



Youth Net and Counselling

# YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

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Volume 12



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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

**Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)**  
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P.O Box 471, Zomba, Malawi.

# About Us

## 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

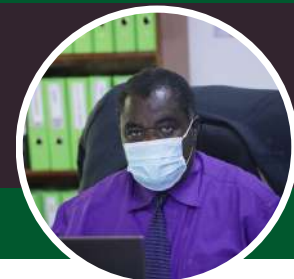


## Our values

Integrity  
Teamwork  
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Respect for human dignity  
Transparency and Accountability



# Executive Director's Note...



Greetings Dear Reader,

*...with MacBain Mkandawire*

Malawi is facing a major challenge in 2023 with the continuing spread of Cholera resulting in over 1,108 people have died as of 30 January 2023 and over 34,355 cases have been confirmed across the 26 districts. The root cause is poor water and sanitation. The impact on youth and children is devastating, with many children becoming orphans. The Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability & Social Welfare should assess the number of orphaned children to help plan support. Prevention of Cholera should be the top priority in development processes. To help prevent Cholera, it is important to regularly wash hands, especially after using the toilet and before eating.

Malawi is also grappling with new revelations of corruption and theft. The recent debates surrounding the arrest of the Director General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau ended up in the media and social media. The investigation by the Malawi Human Rights Commission may provide more information. However, the continued corruption erodes the confidence of development partners and a change in mindset is needed to combat it. It is everyone's responsibility to fight corruption and not just the leadership.

Safe Internet Day on February 7th promotes responsible and safe use of technology by children and young people. The internet is useful, but also has risks such as cyberbullying, privacy invasion, identity theft, access to offensive content, and the presence of strangers. It is important to create a safer internet by being aware of safety issues, using strong antivirus and passwords, limiting access to unsafe sites, and not sharing passwords. Parents should also supervise children while they are online.

Valentine's Day on February 14th can also bring about unintended consequences such as teenage pregnancies, frustrations, and mental health issues. It is important to manage Valentine's Day with care and seek guidance where necessary.

There is a rising problem of violence against children in Malawi, with YONECO registering 10 to 15 cases of abuse every 8 hours of Helpline operations. These cases mainly involve sexual abuse and violence. Tangible protection mechanisms, not just policies, need to be put in place to address the issue. The recent murder of Praise Mafotetsa, a 12-year-old girl, is a tragic reminder of the dangers facing school-going girls in particular. Strategies need to be put in place to curb these threat.

Malawi will be joining the 61st Commission on Social Development in New York from February 6th to 15th, 2023 under the theme of "Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all". Malawi is one of the least developed countries and must reflect on what products and services it can offer to improve employment and move away from handouts towards productivity.



*Sustaining Institutional Growth and Independence  
for Social and Economic Development of Youth,  
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# Reaching Young People in Schools with Career Guidance and Mental Health Awareness

By Enala Msukwa



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Blantyre engaging with the learners during the information session at Kapeni Primary School in the district.

On January 26 2023, YONECO in Blantyre conducted an information session at Kapeni Primary School in the Soche-Blantyre area, focusing on career guidance, Gender-Based Violence prevention and mental health awareness for 493 students of different classes.

The session aimed to provide students with the tools to make informed decisions about their future, including information on how to deal with and report cases of Gender-Based Violence, and tips for maintaining good mental health.

The students were engaged and motivated by the career-oriented discussions.



They were also given the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice about their chosen career paths and how to handle physical and emotional challenges.

As part of YONECO's commitment to social responsibility, the organization emphasized the importance of setting career goals, finding role models, and choosing positive friends. Additionally, the students were encouraged to discover their talents and were reminded of the benefits of opening up to someone when facing physical or emotional challenges.

During the session, many students asked for contact information to report any issues they may face in the future. In response, YONECO's Blantyre office introduced the students to YONECO's hotlines, including the child helpline (116) and the Gender-Based Violence crisis line (5600).

# YONECO CONDUCTS AWARENESS SESSION ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

By George Mlowoka



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for the district engaging with the students during the awareness session at Rumphi Secondary School in the district.

YONECO office in Rumphi district conducted an awareness session on sexual and school-related gender-based violence at Rumphi Secondary School. The district staff, along with other professionals, led the session and provided information on the reporting mechanisms that are available to students. The session was designed to inspire and motivate students, particularly the 55 Form 1 girls who attended the session.

