



Youth Net and Counselling

YONECO VOICE

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Sustaining Institutional Growth and Independence for Social Economic Development of the Youth, Women and Children.

About Us

Youth Net and Counselling

Sustaining institutional growth and Independence for social and economic development of the youth, women and children

VISION

A self-reliant, healthy, empowered, resilient, responsible, and inclusive society that respects democratic values and principles.

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 the** impact 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**

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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 our esteemed readers.

Malawi gets into 58 years of independence on 6 July 2022 a very embarrassed nation. We have seen calls for the cancellations of the Independence Day celebrations and there have been so many arguments for and against.

However, as an embarrassed nation, because of several reasons including corruption, we probably need to have the celebrations with lots of reflections. The central theme for the July, 2022 edition is therefore to reflect honestly about this embarrassment that Malawi continues to enjoy since 1964.

Our first embarrassment came when one Lu Ke was abusing our children and recording them saying 'I am a black monster! I have a low IQ! As the drama unfolded, the man managed to sneak out of the country and obviously through our borders. In trying to discuss this issue, we were all intelligent and meanwhile Lu Ke was arrested in Zambia. We then had a situation where the Ministry of Civic Education and National Unity called for a dialogue meeting. Quite embarrassed to dialogue on the 'Abuse of the children' which was followed by demonstrations.

We are still waiting for the results of the dialogue meeting and obviously, this was intended to politically silence or diffuse the demonstrations that were to happen the next day. Quite a strategy and we continue to be embarrassed. We will continue being embarrassed. It has to be noted that foreigners have continued to abuse our children and they are being shielded by the system in government.

While the issue of Lu Ke was being discussed, we had another embarrassment in Karonga where a Chinese national was abusing the locals. Shortly after this, we also woke up to the news that another Chinese man trafficked a total of six girls from Kasungu to Lilongwe. Is this not embarrassing enough? So, the abuse of children by foreigners can be negotiated? Well, the embarrassment continues in children and youth spheres as one young person in Blantyre is being forced by law enforcers to confess. It is strange that someone who was nabbed at Chileka International Airport in Blantyre for trying to smuggle Indian Hemp was only fined a small amount of money or in default, spend a year in jail while this Mussa boy is given a whopping eight years Imprisonment with hard labour. We are embarrassed.

Let us get to the embarrassment of corruption. We seem to never fall short of the embarrassment in this area. We have had serious corruption scandals dubbed; cashgate, tractorgate maizegate, Nocmagate and now we have the infamous Sattargate. These are embarrassing events that all of us should be worried about. We need to reflect on the current situation.

We all take note of the Malawi president's stance on anti-corruption. At the end of May 2022, the president promised and asked for a report from the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) within 21 days after

the directive. Within those days, the ACB presented the report and the first embarrassment came when the President said openly that the report was substandard. When the President said this, the feeling was, 'should we trust the report'? This was so embarrassing not only to the ACB, but to the Malawi nation in general. If the president says the report was substandard, it erodes the confidence and trust people might have had in the operations of the ACB. We believe that there could have been a way of informing the nation about this by saying the president received the report and has referred it back to the ACB to clarify certain things. This would have kept the confidence and trust of the office of the country's corruption busting body.

What is more embarrassing is the fact that the president went ahead and used the substandard report to make some critical decisions. As Malawians we sometimes provide wrong advice to our leaders. In our view, the president's decisions that have been made based on the purported substandard report makes all of us embarrassed. There is need to balance our emotions with facts. We should not act out of emotions because decisions that are communicated by our president are critical and we need to protect them. Again, the issue of decisions being made based on the alleged substandard report will continue haunting us.

We are embarrassed to learn that the corruption scandal has listed over 80 people including the media and even Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). However, further embarrassment is made with the ACB's inability to disclose the names of those involved in the alleged corruption scandal. One then wonders why are the other names being kept confidential? It is quite an embarrassing situation. We cannot fight corruption if the people involved in this vice are being shielded. Are we not trying to hide some information by focusing on one group of people and not others? We need to know the names now.

