



Youth Net and Counselling

YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

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About Us

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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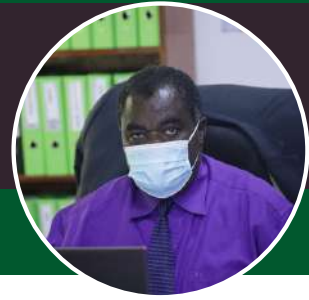
Our Programmes

- 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.



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C/o Youth Leadership Development Centre
Along M3 Zomba-Lilongwe RD
Next to Calvary Family Church
P.O Box 471, Zomba, Malawi.

Executive Director's Note...



Greetings dear reader,

....with MacBain Mkandawire

The new year is slowly moving away from us as a total of eight full months of 2022 have now gone. This is a year that has seen the country go through a lot of drama, grief as well as so many ups and downs both on the social and economic spheres of life. Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe, cholera outbreaks, corruption scandals, power outages (with serious blame games), war in Ukraine and other natural and manmade disasters that we have brought down economies.

Moving this far into the year, it is important to sit back and contemplate on progress, or lack thereof, in our state of affairs. Many a time, we tend to point fingers at others over failure. However, we fail to comprehend our own short comings.

For this month, let us reflect on socioeconomic development of our society and young people. Key to this is narrowing down to how the youth are working towards improving their own growth and development. The youth need to seriously take a stock of what they are doing to enhance their wellbeing and their contributing to the development of their societies. One thing that is spoken of but not given much thought or action is a change of our mindset and this cannot be stressed enough. We should seriously think about what one can achieve with just the right frame of mind.

Unfortunately, most young people want success but they are not willing to do the hard work that is associated with success. There have been arguments on various platforms especially on social media asserting that young people get frustrated and then indulge in delinquent behaviors like alcohol and substance abuse. We need to call a spade a spade and realize that this train of thought has led us into more trouble than we can ever imagine.

The big question is, “after drinking or smoking, have we solved the problem?” It is a fact that the economy is hard and unemployment is high, but economic challenges cannot be solved but aggravated by heavy drinking and drug substance abuse. As young people, we need to reflect in terms of how we use the social media.

Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter have become spaces for social gossip, character assassination and showing off. It has also become an arena where most people spend irreplaceable time browsing through materials or content that is not irrelevant. Very few people will use social media for marketing or learning. We need to seriously reflect on this as well.

Socially, the circle of friends we keep have huge influence on what we can ably do and when. A critical question is, 'what will the circle of friends you keep contribute to your socioeconomic development?'. If the circle of friends you have is of those who major in complaining, you will obviously be complaining the rest of your life as well. This is the case because complaining becomes a common denominator for your group. On the other hand, if your circle of friends is that of people who are industrious, innovative and achievers, you will obviously be industrious, creative and a go-getter as well.

Most young people force themselves to appease others or show off that they have made it when in fact this is far from the mark. The lifestyle of wanting to impress others has led a lot of young people to spend beyond their means. By the end of the day, they regret all this. This mindset has to change for young people develop and take up the mantle as leaders of today. How may this be achieved one might ask? For starters, young people need to learn how to start spending time on planning and be able to project where they would want to be in the next 2, 5 to 10 years and so on. Next, do not only plan, start devising ways on how to implement the plan and this also involves saving the little money you get by sacrificing some of the pleasures that you are craving for with the understanding that once you accomplish your goal, you will be able to enjoy these pleasures.

Another pointer is to ensure that you are living within your means, as alluded to earlier in this write-up. One thing that is crippling the development of so many young people nowadays is the tendency to impress others even if it means spending all the money you have. Unfortunately, this is also affecting other aspects of life such as relationships, friendships and families since people are being attracted to the material benefits such that it is becoming hard to find relationships or friendships that are built on values and morals.

If the young people are to contribute to any meaningful form of development whether socially or economically, they need to adopt principles that foster the spirit of saving and investing. Education for life should be promoted and not education for employment. From the household, parents should learn to incorporate children in various entrepreneurship ventures in order to help them to think outside the box and become entrepreneurs themselves. Give them the basics that money does not come easy but one has to work for the money and success they yearn for in life.