During the session, the district staff and other professionals used role-modeling and mentorship techniques to encourage the students to stay in school and set achievable goals for themselves. They shared their personal stories and experiences to illustrate the importance of education and the potential opportunities that comes from staying in school.



The students were also provided with information on how to recognize and report instances of sexual and gender-based violence, and were encouraged to speak out if they ever felt unsafe or unsupported. The staff also discussed the importance of consent, healthy relationships, and how to access support services.

## YONECO and TLC Introduce SAMALA Project to Chikho ADC in Ntchisi

By Ackim Wasili



Insert: Ackim Wasili (far right) YONECO Field Officer posing with members of Chikho ADC after the meeting.

YONECO and Total Land Care (TLC) introduced SAMALA Project to members of Chikho Area Development Committee (ADC) at a meeting that was held on 24th January, 2023 in Ntchisi district.

The Ward Councillor commended the project which he described as a very transformative undertaking. The Ward Councillor urged the ADC members to ensure that all community members and their leaders are supporting the project's interventions.

"The area of Senior Traditional Authority (STA) Chikho has been greatly affected by climate change and it is high time we did something to restore our environment," explained the Ward Councillor.

In his remarks, STA Chikho expressed his gratitude and avowed his commitment to support the implementation of the project and he also urged the implementing partners to be accountable and transparent.

## Empowering the Youth of Malawi: A Workshop on Facilitating Intergenerational and Cross-Cultural Dialogue

By Wilson Mkandawire

The Centre for Social Research at the University of Malawi, in partnership with the University of East Anglia, recently held a workshop on "Facilitating Intergenerational and Cross-Cultural Dialogue for Improved Life Outcomes for Young People." The goal of the workshop was to bring together young people, key stakeholders in Malawi, and international participants to discuss the role of youth social action and participation in achieving better life outcomes for young people.

Participating institutions and organizations included the University of East Anglia, the Center for Social Research, the University of Malawi, Tribuvhan University, Nepal, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia, Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), the Art and Global Health Centre, and the Ministry of Youth. The diverse group of participants, including young people, government officials, academics, and representatives from non-governmental organizations, engaged in interactive discussions and activities aimed at identifying key challenges facing young people in Malawi and exploring potential solutions through youth social action and participation.

The workshop featured a number of presentations and panel discussions by experts in the field, who provided valuable insights into the challenges facing young people in Malawi and shared examples of successful youth-led initiatives from around the world. The participants also had the opportunity to engage in group work and breakout sessions, where they shared their own experiences and ideas for promoting youth social action and participation in their own communities.

One of the key takeaways from the workshop was the importance of involving young people in decision-making processes that affect their lives and providing them with the necessary support and resources to take action. The participants also emphasized the need for greater collaboration between different sectors and stakeholders, including government, civil society, and the private sector, to effectively address the challenges facing young people in Malawi.

Overall, the workshop was deemed successful in promoting intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue among the participants and generating valuable insights and recommendations for promoting youth social action and participation in Malawi. The organizers hope that the knowledge and connections gained through this event will be leveraged to drive real-world impact for young people in the country. They believe that by working together, we can create a brighter future for the youth of Malawi.







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# Empowering Women: Breaking the Cycle of Street-Begging

By Sewenthe Mahwayo



Insert: Women who were engaged during the session in Limbe, Blantyre.

YONECO recently held an engagement session with 30 women who earn a living through begging along the streets of Limbe town in Blantyre.

The women who are involved in street-begging have heartbreaking realities: their children accompany them, thus depriving them of their right to education and exposing them to potential dangers.

Thus, the session was organized in order to empower the women and help them utilize their skills to gain a more stable income and provide better living conditions for their families. During the session, it was noted that the women have various skills such as knitting, baking, and hairdressing, as well as potential for small-scale businesses such as selling fruits and vegetables.

During the session, the women acknowledged that working can provide them with much higher incomes than

begging on the streets, which exposes them to poor living conditions, health risks, and violence.

At the end of the session, the women agreed to set up a savings and loans group by contributing MK 1,000 each to create a pool of money that they could use to access soft loans for their businesses. Additionally, they decided that all children of school-going age should be enrolled in school for the upcoming academic year.

Most of the women who were engaged are originally from Zomba, Thyolo, Chiradzulu, Balaka, and Chikwawa districts, as well as Blantyre rural. One woman from Chikwawa explained that her current situation was due to floods that destroyed her house and washed away her property.