As a CSO, we are embarrassed because we have been mentioned silently by saying CSO leaders or individuals but not necessarily mentioning which CSOs. As such, we are all embarrassed and we need to clear this out. As we move, we are always checking the ladder because we are not sure who has been mentioned in the report and therefore, we will remain embarrassed.

Another pick is on the fact that one man managed to corrupt over 80 respected individuals. This is embarrassingly too immense and we should be very embarrassed as a nation. We are just asking ourselves: are we not all corrupt? What has gone wrong? The president cited a weak legal framework. We are embarrassed again because this is beyond the law, we need to reflect as a nation. What value system is in place that promotes corruption.

As we celebrate the 58 years of independence, it would be a reflective point to think through why we are continuously being embarrassed and then develop mechanisms to deal with this embarrassment. We should not forget that on 30 July, we will be commemorating the International Day Against Trafficking in Persons. Let us all remain focused. Sadly, a lot of women and children are being trafficked every day. They are being humiliated and embarrassed in various places both within Malawi and beyond.



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Goat Pass On Program Shoots YPLH in the Arm

By Sewenthe Mahwayo



Insert: YONECO Ntcheu Project Officer Richard Nkhonjera interacting with group members.

A total of 81 Young People Living with HIV (YPLH) have benefitted from the goat pass on programme that was launched in 2021 to enhance economic and nutritional needs in Ntcheu district.

The initiative which is being funded by Egmond Trust through Investing for the Impact of HIV and AIDS was launched with 50 goats that were initially distributed to 25 young people who have managed to pass on to the next group of beneficiaries. Many other young people from the areas of Group Village Heads (GVHs) Manjawira, Matale, Mkonde, Chikhasu and Senzani are expected to benefit from the initiative.

Apart from the Goat Pass on Programme, the project has other interventions that are targeting 345 YPLH from the targeted areas. The project's targeted beneficiaries were supported to established support groups which are now being used to easily reach out to them with information and various other services.

A Chairperson for one of the groups stated that the members have now started seeing the importance of participating in the group activities.

“At first some support group members had some doubts, but now, our interest has been kindled with the way the Goat Pass On programme and other interventions are being successfully implemented,” explained the Chairperson.

The District Youth Officer (DYO) for Ntcheu, Emmanuel Tevet, urged the youth to take up their rightful responsibility to ensure that every targeted individual should benefit within the initiative's specified timeframe.

“Nutrition is very important among people living with HIV/AIDS. If properly raised, the goats could be a good source of both income and nutrition,” explained Tevet.

YONECO Internship Program: Intern Spotlight-Virginia Lossa

By Virginia Lossa



Insert: Virginia Lossa in this file photo

Our internship spotlight shines on Virginia Lossa who is based at our Mulanje district office. She shares with us her journey through our internship program.

Tell us about yourself? My name is Virginia Lossa and I am a young confident, intelligent and ambitious lady who has just completed Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences (Social Work) at the University of Malawi, pending graduation.

What made you join the internship program? At school we learn so many theories that are required to guide the social work practice. Having covered these in class, I was skeptical if at all I was going to find an organization that will help me put the theories learnt in practice.

When did you join the program? On May 5th of 2022, I embarked on an internship journey with YONECO, Mulanje where I have interacted with the warmest of staff who have helped me relate the theory perspective to the practical aspect of social work.

How has the journey been so far? One month down the line I can confidently say that I have and continue to learn quite a lot from the daily experiences for example focused and group counseling, interactive sessions with women groups and youth clubs, life skills session with primary and secondary school students and an opportunity to interact with the protection cluster members.

I have by far understood that the social work profession is too vast and hence the need to refer out to other key players where need be. Being part of a very creative team, am prompted to also showcase my creative side in influencing decisions and conducting activities targeting teen mothers as that was my research topic. I look forward to learning even more by the end of my placement in August.

