote mental health of young people as well as their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

Mental Health Nurse for YONECO, Alex Mbewe indicated that community members in all the targeted areas are in full support of the initiative. Mbewe indicated that community members in all the targeted areas are in full support of the initiative.

Our aim is to equip these young people with knowledge and necessary life skills for them to make informed decisions on issues that affect their lives,” explained Mbewe.

Currently, YONECO is using football, netball and volleyball to bring young people together and engage them meaningfully. The initiative is further aimed at ensuring that the youth are successfully transitioned into adulthood.

So far, the initiative has reached over 1,500 young people in Zomba, Nkhosakota, Ntcheu, Mangochi as well as Mchinji among other districts.



Tithandizane Child Helpline



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.

Reducing Youth Unemployment through Poultry Farming

YONECO has empowered young people from Nkhata Bay district to realize their role and potential in social economic growth of their communities and Malawi as a whole.

YONECO has been working with a number of youth groups from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nyaluwanga in the district. Apart from gaining skills in the field, these youth have been trained in poultry farming as well.

Other youth clubs that were trained last year have now started realizing the fruits of their labour as they have now started selling their produce.

Manje and Vilemba Youth Clubs ventured into poultry farming after the training that was held late last year. Currently, the members of the two clubs



Some of the chickens that the clubs are raising

are now being used as progressive farmers who are working tirelessly to promote poultry farming in other areas as well.



Tithandizane Child Helpline 116

Marriage, No Child's Play



REPORT CHILD MARRIAGE CASES

Call: Toll Free 116

POSTAL ADDRESS:
The Executive Director



TEL:



CELL:



EMAIL:



Malawi Participates in International Learning Event on Child Marriage

Malawi participated in a four-day International Learning Event on the Link Between Child Marriage and Adolescent Girls' Sexuality that was dubbed Making the Most of What We Know (MMWWK) that was held from 1 to 4 March, 2021.

Apart from Malawi, other countries which participated in the event included Bangladesh, Mali, Uganda, Niger, Nepal, Pakistan and Ethiopia. A group of delegates from each country joined the conference through a designated virtual channel with the Malawi team congregating at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe City.

The event was organized by the More Than Brides Alliance (MTBA) with funding from the Dutch government. At national level, YONECO – a member of MTBA, coordinated the event in Malawi.

Participants from Malawi were drawn from some key institutions that are actively taking part in the fight against child marriages in the country.

Content Facilitator, Benson Nkhoma Somba, hailed the international event saying, it achieved the intended goal of learning, sharing and re-strategising the fight against Child marriages not just in Malawi, but the world.

In his remarks, the Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, thanked the government, various leaders of local organisations and the donor, SIMAVI for the conference that put issues of child marriage on the spotlight. He further appealed for continued and concerted efforts in the fight against what he termed as, "child marriage epidemic" referring to the rampant cases of the practice.

In his closing remarks, The Deputy Director in the Ministry of Social welfare, Trevor Hamela commended SIMAVI and implementing partners, saying government was committed to ending child marriages. He urged all for continued collaboration and engagement to achieve the intended results.

Rights Alliance, NGO Gender Coordination Network - Malawi, Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre, HRCC-Human Rights Consultative Committee as well as officials from the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare.



1 Participants posing for a group photo.



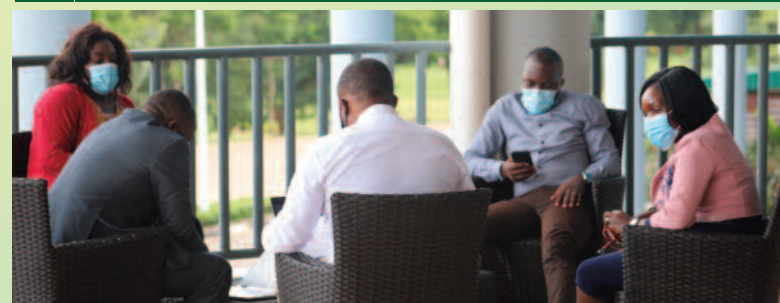
2 Recap session presentation.