Money does not grow on trees. Academically, students should also be given the tools to think outside the box in terms of how they can meaningfully become successful outside of the classroom thinking. There are many investment opportunities presenting themselves that are going to waste such as the making of briquettes as the country is looking for cleaner energy sources and these could be acted upon. The small things make the biggest difference. As a people, we need to rethink and reset in every aspect of our lives in order to move forward. As you begin the month of September, choose to be great.



13:38

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Community Leaders Commit to Empower the Youth in Ntcheu

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Participants during the youth empowerment session.

Youth development is key to the country's development. It has been noted that the saying "youths are leaders of tomorrow" has been making a lot of youth not to take part in developmental activities in their communities as they claim to still be waiting for their time which in most cases does not come. Youth empowerment is different from youth development because development is centred on developing individuals, while empowerment is focused on creating greater community change and relies on the development of individual capacity.

Against this background, YONECO conducted a youth empowerment session with community members at Machira village T/A Kwataine in Ntcheu district .

participated in the session. In attendance were three chiefs from the same area.

During the session, the youth were encouraged to be active in all developmental activities that are taking place in their areas. They were also briefed on risky behaviours such as premarital and unsafe sex, and drug and substance abuse that prevent them from actively participating in developmental activities. They were also encouraged to access YFHS from the nearest health facilities.

The chiefs were encouraged to accommodate youth in different developmental committees and ensure that they are also holding decision-making positions. YONECO received a service demand from the community of Machira in TA Kwataine in recognition for youth empowerment.

"We are so thankful for YONECO for organizing such a gathering. We have learned a lot from the session and as leaders we will ensure that the youth are engaged and involved to participate in youth empowerment programs.

Village head Nzeru said that the session enhanced knowledge and skills regarding issues of youth involvement in different developmental activities as they are leaders of today, not tomorrow; provided they have been given an opportunity. The sessions attracted 65 people where male condoms were also distributed to the youth on demand. Youth club members from four (4) youth clubs namely; Mgirizano, Jolijo Youth Power, Titukulane and Make Our Village Light (MOVIL

YONECO Conducts GBV Awareness Session at Kapeni School

By Enalah Msukwa



Insert: District Manager for Blantyre Enalah Msukwa addressing the pupils during the session in Blantyre.

YONECO conducted a Gender Based Violence (GBV) awareness session at Kapeni Primary school in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Kapeni in Blantyre.

The session was conducted to help the learners understand various forms of GBV to ensure that they are able to prevent and report such cases.

As YONECO, we strongly believe that teaching children about the dangers of GBV at a tender age will enable them to successfully transition into responsible adults.



Further to this, reporting of GBV cases is also key as the survivors get the necessary psychosocial support while the perpetrators are brought to book to ensure that they should not further victimise the survivors and other unsuspecting children.

YONECO Joins Partners in Commemorating DAC in Nsanje

By Jaqueline Holla

YONECO joined partners and community members in commemorating the Day of the African Child in Nsanje district at a function that was held on 13 August, 2022 at Lulwe Primary School Ground in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Ndamela.

The function was presided over by the Chairperson of Nsanje District Council, Rose Makaiyi.

YONECO showcased its interventions that are being implemented to enhance the rights and welfare of the youth, women and children in Malawi.



Insert: District stakeholders who took part in the commemoration event in Nsanje.

The Day of the African Child is an annual commemoration event that is aimed at raising awareness about the issues that affect children in the continent. The Day is widely commemorated on 16 June every year but Nsanje organized its district commemoration event on 13 August.

This year, the Day of the African Child was celebrated under the theme; "Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practice since 2013".

Thamanda Youth Club Members Reaping the Fruits of their Sweat

By Patrick Makonde



Insert: Thamanda Youth Club members in of of their maize fields

Members of Thamanda Youth Club from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Chanthunya in Balaka district have started benefitting from Youth and Agriculture Initiative which YONECO, in partnership with the District Youth Office, introduced in the area.

Members of Thamanda Youth Club have managed to venture into various small scale businesses after accessing soft loans from the funds which the group realized after selling their farm produce.