Pastor Sentenced to 12 Years with Hard Labour for Defilement

By Triza Chimasula

Society expects that a pastor cannot practice or engage in the same behaviour or activity for which he criticizes claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's behaviour does not conform when he/she gets on the pulpit to proclaim the word of God.

In Malawi, there are a lot of defilement cases committed by these men of God only that most minors do not report issues of abuse and violence due to poverty since the men of God tend to do charitable works. The same issue was registered through Tithandizane National Helpline Services that Redeemed Christ Church pastor Mr Penjani Sodzera took Chisomo Banda (Not her real name) aged 15 from Lilongwe district, T/A Tsabango at Tongole village to nurse his twins in Zomba district where in the process was defiled and pregnant.

Later on, the client was accommodated in the YONECO's Safe Place for safety and according to the condition of the pregnancy which it could be difficult to be commuting from Lilongwe to Zomba on the bumpy roads because the case had been referred to Mulunguzi court by the Lilongwe police. The girl told the court sitting at Mulunguzi that she is an orphan as her mother passed away and her father ran away from his responsibilities.

In 2021, Pastor Penjani Sodzera who was ministering at Soul Winner's Church in the Zomba district adopted her while she was ten years old and in standard 6 saying he wanted her to be taking care of his twins. She continued saying when she wrote her Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations, she was selected to Chilunga Secondary School.

She reported that one day, Mr Penjani went to her bedroom one particular evening and forced her to have sex without protection and this happened on four separate occasions. She further said that Mr Penjani threatened her not to reveal this to anyone, saying if she does, she will be sent back to her home village. She reported that she was enticed with MK2,000 or MK1,000 and she kept quiet. She said when she got impregnated she was forced to go for an abortion in Zomba but the doctor had sent her back because the money was not enough and also, he was surprised that such a little girl cannot abort the pregnancy without the consent of her parents or relatives.

She said the man of God resigned from Soul Winner's

Church and founded his church known as Redeemed Christ Church. She told the court that during the holiday, the client was sent back to Lilongwe and the Pastor asked her Aunt to look after her before sending her back to Zomba. She said he was taken to the hospital for medical examination which revealed that she has an eight-month-old pregnancy and she mentioned that the pastor is the one responsible.

After parading witnesses from the plaintiff side the court found the pastor guilty of having sex with a minor and on Monday 25 April 2022, First Grade Magistrate Jones Masula convicted Sodzera, stating that evidence tendered in court indicated that he had committed the offence.

On Friday 29 April 2022 Magistrate Jones Masula warned Mr Penjani Sodzera that as a church leader he was supposed to protect the children and women from different forms of abuse and violence and he did not set a good example as a pastor being a role model towards protecting children. He was then given a 12-year sentence according to Section 138 of the Penal Code. Prosecutor Rodrick Kamuona asked the court that defilement cases are on the rise and for this reason, the court should continue ensuring stiff punishment.

The helpline officers were providing psychosocial support to the client to ease the trauma that she had following the death of the baby and the Victim who was accommodated at the safe place was taken back to orphanage and she started education when she finishes school she wants to be a Nurse because she admires female nurses who help patients at the hospital.

In addition, the Helpline officer was attending the court hearing at Mulunguzi Magistrate court and Zomba High Court from the beginning from October, 2021 up to the end on 29 April, 2022 with a keen interest to make sure that justice prevails. The helpline officers were providing psychosocial support to the client to ease the trauma that she had and the following the death of the baby and the Victim who was accommodated at the safe place was taken back to orphanage and she started education when she finishes school she wants to be a Nurse because she admires female nurses who help patients at the hospital.

Lilongwe Dairy Reaches out to Children at Lilongwe SRC

By Julius Mbewe



Insert: Children at the centre posing together with Lilongwe Dairy and YONECO staff

A person who shares a blanket in winter is surely more than a friend. True to this was a momentous occasion on Friday 10 June, 2022, as children at the Lilongwe Social Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) received brand new blankets from Lilongwe Dairy Limited. The company brought 31 blankets and were shared to the children at the centre.

