

YONECO VOICE

YONECO Voice Monthly Newsletter

November 2021

Vol.10

Issue 11



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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

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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*

Greetings for November.

We are two months to the end of the year and one asks the question of the what have we achieved. We have seen a few developments economically and socially. Rising costs of living, heat wave and increasing violence against women and children. Youth continue to be sidelined in many development initiatives and one is bound to ask the question why. We should start interrogating these aspects honestly and without prejudice.

Getting into the youth non-participation, we may want to ask fundamental question of what is a miss. In the previous newsletter articles, we have focused on education and attitude towards the young people. We now have to focus on young people as enemies of themselves. We know the question is how can some be an enemy of himself or herself. In fact, the biggest enemy of person is yourself. Most of us do things against ourselves and we do not realise we are enemies of ourselves. To illustrate this, 29 October 2021 was a Friday and month end. On Saturday, October 30, 2021 at 4 am young people were moving from the drinking points to their homes. What has happened, they have spent a lot of money drinking, they have not slept and obviously they will be sleeping during the day instead of being productive and obviously in the evening they will get bored and would like to go drinking again. This is being an enemy of yourself. Another example is when young people would just hung out doing nothing. If you check, they will always say “timacheza” – we were chatting. We have always questioned how unproductive most of us are at various levels. This is being enemies of ourselves. So our request can we stop being enemies of ourselves by developing good and productive habits. Being an enemy of yourself is enhanced by developing attitudes, practices and activities that make you fail to achieve your own goals. We have noted with great concern that with COVID-19, the home is not a safe place for many women and children and something needs to change drastically.

Violence against children continue to be a critical issue in Malawi. Ranging from children on the street to children in the homes, exploitation seem to be the order of the day. Fathers have become lions in the homes. Stepfathers have become nice because they want to prey on their step daughters. We are shocked in YONECO because from January to September 2021, we have registered 1448 child defilements and 1482 child marriages. These are but some of the child abuse issues that we get on daily basis. We are wondering what is the problem and we need to come together and engage in the matters seriously. We invite you to the 19 Days of Activism for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. This campaign starts from November 1, 2021. The campaign seeks to support the Sustainable Development Goal - Target #16.2: "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children". We invite you to our social media system, YONECO FM and other platform. You are reminded that our helplines under the Tithandizane Helpline services are still open on 116, 5600 and 6600. Youth can also call 393 on your SRHR issues.

In November, we also commemorate the 16 days of activism against Gender based Violence (GBV) whose aim is to amplify the call for the global community to act on ending the vice. This year the theme is locally is “Orange Malawi: End Violence Against Women and Girls, Act Now!” Planning is at advanced stage and we are all excited. While there are lots of investments into the commemoration, we also want to draw the attention of the Malawians to the reality on the ground. GBV is the order of the day Helpline data again shows high levels of abuse and violence. More needs to be done from both Civil Society Organizations (CSO), the government and the general public to ensure that not just awareness is being done but action as well. As days of activism have been around for more than three decades now and it is high time we started singing a new song. We need to focus on the other issues associated with this menace. Matter relating to mental health and support.

COP26 is convening from Monday in Glasgow, Scotland and it's good that the leadership of the country is attending. However, while this is the case, we were looking at some documents on commitments, we seem not to be making progress. Reforestation for example, we seem to have forgotten that we need to reforest our mother Malawi. Secondly, we seem to be having some serious challenges on the matters relating to waste management and disposal. Plastics are everywhere. Bottles and thin plastics are the order of the day. These tend to cause havoc in our cities to begin with. We have blockages that end up causing floods within the cities. We have plastic papers and bottles getting into the soils and will continue releasing toxins into the environment and reducing the quality of our waters. Considering the sources of water from the villages, we are not surprised with the many diseases. Possibly our scientists need to do some research. When these chemicals seep to our water, can they not cause cancers? These should be debates that as a country we need to focus on. Thirdly, on environment management, we do have a hot issue around deforestation, run water management and soil erosion. These are matters that lead to siltation in our lakes. We need to manage them.

