



Youth Net and Counselling

# YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

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Issue 11

Volume 11



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## Our Vision

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



## Our Mission

non-governmental organization that is empowering youth, women and children; promoting good health and human rights, and democracy; mitigating and adapting effects of climate change; conducting research for evidence-based programming and advocacy.

## Our values

Integrity  
Teamwork  
Confidentiality  
Respect for human dignity  
Transparency and Accountability



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## Production Team

**Layout and Design**  
Wilson Mkandawire

**Supporting Editor**  
Daniel Chikatentha

**Contributors**  
Jacob Phiri  
Grant Dulla  
Larah Mbewe  
Keston Mulebe  
George Mlowoka  
Funny Chilembo  
Chimango Chingwali  
Richard Nkhonjera  
Wongani Mfunu  
Jacqueline Holla

**Media & Communications Manager**  
Benson Nkhoma Somba

**Executive Director**  
MacBain Mkandawire

## Our Programmes

- Youth Development.
- Child Protection and Development.
- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.
- Governance and Human Rights.
- Media, Collaboration, Networking and Coordinating.
- Climate Change and Disaster Management.
- Institutional Management.
- Research and Documentation

# Executive Director's Note...



Greetings Dear Reader,

*....with MacBain Mkandawire*

We are already month 11 and with only one month to the end of the year. Fundamental questions have to be answered in relation to how we managed to protect women, girls and children. We are beginning the month with the famous 19 days of Activism to Prevent Abuse and violence against children and youth. While this is in action, we note the abuse and violence unleashed upon children connected to the street.

They are normally condemned as a nuisance. Very little attention has been paid to the plight of street connected children in Malawi. "Street-connected children should not be viewed or treated solely as victims or as delinquents, but should be seen first and foremost as rights-holders" – (CSC Advocacy Tool Kit, UK). The attention has been on what they have done wrong and not on how we can help them.

we are not spending time thinking about push and pull factors for the street connected children. As the Consortium for the Street Children convenes from November 1 to 4, we need to think about the recommendation from the Committee on the Rights of the children (Concluding remarks) and how are we relating as a country.

Malawi estimates over 4,000 children live or work on the street. The question is how are we managing the processes. Children continue to flood the streets with very limited interventions. We implore the Government to conclude the strategic framework for the street connected children. It has been four years of discussions and one wonders if we are really serious about the plight of the children connected to the street.

The commitment of the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare seem to be very limited and so is the commitment of the development partners. UNICEF, a child development system has noted that they will look at Government programmes. We have seen the business community wanting to support only things that would benefit them. The focus has been how can we manage the street connected children so that we protect our business. These are children as well and need protection, development and enjoy their rights.

Street connected children need holistic and not piecemeal approaches. We need to address their health, education, economic and personal skills development if we are going to make progress with these efforts. While addressing these, we also need to enhance the security of the street connected children and also the security of the citizens around the street connected children.

Child rights advocacy has received a lot of criticism that there is too much attention on the girl child and possibly boys are feeling out of place. Let us address this as boys. The protection of the girl child is protecting a precious item or property for boys. Leave it or take it. Girl child protection is in the interest of the boys as well. Girls are partners or wives of boys today

We need to ensure that your girls or future partners are not exploited by older men. We also want to ensure that you have partners that are educated, empowered and contribute to both family and society. So join us to protect your girls. However, we may want to get around a way of how as boys we can help protect our girls. While this is the case, it should be highlighted that boys too have issues. Mental health is a real challenge for boys in schools and communities. The expectation for boys is too much such that it affects their growth and development. So actors in child rights, let us refocus on the boys as well and develop proper interventions.

On a different note, we should reflect as development partners and actors. Coexistence of the women and men require some serious rethinking of the strategies we are using. We need the boys on board to change the mindset of looking at women as objects. Girls are precious members of the society and therefore we need to spend time working with boys so that they develop positive attitudes towards girls and women. We therefore need to reorganize boys and girls to start working together at a tender age so that they can understand each other.

Feminism ideologies need to be enhanced among the boys at a very tender age. Role modelling would be central at this point in time to get men role models to support the boys and girls at community levels. We need future men that respects the rights of women and this can only be possible if we start engaging boys currently in serious coexistence aspects. We need future men that do not abuse their daughters and enhances women participation. This is only possible with boys empowerment and the question that we all need to answer is how we are going to achieve this.

