



Youth Net and Counselling

# YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

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### Our Vision

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



### Our Mission

We are committed to empowering the youth, women and children, promoting good health, human rights and democratic culture, adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change and 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**

**Contributors**  
**Jacqueline Holla**  
**Larah Mbewe**  
**Robert Chanunkha**  
**Triza Chimasula**  
**Richard Nkhonjera**  
**Mable Makondetsa**  
**Lackson Jere**

**Media & Communications**  
**Manager**  
**Benson Nkhoma Somba**

**M&E Manager**  
**Daniel Chikatentha**

**Executive Director**  
**MacBain Mkandawire**



**Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)**  
**C/o Youth Leadership Development Centre**  
**Along M3 Zomba-Lilongwe RD**  
**Next to Calvary Family Church**  
**P.O Box 471, Zomba, Malawi.**

# 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*

Happy New Year to all our supporters, partners and more importantly our beneficiaries. As YONECO, we cherish your support and the fact that our masters; the youth, women and children have the trust and confidence that we will provide the essential services.

We have cherished many comments and posts that have shown us that we contribute in small ways to the protection of the youth, women and children. We have noted your concerns and encouragement on the work we are doing and most importantly, your advice on what we have not done well. Our focus has always been on improving so as to serve our constituents better. As YONECO, we are aware that arrogance is the enemy of progress and this compels us to listen to your misgivings and to value your prudent counsel.

We also want to put on record the sentiments of Honourable Dr. Patricia Kaliati on the things which YONECO needs to change and improve on. We have not taken your critical messages for granted.

We would be failing our duties as we start 2023 without giving credit to various development partners who have been giving us support in 2022. We would like to particularly acknowledge the support we got from Trocaire, UNFPA, World Education Inc, Segal Foundation, Egmont Trust, VIIV, SRHR Africa Trust (SAT), Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and NCA/DCA among others. It was exciting for us. The support and engagement you gave in 2022 was not taken for granted. We also want to appreciate all our district council partners for the fruitful collaborations which we established, strengthened and maintained in the year 2022.

The year 2023 is the second year for our new strategic plan which focuses on the sustainability of local institutions. We are aware of the wave in the west focusing on 'Localization'. This has become a buzz word but we need to put this into practice by finding mechanisms for enhancing sustainability.

Local organizations need to refocus their attention to move away from the colonization through aid. They need to refocus their attention to ensure that there is complete change from donor dependence to independence. This means that very painful decisions have to be made, engage in more productive work and focus on organizations as opposed to just getting money. We need critical strategic aspects.

Organizations in 2023 need to plan for the change they want to see. However, for this to happen, organizations need to develop a culture that is both productive and value based. Over the year, there have been arguments that institutions are not moving because its human resource is not motivated. It would be good for organizations to reflect on internal versus external motivation. One response that a job seeker gives when you ask why they want to join your institution is "I want to serve the organization" after 6 months or one year, the same person raises the issue of motivation.

Let us be honest that selection of people into positions for service-based organizations is the most difficult task this time around because the service is not important but our employment. We probably need to find a balance between the two. Otherwise, we spend time fighting battles that are not necessary.

Lest we forget that 15 January is Chilembwe's Day. As we remember one of the patriotic Malawians, we need to focus and ask ourselves if we could have died for this country. The reflection should go to the corruption levels, the time we spend not working and still wanting to be paid, the abuse of power and resources, the squabbles at various levels of operation. These are posing a very high risk to the right to development as enshrined in Section 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi.

We would be naive if we do not comment on the abdication of parental responsibilities in the past 25 years in the name of human rights and democracy. The respect for parents, teachers and elders has not been there while parents have stopped talking to their children. Technology has replaced parenting in the home as children and parents will be glued to their gadgets. Children are being raised by nannies meaning that relatives have no clue how their parents behave.

We have also portrayed a bad model as parents as we have been in scandals on daily basis. It would be very important that we seriously reflect on these matters and engage the various structures and systems. Consequently, all this has resulted into bad behaviors of children and parents complaining of the same. As parents, we need to reflect on how we are losing the children. On the other hand, children need to be disciplined when they have done something wrong to shape their character. This requires consistency and also modeling. I do hope that we can make the new year a "Positive Parenting Year."

