



Youth Net and Counselling

YONECO VOICE



Monthly Newsletter

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SAMALA Project Launched in Mzimba

The 40th Ordinary Session of ACERWC underway in Lesotho

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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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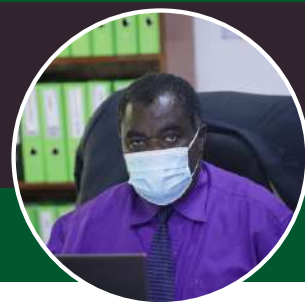
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Our Programmes

- 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

December 1, 2022 marks the beginning of the last month of the year 2022. It's also the day we commemorate the World AIDS Day. It is therefore a significant date as it is the beginning of the review of the last 11 months, assessing our achievements against the plans we had put in place and deciding the next 12 months.

It's a day when we have to make and break, dealing with the undefined and unseen yokes and chains around ourselves which are only mental and not physical. It's the time when we have to deal with the big disease of excuses called "excutisis" and make progress.

Unfortunately for the majority of us, sadly, do not want to accept the reality and plan on refocusing. We are busy pushing the blame on everything else including fuel and forex crisis that we are currently facing.

Well, we can spend the time thinking about these but we need to seriously look at ourselves. Self-accountability is lacking as we tend to think about others being accountable for our failures. Ask yourself what we could have done better in the last 11 months and how we are going to reflect the changes as we plan the new year.

While we are celebrating world AIDS Day under the theme 'Putting ourselves to the test: Achieving equity to end HIV'. It would be critical to define equity and, in this context, 'it is the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups of people are defined geographically, demographically, socially or economically.

As we celebrate the world aids day, let us spend our time thinking about access to HIV services for marginal groups like street connected young people, young people using drugs and alcohol, women living in violent relationships including young people in intimate partner violent relationships, pregnant and parenting adolescents among others.

We need to reach them with information about testing, prevention, care and treatment. Adherence to these social groups can be a nightmare, but we need to find mechanism to enhance their access to services.

Malawi has seen an increase in suicide cases being report and in particular for men. Well, this is as a result of increasing mental health issues among the communities. Attempting suicide unfortunately is a criminal act. We therefore as a country need to reflect seriously about the issues of mental health and what needs to be done to decriminalize attempted suicide.

We need to put in place more support mechanisms and also engage people. People should develop a tendency of checking on each other. Those of us who are challenged, please seek support and meet a mental health provider at the nearest health facility or call Tithandizane Helpline Services on the following numbers: 6600, 5600 and 393.

Malawi joined the world in commemorating the 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence and violence against women. The event starts from 25 November to 10 December every year. As we commemorate the days, YONECO records high numbers of GBV cases in all its facilities and drop-in centres. Child marriages are on the increase, violence in families is increasing and women are socially, economically and physically abused.

More worryingly is that we have huge investments in the launches and limited support to supporting structures in the system. We therefore need to refocus in terms of our interventions and identify what we are missing.

We need more action research to understand the issues relating to GBV. What is more interesting is that the 16 Days of Activism concludes with the World Human rights day on 10 December 2022.

Malawi joins the world to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights amidst the world bank report that has again listed Malawi in the bottom 10 of poorest countries.

Poverty continues to impinge on the human rights of the people leading to non-participation in matters affecting them, poor health, lack of access to basic services among others. What is more worrying for Malawi is the increasing corruption and theft of public resources that hamper the people's rights, it would be important to reflect on this on 10th of December as we celebrate the 75 years of universal declaration of the human rights.

Moving into 2023 requires serious reflections on how we have managed 2022. The year 2022 was hopeful as the COVID-19 was seen to subside. Unfortunately for Malawi this has been a year of devaluations, persistent power blackouts, lack forex and long queues of fuel affecting both our work and social life.

Commodities skyrocketed in pricing and scarcity of fuel and persistent power blackouts led to less production, closing down of companies, retrenchments and ultimately mental health challenges. These have also impacted on GBV and general wellbeing of women, youth and children. Ministry of Education reported a decline in completion rate for primary school to below 50% while the entry into primary education has also reduced.

Malawi needs to seriously reflect on these matters if we are going to make progress. Malawi2063 envisages a middle-income country by 2063 but if the trajectory we are seeing continues, achieving SDGs in 2030 and Malawi2063 is very unlikely. We need to start being a production led economy as opposed to being a consuming economy.