As the 19 Days of Activism for Prevention of Child and Youth Abuse finishes, we engage in the 16 days of Activism to curb gender-based violence. Preparations are underway for the launch of the same on 25 November 2022. This is the 21st Year of Celebrating the Launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.

A very serious thought has to be in place now to take stock of the many years of activism. We are registering increasing gender based violence cases at various levels and one of the issues that is worrying is more cases are within the workplaces and closed quarters of the families. What has this achieved? What is it that we need to change? Are we winning the war against the vice? If we are not winning what are we missing? Has it become a norm that we do the activism as long as there is funding? Are we aiming at change or we are fighting for supremacy between the funding partners, implementing partners and development NGOs while there are heavy investments in thousands of dollars being spent in the launches.

What is more saddening is that after the launch we seem to have limited support to interventions that emerge after the awareness. We need to engage more. These are simple but hard questions to answer to ensure that we are making progress. At YONECO, we see lots of show off, outperforming and feeling superior in the entire management of the GBV prevention period. Serious reflection is needed on what this achieves. We need to move beyond rhetoric and make meaningful support to women and girls being abused.

Have a wonderful month as you reflect.



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# Empowering the Youth and their Communities to Deal with Alcohol Abuse

By Wongani Mfuno



Insert: Some of the youths who were engaged posing with YONECO officer during the session at Mangochi Vocational Training Centre.

Alcohol and substance abuse usually cause an array of challenges including mental and physical health problems among the abusers. Subsequently, the society has its share of socioeconomic problems as well which directly emanate from the continuous need to deal with the various consequences of alcohol and drug abuse.

Heartrendingly, many young people fail to successfully transition into adulthood as they fall into the alcohol and substance abuse trap at a tender age due to issues of self-esteem and misinformation. It is against this background that YONECO, with funding from NCA-DCA, is currently implementing a project which is aimed at empowering young people to fight against drug and substance abuse.

Among other things, YONECO is strengthening community response systems, equipping the youth with various life skills to resist negative peer pressure as well as raising awareness about the dangers of drug and substance abuse.

As one of way of ensuring that young people have access to support services, YONECO has a toll-free hotline which operates 24 hours and provides referrals services and telephone counselling services on issue pertaining to drug and substance abuse.

# Youth Development

## YONECO Engages Youth on Career Guidance and Counselling in Rumphi

By George Mlowoka



Insert: YONECO Officer (In orange vest) addressing students during the session

On 29 October our Officers in Rumphi conducted a career guidance and counselling session at Chankhomi Community Day Secondary School.

The session was aimed at helping students to set up realistic goals in order to fulfill their aspirations. The participants were urged to remain in school and resist negative peer pressure.

250 students attended the session of which 120 were males and 130 were females.

## Youth as Change Agents in the Quest for Gender Equality

By Wongani Mfune



Insert: YONECO Officer Wongani Mfune (Standing) during the engagement meeting in Mangochi.

Limited access to information is one of the factors which contribute to increased cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) at community level. Thus, YONECO has embarked on promoting equal opportunities for both young men and women through the promotion of gender transformation at various levels in Mangochi district.

In this endeavor, YONECO is engaging young people in secondary schools and tertiary institutions within the district with an aim of imparting the youth with knowledge and skills on how they can advocate for equal opportunities for both men and women in their areas.

Further to this, YONECO has also facilitated the establishment of a Youth Hub at Mangochi Technical College. The hub provides safe space for students to learn and share their knowledge and experiences on various issues that affect them including GBV.



# Internship Spotlight: Lauryn "Patricks" M'banga

## Radio Intern

My name is Lauryn "Patricks" M'banga, I am currently in my final year of my Diploma in Journalism course at the Malawi Institute of Journalism in Blantyre.

I joined YONECO on 19th September, 2022 as an intern in the radio department so that I can learn and gain the much needed knowledge and experience in the next 4 months of my internships. I am also delighted to not only limit myself to my field of practice, but also gaining exposed to other fields that are present at YONECO.