Finally, places like Zomba were cool and nice and legends has it that we have “Old Naisi” in Zomba. But those people who have lived in Zomba for the last 30 years will agree with us that the weather partners in Zomba has completely changed. We never needed a fan in Zomba. We needed a heater. But Zomba has changed to be a hot city. We need to seriously reflect on the aspect. As the rains are coming, we are probably embraced for disasters, can we not be working on preventing these disasters as opposed to planning for mitigating the impact of the disasters. COP26 should surely focus on preventing disaster. The unfortunate part is that we have so many players planning to respond to disaster as opposed to preventing disaster.

October was breast cancer awareness month and as a side note this is not a matter that should be shunned since cancer is a silent killer that is taking from the nation. Despite the various interventions being put to raise awareness more needs to be done. More needs to be done in raising awareness for people to get tested, besides from this it is important that the patients of cancer are were supported to be able to cope with the pressure. As we are all aware cancer treatment is expensive and we need to find ways of solving this problem. As the new month begins remember you have the potential to achieve great things but you have to set your priorities right to do so.

Have a fruitful November.



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YONECO FM Welcomes New Cohort of Interns



Picture insert: Some of the new interns posing for a photo.

As part of fulfilling its mandate of enhancing and promoting youth development, YONECO FM has welcomed a new crop of interns. The new cohort comes after another cohort of six (6) interns has graduated from the institution after completing their attachments between July and September this year.

The new cohort comprise of 11 young people (3 males and 8 females) who have completed their studies in various colleges and universities in the country, while others are still continuing with their studies. The interns will be attached to the radio department for a period of three months (October to December 2021).

During their three months stay, the interns will be drilled in news writing and program documentation, presentation and production. In addition, they will also be supporting various institutional activities.

In her remarks one of the interns, Esnarth Chingwalu, who is a graduate of the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) says her stay in

YONECO will help her obtain hands on experience which she will easily apply in her journalism career.

Chingwalu added that she is anticipating to explore and learn more skills beyond journalism; saying this will add value to her profile during full time employment.

On his part, YONECO FM Station Manager, Benson Nkhoma Somba, said as a youthful station, they are delighted to contribute towards youth development and the country's development at large.

Since its inception, YONECO FM has trained a total of 97 interns, many of whom have managed to secure full-time employment with the institution while others have secured jobs elsewhere.

YONECO Donates Groundnuts Grinders to Youth Groups in Ntcheu

Picture insert: Some of the youths receiving the portable groundnuts grinders.

As one way of improving nutrition and economic status of Young People Living with HIV (YPLH), YONECO through Investing for Impact of HIV/AIDS among Young People Project supported four youth support groups from Ntcheu district with portable groundnuts grinders.

The handover ceremony of the groundnut grinders was done in the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Senzani VH Senzani in the district. Prior to the donation, the support groups were introduced to cultivation of soya beans, groundnuts as well as orange fleshed sweet potatoes. The group members were further trained in business management and value addition skills. This was designed to prepare them to effectively add value to their farm produce.

“We are very thankful to YONECO for the support. Our young people will now venture into this lucrative business as there are no such grinders in this area

and the demand for groundnuts flour is very high,” said Village Head Senzani.

Speaking during the function, Francisco Sadyamtambe - District Trade Officer applauded YONECO for the gesture. Sadyamtambe urged all club members to apply the skills which they learnt during business management training for them to become successful.

“Through this project, our living standards have tremendously improved. This donation will further help us to boost our group businesses as well as our nutrition status,” said one of the members of the youth support groups which received the grinders.

YONECO Participates in International Day of the Girl Child Commemoration



Picture: YONECO Executive Director posing with some of the girls during the commemoration in Nkhotakota district.