Sales and Marketing Manager for the company, Gabriel Peter Phiri said the donation was made as part of the company's community social responsibility.

Phiri further expressed commitment to supporting the children at the centre.

Lilongwe Social Rehabilitation Centre is a government facility which is being co-managed by YONECO and the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare. The centre offers therapeutic and other services to the most vulnerable and socially excluded children, women and young people in the district, more particularly, children connected to the streets.

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YONECO and Mobile Schools Launch SmartStreet Project

By Julius Mbewe



Insert: Street Smart Mobile Schools Master Trainer Van De Putte posing with YONECO staff and keystakeholders in child protection.

A journey of reaching out to street connected children with basic education using innovative approach dubbed “SmartStreet” commenced on 13 June, 2022 with a training of street outreach workers.

The eight-day training being offered in Lilongwe is first of its kind in Malawi as it is focusing on addressing education needs of children connected to the street using innovative ways.

Participants to the training have been drawn from YONECO and other stakeholders in the child protection like police, education, social welfare among others.

In his speech marking the official opening of the training, YONECO board Chair responsible for Programmes and Projects, Samuel Bota, described the training as an opportunity to the country as it will help to provide the best possible future for the children in the streets.

The board Chair also highlighted that the “Smartstreet” will not only respond to the lamentation by the Ombudsman in the 2019 report “Abandoned on the Streets” but act as

a conduit for provision of comprehensive services for the children connected to the street even in emergency situations.

On his part, Master Trainer for Mobile Schools, Bram Van De Putte said he is excited that they have partnered with YONECO and added that the project will help to bridge the gap between the children and street outreach workers.

Meanwhile, one of the participants, a Child Protection Officer working with Lilongwe Police Station Sub Inspector William Chirambo has described the training as timely and eye opener saying it will assist them enhancing their skills on handling street connected children.

YONECO will implement the project, “SmartStreet”, in the districts of Lilongwe, Ntcheu, Zomba and the commercial city of Blantyre with support from Mobile Schools.

New ECD Centre Opens at Mwanyama Village in Mangochi

By Grant Dulla



Insert: Pupils at one of the ECD centres

In collaboration with community members around Mwanyama Village in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda in Mangochi district, YONECO has facilitated the establishment of an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre which currently has 14 learners of which nine are girls and five are boys.

The initiative is a result of an assessment which YONECO conducted in the area to identify various factors which contribute towards children's failure to succeed in their studies and their lack of interest to enroll in primary school.

ECD, which also comprises Early Childhood Education (ECE), plays an integral role in improving and promoting the welfare of children. ECD centres are places where children not only engage in educational activities, it is also a place where children get to engage in meaningful play which stimulates their physical, emotional and speech development.

Further to this, children also get to learn socially acceptable conduct, and

continuously develop their intellectuality. Children have the right to education but evidently, not all children get to enjoy this right. On their part, community members have expressed their commitment towards ensuring the sustainability of the initiative.

Currently, the ECD Centre requires proper infrastructure especially classrooms and play materials. In addition to this, we are also working around the clock to ensure that the centre has trained caregivers.



Chiefs Urged to Spearhead the Modification of Harmful Practices



Insert: Deputy minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Agness Mkusa-Nkhoma during the commemoration event in Lilongwe.

Government has called on chiefs in Malawi to be agents of change in eradicating harmful cultural practices affecting children in their respective areas.

The Deputy Minister responsible for Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare Agnes Mkusa-Nkhoma made the plea this on Thursday in Lilongwe on side-lines of a commemoration event for this year's Day of the African Child (DAC).

According to Mkusa-Nkhoma, chiefs are custodians of culture and it is important for them to only uphold good cultural practices and eliminate those deemed harmful.