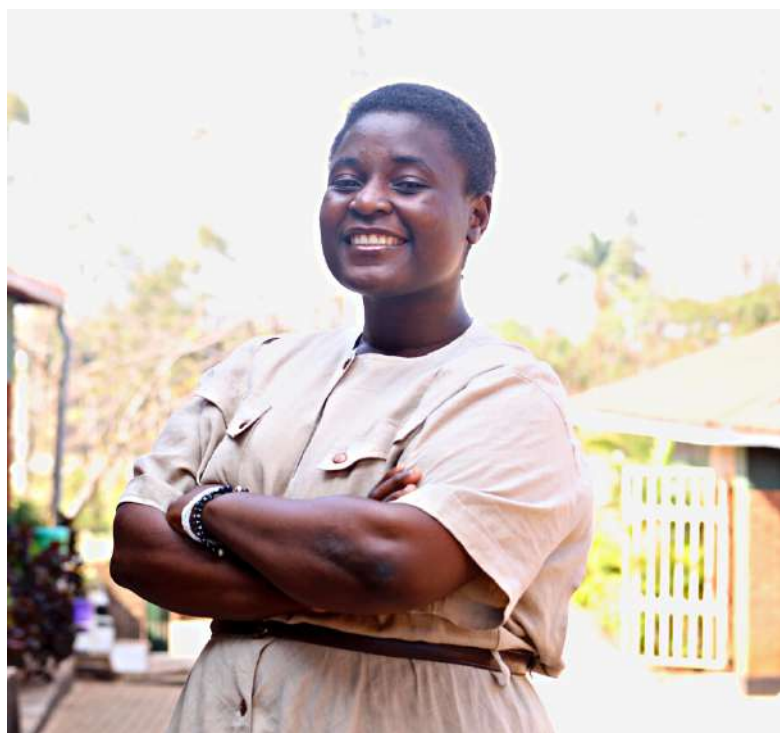
In the first month that I have been with YONECO, I have learnt a lot of things that are aligned in the Journalism industry. I have learnt how to fish out news ideas from already existing news stories and how to come up with unique news ideas. I have also learnt how to write a story for radio broadcasting and a story for an online publication be it Facebook or Website.

I have also learnt how to cover meetings where I was once entrusted to attend a meeting at Zomba District Health Office to write a story on the fourth phase of the polio vaccination campaign that they were yet to conduct at that time.

I have also been featured in a few programs such as Youth and Christianity, Let's Talk show and the *Ticheze* radio play. I also got to participate in a few radio adverts. To be honest, the past few weeks have been the most hectic weeks of life considering that I am just coming from a school environment into a working environment and it hasn't been easy to adjust and adapt but I am learning and getting better. I am looking forward to many more adventures that this industry has to offer.

I am very grateful for this great opportunity because for the past month I have learnt a lot and I am super convinced that there is a lot more to learn as far as this industry is concerned. I believe that by the end of this internship program, I will be well equipped and ready to face what the industry has got to offer.

I would like to urge my fellow youth out there that have completed their studies but are not yet employed, to apply for internship programs in different organizations so that they can gain some experience so that when it is time to face the world, they should excel with the experience and knowledge gained from the internship program. To the youth that are still studying, I would like to urge them to work hard as hard work pays.



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Hotline - Call 6600



# YONECO Engages TBOs in Promotion of Women's Rights

By Grant Dulla



Insert: Some of the men who were reached during the awareness session

A good number of men around Mangochi town earn a living as Taxi Bicycle Operators (TBOs) business (locally known as Kabaza) around the town to make a living.

The work of Kabaza operators involves a lot of travelling within the town and around its townships without fixed schedules. This automatically places the TBOs into the category of people who are hard to reach with information.

As such, there is need to make deliberate efforts towards ensuring that TBOs have adequate information about various issues that affect them. YONECO has embarked on reaching TBOs in various spots where they meet customers in order to get their attention on prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV), HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

There are certain prevailing sociocultural norms which give men a sense of dominance and limit girls and women's bodily autonomy.

As such, this increases the prevalence of child marriages, unintended teen pregnancies, GBV, HIV infections and STIs. As such, meaningful involvement of men in dealing with such issues is key.

Currently, a total of 342 TBOs have been engaged in various awareness and information sharing sessions since March, 2022.

Report Gender Based Violence  
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## Awareness Sessions on Rights and Responsibilities in Zomba

By Keston Mulebe



Insert: A Helpline Officer addressing the community during a hygiene and sanitation session in Njonjo Village, TA Malemia

Officers from the Tithandizane Helpline Services Department conducted a series of human rights awareness sessions in various villages around the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mwambo in Zomba district.

The sessions were held to combat various forms of violence which women and children are subjected to at community level. The sessions mainly focused on demystifying human rights and at the same time helping the community members to understand the associated responsibilities of the rights which they have.

Community members actively participated in the session and posed a number of questions on various key issues and concepts in relation to human rights. The questions were mainly on Gender Based Violence (GBV) as well as on reporting channels and their roles in case management.