YONECO joined Malawi and the rest of the world in commemorating the International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC) which falls on 11th October every year. This year, the day was commemorated under the theme **‘Digital Generation: Our generation’**

The commemoration event which was held at Lozi Primary School in Nkhotakota District was graced by the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Honorable Dr. Patricia Kaliati, who was the guest of honor.

Among other key notable guests at the event were UNICEF Resident Representative Rudolf Schwenk, UNFPA officials and Executive Director of YONECO MacBain Mkandawire.

During the event, YONECO showcased some of its interventions towards enhancing and promoting the rights of a girl child; where key initiatives under the Responding to Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSEA) were highlighted.

YONECO FM (YFM) covered the whole event live, giving its listeners a chance to follow the event from their respective communities. Addressing the event, Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare -Dr. Patricia Kaliati emphasized that her ministry is working tirelessly to ensure that girls are protected and empowered as one way

of enhancing the country’s development agenda. Kaliati condemned the growing tendency of harassing girls through social media platforms; saying this does not only affect girls psychologically but it is also a human rights issue. Kaliati further said that deliberate measures will be put in place to bring to book all perpetrators.

She then challenged girls in the country to take a leading role in ending all forms of violence and abuses perpetrated against them by, among other things, reporting to relevant stakeholder including calling the Tithandizane National Helpline 116 toll-free number.



Hon. Dr. Kaliati interacting with the media at the function.

In his remarks, YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire said they are committed to scale up their efforts and ensure that girls are protected and empowered in various aspects including education.

Mkandawire also urged girls and the public at large to be part of the

solution of ending online abuses against girls and children by reporting through the Tithandizane toll free lines and the IWF reporting portal.

International Day of the Girl Child was established to help raise awareness on various issues affecting girls across the globe.

YONECO ED Calls for Community Empowerment in Management of ECD Centres.



Picture insert: YONECO Executive Director - MacBain Mkandawire making a speech on behalf of various NGOs during the ECD Awareness and Advocacy Week Launch.

The Executive Director of YONECO – MacBain Mkandawire has called for concerted efforts towards empowering community members to sustainably manage Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres in rural areas.

Mkandawire made the remarks on behalf of various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Malawi during the commemoration of ECD Awareness and Advocacy Week that was held on 18th October, 2021 in Mangochi district

In his remarks, Mkandawire said that there is need for deliberate efforts to be made for the empowerment of communities for sustainable operation of ECD Centres. He further said communities need to be made aware of the importance of Early Childhood Development activities which are crucial for children's cognitive functions.

The function was presided over by Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social welfare – honourable Dr. Patricia Kaliati who officially opened Mpinganjira ECD Centre

the singing of the Malawi National Anthem before and after the function. The group also performed a number of ECD awareness and child protection songs which they compose as a group.



YONECO Childrens Band before their performance at the event.



Insert: The newly built Mpinganjira ECD Centre in Mangochi.

YONECO Internship Program



Waldo Banda - Zomba District

Waldo Banda is a 4th year Bachelor of Social Science (Social Work) student from the Catholic University of Malawi.

He joined the YONECO Internship Programme and is attached to Zomba district. Through the internship, Waldo expects to build his character in terms of personal development and to upgrade his skill and gain the much needed experience to prepare him for the industry.

He says he will use his internship opportunity to do his best to help achieve the organizational goals by sharing his knowledge where needed. As a social worker he expects to assume roles of being an educator, facilitator, coordinator, researcher during his stay with YONECO. He believes that YONECO offers the best opportunity for him to learn social work and gain hands on experience through the various programmes that the institution implements.



Sharon Martin Chiwala - Ntcheu District

Sharon Martin Chiwala graduated from Hope Community College with a diploma in Community Development. She joined the internship program in september and is based in Ntcheu district.

Her expectation is to promote new ethical standards while maintaining high levels of integrity and professionalism, leadership skills, facilitation and community mobilization skills as well as team work. She believes that she will impact towards my studies now and beyond.