She said: "In this regard, Paramount Chiefs, Senior Chiefs, Religious leaders, Traditional healers, and policy makers need to join hands in order to end harmful practices.

This has been the song for the past decade but there seem to be very little change. All of us need to start acting differently. The period of doing things in a business as usual mode is over. We need to account to the children of Malawi."

In an interview, one of the children, Liness Harrison, said children are greatly affected by various harmful cultural practices.

During the event, YONECO officers led by Central Region Programmes Support Manager, Hughes Tawanda Munthali, demonstrated how a Mobile School operates and why it is a significant tool to use when educating children especially those connected to the streets.

Key features of the commemoration event were an interface meeting between children and various stakeholders on cultural practices that affect children in Malawi and the launch of a child-friendly version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) document.

The DAC is commemorated annually on 16 June but Malawi had a national commemoration event for the Day on 23 June, 2022.



Insert: Kondwani Matope from YONECO Lilongwe office explaining how the Mobile School works to some of the delegates at the event.

The Day is commemorated to raise awareness about the rights and welfare of children. This year, the Day was commemorated under the theme; "Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practice since 2013".



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Church and Society High-Powered Delegation Visits YONECO**by Mabuchi Chunga****Insert: YONECO and Church and Society members posing for a group photo**

On 3 June, 2022 YONECO hosted Board Members and Management of Church and Society of the Livingstonia Synod in Zomba.

The visit provided an opportunity for the two institutions to share knowledge and skills in resource mobilization, sustainability, transparency and accountability at organizational level as well best practices in promotion of socio-economic development of marginalized groups.

During the visit, the group had a brief tour around YONECO Head Office which houses YONECO FM Radio Station, the call centre for Tithandizane Helpline Services. The visitors also toured YONECO ICT Centre where they appreciated how YONECO has uses ICT in its programming.

The tours were succeeded by a debriefing

session that was also attended by the Chairperson for YONECO Board of Trustees, Professor Dixie Maluwa Banda, the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire and other senior managers.

**Insert: YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire sharing notes with Church and Society Chairperson**

YONECO ED Attends High-Level Symposium on Harmful Cultural Practices

By Mabuchi Chunga



Insert: YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire (Right) at the symposium in Maseru, Lesotho.

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, was among the delegates who attended a High-Level Symposium on Harmful Cultural Practices affecting Children that was held today in Maseru, Lesotho.

The symposium was organized as part of the activities that have been lined-up across Africa to mark the commemoration of the 2022 Day of the African Child (#DAC).

Among other key issues, delegates agreed to ensure that children with disabilities are given the necessary care and protection as a number of harmful cultural practices are associated with them.

The theme for this year's #DAC is "Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practice since 2013".

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Strengthening the Capacity of CVSUs to Effectively Respond to SGBV

by Thuliwe Mwenifumbo



Insert: Community victim support unit (CVSU) members during the training.

Mulanje is one of the districts in Malawi which register increased number of Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases. Community structures like Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs) are key in responding to such incidences at community level.

Thus, with support from UNFPA, YONECO trained all CVSU members in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Ndanga to effectively respond and spearhead SGBV prevention activities in their designated areas. The training focused on manifestations of SGBV, protecting vulnerable groups of people from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and a session on various gender-related laws.

One of the participants, Rose Makatanje commended YONECO for the training which she described as practical and beneficial.

“As members of CVSUs, we have been

responding to SGBV issues for a long time but we clearly had no knowledge. Now that we know, we will be diligent in rendering our services,” explained Mkatanje.

During the sessions the participants were also given a chance to share their experiences in responding to SGBV cases and the challenges they face. The training sessions were concluded with the development of action plans on how to deal with various challenges that have hinder process in preventing and responding to SGBV.

The training sessions were conducted in collaboration with Mulanje District Gender Office, the Malawi Police Service, and Mulanje District Social Welfare Office.