Among other things, a good number of participants in all the meetings indicated that, prior to the sessions, they were not aware that human rights have corresponding responsibilities.

Among other villages, the human rights awareness sessions were conducted at Sogoja, Mwendakale, Chopi and Ndiyesamwana in the area. In total, the sessions were attended by 431 community members of which 228 were females and 203 were men.

# YONECO Trains 19 Women in the Production of Briquettes

By Chimango Chigwali



Insert: Some of the women who participated in the training pounding raw materials used to produce briquettes

About 14.87 % of the total population in Malawi has access to electricity. Consequently, the pressure is mounted on forests as people are continuously in need of energy for cooking. Thus, trees are primary sources of cooking energy in form of charcoal and firewood.

The adoption of sustainable and energy efficient sources of energy are critical in the process preventing further degradation of the environment and in building community resilience.

Women are among the groups of people who are being highly affected by the effects of climate change. It is against this background that YONECO, through its Climate Change and Disaster Management Programme, has trained a total of 19 women from Ntcheu district in the production of briquettes for cooking.

The briquettes will help communities to conserve the environment as their production relies on the use of recycled materials. Further to this, the trained participants will also be empowered economically as some of the briquettes will be sold within their communities.

In addition, YONECO further intends to train more women in making energy efficient cooking stoves that will be supplemented by the briquettes.





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## Positive Parenting Key to Adulthood Transition of Young People

By Grant Dulla



Insert: Members of Chiwaula Women's Group during the meeting

Positive parenting is key in ensuring that young people are able to successfully transition into adulthood. Thus, YONECO works with women from rural parts of Mangochi district in a bid to promote positive parenting.

Chiwaula Women's Group is one of the vibrant community parenting forums which YONECO established in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Chimwala in the district. A number of community members are now attesting that the group has been very helpful in terms of promoting positive behaviours and strengthening the bond between them and their children.

Apart from various activities conducted with the women groups, YONECO managed to mainstream other critical issues like nutrition, Gender Based Violence (GBV) as well as Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

## Life Skills Sessions Key to Child Development

By Jacob Phiri



Insert: Some of the learners who patronize the DIC in Machinga

YONECO conducted a life skills education session with children at Ntaja Youth Drop-In Centre in Machinga district.

The session focused on issues pertaining to goal setting and how to resist negative peer pressure.

During the session, the participants were encouraged to set goals and work towards achieving them.

The session was attended by a total of 43 children of which 25 were girls and 18 were boys.



## **Video Showroom Owners Urged To Desist From Admitting Children During Odd Hours**

By Jacqueline Holla



Insert: YONECO officers in conjunction with the Malawi Police during one of the visit at a video showroom in Nsanje

A number of parents and guardians around Tengani Trading Centre in Nsanje District reported to YONECO that their children are spending much time watching films in various video showrooms to the extent that they get home late at night and some even abscond from school.

It is against this background that YONECO collaborated with the Malawi Police Service and other community rights groups in conducting engagement meetings with owners of various video showrooms within the area. YONECO and various stakeholders also conducted a monitoring visit of video showrooms around Gazani, Zyuwaki, Chiku Viano and Makokayo villages in the area.

The visit was conducted to monitor presence of children in the video showrooms. On the other hand, the video showroom owners were also engaged in a bid to discourage them from admitting children during school time or at night.

## **YONECO Conducts Child Labor Sessions in Lilongwe**



Insert: YONECO officers interacting with some of the men in Lilongwe

As a capital city of Malawi, Lilongwe is a very busy city with a lot of business transactions taking place. In an attempt to maximize profits, some unscrupulous business owners seek cheap labor by employing children and this has led to increased cases of child labor in the city.

It is against this background that YONECO conducted awareness session on child labour around Lilongwe market as one way of fighting this depravity that has been normalized.

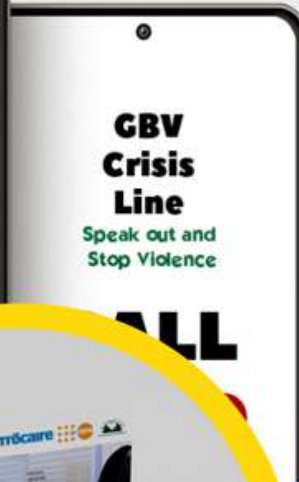
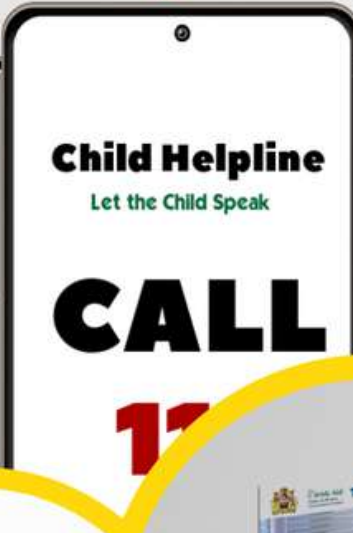
The session was aimed at sensitizing the business community about various legal and policy frameworks that are aimed at preventing child labor in Malawi.