With support from YONECO and Balaka District Youth Office, Thamanda Youth Club realized substantial profits from the cultivation of maize, groundnuts and soya beans during the 2020/2021 Agriculture season.

The group is among the youth clubs that are benefitting from the initiative in various districts in a bid to enhance socioeconomic welfare of young people in Malawi.

The initiative mainly focuses on provision of technical support and capacity strengthening of the youth in agribusiness.

By Alinafe Nyasulu

Internship Spotlight



I am Daniel Chivwala. Currently, I am pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science - Development Studies at the University of Livingstonia. Based on our school calendar, students are attached to various institutions where they are tasked to apply what they learnt in class to real life situations and learn from the host organizations as well.

Thus, between June and July 2022, I was attached to YONECO as a Programmes Intern and I was stationed in Chikwawa district where the organization has a satellite office.

In this period, as an aspiring social worker, I have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills through the practical experience and consistent support I got from my immediate supervisor. Serving as an Intern at YONECO further brought about my resourcefulness in as far as social work is concerned.

I would like to urge my fellow students who are doing their industrial attachments not to take such arrangements for granted as they mark the beginning of a whole new chapter in one's career.

I am Chimwemwe Mtika. Currently, I am pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences-MUBAS. Based on our school curriculum, students are attached to various organizations in their third year of university where they are tasked to apply what they learnt in class to real life situations.

Consequently, on 15 July 2022 I was attached to YONECO as a reporter and I was stationed in Zomba district where the organization has a radio station and am expected to finish my internship on 15 October 2022.

In this period, as an aspiring journalist, I have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills through the practical experience and consistent support I got from my supervisor as well as my co-workers. Serving as an Intern at YFM has really helped me to boost my confidence as I am able to interview as well as interact with various people in all works of life. Not only that, this has also helped me to put in practice whatever I learnt from class and avoid to be theoretical.

I would like to urge my fellow students who are doing their internship at various organizations not to take such arrangements for granted as they mark the beginning of a whole new chapter in one's career and it is the time to show case their skills.

I am Justice Katema. Currently, I am pursuing a Diploma in journalism at Malawi University of Business and Applied sciences (MUBAS CEC). Based on our school calendar, students are attached to various institutions where they are tasked to apply what they learnt in class to real life situations and learn from the host organizations as well.

On 15 July 2022, I joined YONECO as an Intern in Zomba district where the organization's headquarters is situated.

In this period, as an aspiring Journalist, I have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills through the practical experience and consistent support I got from my immediate supervisor. Serving as an Intern at YONECO has helped in shaping my career of journalism.

I would like to urge my fellow students who are doing their industrial attachments not to take such arrangements for granted as they mark the beginning of a whole new chapter in one's life career.

The 2022 International Youth Day Commemoration Event



the consistent support I got from my immediate supervisor. Serving as an intern at YONECO has shaped my career.

I would like to urge my fellow students who are also doing internship not to take this internship for granted. This will also add value in the next chapter of their lives.



I am Timothy Peter. Currently, I am pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in journalism at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS). Based on our school calendar, students are attached to various institutions where they are tasked to apply what they learnt in class to real life situations and learn from the host organizations as well.

Thus, between July and October 2022, I was attached to YONECO as a reporter based at the Headquarters.

As an aspiring journalist, I have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills through the practical experience and consistent support I got from my supervisor, editors and the rest of the staff at the organization. Serving as an Intern at YONECO has further cemented my skills and capabilities in journalism.

I therefore would like to urge my fellow students who are doing their industrial attachments not to take such arrangements for granted as they mark the beginning of a whole new chapter in one's career.

YONECO in partnership with Trocaire joined the Malawi nation and the rest of the globe in commemorating the International Youth Day (IYD) that was held on 12 August, 2022 at Civo Stadium in Lilongwe.

sessions on drug and substance abuse, SRHR as well as GBV.

Further to this, YONECO also capitalized on the presence of the youth to publicize its toll-free lines for child helpline -116; Drug and Substance Abuse Hotline - 6600, the Youth Helpline - 393, and the GBV Crisis Line (5600) which is being operated with support from Trocaire and other partners.