Once again, YONECO wishes you a peaceful and prosperous 2023.

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**YONECO is delighted to have been granted the Observer Status to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).**

**ACERWC is mandated to protect the rights of children enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.**



# YONECO Targets the Youth in Human Capital Development Activities

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Youth leaders being oriented on livelihood activities as an investment in human capital.

In Malawi, Young people make up the largest and fastest growing proportion of the general population. The 2018 Population and Housing census shows that 51% of the population is below 18 years.. Thus, investing in the growth and development of young people is key to warrant a bright future for the nation.

As such, YONECO has embarked on promoting knowledge acquisition and skills development activities in order to enable young people to realize their potential as they transition into adulthood.

YONECO's transformative approach regarding the promotion of young people's livelihood activities has started

with the training of youth network leaders in management of various economic activities. The areas of focus in income generating activities include agribusiness and livestock management.

Young people who participated in the session acknowledged that the youth have a role to play in various economic activities at various levels.

The youthful generation has the potential to contribute to the development of the country through livelihood initiatives. However, their voices and concerns are not taken on board in the designing of programs and implementation of strategies.

***“We need more space for us to participate in wealth-creation activities. We also need organizations and lending institutions to have trust in us,” explained a Youth Network Chairperson from the area of Traditional Authority Masasa in the area.***

The session was attended by 16 youth network leaders (6 females and 10 males) from various parts of Ntcheu district.

# CHINAMWALI YOUTH DIC ELECTS NEW YOUNG LEADERS



**Insert: Some of the members of Chinamwali Youth Drop-in-Center posing for a photo after the elective meeting in Zomba.**

Young people who attend various sessions at our Chinamwali Youth Drop-in-Centre (DIC) in Zomba have elected new office bearers to lead various youth activities at the centre.

Congratulations to the new young leaders who have been entrusted with the positions and a big thank you to all the outgoing leaders for their remarkable contribution and dedication during their tenure as young leaders.

## PARTNERING WITH THE YOUTH IN CLIMATE ACTION

Young people are a resource that is needed to deal with various challenges that are affecting the world today. Young people are the most critical partners in development. Young people also need to know and take up their roles in climate action.

It is against this backdrop that YONECO is working with a group of young people from Zomba district who are currently in the process of establishing a tree nursery.

The group is being technically supported by YONECO in a bid to enhance young people's agency towards addressing issues of climate change and environmental degradation.



**Insert: Some of the young boys and girls who are taking part in the establishment of a tree nursery in Zomba.**



# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT



## Roy Changadeya

My name is Roy Changadeya, a 22-year old young man who was born on January 6, 2000 into a family of five, and I am the fourth born. I come from Mulanje District where I did my primary and sat for my Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)s in 2019.

I completed my tertiary level education where I graduated as a journalist at the Malawi Institution of Journalism (MIJ) in Blantyre, and received my Certificate and Diploma in journalism from 2021 to 2022.

I joined YONECO FM in Zomba on September 19th, 2022 as one of the reporters of the station on an internship program which the institution runs.

My passion is to become a professional reporter in the near future. I also have skills in graphic design, audio and video production, and I am also a musician.

## Steve Mwamlima

My name is Steven L. Mwamlima, I am 21 years old and I come from Salima District. I did my schooling at Mvera Army Primary school in Dowa and sat for my MSCE in 2019 at Mvera Army Secondary School.

I did my tertiary education at the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ), where I obtained a certificate and a diploma in the years between 2021 and 2022. I have skills in editing both audio and videos for various productions.

Currently, I am doing an internship with YONECO FM in Zomba District. I like playing with software like Adobe Audition, Adobe Premier Pro, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Quarkxpress, etc. My passion is to become a professional presenter and editor.



## Eusther Kangala

My name is Eusther Kangala and I am 20 years old. I come from Phalula village, TA Nsamala in Balaka District. I am pursuing my tertiary education at the Malawi Institute of Journalism (MIJ).