At the end of the session, YONECO urged the participants to use the existing toll-free lines to report child labor activities and other human rights violations.

The session was attended by 33 participants of which 21 were females and 12 were males.



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# YONECO Embarks on Provision of Child Rights Education in Rumphi District

By George Mlowoka



Promotion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is one of YONECO's strategic interventions under Child Development and Protection Programme. Among other benefits, ECD activities help to create a child's foundation for learning, enhances child protection and help to promote good health among children.

Over the years, YONECO has been facilitating the establishment of ECD centres in rural and remote parts of Malawi. However, some centres were reportedly having challenges due to lack of teaching and learning materials. Thus, 2022, YONECO organized a weeklong session for

caregivers from Ntcheu district who were trained in Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources (TALULAR).

During the session, caregivers were trained in making various ECD Centre teaching and learning resources. In total, 13 caregivers from some parts of Ntcheu district attended the training session.

The training is expected to contribute towards improved education outcomes in the targeted areas.

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## YONECO ED Attends High Level Food Security and Nutrition Conference

By Larah Mbewe



Insert: YONECO Executive Director Mr. MacBain Mkandawire (Right) addressing the gathering during a panel discussion in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Executive Director (ED) of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, attended the African Union Meeting on food security and nutrition that was held on the 10 October 2022 at African Union Head Quarters in Adis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The main objective of the meeting was to lobby African Governments to put in place measures that should address issues of food insecurity and hunger.

Present at the meeting was Malawi's Minister of Agriculture Honourable Lowe, who made a presentation for Malawi and YONECO's ED chaired one of the sessions in trying to discuss the issues of hunger and food insecurity.

At this meeting governments agreed that they need to scale up in terms of production of food, the ministry of agriculture should develop good strategies for scaling up the production of food at regional level and that they should develop developmental partners to invest in food security and nutrition programs in Africa.

As an organization which also focuses on humanitarian activities, YONECO has learnt a number of lessons that will be used to strengthen its programming. On the other hand, the broader aspect for Malawi as a country is to ensure that it develops effective programs that address food insecurity.

# Steering Committee for Action for Adolescent Girls and Teen Mothers Project Conducts Field Visit in Mchinji

By Larah Mbewe



Insert: Deputy Minister of Local Government, honourable Halima Daudi with other delegates during the visit in Mchinji

The Steering Committee for Action for Adolescent Girls and Teen Mothers Project conducted a field visit to one of the project's impact areas at Kuselikuvenji Village, Traditional Authority (T/A) Mduwa in Mchinji district.

The committee was led by the Deputy Minister of Local Government, Honourable Halima Daudi.

Among other things, community cadres shared progress that they are making and the impact the project is having in the area.

YONECO trained young people on how to effectively use participatory theatre in promoting the rights and welfare of adolescent girls and teen mothers. In addition to this, YONECO is also using

SASA (Start Awareness Support Action) tool in order to prevent Gender Based Violence (GBV) through community engagement and awareness raising



Insert: Some of the youth who are benefitting from the project during the visit.

The chairperson for Mchinji District Council, Denis Lazaro expressed gratitude on how the project is contributing towards ending child marriages in the area of T/A Mduwa.

The project is being funded by UNFPA and KOICA and YONECO is among the project's implementing partners.

# YONECO Participates in Internet Universality Indicators Awareness Meeting in Blantyre



Insert: Participants posing for a group photo after the meeting in Blantyre

On 26th October, 2022, Malawi joined various African countries during a one-day hybrid meeting that was aimed at creating awareness on Internet Universality Indicators.

A total of 20 invited participants from Malawi attended the meeting of which some convened at Amaryllis Hotel in Blantyre while others directly joined through Zoom from various locations across the country.

The session was organized by the International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) in collaboration with UNESCO.

At national level, YONECO coordinated the meeting in Malawi while PROTEGE QV, Digital Shelter, namTshuwe organized the meeting in Cameroon, Somalia and Namibia respectively.