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YONECO Internship Program



Patricia Favour Gelevazio - Zomba District

Patricia Favour Gelevazio graduated from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources where she studied Nutrition and Livelihood Security studies. She joined YONECO's Internship Program under the programmes department where she is stationed at Zomba district office. Her expectation is to work with YONECO for long term in improving the health and well-being of women, children and the youth.

Patricia also expects to be a tool to contribute towards the reduction violence against women and children, and plans to achieve this through team work, hardwork and collaboration. She further wants to contribute to the enhancement of the socio-economic status of the youth and women with the knowledge she is acquiring from the internship.



Raphael Sululu - Zomba District

Raphael Sululu is a 4th year Bachelor of Social Work student at the Catholic University of Malawi. Raphael joined YONECO's Internship Program and is attached in the Programmes department at the Zomba district office as well. Raphael expresses gratitude that he is attached to the programmes department which he believes is in line with what he is studying in his college studies.

Through this internship he expects to contribute towards the process of eradicating gender based violence (GBV) in the society and also to support the welfare of children by promoting their rights as well as contributing towards ending child marriages and defilement. The other important thing is that he will contribute towards promoting mental health among the young people in order to prevent the many suicide cases. Raphael says he is hopeful he will be able to positively impact people's lives and uphold the principle of human dignity.

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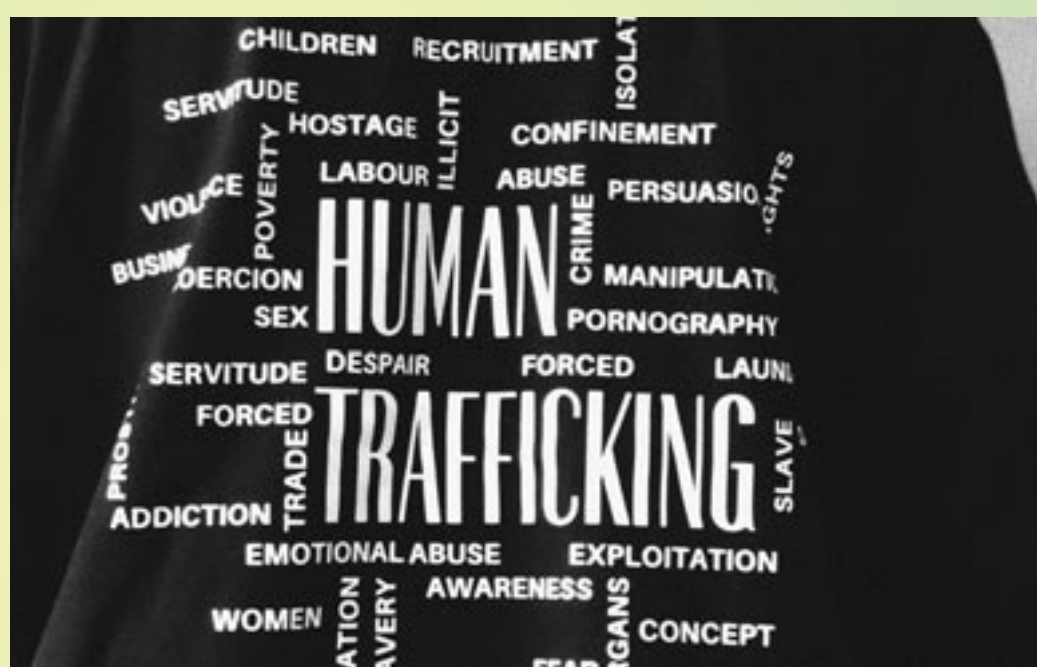
YONECO Facilitates Repatriation of Two Survivors of Human Trafficking.