3 MacBain Mkandawire- YONECO Executive Director making his speech.



4 In the thick of things. Nyatuwe Phiri.



5 Participants during a breakout session.

DREAMS Facilitators Receive Aflatoun Session Manuals



A group of participants celebrating after the training in Blantyre

20 adolescent girls from South Lunzu in Blantyre district have been trained to facilitate sessions on child rights and responsibilities as well as management of financial resources.

will work tirelessly to ensure that the knowledge and information she has acquired from the the training should also trickle down to other girls in her community.

There are a number of challenges in today's society due to the fact that awareness camapigns and trainings only focused on human rights while giving a blind eye to the corresponding responsibilities.

“Management of financial resources is very key in development of our country. This training will go a long way in influencing positive change in our communities,” explained one of the participants.

One of the participants stated that the training was an eye opener. The participant further explained that she

The activity was conducted under Ana Patsogolo Project which is being funded by USAID.

YONECO Facilitates Establishment of 5 Village Savings and Loan groups



Women during the meeting in Balaka.

YONECO has facilitated the establishment of five Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) for women in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nsamala in Balaka district.

The groups are expected to enhance the socio-economic status of women who will join the associations. The VSLAs will promote a culture of saving and investing in various businesses among women.

Further to this, the women will have pools of funds within their designated groups which will enable them to access soft loans to further develop their individual Income Generating Activities (IGA).

Apart from saving and lending, the groups will also be involved in community activities such as communal farming and establishment as well as management of Early Childhood Development (ECD) ECD Centers.

Over the years, VSLA have proved to be a powerful tool for financial inclusion of the

vulnerable groups. The positive results are achieved when the targeted groups of people are properly engaged and empowered to tackle various socioeconomic issues that affect their lives at various levels.

VSLAs exist in at least 73 countries around the world including Malawi where most women are not financially stable due to low levels of literacy.

The five VSLAs are; Tigwirizane from Rivilivi, Tikondane from Lakalaka, Tiyanjane Lakalaka, Tipindule and Tikondane from Lupanga village.

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YONECO FM the Real Voice of the Youth, Women and Children

Irish Ambassador and Minister of Gender Launch Counselling Block

The Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Dr. Patricia Kaliati in the company of the Irish Ambassador to Malawi, Seamus O'grady, officially opened a new counseling block for Tithandizane Helpline Services at YONECO Head Office in Zomba.

The counseling block was constructed with financial support from the Irish government through Trocaire. Trocaire has also been supporting YONECO to implement a number of activities that are aimed at preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and environmental conservation.

The new counseling rooms will ease the pressure which Tithandizane Helpline Services has been having due to increased number of walk-in clients who require face-to-face counseling sessions.

In her address, honorable Kaliati stated that apart from being a gross human rights violation, GBV negatively affects all facets of development hence the need to swiftly address it. Kaliati further hailed YONECO for its tireless efforts and innovativeness in dealing with violence against women and girls.

The launch was also attended by the Country Director of Trocaire, Mrs Jeannette Wijnants as well as other key government officials including the Acting District Commissioner for Zomba.

Before the official launch of the counseling block, honorable Kaliati and the Irish Ambassador to Malawi toured YONECO FM studios, YONECO ICT Centre, Safe place for survivors of GBV and child abuse, Mapale Youth Drop-in-Centre (DIC) and Tithandizane Helpline Services Call Centre.

In his address, the Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, acknowledged the efforts which the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare plays in the fight against GBV. Mkandawire further hailed Trocaire and the Irish Government for providing the much-needed technical and financial support towards ending GBV in Malawi



Hon. Patricia Kaliati.



Kaliati cutting the ribbon with O'grady



Irish Ambassador with minister Kaliati and Mkandawire.



**REPORT ANY FORM OF
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**WRITE TO
PRIVATE BAG**

5600



**FREE POSTAL
MAILING SERVICE**

Email: gbv@yoneco.org

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



NAC Visits YONECO Head Office in Zomba



NAC officials posing for a photo with YONECO members of staff outside it's head office.