The participants discussed a number of issues pertaining to the state of digital rights in Malawi and the usage of Internet Universality Indicators.

The meeting was attended by journalists and various officials from government departments and NGOs.

from various government departments, the academia as well as digital rights researchers and defenders.

CIPESA in partnership with UNESCO. At national level, YONECO was entrusted with the task of coordinating the function in Malawi.

## YONECO Participates in Mulhakho Wa Alhomwe Annual Cultural Festival



Insert: YONECO team posing for a photo during the festival

YONECO in collaboration with Mulanje District Health Office (DHO) participated in this year's Mulhakho wa Alhomwe Annual Cultural Festival which was held at Chonde in Mulanje district.

The team facilitated a role modelling session with Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) during an initiation camp which had been organized as one of the festival's activities. Further to this, the team also organized an economic empowerment session with women.



# 393 YOUTH HELPLINE



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## YONECO Conducts Awareness Session on NCDs in Ntcheu

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Some of the people who were reached during the awareness session in Ntcheu

Our team in Ntcheu district conducted an awareness session on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) with community members at Eneya in Ntcheu district.

The session was aimed at promoting healthy living and health seeking behaviour (HSB) among community members.

Participants were made aware of general signs and symptoms of prevalent NCDs in Malawi like diabetes, high blood pressure, as well as cervical and breast cancer among others.

Participants described the session as an eye-opener and avowed to share the information they got with other community members who did not manage to attend the session.

According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) NCDs, such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes, are the leading cause of death worldwide and represent an emerging global health threat. Deaths from NCDs now exceed all communicable disease deaths combined. The session was attended by a total of 25 people of which 4 were men and 21 were women.

## Fighting Cholera Outbreak with More than Medicine



Insert: some community members during the cholera the WASH interactive session

As cholera continues spreading around in some districts across Malawi, YONECO programmes staff are also tirelessly working around the clock in a bid to halt the spread of the disease.

Thus, YONECO has been conducting Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) session at community level since March, 2022 when the Ministry of Health declared a cholera outbreak in Malawi.

On 5 October, our team in Balaka conducted a number of interactive WASH sessions with a number of small groups of people at village level in the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Mchilakwenda, Traditional Authority (T/A) Sawali in the district. The sessions were attended by a total of 80 people.



# Tithandizane National Helpline Services

**Child Helpline 116**

**GBV Crisis Line 5600**

**Youth Helpline 393**

**Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline 6600**



Free and confidential services

## Email us

[drug@yoneco.org](mailto:drug@yoneco.org)

[help@tithandizanehelpline.org](mailto:help@tithandizanehelpline.org)

[gbv@yoneco.org](mailto:gbv@yoneco.org)

Visit [www.tithandizanehelpline.org](http://www.tithandizanehelpline.org)

## Our Services

- Telephone Counselling.
- Face to Face counselling.
- Social Rehabilitation.
- Case Management.
- Safe Places for survivors of GBV and VAWC.



[www.yoneco.org](http://www.yoneco.org)



# YONECO Conducts Community Sensitization Meeting on Climate Change



Insert: A YONECO helpline officer engaging with community members who attended the sensitization meeting at Njonjo village.

The impact of climate change has brought about a number of diverse effects on the welfare of people at community level especially among women and girls in Low Income Countries (LICs) like Malawi. Thus, in a bid to prevent further environmental degradation, YONECO conducted a sensitization meeting with community members at Njonjo Village, Group Village Head (GVH) Chopi in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Malemia in Zomba District.

The session was aimed at promoting awareness on the effects of climate change. During the session, the community members were taught on how to make compost manure which helps in improving soil structure. Further to this, the participants were also encouraged to establish communal woodlots.

The session was attended by 112 people of which 22 were men and 90 were women.



**Call 393 to get information and referrals on HIV and SRHR**





**116**  
CHILD  
HELPLINE



**5600**  
GBV CRISIS  
LINE



**393**  
YOUTH  
HELPLINE



**6600**  
DRUG &  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
HOTLINE

# TITHANDIZANE NATIONAL HELPLINE SERVICES

Free and confidential services

Email:  
[drug@yoneco.org](mailto:drug@yoneco.org) | [help@tithandizanehelpline.org](mailto:help@tithandizanehelpline.org)

### OTHER SERVICES

- Telephone Counselling.
- Face to Face counselling.
- Social Rehabilitation.
- Case Management.
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