Have a blessed last month of the year 2022.



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Empowering the Youth and their Communities to Deal with Alcohol Abuse

By Sewenthe Mahwayo



Insert: One of the members of Senzani Youth Support Group showcasing his Groundnut grinder in this file photo.

Over the years, the frequency and intensity of disasters has increased in Malawi. Disasters like storms, floods and short rainfall periods have led to an increase in the levels of vulnerability and many households are experiencing perennial food shortages. This scenario has further greatly affected the nutritional status of various vulnerable groups including people who are living with HIV.

In a bid to address such challenges, YONECO with support from Egmond Trust, supported a total of four youth support groups in the areas of Senzani, Matala, Manjawira and Chikhasu with small groundnuts grinders in October, 2021.

The groups have been running the business of grinding and selling groundnuts flour.

Through this venture, Senzani Youth Support Group managed to realize MK1,697 000.00 within a period of one year. The youth support group has 22 members of which 9 are boys and 13 girls.

The members of the group were earlier trained by YONECO in bookkeeping, business management and financial literacy. Thus, the group members have been ably utilizing the knowledge and skills which they acquired from the trainings.

On monthly basis, the group members share a certain percentage of the profit they make and some funds are saved in a bid to reinvest in other ventures. Currently, the group's savings have reached MK1 697 000.00. At the

moment, the group members are planning to venture into agribusiness particularly dairy farming.

The group members are very optimistic that such an investment would help them to be financially stable and independent as they further intend to ensure that each member should eventually own a private farm.

"The intervention has kept us busy and we have no time to indulge into immoral behaviors which would have put our health and other youth at risks, as such further transmission of HIV has been reduced as we are now able to meet our daily needs," explained one of the youth club members.

YONECO implementing the interventions under Investing for the Impact of HIV and AIDS among Young People Project which is being financed by Egmond Trust.

So far, the project has also contributed towards human capital, mindset change and improved nutritional status of young people who are living with HIV in the targeted areas.

YONECO Conducts Career Guidance Session in Mangochi



Insert: YONECO Officer engaging the students during the career guidance session

Career guidance sessions assist students to fulfil their dreams by helping them in making informed choices on what they want to become. The sessions help students to understand what it takes to accomplish their dreams at the same time give them a chance to seek advice on what they intend to do.

As YONECO, we believe that there is need to intensify career guidance sessions in schools to ensure that students are able to set and achieve their goals. As such, we conduct career guidance sessions in both primary and secondary schools across the country. On 9 November, 2022, our team in Mangochi conducted a career guidance session with Form 4 students at Mangochi CCAP Mission Secondary School.

The main objective of the session was to help the students prepare for the future and find the right career paths as they are about to move to the next stage of their lives.

Heartrendingly, the students who attended the session explained that many young people fail to choose an appropriate career path due to the fact that they have limited knowledge about various opportunities they can vie for. The session was attended by 23 Form 4 students.

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.

YONECO Conducts Leadership Session in Zomba



Insert: Zomba Islamic High School students who attended the session posing for a group photo with YONECO Field Officers.

Youth leadership sessions, among other things, prepare young people to effectively manage time, understand group dynamics and work in a team, set clear goals and work to achieve them. The session facilitators encouraged the students to read more, stay in touch with what is happening around them and seek support from adults in order to understand various socioeconomic spheres of life.

Thus, on 16 November, 2022, officers from the Tithandizane Helpline Services department conducted a leadership session that was attended by 36 students from Islamic High School in Zomba.

The session focused on team work, time management, setting personal and career goals as well as building self-esteem.

During the session, the youth stated that they are afraid of getting involved in decision making process due to lack of knowledge and aptitude to contribute positively.

“Fear of failure and being laughed at always hold us back. However, this session has really helped us to understand that we are leaders of today and tomorrow so much that if we remain dormant, others will keep on leading on our behalf,” explained one of the learners.

YONECO also provides youth mentorship sessions in all its Youth Drop-In-Centres (DICs) across Malawi.

YONECO Conducts Career Guidance Session at Rumphi Secondary School

By George Mlowoka

Our team in Rumphi district organized a career guidance session at Rumphi Secondary School.