Despite Malawi having Trafficking in Persons Act of 2015 with an aim of preventing and eliminating trafficking in persons, many people, particularly children continue to be trafficked. Perpetrators take advantage of the poor living standards and the treatment children receive from their parents and guardians.

law because they could not recall the route which they used at the time they were taken there because it was during the night. The two resorted to walk their way back home to Malawi. They started their journey on 18th September, 2021 and walked day and night till they managed to reach Ntcheu district where well-wishers referred them to YONECO for help. In safeguarding

from Chilipa Police Unit and went to the victims' home where it was discovered that the children went missing during the time the said brother in-law came from Mozambique to attend a funeral ceremony and that they were taken by a certain person and they spend a night at a place called Kapiri before being taken to Manjawira where they were taken by another

The story of Hamuza Katema aged 11 and Lapani Ketulo aged 13 (not real names) is one which is saddening. Both got trafficked from their home village in Mangochi district to Mozambique where they were herding cattle for three months without being paid and were only provided one meal a day. According to the children, their brother in-law was the one who trafficked them to the place where they were being abused.



“We were tired of the treatment we were given. Worse still, we were not given a chance to go to school to exercise our right to education. The person who we were working for did not disclose his name to us and when we attempt to ask the amount he was going to be paying us, he was always angry and his response was that our brother in- law is the one who knows the amount and his name”. Said one of the children

their rights. YONECO collaborated with Ntcheu Police and District Social Welfare Office to ensure the children were accommodated at the district's Resource Centre pending repatriation. YONECO and the District Social Welfare Office pulled resources and repatriated the victims to their home in Mangochi district. However, parents of the children did not show up at the police station to get the two.

person to Mozambique via Katsekera in TA Mpando. The children were handed over to their uncle who is Village Headman in the presence of their sisters and community policing forum.

The team provided counselling to the relatives of the children on how they can protect and prevent children from any form of abuse.

The survivors got stranded and failed to go back to their brother in-

The team involved police officers

Machinga District Office Intensifies Life Skills Education Sessions



Life skills education session in progress with children at YONECO office

YONECO has intensified life skills education sessions with children in Machinga district in order to equip them with the social and interpersonal skills that would enable them cope with the demands of everyday life. The sessions were conducted at Ntaja office where over 60 children patronize the sessions on daily basis. Among key issues that transpired during the sessions were self-confidence, encouraging critical thinking, communication and self-esteem.

In order to effectively deliver the intended content, YONECO officers used various approaches including in-door and out-door games, writing, drawing, story-telling, dancing and singing songs pertaining to life skills. Asked why it was relevant to facilitate the sessions with children, one of the facilitators, Godwin Mhango, explained that the sessions were important as they are aimed at enhancing children’s ability to be fully self-aware to overcome fears

“Life skills are integral to enable children to become healthy, independent and responsible members of the society” added Mr. Mhango.

Machinga is one of the southern region districts with very high cases of social ills including teenage pregnancies and child marriage. According to a 2020 report on teenage pregnancies and child marriages by the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Machinga registered 1,184 cases of teenage pregnancies between a period of March and April 2020. This translates into a need for more awareness campaigns on life skills among children to enable them make informed decisions.

Mangochi District Office Conducts Career Guidance with Young Girls



Insert: Some of the girls that attended the career guidance session at St. Monica Secondary School.

YONECO in Mangochi district conducted a career guidance session with girls at St Monica Secondary School. The session was aimed at equipping young girls with knowledge on how they can set goals and have them achieved. Students were also advised to desist from sexual relationships because they may result in them making poor choices that may

in turn affect their careers.

During the session, Role Models from Catholic University of Malawi and Malawi Assemblies of God University, who are doing their internship with YONECO encouraged the girls to work hard in their studies and aim at achieving their set goals. The role models also said that there are now more opportunities for girls who excel in their studies hence the need for them to focus on their studies and to desist from immoral behaviors which can derail their future.

The students were further encouraged to always seek expert counselling and advice on SRHR issues affecting them in order to make informed choices. They were then introduced to the Letschill and SADC 393 Youth Helpline services as platforms where they can access free SRHR services.