YONECO and Trocaire mounted a pavilion where the two organizations shared with young people various interventions that have a bearing on young people's welfare. Among other things, young people were engaged on issues of climate change, Gender Based Violence (GBV), and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

The event was also graced by the presence of the President of the republic of Malawi, His Excellency Dr. Lazarus Chakwera and other government officials and heads of various institutions.

The engagement with young people on the pavilion was fruitful and a total of 76 young people (24 F; 52 M) attended group counselling

This year, the IYD was commemorated under the theme; 'Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages.'

Internship Spotlight



I am Emily M'mangisa doing bachelor of arts in Journalism at Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences(MUBAS).

Based on our school calendar, students are attached to various institutions where they are asked to apply what they learnt in class to real life situations and learn from the host organizations as well.

I joined YONECO on 15 July 2022 at its headquarters in Zomba as an intern.

During the period that I have been here I have acquired a lot of knowledge and skills through practical experiences and

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Drug & Substance Abuse
Hotline - Call 6600



A New Adult Literacy Centre for Women Opens in Balaka

By Patrick Makonde



Insert: Some of the women who have enrolled into the programme in the district

Malawi's literacy rate is the fourth in the SADC region and the level is even lower among women who live in rural parts of the country.

Thus, in an effort to ensure that women are fully participating in economic activities, YONECO has been introducing adult literacy programmes.

This year, YONECO has established an additional adult literacy centre in Balaka district. Currently, the centre has enrolled a total of 22 women who are expected to gain literacy and numeracy skills.

"These classes will help me to properly calculate profits and manage my business better. Further to this, my children will also be motivated to work hard in school and shortly, I will be able to check their academic performance." said Mercy Dzimbiri, one of the participants.

YONECO Trains 45 Women in Baking

Economic empowerment of women is key in prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV). Perpetrators of GBV usually take advantage of vulnerabilities like poverty and women's overreliance on men.

As such, economic empowerment of women reduces the susceptibility to GBV and this is why perpetrators of GBV against women and girls always fight to maintain the status quo.

As a way of enhancing socio-economic status of women in Ntcheu District, YONECO conducted a baking training session which targeted various vulnerable groups of women including survivors of GBV and unemployed single mothers. The session was attended by 45 women who are supposed to venture into baking business through loans they will access from their designated Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) which YONECO initiated.



Insert: Members of the VSL group dancing and jubilating after the training session.

"As a single mother, these are the kind of empowerment initiatives that we need to take care of our children and live a comfortable life. Otherwise, we so easily fall prey to abusers when we do not have stable sources of income," explained Jane Chindima.

An assessment which YONECO conducted showed that there is a good market for bakery products in the district. As such, this informed YONECO to equip the women with baking skills so that they should benefit from the opportunity.



Using VSLA Sessions to Break the 'Culture of Silence' on GBV

By Triza Chimasula



Insert: Helpline Field Officer Triza Chimasula (standing) engaging with members of Tayanjane women VSLA group.

Women's Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) are safe spaces which provide a platform for the provision of a holistic empowerment package to women when the monetary component is systematically fused with other sociocultural aspects of their lives.

As such, many cases go unreported and the survivors are left with various issues including psychosocial and physical injuries to deal with. Thus, the session focused on the dangers of GBV and the importance of reporting such cases.

On 21 August 2022, a team of YONECO Helpline Counsellors had a session with members of Tiyanjane Women VSLA at Njonjo Village in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia, Zomba. The session was aimed at addressing the 'culture of silence' on Gender Based Violence (GBV) which thrives on harmful paternalistic cultural norms.

The group was further equipped with information pertaining to how GBV is manifested, how to support survivors and where to report. YONECO Helpline Counsellors also shared the following toll-free helpline numbers which include; GBV Crisis Line - 5600; Child Helpline - 116 and the Youth Helpline - 393.

By Happiness Chanunkha



**VSLA Key To
Enhancing Women
Empowerment**

Small things matter in enhancing social economic development of the youth, women and children. Mr. Chanunkha, our district facilitator has been key in facilitating establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in Zomba to empower women socially and economically.