Insert: One of the healthcare service providers during the career guidance session.

The session was also facilitated by young healthcare service providers from Rumphi District Hospital who encouraged the learners to work hard and desist from behaviours that may hinder them from achieving their goals in life. Among other issues, the session also focused on discussions around mental health, sexual reproductive health issues as well as the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse. Over 300 male and female students attended the session which was spiced up by performances by some of the students.

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Internship Spotlight: Patricia Muthuchi and Dalitso Khancha



I am Prisca Muthuchi, aged 20 and single. I am currently pursuing a diploma in journalism at the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ). According to our school calendar, students are assigned to various institutions where they are tasked with applying what they have learned in class to real-life situations and learning from the host organizations.

As a result, between the months of September up to December 2022, I was assigned to YONECO as a reporter based in the Zomba district, where the organization's offices are located.

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, editors, and all the other members of the staff at the organization. Serving as an intern at YONECO has further enhanced my skills and capabilities as far as journalism is concerned.

However, 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 Dalitso Khancha, I'm 28 years old. I was born on March 11, 1994, and am the second born in a family of three. I am from Phalombe district, where I did my primary and secondary school. I wrote my MSCE at Phalombe Secondary School in 2016.

I did my tertiary education at the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ) in Blantyre, where I obtained my certificate and diploma from 2021 to 2022.

I am currently working as an intern with Youth Net and Counseling (YONECO) FM, where my duty is as a radio reporter.

My passion is to become a professional presenter, sports commentator, and reporter. During my internship, I believe I am going to learn some new things which I don't know.

During my free time, I like watching football, series, and listening to gospel music.

Investing in Young People to Achieve Sustainable Economic Development

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Some of the youth who are benefiting from the project in Ntcheu District

Malawi's greatest human resource to achieve implanted in Ntcheu district with funding sustainable socioeconomic growth lies in its from Egmond Trust. The project, which youthful population. The 2018 Population and targets young people living with HIV, has Housing Census that was conducted by the been bearing fruits.

National Statistical Office (NSO) revealed that 51 percent of the country's population is under the age of 18. However, inaction to harness the potential which young people have is a threat to the promising future which the country has. The project has been helping to enhance the welfare and urgency of the targeted group of young people through a wide range of capacity strengthening activities. Through capital injection in agribusiness and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), young people have been able transform their lives and their designated communities.

Currently, a good number of the youth in Malawi youth do not have the requisite skills or the necessary financial capacity to participate in the process of steering the country's socioeconomic growth. "Our economic status has greatly improved. We are now able to run both individual and group businesses and at the same time making various commodities and services available to the members of our communities," explained one of the young people from the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Senzani which is one of the project's impact area.

In recognition of this gap, YONECO has been embarking on various youth development initiatives in various districts across Malawi with a focus on the most vulnerable subgroups.

Investing for Impact against HIV and AIDS among Young People Project which is being



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Empowering Women Through Financial Inclusion Activities

By Mable Makondetsa



Women empowerment is one of the important and effective ways of building the nation's economy. In a number of ways, women have been sidelined for so long. They haven't been given opportunities to participate in activities that would economically empower them. This have left many women with no decision-making power at household and community level.

YONECO in collaboration with Chikwawa District Gender Office and Community Forum Organisation (COFO) conducted an empowerment session on 10th November, 2022 with newly established Namatchuwa Young Women Group in TA Maseya. The group has been established with the sole purpose of addressing issues affecting women in their community.

Chairperson of the group Mercy Mungomo expressed gratitude for the session which she said will empower them.

"As a newly established group, we want to learn different things including skills that will assist us build our capacity, and at the same time take good care of our families. We want to learn more about GBV, VSLs, nutrition with focus on cooking demonstrations etc. It is our hope that YONECO and all here will support us."

Responding to their expectations, District Gender Officer (DGO) for Chikwawa Mrs. Victoria Nkasala Chisale applauded the women for organizing themselves stating that it will assist in building and managing their families. She assured the women that her office will make sure women are assisted with the necessary skills and support.

"As Gender Office, we cannot do everything the group wants but with support from other organisations like COFO, YONECO and others, we will try our best to support." The DGO promised to have a GBV training with the women group and encouraged the them to be committed. She mentioned that she would be happy that when conducting the GBV training, their husbands should be invited.