Safe Spaces Key to Open Discussions among Adolescent Girls and Teen Mothers on SRH&R Issues



Picture insert: Teenage girls and adolescents during one of the meetings in Dedza district.

Lack of Safe Spaces for teen mothers and adolescent girls in communities affects youth participation, contributions and making informed decisions. Young people end up having solutions imposed on them by elders and it is very difficult for them to build on and own such solutions for positive change. This trend further compromises the universal access to social services among the youth. The problem increases school dropout rates, teen age pregnancies as well as child marriages. However, every problem has a solution and this can only be attained if the affected population are given the opportunity to do self-analysis of the situation and come up with possible solution on their own through safe spaces where peers can actively participate in discussions on issues affecting them.

YONECO, through Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls project which is being implemented in Dedza and Mchinji district is building the capacity of youth champions for them to actively create safe spaces for discussions among teen mothers and adolescents. The youth are now able to congregate in different places where they feel free and safe for open discussion on issues affecting them such as access to family planning, teenage pregnancies, child marriages and gender based violence. Both teen mothers and adolescent girls are free and open to discuss issues that affect their daily lives and are able to come up with

possible solutions which they build on. 21 teenagers and other adolescents participated in one of the discussions following the creation of a safe and free space initiated by trained Youth Champions.

“If these spaces were there before, most of us would have not had children at a tender age and dropped out of school, but it is not too late. We are going to build on these possible solutions which we discuss in our meetings and make informed decisions”. Said Sarah Jossam, one of the teen mothers who led the discussions which were conducted at TA Kaphuka in Dedza.

Young people in the project impact area have taken an initiative of creating free and safe spaces where they are able to discuss different issues. This has promoted youth participation on issues of their concerns and are able to utilize youth religious gatherings, youth clubs, netball and football clubs which have proved to be a hub for youth discussions towards different issues of their concerns.

YONECO FM

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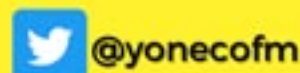
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YONECO Attends *A Girl's Gaze* Screening at Jacaranda



Picture insert:

The prevalence of child exploitation and trafficking is fueling sexual gender based violence in Malawi. Many children, especially girls have fallen victims of sex trafficking in hope of a better life. However, the effects are detrimental to the victims and families. Tackling these vices therefore requires concerted efforts both at family, community and national level.

YONECO is a member of the Trafficking in Persons Network and provides support to survivors through its Safe Places that are located in the northern, central and southern regions of Malawi. It is from this background that YONECO was invited by the Spotlight Initiative to a screening of *The Girl's Gaze*, a documentary that was produced to highlight the plight of the girl child in Malawi; tackling issues of child marriages and sexual exploitation.

The event saw delegates from the UN,

CREECOM, Chance for Change, WORLEC, Jacaranda Children's Home, Dikamawoko Arts and many other.

After the screening, participants were engaged in a discussion where, among other things, issues that fuel child marriage in Malawi were tackled and possible solutions presented. NGOs were then urged to collaborate in the fight against trafficking in person and called for mainstreaming of child marriages and SGBV in their programming.

The organizers of the event thanked the patrons for showing up to the screening, saying it will help in spreading the message of ending, child marriages, sexual gender based violence as well as curb the practice of human trafficking.

Women Challenged To Prevent Breast Cancer



Picture insert: Participants listening to the program

YONECO joined the rest of the world in observing the Breast Cancer Awareness month with a call to women to take a leading role in fighting breast cancer in the country. Breast cancer awareness month is observed in October every year with an aim of raising awareness on the disease and how it can be prevented.

Thus as part of the commemoration YONECO, through its radio station, YFM conducted awareness campaigns through the Amayi Yankhulani Radio program. The program, which is interactive in nature (phone in and SMS), gave women a platform to share their experiences on breast cancer, signs and symptoms as well as some of the preventive remedies of the disease. One of the radio listeners, Gladys Muyala, based in Lilongwe, said women need to take part in the fight against the disease through self-examination among other things.