Based on our school calendar, students are attached to various media institutions where they are expected to practically apply what they learned in class to real-life situations and learn how the media houses operate. I was assigned to YONECO FM as a reporter based in Zomba District for four months (September to December). My passion is to become a professional presenter.

# 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 sustainable socioeconomic growth lies in its youthful population. The 2018 Population and Housing Census that was conducted by the 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.

Currently, a good number of youth in Malawi do not have the requisite skills or the necessary financial capacity to participate in the process of steering the country's socio-economic growth.

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

implemented in Ntcheu district with funding from Egmond Trust. The project, which targets young people living with HIV, has been bearing fruits.

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.

"Our economic status has greatly improved. We are now able to run both individual and group businesses and at the same time produce various commodities and services which are made available to the members in our communities," explained one member from the area of Group Village Head (GVH) Senzani, which is one of Egmond Trust's project impact area.





# HAPPY *New Year*

Happy new year! Together, we  
can make 2023 a Gender - Based  
Violence free year.



# Reaping the Fruits of VSLAs



A 13-member Chisomo Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) from Chinamwali Township in Zomba has closed the 2022 circle in style.

The group was established in 2021 as a way of empowering women who have no access to formal loans to save and invest in small scale businesses.

95 percent of the members received MK 181,000.00 from the savings and loans profits which the group managed to accumulate in the course of the year.

Members of Chisomo VSLA group after distributing their shares

A big thank you to our VSLA Facilitator, Robert Chanunkha, whose tireless efforts towards establishing and training the group has seen all the members venturing into various businesses.

Chisomo VSLA is among a number of groups which YONECO has been establishing in various areas across Malawi.

## Tithandizane Helpline Services Gears up to prevent GBV during the Festive Season



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

According to data from YONECO's Tithandizane Helpline Services, Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases tend to spike during the festive season due to a number of factors including substance abuse and overindulgence in alcohol. The available information shows that GBV is mainly perpetrated against women and girls.

Thus, the Tithandizane Helpline Services Department has embarked on community engagement meetings that are aimed at strengthening community social protection systems in a bid to prevent the occurrence of abuse cases this festive season.

On 17 December 2022, officers from the Tithandizane Helpline Services Department conducted one of the community engagement sessions on GBV at Mwandiyasamwana Village, in the area of Groups Village Head (GVH) Mnyanya, Traditional Authority (T/A) Mwambo in Zomba district.

During the session, community members were encouraged to report GBV cases to relevant authorities and ensure that the survivors are accessing psychosocial support. In addition to this, the people who attended the session were also made aware of various reporting channels, forms of GBV and the spillover effect that emanates from the vice to various spheres of life.

Tithandizane Helpline Services provides information to the youth on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues and responds to GBV and VAC cases. The service has the following toll-free lines which operate 24 hours every day; Child Helpline – 116, GBV Crisis Line 5600, Youth Helpline – 393, and a drug and substance abuse hotline which is accessible on 6600.



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# Empowering the Next Generation: Promoting Child Rights for a Better Malawi

By Lackson Jere

Children's rights are an important issue but, conversely, they are overlooked in the society. The rights of children are repeatedly disrespected leaving them vulnerable to various forms of abuses. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 2 million under-age children between 5 and 14 years of age are involved in child labour in Malawi. In addition to this, children are still subjected to corporal punishment with many others being sexually abused as well.

In a bid to make Malawi a safe haven for all children, YONECO uses a number of strategies that are aimed at strengthening child protection systems, raising awareness about child rights and the importance of respecting them.

On 15 December, 2022, YONECO conducted a child rights session with parents from the area Ntcheu district. The main objective of the session was to create an environment that fosters child growth and protection.



Insert: An officer from YONECO interacting with the learners and guardians during the session.

**“The session is an eye opener. I think we tend to ignore some things that are important. I was not aware of the long-term impact of various abuses which children are subjected to,” explained one of the parents who attended the session.**

In total, the session was attended by 56 parents comprising of 52 females and 4 males.