Concurring with the DGO, YONECO District Manager, Mable Makondetsa assured the group that they will work together in ending GBV as well as training and sharing with them different information and skills that will sustain their families.

"It is our expectation that skills and information gotten from the sessions will be used to uplift the lives of the women." Makondetsa

Makondetsa mentioned that TA Maseya is among the TAs with more GBV cases being reported at YONECO office which shows that there is a gap in knowledge about GBV within most families.

Namatchuwa Young Women Group has been established with support from the Director for Distance Alert Youth Organisation (DAYO) with operates in TA Maseya. Speaking during the session DAYO Director Laston Daudi, expressed his passion for working with women groups following high rates of GBV reported cases in the area. He mentioned that most women are being abused without even knowing that what is happening is abuse, while some are able to report. He commended the relationship the organisation has with YONECO and support he usually gets from the organisation. DAYO Director assured that more groups of women will be established in the area and that plans to established another forum for men are in place to ensure they are not being left behind.

Namatchuwa Young Women Group has currently a total of 17 young women.

Traditional Leaders in Nkhata Bay Urged to Send Teen Mothers Back to School

By Danrek Pande



Insert: Some of the school and community-based committee members during the meeting

YONECO has urged leaders from the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Nyaluwanga in Nkhata Bay district to step up efforts to ensure that teen mothers are returning to school after delivery.

This was said by the Programme Support Manager for YONECO in the Northern Region, Dunreck Pande, during an engagement meeting which YONECO held with community and traditional leaders in the area.

The meeting was aimed at finding workable solutions towards addressing challenges that are affecting young people's education in the area.

Among others, the session was also attended by members of Nyaluwanga Area Development Committee (ADC), members of Mother Groups, Parents Teacher

Association (PTA), School Management Committee (SMC), and Village District Council (VDC).

During the discussions, it was also noted that teen girls who drop out of school because of pregnancy face a lot of obstacles that prevent them from going back to school after giving birth as stipulated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. As such, the meeting agreed a number of action points that are aimed at guiding the process of supporting girls to return to school after delivery.

In total, the session was attended by a total of 30 community and traditional leaders.

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YONECO Reaches Primary School Learners with SRHR Information

By Richard Nkhonjera

YONECO officers in Ntcheu conducted a session on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) using Auntie Stella Pack card numbers 6, 32 and 37 as SRH youth participatory tools with Senior primary school learners in Ntcheu.

The session was aimed advising the learners on the negative impacts of early sexual debut and its effects, negative peer pressure and cultural beliefs. The learners were encouraged to protect themselves and to refrain from malpractices that they are exposed to on social media pages.



Insert: An officer from YONECO interacting with the learners during the SRH session

During the session, learners assured the officers that they will protect themselves and work hard in school. The session was attended by 91 learners of which 31 were boys and 60 were girls.



UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 1 DEC** World AIDS Day
- 3 DEC** International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 10 DEC** Human Rights Day

YONECO Introduces Mobile School Learning Sessions in Lilongwe

By Evance Keyala



Insert: YONECO team (In green reflectors) during the session at Mchesi Trading Centre in Lilongwe.

Children have the right to good and quality education. However, a number of factors prevent others like street connected children from equally enjoying this right.

It is against this background that YONECO has introduced mobile school learning sessions around the streets of Mchesi township in the capital city of Malawi - Lilongwe.

Mobile School is a way of providing non-formal education to children who have little or no access to education. Thus, the tool ignites their interest to learn as it provides a platform for self-discovery and expression of the challenges they experience.



Many children expressed their interest and support to the Mobile School initiative. Further to this, many adults from the area described the initiative as an opportunity for vulnerable children to learn how to read and write.

In his remarks, the chairperson for Mchesi Trading Centre stated that all community members have seen the value which the tool has in terms of transforming the lives of vulnerable children. The chairperson further added that his team will mobilize more children to benefit from the initiative as well.

YONECO Conducts Child Rights Awareness Session in Nkhata Bay

By Dunrek Pande



On 16th November 2022, YONECO conducted a child rights awareness session at Mazinga Clinic in Choma Village in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Nyaluwanga in Nkhata-Bay district.