She added that women should not hesitate to seek medical attention and help whenever they have notice signs and symptoms of breast cancer such as swelling of all or part of a breast, skin dimpling, breast or nipple pain, nipple retraction and swollen

lymph nodes.

Commenting on the same YFM Deputy Station Manager, Rose Kamera, urged women to pay serious attention to their breasts at all times and to seek medical help in good time whenever they notice some unusual changes. She said breast cancer is treatable if diagnosed at an early stage hence the need to develop a health seeking behavior.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2020 there were 2.3 million women diagnosed with breast cancer and 685 000 deaths globally.



Men in Machinga asked to Take Part in Issues Affecting Women’s Health



Picture insert: Some of the men that were engaged during the session

YONECO in Machinga district conducted visits to men’s hotspots in Ntaja area, to share with men about the importance of male involvement in health issues that affect women. The visit created a platform for an interactive and educative session where the men showed eagerness to learn more on how they can support women on health matters.

During the session, officers stressed that male involvement is a process of social and behavior change that is needed for men to play more responsible roles with the purpose of ensuring women’s and children’s healthy wellbeing. The session tackled various issues ranging from child bearing, child spacing, unprotected sex, sexual transmitted infections (STIs) among others.

“As a man, I am a decision maker, a woman cannot tell me when to have children, and I will simply choose whether to have protected or unprotected sex, that should not matter to my wife”, said one man while receiving applauses from his friends.

In response to his comment, the officers went on to explain that it is the responsibility of both a husband and a wife to decide when to have children, and to ensure child spacing in order to prepare each other mentally, physically and

economically. The facilitators further stressed that such discussion in a family helps in creating a positive bond between couples and eventually leading to successful families. On issues of STI’s, men were urged to be faithful to their spouses and encouraged to refrain from engaging in extra marital affairs in order to avoid contracting and passing on infections.

In addition, the session also urged men to provide nutritious food for their families for healthy homes. The men were then encouraged to have backyard vegetable gardens; stressing the need for men to have knowledge of the 6 food groups so that they ably provide the best for their family.



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YONECO Strengthens Capacities of 60 Community Artists in TfD

Picture insert: Some of the men that were engaged during the session

YONECO, through its cultural troupe has strengthened capacities of 60 community artists in Theatre for Development (TfD) as a tool for awareness, community mobilisation and advocacy in Mchinji and Dedza districts.

The training equipped community artists from six Traditional Authorities (TAs) namely Mkanda, Mduwa and Zulu in Mchinji and Kachele, Kaphuka and Chilikumwendo in Dedza. The artists will act as focal points in raising awareness at community level on enhancing capacities of teen mothers and adolescent girls in making positive informed decisions.