These groups are also avenues for discussing parenting issues, Gender Based Violence (GBV), HIV and AIDS, as well as personal growth and development. In addition to this, adult literacy is also integrated in the systems.

VSLA Transforms the Life of Felista Pensulo.

By Patrick Makonde



Insert: Felista Pensulo standing in her vegetable crop garden which she established after getting a loan from the VSL

Felista Pensulo is a 45-year-old single mother of four who hails from Kapile Village in the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Mpulula, Traditional Authority (T/A) Nsamala in Balaka district.

Life has not been easy for Felista after her husband, the sole provider of the family, left her for another woman in 2018. The turning point in her life came when she was identified as one of the beneficiaries of YONECO's women empowerment initiative. Thus, Felista was registered as a member of a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) which YONECO initiated in her village.

Before Felista got a soft loan from the group, YONECO trained her in financial literacy and agribusiness. The training helped her to properly analyze and understand her comparative advantage. Thus, after getting a soft loan from the VSLA, Felista successfully ventured into small scale farming. Felista cultivates various vegetables mainly tomatoes and chilli pepper which she grows all year round as she uses the nearby Liwawadzi river to irrigate her crops during the dry season.

The venture has helped Felista to pay back the loan she got from her group and she has also managed to extend her farmland. Further to this, Felista states that her life has tremendously improved within a short period of time.

“I am now able to pay tuition fees for all my children and I also manage to provide them with three decent meals a day,” explained Felista

Felista explained that she is currently serving some money to buy a treadle pump to easily water her crops as she is currently using watering canes for irrigation.

“VSLA is a game changer and I would like to urge all women to join VSLAs that are in their areas” added Felista.

Engaging Children in Building a VAC-free Generation

By Jaqueline Holla



Insert: Project Officer for YONECO in Nsanje Jacqueline Holla (In orange vest) during the VAC awareness session.

Violence Against Children (VAC) is among the factors that hinder the progress of many children in Malawi. Heartrendingly, one in five girls and one in seven boys experience sexual violence.

Thus, in our efforts towards ensuring that children are protected from such vices we raise awareness about the dangers of VAC and how it is manifested, strengthening the capacity of stakeholders and community systems to ably respond and prevent VAC. We also reach out to children with necessary information that is intended to help them to understand VAC and report such incidences.

Recently, YONECO conducted a VAC awareness session at Nsanje Catholic Primary School which is in the area of Traditional Authority Malemia. The session was attended by a total of 235 learners (123 boys and 112 girls). The activity was conducted in collaboration with officers from the District Social Welfare and Nsanje Police Victim Support Unit.

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire states that the approach helps to ensure that children should successfully transition into adulthood with a high level of integrity and a sense of responsibility.

“Preventing VAC starts with giving boys and girls enough information about the vice at a tender age so that they should grow up with the knowledge that violence is bad and it has no place in the society,” explains MacBain Mkandawire.

YONECO Conducts GBV Awareness Session at Ludwe School

By Blessings Chinula



Insert: Project Officer for YONECO Blessings Chinula (standing) during the awareness

Utale is among the areas in Balaka district that register high rates of Gender Based Violence (GBV). Most of the registered cases are perpetrated against women and girls and they include forced child marriages, sexual harassment and child sexual exploitation among others.

Thus, it is against this backdrop that YONECO conducted a GBV awareness session at Ludwe Primary School at Utale in the area Traditional Authority (T/A) Nkaya in the district. The activity targeted both male and female learners at the school to know about the dangers of GBV and the importance of reporting such cases to authorities.

The learners were made aware of various GBV reporting channels at various levels at community and district level. Further to this, YONECO also publicized its national toll-free child helpline (116) and the GBV crisis-line (5600).

The activity was also facilitated by officials from the Balaka Districts Social Welfare Office and the Malawi Police Service.

A trustful relationship, A Turning Point from Destructive Lives.

By Richard Nkhonjera

The living conditions of children who are connected to the streets is filled with difficulties and often related to drug abuse, violence, crime, family disruption, abandonment, disease, prostitution, being in conflict with the law and so forth.