This session was aimed at engaging community members to modify harmful cultural practices which promote child neglect and Sexual Gender Based Violence(#SGBV).

During the session parents were urged to refrain from forcing their under-age children into marriages, a practice which is prevalent in the area.

In total 37 people attended the session of which 14 were female and 23 were male.

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YONECO Moves in to Help Learners in Setting Goals

By Lackson Jere



YONECO reached a total of 400 learners at Roman Catholic Primary School which is under Gumbu Education Zone in Ntcheu district.

The sessions were facilitated by young graduates from various public and private universities who are currently attached to the organization on internship basis.

The learners had an opportunity to know and understand what it takes to set and achieve one's goals from young people who have recently graduated from various reputable institutions of higher learning in Malawi.

Despite schools having enough resource such as school blocks, books, adequate teachers among other things, role models are also key in helping students to set and achieve their goals in life.

The number and sincerity of questions which the learners posed vindicated the need for concerted efforts towards helping young people to appreciate and choose the best career options they have.

Thus, in pursuit of building a strong and productive generation, YONECO has been organizing role modelling sessions in various primary and secondary schools across Malawi. In one of the sessions,

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YONECO Joins Stakeholders in Commemorating of the International Day of the Girl Child

By Patrick Makonde



Insert: Some of the participants who attended the district commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child in Balaka.

YONECO joined community members challenges pertaining to their rights, and stakeholders during a district physical health, education, and commemoration of the International mental wellbeing. Thus, the Day Day of the Girl Child that was held at focuses on empowering the girl child Utale Community Day Secondary and bringing attention on the need to School (CDSS) in the area of address the challenges which girls Traditional Authority (T/A) Nkaya in face globally. Balaka.

The event brought together community members, government officials, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as well as traditional and religious leaders. The theme for this year's IDGC commemoration was 'Our Time is Now, Our Right, Our Future.' Among others, the event was graced by the presence of the District International Day of the Girl Child Commissioner (DC) for Balaka, Ward Counsellors and Balaka District Girls Education Manager. (IDGC) is global commemoration which falls on 11 October every year. Girls continuously face a number of

SAMALA Project Launched in Mzimba

By Larah Mbewe



Insert: Guest of honour, Rodwel Mzonde (Centre), showing the cut ribbon symbolizing the official launch of the project.

On 28 November, 2022, the Director of Agriculture Planning Services in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Rodwel Mzonde, launched Sustainable Land Management (SAMALA) Project at Luwerezi in Mzimba district.

The five-year project will be implemented by Total Landcare, YONECO and World Agroforestry Centre with support from the Government of Flanders and Irish Aid.

The project will be implemented in Mzimba, Kasungu and Ntchisi districts with the aim of complementing the efforts of the Malawi government towards addressing issues of land degradation in the targeted areas.

In his remarks, the Guest of honour, Rodwel Mzonde, urged community members to own the project in order to ensure its successful implementation.

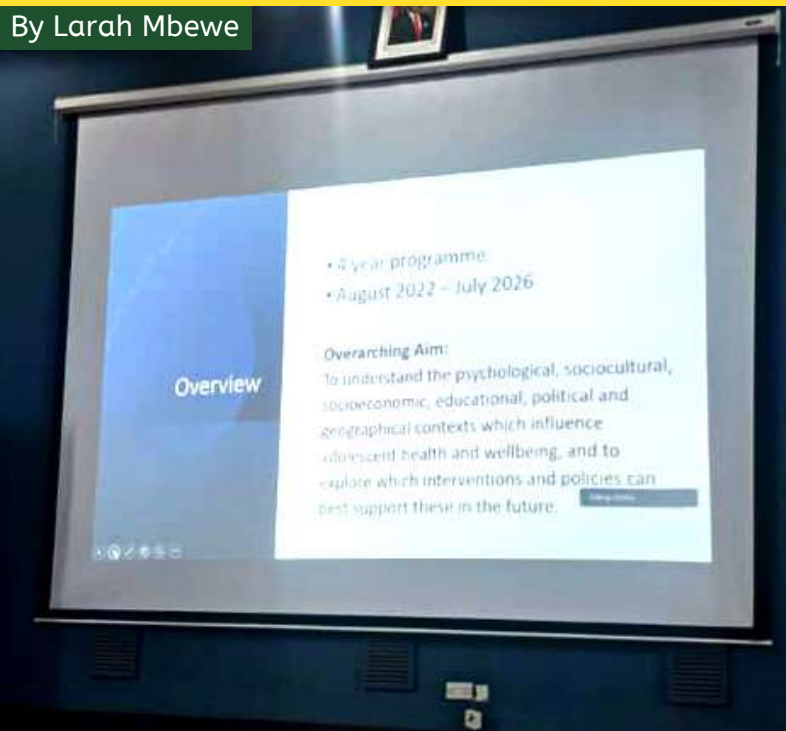
Among other things, SAMALA Project will focus on watershed management, promoting conservation agriculture, Agroforestry, natural regeneration and tree planting, co-management of protected areas, as well as capacity building of local communities, awareness and advocacy on sustainable land management.