YONECO Embarks on Door to Door GBV Awareness Campaign in Mulanje

By Thuliwe Mwenifumbo



Insert: Officers and Islamic women's group posing after GBV session in Kumwamba village.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is one of the social ills that negatively impact on the livelihood of those affected. It is estimated that one in five women in Malawi experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, and that 42% of girls in the country experience physical violence before their 18th birthday.

However, many GBV cases go unreported and those affected by it suffer in silence. Engaging communities and raising awareness on the dangers of GBV is one of the best strategies for reducing the incidences of this vice.

Thus, in the month of June, 2022, YONECO conducted a series of GBV awareness campaigns that reached a

total of 150 people around Chitakale area in Mulanje district. The campaigns targeted women groups and households.

During the sessions, most women acknowledge that they suffer GBV in silence for fear of reprimands from other conservative community members, and relatives of the perpetrators. Thus, the groups were introduced to a number of laws that were enacted to protect them in such circumstances. Furthermore, the facilitators from YONECO shared the confidential and toll-free GBV Crisis Line (5600) for the community members to use.

Reaching the Hard to Reach with GBV Messages

By Richard Nkhonjera

Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls is very high in Malawi and in some districts of the country, it is even higher among sex workers and other hard to reach groups of people.

Thus, inadequate information about GBV further increases their vulnerability to the vice as they perceive some acts of violence as normal hence they do not see the importance of reporting such incidences to the authorities. Eventually, such sexual, physical, economic and emotional abuses flourish as perpetrators are not reprimanded hence they continue and encourage others, mainly through their actions, to do likewise.

Thus, YONECO has started conducting GBV screening and awareness

campaigns targeting hard to reach groups of people including Female Sex Workers (FSW). During one of the sessions with FSWs in various hotspot areas, it was reported that they suffer various forms of GBV in the hands of their clients. Among other things, the FWSs stated that sometimes clients refuse to pay them a thing which leads to physical violence when they start asking for payment.

“I have so many scars from wounds which I sustained after being beaten by my clients,” one of the sex workers stated.

Currently, YONECO will be working with various shareholders to ensure that FSW are not subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.



YONECO Supports Outreach Clinics in Phalombe District

by Shupikayi Shalom Singanyama



Insert: Phalombe District Nursing Officer during the outreach session.

YONECO supported a series of health outreach activities which benefited a total of 114 survivors of Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe at N'ganjo Evacuation Camp in Phalombe district.

The activity was conducted in collaboration with Phalombe District Hospital and some of the services that were provided during the activity include; health education on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) screening, provision of contraceptives, HIV Testing Services (HTS) and child care services.

Phalombe District Nursing Officer (DNO) commended YONECO for the support stating that there is need to intensify

outreach clinics in many areas around the district. The DNO indicated that financial constraints limit the District Health officials to conducting one outreach activity a month.

The DNO further added that Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe increased many people's vulnerability so much that many were unable to access various health services within the flood evacuation camps.

The outreach activities provided a health comprehensive package so much that no referrals made as all conditions were treated on spot.



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Playing Our Part towards the Realization of SDG 13

By Romeo Soko



Insert: Tree seedlings that are being raised falong Mdeka river in Ntcheu

Climate change remains one of greatest threats to development and its widespread and unprecedented impact disproportionately burdens the world's poorest. Urgent action to combat climate change and minimize its disruption is integral to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (#SDGs).

In line with #SDG13 which focuses on the taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impact, more countries are acting on the imperative to implement national and local strategies for combating the problem.

In line with this approach, YONECO, through its office in Ntcheu, has embarked on community sensitization campaigns on sustainable development and initiating tree planting programmes at community level in the district.

YONECO is committed to mitigating the impact of climate change and through its

various satellite offices across Malawi.