The living conditions of children on the street are so pathetic for them to survive. Unfortunately, the streets where they live and work are prone to activities many dangers and effects on their health.

The problem of children living in and on the streets is both a global and national issue. Even at district level, the issue is prevalent and Ntcheu district has not been spared as it also has children who are living in and on its streets.

Although street children are viewed as victims, thieves and naughty by society, YONECO approach them with effort of building trustful relationships, negotiation and support; all of which are gained before the children receive any help. The trustful relationship enables the children to patronize YONECO DIC for child-related sessions such as child rights.

Through these sessions, children are able to refrain from being involved in any form of violations. Ntcheu has a total of 19 children who are living in and on the streets and out of them, all were once supported to enroll back to school but only 3 attend classes.

There are several types of turning points that claim the time period of making a choice important. In terms of time, a person can be gradually evolved to the point of making a decision about a role choice; for some people, the decision to resign a role occurred gradual over many months or even years.

“I feel like I am old enough to go back to STD 3 while am 14 years, hence I would like if I can be attached to a local artisan of either Tin smithing or mechanic”. Said one of children connected to the street. Others experience a more abrupt and dramatic turning point and YONECO anticipates more turning through sessions.

children from the streets around Nsanje Boma. Out of the total, four children were from Mozambique.

During the exercise, two men and a woman were nabbed by the police for alleged child labour and exploitation.

28 children Withdrawn from the streets around Nsanje Boma

The street is no place for a child to live in. Children who are connected to the streets face a lot of challenges and they are exposed to a number of hazards and abuses. Heartrendingly,

many small towns and major cities of Malawi have become homes to thousands of children. On 18 August, 2022, YONECO in partnership with the Malawi Police Service and the Department of Social Welfare Services withdrew 28 children

According to an assessment that was conducted after the exercise, most of the children decided to call the streets their home due to orphanhood, poverty and parental neglect. Currently, all the children have been repatriated back to their homes.

Reaching Children with Human Rights Information Sessions

By Shupikayi Singanyama



Children experience insidious forms of violence in the places they are supposed to be most protected. No matter the circumstance, every child has the right to be protected from violence, exploitation and abuse.

Protection starts from letting the children know their rights and places where they could

report all forms of abuse. As such, YONECO has intensified child rights sessions in schools and youth Drop in Centres (DICs).

This week, a total of 12 children are participating in a human rights sessions that are being conducted at Mulanje DIC.

YONECO Capacitates Caregivers in Child Protection

By Wongani Mfunu

As one way of strengthening child protection and development, YONECO has trained community caregivers who will be facilitating sessions at Mwachande Children's Corner which is in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda in Mangochi district.

The training is among the interventions that are aimed at establishing and strengthening community child protection systems. The training is expected to contribute towards the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse among young people in the area.

Child Corners are safe spaces where children play and at the same time get support from caregivers on issues that affect them.



Insert: Some of the caregivers and children during the training at Mwachande Children's Corner

In addition to this, children also access life skills education which enables them to make right choices as they grow up.

The interventions is among the various activities which YONECO is implementing under Empowering Young People to Fight Drug and Alcohol Abuse Project in Mangochi district.

The project is being funded by NCA-DCA and it targets young people who are within the age bracket of 10 and 24 years.

Margret, A Rose that is Sprouting from Concrete

By Grant Dulla

Success is earned' and the life of 16-year-old Margret Mdala who is a Standard 7 learner at Mpondasi primary School in Mangochi district corroborates this adage.

Margret was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth. As a young female student, Margret has been lacking a lot of things.

Poverty was a constant obstacle that stood between failure and her dreams. At the age of 14, Margret contemplated dropping out of school in order to get married.

This was a time when her parents abruptly said they cannot manage to care of her. Here, the message was clear to her, **'find yourself a husband to take care of you.'**



Insert: Margret at school in one of the learning sessions.

Despite her resistance, Margret's friends kept on encouraging her to simply get married. A few months later, Margret was at the verge of giving in to the demands. Margret was slowly getting convinced that

maybe heavy drinking or drug abuse could be better options to consider in order to escape reality. Fortunately, YONECO with support from NAC-DCA under a project called 'Empowering young People to Fight Drug and Alcohol abuse' established a parenting circle around Margret's village.