# Community Members Uphold Parent-Child Communication Sessions

By Lackson Jere



Insert: Participants being engaged in PCC during one of the sessions in Dedza District.

Community members from the areas of Traditional Authority (TA) TA Chilikumwendo, Kachere and Kaphuka in Dedza have commended Parent-Child Communication (PCC) sessions which YONECO organized in their areas during the month of December, 2022.

YONECO supports PCC activities with the aim of encouraging parents to become more involved in supporting their children in dealing with various issues that concern their rights and welfare. PCC sessions facilitate conversations between parents and children which help to build strong relationships and openness.

Parents of adolescent girls and teen mothers who participated in the sessions expressed their satisfaction with the activity.

Previously, it was regarded as a taboo for a parent to openly discuss issues about sexuality with their children. Parents have acknowledged that the introduction of PCC sessions has enabled young people to seek guidance on Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) issues they face so much that parents are also increasingly making decisions that are in the best interest of their children.

Initially, YONECO trained community facilitators who organize and coordinate the PCC sessions in their designated areas.

The PCC sessions are being conducted under Action for Teen Mothers in Central Region Project which is being funded by UNFPA and KOICA.



# Tithandizane National Helpline Services



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# Malawi Commemorates Human Rights Day

By Larah Mbewe



Insert: Programme Support Manager for YONECO (Central Region) Hughes Munthali addressing the Minister of Civic Education and National Unity Hon. Timothy Mtambo about YONECO interventions.

On 12 December, 2022, YONECO joined the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), partners and the general public in commemorating the 2022 Human Rights Day at a function that was held at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe.

Human Rights Day is held in recognition of the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which enshrines the rights and freedoms of all people.

The Day is commemorated on 10 December every year but Malawi opted to have a national commemoration event two days later. The function was presided over by Honourable Timothy Mtambo, Minister of National Unity. Among others, the event was graced by the presence of MacBain Mkandawire, the Executive Director of YONECO and various Civil Society Organizations (CSO) leaders and foreign dignitaries.

The 2022 Human Rights Day was commemorated under the theme: Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All. The localized theme for Malawi was: Right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

YONECO Radio Station (YFM) covered the function live in order to ensure that the people who did not manage to attend the function were able to follow the proceedings on YONECO Radio Station (YFM).

# YONECO and MPS Interface Sex workers on Prevention of GBV

By Jacqueline Holla



**Insert: Police officers interacting with the community in this file photo**

Among other key priority areas, GBV is one of the common human rights violations in Malawi. 1 in 5 women in Malawi have experienced sexual violence in their life time and specifically for youth, women and children. In a bid to fulfill this mandate, YONECO uses various strategies to promote the rights and welfare of all people in the society especially the vulnerable groups. (42% of girls experience physical violence before they turn 18. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/tackling-gender-based-violence-project-sites-malawi>)

Thus On 11th December 2022, YONECO, At the end of the session, YONECO FM in collaboration with the Malawi Police Service (MPS) conducted an interface meeting with sex workers in Nsanje. (YFM) documented radio programs and the toll-free lines were publicized.

The meeting was aimed at strengthening various efforts being made to prevent Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the district. The meeting was held in the wake of increased incidences of GBV that is perpetrated against sex workers.



**Banja sinkhondo; ulurani nkhanza zomwe mukukumana nazo kwa adindo a m'dera lanu.**

**Imbani foni pa 5600, 116 kapena 6600**





# YONECO STRENGTHENS THE CAPACITY OF MOTHER GROUPS IN DEDZA AND MCHINJI

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Members of various Mother Groups pose for a group photo together with facilitators after the training.

Mother Groups are community-based structures that promote girl child education by helping girls to remain in school and complete their education as well as providing age-appropriate Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) information.

In addition to this, Mother Groups are also instrumental in encouraging girls who dropped out of school because of child marriages or pregnancy to return to school.

Thus, YONECO saw the need to strengthen the capacity of the groups so that they should ably support adolescent girls and teen mothers in their respective areas.

In total, YONECO has trained 30 women from the areas of Traditional Authority (T/A) Kaphuka, Kachere and Chilikumwendo in Dedza as well as 30 others from T/A Zulu, Mduwa and Mkanda in Mchinji district.