The launch event was graced by the presence of Inkosi Mabulabo, the Irish Ambassador to Malawi - His Excellency Seamus O'Grady and the Deputy General Representative of Flanders in Malawi - Dr. Sofie Geerts.



Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Research Project Launched in Malawi

By Larah Mbewe



The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, who was among the invited guests, hailed the three academic institutions for their interest to generate evidence to inform programming.

The overarching aim of the study is to understand the psychological, sociocultural, socioeconomic, educational, political and geographical contexts which influence adolescent health and wellbeing, and to explore which interventions and policies can best support these in the future.

The University of Strathclyde (UK), Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) and the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) have launched Global Health Research Group on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Research Project at a function that was held this morning in Blantyre.

The four-year project will be completed in July, 2026.

14-year-old Form 2 student, Tadala Mwavi, who is also a member of YONECO Children's Band, represented her fellow Malawian adolescent girls. In her presentation, Tadala highlighted a number of things which affect the girl child in Malawi.



Insert: Some of the participants during the launch of the project in Blantyre, Malawi.



Insert: Tadala Mwavi making her presentation

The four-year project will be completed in July, 2026.

The 40th Ordinary Session of ACERWC underway in Lesotho



Insert: ACERWC panel during one of the sessions in Maseru, Lesotho.

YONECO is participating in the ongoing African Union 40th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) which is being held in Maseru, Lesotho.

YONECO is being represented by Vitumbiko Namondwe – Coordinator for Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Coordinator.

Among other things, the members present have discussed the need to enhance cooperation in order to address the impingement of children's rights in Africa.

In his remarks, the Deputy Director for Child Affairs in the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Justin Hamela, commended the collaboration between companies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the Malawi government which has seen a significant impact in addressing issues of child labour in tea production.

The session commenced on 23 November and it will end on 1 December, 2022.

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 and Partners Cerebrate NCA-DCA Programme in Malawi

On 8 November, 2022, YONECO joined its partners in celebrating NCA-DCA Joint Programme in Malawi at a function that was held at St Augustine 3 Primary School ground in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda, Mangochi.

The function was aimed at increasing awareness of GBV, to intensify efforts towards ending child marriages among other objectives.

The event brought together various stakeholders and partners who showcased their activities that are aimed at preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV) as well as alcohol and substance abuse through pavilions that were mounted at venue.

During the function, YONECO also presented its promising practices and successes that are being realized under Empowering Young People to Fight Drug and Alcohol Abuse Project which is being implanted in the district with financial support.

The Guest of Honour, Dr. Patricia Kaliati who is also the Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, urged women and girls to speak out when they are subjected to various forms of abuse in their work places, schools and communities.



393 YOUTH HELPLINE



**Imbani foni
mwaulere pa 393
kuti mupeze uthenga
okhudza HIV ndi
uchembere
wabwino.**

YONECO Conducts Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Awareness Session in Zomba

By Triza Chimasula



Insert: Helpline Services Field Officer Triza Chimasula during the SRHR session at Sogoja Village. (Below) Helpline Officer Sinyanya taking his turn.

On 13 November 2022, Officers from the Tithandizane Helpline Services Department conducted a Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) awareness session at Sogoja Village in the area of Tadiational Authority (T/A) Mwambo, Zomba.

The awareness session was organized in a bid to enhance the wellbeing of community members through increased uptake of HIV Testing Services (HTS) and other SRHR services. Thus, the session targeted both the youth and older community members.