As YONECO, we deal with various issues that affect the youth, women and children and climate change is one of them. As such, we would like to contribute towards resilient and self-reliant communities that are able to deal with various aspects pertaining to climate change," explained the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire

Below: Tending to some of the trees



YONECO Distributes Relief Items to Storm Survivors in Nsanje



Insert: Some of the survivors who have benefitted from YONECO interventions in Nsanje district

By Bright Chayachaya

As at 10 February 2022, the Department of Disaster Management reported that 221,127 households had been affected, leaving 109,219 vulnerable populations at risk and 169,390 households in need of relief assistance. A total of 18,224 households in Mulanje; 84,106 in Chikwawa; 23,498 in Nsanje; and 13,262 in Phalombe were amongst the heavily affected households within the districts. In total, 32,935 people had been displaced, with 115,388 hectares of farming land washed away and 51,023 livestock lost.

On 11 June 2022, YONECO distributed relief items to survivors of Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Ndamela in Nsanje district.

The exercise was presided over by officials from the Department

of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), District Social Welfare and Officers from YONECO who distributed both food and Non-food relief items to the affected populations.

The Items that were distributed include; water buckets, maize flour, beans, cooking oil, mosquito nets and energy efficient cooking stoves locally known as Chitetezo Mbaula.

"I am happy that I am among the recipients of these items. I lost all I had during the two devastating storms, God bless YONECO," said Liness Samson one of the beneficiaries.

YONECO managed to procure and distribute the relief items with support from Vitol Foundation.

Currently, with the two cyclones, have resulted in over 187,930 households with approximately 845,685 people are in a

devastating situation including physical harm; 40 deaths, 147 injuries, 20 missing persons. Mulanje, Phalombe, Chikwawa and Nsanje are among the heavily affected districts.

In Chikwawa, 84,106 households and 378,477 people were affected, 83,100 households displaced internally, 13 deaths, 19 injuries and 18 missing people; in Mulanje, 18,224 households and 82,008 people were affected, 19,757 households were displaced with 6 deaths and 32 injuries and in Phalombe 13,262 households and 59,679 people were affected, 3,911 households displaced, 4 deaths and 5 injuries and in Nsanje, 23,498 households and 117,490 people affected. 44,355 people displaced.

One Woman, Two Cyclones and three Children

By Titus Linzie



Insert: Melina Ngodzi carrying her package during the distribution exercise in Mulanje

Melina Ngodzi is a 28-year-old single mother of three who hails from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Njema in Mulanje district. Her children are two boys and a girl who are 7, 5 and 2 years old respectively.

Melina is a standard 5 drop out and got married to a bicycle repairer at the age of 17. Melina describes her life as one that is full of downs. Melina explained that her life finally turned from bad to worse following the devastating Tropical Storm Ana in January, 2022 and Tropical Cyclone Gombe in March, 2022.

“The first disaster [Tropical Storm Ana] mainly affected our crop fields and partially damaged our house. Then, the second one completely destroyed our house, property and some food which we stored from last year’s harvest,” explained Melina.

Melina recalls one beautiful Monday morning when her husband of 11 years left home to fend for the family with a promise to return before sunset. Heartrendingly, this was the last time the family saw him. Later, there were confirmations

that the husband migrated to the neighbouring Mozambique.

Fortunately, Melina’s became one of the 500 households which benefited from the distribution of food and non-food relief items from YONECO on 28 May, 2022. The gesture was made possible with financial support from Vitol Foundation through Empowering for Resilience, Mitigation and Protection of the Youth, Women and Children Survivors of Cyclone Ana (ERMP) Project. The hamper for each household comprised of cooking oil, maize flour, blankets, salt, an energy efficient cooking stove, washing soap and mosquito nets.

“Am so thankful to YONECO. This is something I cannot afford on my own,” said Melina as tears of joy trekking down her cheeks.

It has been noted that various socioeconomic challenges which natural disasters cause, perpetuate Gender Based Violence (GBV). Such occurrences further destabilize family life as many men abdicate their responsibilities and leave their spouses and children to simply fend for themselves elsewhere.

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