Members of the group noticed how Margret was struggling to get various necessities. The parenting circle members agreed to start providing support to Margret until she finishes her studies.

This has ignited Margret's dreams and fruits of her hard work are now being seen. Margret's current outstanding performance in class has made her teachers and members of her village's parenting group happy and proud of her.

An advertisement for the YONECO Cultural Troupe. The main image shows several people in green and white traditional attire performing outdoors. There are three circular inset images: one showing a person playing a large drum, another showing a person playing a smaller drum, and a third showing a group of people. The text on the left reads 'YONECO CULTURAL TROUPE' in large white letters, followed by 'EXPERTS IN: Community Mobilization, Advocacy, SBCC'. At the bottom, there is contact information for bookings.

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CULTURAL
TROUPE**

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Advocacy
SBCC**

FOR BOOKINGS
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Youth Net and Counselling
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Tel: 01 525 764 - 01 526 199
Email: executive@yoneco.org.mw | stationmanager@yoneco.org | web: www.yoneco.org

YONECO Presents Youth SRHR Project Progress to Lilongwe District AIDS Coordination Committee

By Shadreck Sindiza



Insert: Programme Support Manager for YONECO responsible for the central region Hughes Munthali (Standing) presenting the project to the DACC in Lilongwe.

Two weeks after introducing a new project called 'Connect Malawi Plus: Action for Adolescent Girls and Young Women' to Lilongwe District Health Management Team (DHMT), YONECO has presented a report on the progress that has been made during the inception phase of the project to Lilongwe District AIDS Coordination Committee (DAC).

In response to the presentation, members of the Lilongwe DACC applauded YONECO for being up-to-date and flexible after incorporating Kawale as one of the project's additional targeted health facilities.

Kawale was not initially among the targeted health service delivery points but was later embraced after engagements with stakeholders.

Connect Malawi Plus: Action for Adolescent Girls and Young Women' is a three-year project, which is being implemented in Lilongwe with financial support from ViiV Healthcare. The project seeks to provide biomedical, behavioral and structural interventions to targeted group of 2, 250 adolescent girls and young women, 30 health providers and 30 peer mobilisers.

Tithandizane National Helpline Services

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The Roll-out of 'Making Community Voices Count in Mining Areas' Project

By Wongani Mfunne



Insert: Stakeholders who attended the introductory meeting in Mangochi district.

YONECO has introduced a new project which is aimed at enhancing the rights of communities around Njereza Mining Sites in the area of Traditional Authority Mponda in Magochi district.

The project which is being funded by Southern Africa Trust (SAT) is expected to amplify the voices of communities and beneficiaries of mining activities in the district, and enhance the capacity of community members to demand transparency and accountability from miners and mining companies.

During an inception meeting with members of Mangochi District Environmental Subcommittee Committee (DESC), stakeholders expressed their commitment to ensure successful implementation of the project. Further to this, the committee also requested YONECO to address various Gender Based Violence (GBV) related issues in mining.

The project which is titled 'Making Community Voices Count in Mining Areas' will be implemented for a period of 1 year.

Report Gender Based Violence

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EU Ambassador Visits YONECO to Assess Spillover Effects of Mozambique Insurgence

By Grant Dulla



Insert: Skinnebach posing together with YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire and YONECO Mangochi Office team.

On 24 August 2022, a delegation led by the Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to Malawi, Rune Skinnebach, visited YONECO to assess if the unrest in the Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado would have any spillover effects to Malawi.

The delegation held the meeting at YONECO office in Mangochi district. The officials focused on how the conflict across the border would affect issues of child labor and human trafficking in general. Further to this, the meeting also discussed a number of strategies for strengthening social protection systems in communities around the Mozambican border.

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, acknowledged the importance of the visit to the people of Mangochi especially the youth, women and children who are mostly vulnerable to various internal and external shocks.

“It is exciting that YONECO was listed as a focal stakeholder on issues social protection. The topic of discussion was an interesting entry point on matters which YONECO can take up,” explained Mkandawire.