Officials from the National AIDS Commission (NAC) had an engagement meeting with YONECO management team in Zomba as one way of enhancing coordination between the two institutions in the fight against HIV and other related issues.

Among other things, the officials deliberated on the link between child abuse and HIV. Further to this, the teams also discussed how Gender Based Violence fuels the spread of HIV.

NAC officials later toured YONECO's Tithandizane Helpline Services Call Centre, YFM studios as well as YONECO ICT Centre. YONECO uses these three sections to raise HIV awareness, promoting adherence to treatment among People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), as well as preventing stigma and

discrimination against PLWHA.

Previously, YONECO has also worked with NAC in the implementation of projects on key populations as well as Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC).



YONECO Takes Over CSO Network Leadership in Ntcheu



NGO members during the meeting.

Members from 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 no longer a CSO but a Trust.

YONECO is also leading Ntcheu District Education Network and is a prominent members of other district-based networks such as District Child Protection Committee, Gender Technical working Group, District AIDS Coordinating Committee, and Ntcheu Court Users Committee among others.

Wear your mask
Wash your hands or sanitize
Watch your distance

Keep the faith!

**COVID-19 IS
REAL**

**MACBAIN
MKANDAWIRE**

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



**DRUG & SUBSTANCE
ABUSE HOTLINE**

6600

**SAY NO TO DRUG AND SUBSTANCE
ABUSE**

**Get Help for free,
Call 6600**

Our Services

Telephone Counselling
Social rehabilitation
Psychosocial support
Referral support
Youth Drop-in Center
Facilities

WFP's Assistant ED Visits Balaka



Guarnieri visiting YONECO pavillion.

Global Assistant Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP), Valerie Guarnieri, visited Ulongwe in Balaka district to appreciate Lean Season Cash Response and Resilience Building interventions where the organization is implementing humanitarian programmes.

YONECO also showcased how it has been supporting WFP's food assistance programmes in the area through the operationalization of Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs).

CFMs promote accountability to the affected populations in humanitarian situations. Currently, YONECO is supporting implementation of the CFM component in various programmes that are funded by WFP in 12 districts across Malawi.

Balaka is one of the areas in Malawi which is mostly affected by short rainfall periods and dry spells. Currently, the vulnerable households are benefitting from WFP-funded food assistance programmes.

CFM Exposes Malpractices in Humanitarian Programmes



Bags of maize that were returned.

There are times when humanitarian support falls into the wrong hands of people who try to take advantage of the vulnerable by taking what does not belong to them. Heartrendingly, some people who do this are traditional leaders who are expected to serve their subjects.

This is why there is need for stakeholders and community members to be vigilant in order to deal with such malpractices.

In March, 2021, community members called YONECO's Tithandizane Helpline Services toll-free line to report an incident whereby a traditional leader was being suspected of stealing food stuffs under Lean Season Response (LSR) Programme which is being funded by WFP.

Thus, as operators of the Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (FCMs), YONECO engaged various stakeholders who investigated the matter.

The tip-off was vindicated and the traditional leader (name withheld) registered five members of his household as independent beneficiaries. The traditional leader accepted that he has been operating the illegal scheme and accepted to return all the bags of food he stole and re-distribute to the rightful beneficiaries.

Community members expressed their gratitude for the support they get under LSR programme.

YONECO ED Gets COVID-19 Vaccine



The Executive Director of YONECO getting his COVID-19 vaccine jab at Zomba District Health Office

On 20 March 2021, the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, received the AstraZeneca vaccine at Zomba District Health Office.

In his remarks, Mkandawire pleaded with all who are deliberately spreading various misconceptions about the vaccine to desist from this.

“Vaccines save lives. Protect yourself and others around you from COVID-19 by getting one today!” said Mandawire.

YONECO is among the institutions in Malawi that have been working with the Malawi government in raising awareness on COVID-19 and the various preventive measures.

Currently, members of staff for YONECO are also getting the vaccine. As social workers, this is very key and the institution is also promoting the uptake of COVID-19 vaccine through its social media platforms, radio station (YFM) as well as SMS messages.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE

5600

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