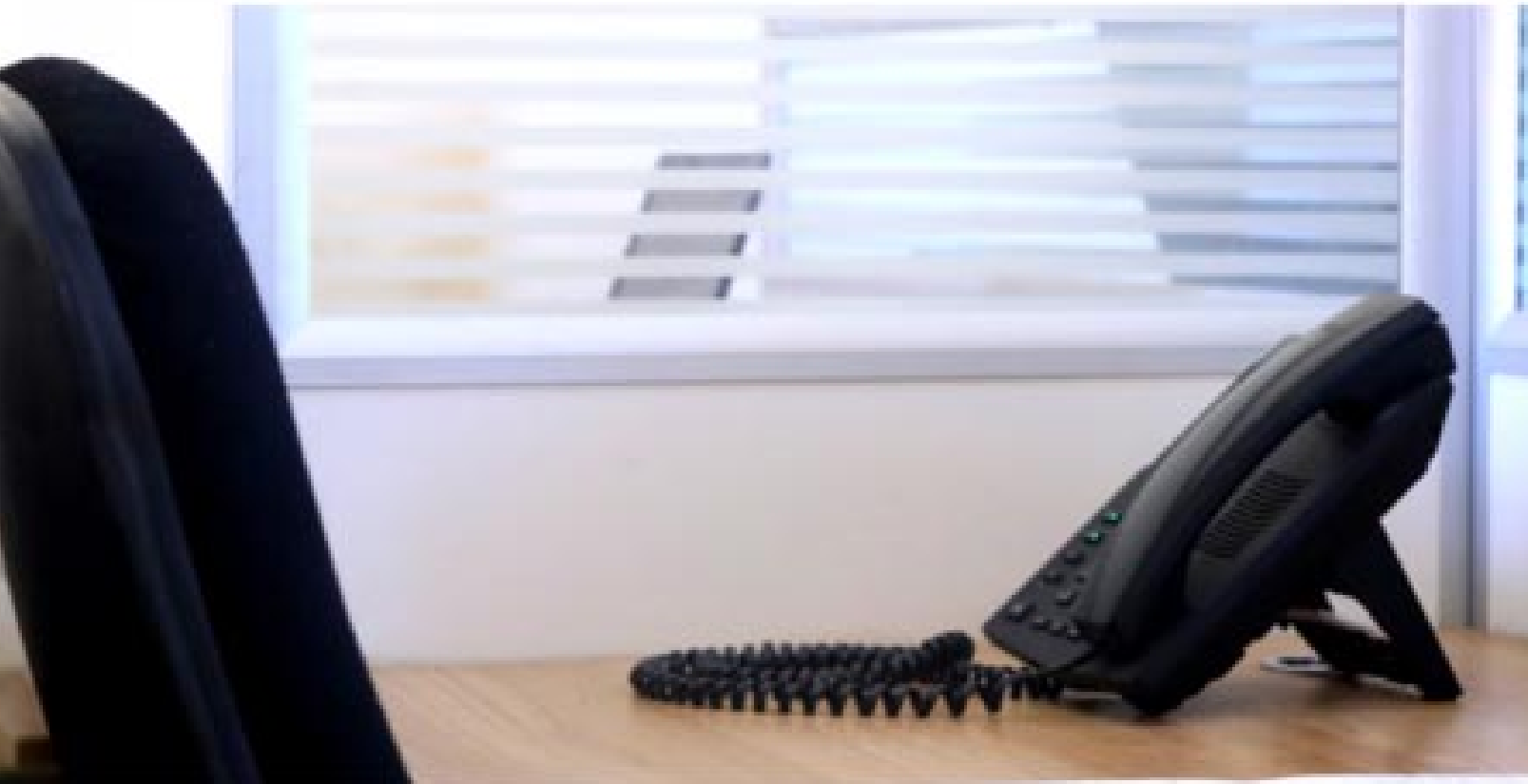
After the trainings, participants applauded YONECO for organizing the capacity building sessions as they have been empowered in utilizing theatre as a tool for community participation. The theatre groups said as much as they have been doing drama they lacked the necessary skills and technical know-how to positively engage communities towards behavioral change.

Through the training sessions, the artists conducted awareness activities in their respective communities. In total, the training sessions reached 284 people (189 females and 95 males). One of the issues that were uncovered through the awareness activities was demonizing and shaming of teen

mothers and adolescent girls which in turn hampers access to sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services.

Making his contribution at one of the awareness activities, Village Head Masinja from Dedza appealed to young girls in the communities to access contraceptives to avoid pregnancy and STI's. Group Village Head Yohane from TA Mduwa, Mchinji supports the motion to protect girls and teen mother from all forms of abuse. She also showered praise to the artists for having the courage of stimulating the debate on protecting girls and mothers from abuse; saying that the issue has been bothering the community for a long time and that it was time such issues were addressed once and for all.

The training sessions were conducted under the UNFPA funded project 'Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescents' which is being implemented in Mchinji and Dedza districts.



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