The meeting was concluded with a number action points that were agreed upon in order to strengthen security and social protection of communities in the targeted areas.



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YONECO

By SGT Rhodrick Masina - Research and Gender Officer, Ntcheu Prison Station



Insert: Flora Malemia drilling the female inmates with hygiene and sanitation skills.

The sun is harshly vibrating on the hardly supplied ballets and Angolan head dresses. It is just around 1:30 pm, but considering how hot the weather is, one may think we have been given a test of how October will be, yes, very hot, as never before. Business is trading normally at Ntcheu Prison Station.

The female section is well prepared to host the visitors from YONECO - Ntcheu District Office. Their coming is as a result of a cordial working relationship with the Station's Gender Office. Finally, the ever smiling skilled female official from YONECO, Flora Malemia, is on our campus. Filled with mouthwatering skills, ready to drill the 16 female inmates.

In her presentation, she taught the inmates how they can take good care of themselves as women whilst in prison. This includes having their baths and regular general body cleaning, so that they should avoid contacting diseases that come about because of inadequate hygiene and poor sanitation.

She further reminded the inmates of the practical ways of making handmade sanitary pads which they already taught them during the last visit early this year. During the initial visit, YONECO supported the inmates with starter pack materials after a three-day training on production of

After the fruitful presentation, the inmates thanked YONECO for its wavering support towards their welfare. The inmates further asked the institution to consider visiting again to re-train them on sanitary pad making and reusable face masks.

In his remarks, the Station Officer, Superintendent James Kafamtandala, appreciated the relationship between the two institutions. He further echoed the request to YONECO Office to consider offering more trainings, saying the station is benefitting a lot. The visiting officer assured the Station Officer that she will extend the request to her superiors

YONECO Intensifies SRHR Sessions with Young People in Machinga District

YONECO in Machinga district has intensified Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) engagement sessions with in and out-of-school young people around Ntaja in Machinga district amidst rising cases of unintended teen pregnancies in the area.

During the sessions, young people indicated that frequent stock out of SRHR commodities and lack of consistent information among young people are among the contributing factors to an increase in the number of teen pregnancies in the area.

The sessions also focused on child marriages and harmful cultural practices that are prevalent in the area. Young people bemoaned the existence of some practices which expose them to SRHR challenges like contraction of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV as well as teenage pregnancies.

One of the key action points that were agreed with the young people was to schedule engagement meetings with community stakeholders in order to spearhead the process of modifying harmful sociocultural practices.



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**GBV Crisis
Line 5600**

**Youth
Helpline 393**

**Drug &
Substance
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Men Urged to Be Agents of Change in the Fight Against GBV

By Shupikayi Singanyama



Insert: YONECO officers engaging with men who operate at a lorry taxi rank in the district

Men are key partners in the process of transforming harmful sociocultural norms and practices that perpetuate Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the society. In Mulanje district, men have also bemoaned that they are continuously left out in the process of devising mechanisms for ending the vice.

The men expressed these sentiments during an engagement meeting which YONECO organized in the district.

In a bid to contribute towards ending GBV, YONECO engages both men and boys as change agents to reach their fellows in schools, workplaces and communities.

As agents of change, men and boys are involved in awareness raising, providing support to survivors of GBV, as well as promoting the rights of girls and women.



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Capacitating the Youth to Embrace Tree Planting and Protecting Culture

Grant Dulla



Insert: Some of the youths who attended the tree nursery management training in Mangochi.

In a bid to ensure that young people are actively participating in the fight against climate change, YONECO has started training members of various youth clubs from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Katuli in Mangochi in tree nursery management.

Just like many parts of Malawi, Katuli area has suffered wanton cut down of trees thereby vindicating the need for vigorous afforestation activities. Thus, building the capacity of young people to plant and manage forest trees is one way of nurturing and ensuring sustainability of a tree planting and protecting culture at community level.

“Planting trees is one thing and ensuring the survival of the trees that have been planted is also another and all these two stages are very significant in afforestation,” said YONECO’s Project Officer, Grant Dulla.

It is expected that the youth will use the skills they will acquire in these trainings to grow enough seedlings that will be ready for transplanting in the forthcoming tree planting season.





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