# Empowering Women for Economic Growth: The Success Story of YONECO's Interventions

By Wilson Mkandawire



Insert: A woman beneficiary standing in her shop at Chinamwali Trading Centre in Zomba

Women's economic empowerment can have a positive impact on overall economic growth and development. When women are able to participate fully in the workforce, it increases the size and productivity of the workforce, which in turn can lead to higher levels of economic growth. Additionally, when women have control over their own income and assets, they are able to invest in their families and communities, which can lead to improved health, education, and overall well-being.

Thus, one of YONECO's programmes focuses on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality where women are provided access to education and training. The idea is that women who have access to education and training are more likely to be employed and to earn higher wages. This can be accomplished through initiatives such as scholarships, training programs, and adult education classes.



Another strategy that YONECO uses is promoting women's entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs can create jobs and drive economic growth, but they often face unique challenges such as lack of access to capital and networks. Programs that provide mentoring, training, and access to finance can help women overcome these barriers and start their own businesses.

It is against this background that YONECO conducted a visual documentation of some of the interventions that being are implemented in Zomba, Mangochi and Ntcheu. The visual documentation was done by an independent consultant who wanted to document some of the successes being registered and their impact.



Insert: One of the beneficiaries of the women economic empowerment intervention.

Notably, the economic empowerment interventions are showing positive changes among beneficiaries as most of them have managed to establish small businesses which are supporting their day to day household needs. Beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the interventions such that they plan to continue operating within their groups in order to boost their capita base and expand their businesses.

The consultant expressed satisfaction with the stories that were shared and encouraged the women to think outside the box and plan on expanding their small enterprises.

# Promoting Child Rights Through Sports

By Enala Msukwa



**Insert: An officer from YONECO interacting with the children during one of the sessions in Blantyre.**

YONECO has intensified its efforts to use sports as a tool for promoting children's rights and welfare. This year, YONECO introduced sports for social change interventions at the Soche Hill Football ground, where a total of 52 children are participating in the activities.

The sessions aim to engage young participants on their rights and the responsibilities that accompany them. Through the use of football, YONECO is also raising awareness about various forms of child rights violations and providing information on where children can report such incidents.

Child rights are an essential aspect of human development and play a crucial role in ensuring the overall well-being of children. However, children's rights are often violated, leading to negative consequences on their physical, emotional, and social development.

This is where organizations like YONECO step in, working to protect and promote the rights of children through various interventions.

YONECO's use of sports as a tool for promoting children's rights and welfare is a unique and innovative approach. Football, in particular, has proven to be a powerful tool for promoting social change and is widely popular among children in Malawi.

By using football as a medium to teach children about their rights, YONECO is able to reach a larger audience and create an environment that is both engaging and informative. Through the sessions, children are able to learn about their rights in a fun and interactive way, making the information more accessible and easier to understand.

The use of sports as a tool for promoting children's rights and welfare is a commendable initiative that is making a positive impact on the lives of young people in Malawi.

# YONECO Presents Issues Impeding Children's Education in Bumba Zone, Rumphi District to Stakeholders

By George Mlowoka

On January 10, 2023, YONECO presented issues negatively impacting children's education in Bumba Zone, Rumphi district to various education stakeholders and authorities in the district. The meeting was attended by the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), members of various Parents Teachers Associations, Mother Groups, and School Management Committees (SMCs), in a bid to seek collective actions to address the challenges.

Through various engagement sessions which YONECO has been having with parents and learners, it has been noted that children from needy households are sent back from school due to failure to pay School Development Funds. Consequently, this has also led to an increase in the number of street-connected children in the area. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of young people who abscond from school due to drug and alcohol abuse.

During the meeting, the authorities and stakeholders agreed to identify the most vulnerable children so that they can be linked to various service providers. It was also agreed that schools should stop chasing children from school because of non-payment of development funds, but instead engage the concerned parents.



**Insert: Stakeholders during the meeting in Rumphi district.**

Additionally, chairpersons of various Village Development Committees (VDCs) vowed to initiate development projects that would help to contribute towards the creation of conducive learning environments for children in their designated areas.

Currently, YONECO is chairing the Rumphi District Education Network, and their work in highlighting these issues and bringing together stakeholders to address them is an important step in improving the education of children in Bumba Zone, Rumphi district. Their efforts to ensure that every child has access to education can be seen as commendable, as it will not only help in creating a better learning environment but also create a long-lasting impact on the community's overall development.