After the training, participants avowed to work tirelessly in a bid to create a zero tolerance to GBV learning environment in their designated schools.

The trainings were conducted under Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls Project with support from UNFPA and KOICA.



Insert: Mother Group members during the session





# Tithandizane National Helpline Services

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# YONECO Trains Community and School Clubs in Environmental Conservation

By Mabel Makondetsa



**Insert: Members of Njobvuyalema Club posing with project staff in Chikwawa District**

The 2018 Population and Housing Census that was conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) revealed that 51 percent of the country's population is under the age of 18. This is the group that will also shoulder the impact of all the actions and decisions that are done today on issues pertaining to climate change.

It is against this background that YONECO, in collaboration with Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) and Centre for Integrated Community Development (CICOD) conducted a training on water and Soil conservation which targeted young people from various community youth groups and school clubs.

Due to high unemployment rate, many young people resort to income generating activities that deplete the environment and lead to the destruction of various natural resources and wildlife in protected game reserves and national parks. Such practices include charcoal burning and selling.

The training session focused on protection of wild animals and forest tree species, natural regeneration and management of tree nurseries.

During the sessions, officials from District Forest Offices and wildlife Parks from all the three districts also presented the challenges which they face in taking care of water, soil, trees and wildlife animals. The stakeholders also reminded the young people about their roles in natural resource and environmental conservation.

The training was attended by 45 young people (22 Females and 23 Males) from Nsanje, Chikwawa and Kasungu districts.

The training was conducted under 'Building Climate Resilient Communities through Conservation Effective Management of Natural Resources and Diversified Livelihoods Particularly for Women, Youth, and People with Disabilities Surrounding National Parks and Game Reserves Project' which is being funded by the European Commission (EU).

At national level, the project is being coordinated by Trocaire with the aim of improving the capacity of organization in managing climate change related initiatives.

# YONECO Awards Lead Farmers and Climate-Smart Agriculture Villages

By Jacqueline Holla

Over the years, the effects of climate change which include drought and short rainfall periods have led to perennial hunger in many parts of Malawi. Consequently, community members around wildlife protected areas have resorted to poaching and encroachment in nearby national parks and game reserves as a coping mechanism.

Thus, YONECO is implementing various interventions in a bid to address the challenges which communities are facing due to climate crisis. The activities are being conducted under 'Building Climate Resilient Communities through Conservation Effective Management of Natural Resources and Diversified Livelihoods Particularly for Women, Youth, and People with Disabilities Surrounding National Parks and Game Reserves Project'.

The project is targeting communities around Kasungu National Park as well as Mwabvi Game Reserve in Nsanje and Lengwe National Park in Chikwawa. Among other activities, the project is aimed at promoting the adoption of various climate-smart agricultural practices to enhance resilience and help communities to prevent further environmental degradation.



Insert: Some of the farmers who emerged winners in the competition posing for a photo.

As one way of motivating local farmers to venture into agro-forestry, YONECO launched two sets of competitions in 2021 to award the best performing communities and lead farmers in the project's impact areas using an agreed criterion.

Through the competitions, YONECO awarded six best performing communities namely; area of Group Village Head (GVH) Nanjidu in Nsanje, GVH Njobvuyalema and GVH Lundu in Chikwawa as well as GVH Kumba, GVH Mkango and GVH Chitsime in Nsanje. The victors were awarded wheelbarrows, shovels and hoes.

In addition to this, YONECO also awarded a total of 31 lead farmers from the project's impact areas. Among other factors, the lead farmers were recognized for their expertise in practicing water harvesting techniques in their farms.

The project is being supported with funds from the European Commission and it is being coordinated at national level by Trocaire Malawi to improve the capacity of organization in managing climate change related initiatives.

The project is also being implemented in collaboration with Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD), Centre for Integrated Community Development (CICODE) and Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC).



Insert: Project Officer for YONECO handing over a shovel to one of the winners



# Speak out against GBV



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Report any form of  
Gender-Based  
Violence