During the session, community members were encouraged to adopt healthcare-seeking behaviors. Community leaders from the area bemoaned that most community members die from treatable diseases because they shy away from seeking healthcare support.

In addition to this, parents were encouraged to take up their rightful roles in raising their children. In total, the session was attended by 88 people of which 58 were females and 30 were males.

YONECO Embarks on Community Sensitization Campaign on NCDs in Ntcheu

By Youngs R. Chawinga



Information gap on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) that exists among community members especially those who live in rural and remote parts of Malawi is a critical issue that requires a necessary attention. NCDs are increasingly contributing to the burden of disease in Malawi. Ministry of Health and Population reports indicate that NCDs are the second leading cause of deaths in adults after HIV/AIDS in Malawi.

It is against this background that YONECO has embarked on sensitizing communities about NCDs to promote health seeking behaviors in a bid to promote the wellbeing of people.

Among other factors, it was noted that there are a lot of misconception surrounding various NCDs. Thus, the various perceptions which community members have compel them to believe that such diseases do not require any medical attention.

In the month of November, 2022, YONECO conducted a series of community awareness campaigns in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Kwataine in Ntcheu district. YONECO also promotes awareness of NCDs in other districts across Malawi and through its various social media platforms and its community of interest radio station – YFM.

YONECO and Malawi Police Services Mental Health Campaign Reaches 2, 000 People

By Jacob Phiri



YONECO in collaboration with the Malawi Police Service (MPS) has reached over 2, 000 community members in Machinga district with mental health awareness sessions in the wake of a shocking spike in the number of suicide cases in Malawi.

The awareness campaigns were conducted in a number of trading centres including Mangamba, Mwala, Mbonechera, Mbanila, Nanyumbu and Ntaja.

During the campaign, community members were urged to seek counselling services when they have psychological problems. Thus, community members were made aware of various institutions which provide free psychosocial support services including the Police Victim Support Units (VSUs) and YONECO's Tithandizane Helpline Services.

The participants were also oriented on how they can identify some signs of The facilitators also raised awareness of some common mental health problems in order to ensure that community members are ably supporting each other to seek mental health support.





Tithandizane National Helpline Services

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Helpline
116**

**GBV Crisis
Line 5600**

**Youth
Helpline 393**

**Drug &
Substance
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Traditional Leaders Call for by-laws to Protect Game Reserves and National Parks



One of the participants expressed satisfaction upon learning how communities surrounding these protected areas are playing a crucial role in protecting the areas through reafforestation and land management, while at the same time also benefiting through bee keeping, basket weaving, baobab juice making among others.

Traditional Authorities have called for the development of by-laws to protect game reserves and national parks. The calls were made during a three-day learning visit which was organized by Trocaire under 'Building Climate-Resilient Communities Around Wildlife Protected Areas' Project which is being implemented in communities surrounding Kasungu National Park, Mwabvi Wildlife Reserve and Lengwe National Park.

The learning visit was aimed at sharing experiences on what is working well and how communities and park authorities are working together in the management and conservation of the game reserves and national parks.



The learning tour saw participants visiting Lengwe National Park, Elephant Marsh and Majete Game Reserve where they appreciated wildlife conservation efforts being done.

The learning visit also saw participants engaged in discussions which highlighted some of the challenges affecting conservation works in wildlife protected areas. High electricity tariffs and prolonged blackouts were said to hamper efforts as parks and game reserves struggle to tackle encroachment by charcoal producers. Park authorities also bemoaned the lack of stiffer punishment to those found guilty of wildlife crimes as it is exacerbating the malpractice.

The learning visit was attended by representatives from implementing partners including YONECO, CICOD, CARD and CISONA, local leaders, government extension workers and officials from Trocaire.



Senior T/A Maganga of Nkhotakota district said the by-laws which were developed in Nkhotakota to protect the fishing areas including good methods for catching fish to ensure there is no indiscriminate fishing of immature fish are really working because communities are now well aware of the repercussions once they are in conflict with the by-laws.

The senior chief however bemoaned that the situation is different in many game reserves and national parks which has resulted in continued encroachment and poaching, deliberate bush fires and deforestation.



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



**PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR**





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CHILD
HELPLINE



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GBV CRISIS
LINE



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YOUTH
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