# Ntcheu District Social Welfare Office Supports YONECO's Early Childhood Development Centre with Nutritional Flour Donation

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Children who attend Ntcheu DIC and some of the flour that was donated by the DSWO.

YONECO received a donation of 40 kilograms of fortified soya enriched flour from the Ntcheu District Social Welfare Office. This donation will contribute towards enhancing the nutritional status of the children enrolled in YONECO's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre in Ntcheu Boma.

YONECO opened the ECD Centre in 2018 with the goal of creating a safe, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment for children in the area. The centre currently has a total enrollment of 62 children, with 38 girls and 24 boys.

The donation of fortified soya enriched flour is particularly important for these young children, as proper nutrition is crucial for their growth and development.

The fortified flour is rich in essential vitamins and minerals that will help to support the children's cognitive development and overall health.

The donation from the Ntcheu District Social Welfare Office is a testament to the strong partnership between YONECO and the local government. This type of collaboration is essential in ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community have access to the resources they need to thrive.

YONECO's efforts to provide quality Early Childhood Education and also to ensure that these children are well-nourished can be seen as commendable, as it will not only help in creating a better learning environment but also create a long-lasting impact on the community's overall health and well-being.

# YONECO and Malawi Police Service Promote Road Safety for School-Going Children in Nkhata Bay

By Doreen Luwe

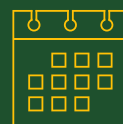


Insert: A Road Traffic Officer making a demonstration on how to use the pedestrian crossing with support from two learners.

On January 20, 2023, YONECO partnered with the Malawi Police Service to conduct a road safety session at Kalambwe Primary School going children in T/A Mkumbira area of Nkhata Bay district. The goal of the session was to teach school children safe methods for crossing the main road to and from school and to familiarize them with road signs and their purpose for protecting both drivers and pedestrians.

A total of 372 students, consisting of 179 boys and 193 girls, participated in the session led by Road Traffic Officers. The students were instructed on how to properly look both ways before crossing the road, use designated crosswalks, and other safety precautions. The officers also explained the significance of different road signs and how they promote safety for all on the roads.

The session was deemed a success, as the children demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of road safety. Both YONECO and the Malawi Police Service are optimistic that these sessions will aid in reducing the number of accidents involving children on the road.



## Upcoming International Days

Safer Internet Day – 8 February

International Day of Women

and Girls in Science – 11

February

World NGO Day - 27 February

# Nsanje Schools Get a Boost from YONECO's introduction of Safe Schools Programme

By Jacqueline Holla



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Nsanje, Jacqueline Holla during the session at Kanjedza Primary School.

YONECO and Nsanje Police teamed up to launch a Safe Schools Programme in Nsanje district, designed to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of gender.

This initiative is intended to reduce the number of girls who drop out of school due to increased instances of violence and harassment they experience in their schools. Further to this, the initiative is also expected to contribute towards improved performance of girls in the targeted schools.

So far, the Malawi Police Service and YONECO have held a series of

educational campaigns in schools across Nchere Education Zone, within the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Chimombo in the district.

The sessions covered topics such as child rights and responsibilities, types of Gender Based Violence (GBV), crime prevention, school complaint boxes and other reporting mechanisms.

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# YONECO Empowers Young People with Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights information at Chulu Community Day Secondary School

By Yamikani Gausi



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Kasungu (Chulu EPA) Yamikani Gausi during the awareness session

YONECO conducted an awareness session on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) at Chulu Community Day Secondary School in Kasungu district. The session was attended by a total of 180 students, with 120 girls and 60 boys in attendance.

The goal of the session was to provide the students with accurate and comprehensive information on SRHR, so that they can make informed decisions about their health and well-being. The session covered a wide range of topics, including understanding one's own body, protecting oneself from potential health risks associated with sexual activity, and safeguarding one's sexual and reproductive rights.

One of the key takeaways from the session was the importance of communication. The students were encouraged to openly and honestly communicate with their partners and

healthcare providers about their sexual and reproductive health needs. This is essential in order to make informed decisions and to protect oneself from potential health risks.

The session also touched on the importance of consent, and the students were reminded that it is essential for all sexual activities to be consensual. They were also provided with information about how to access sexual and reproductive health services, and were encouraged to seek out help if they needed it.

This SRHR awareness session was an important step in empowering young people with the information and skills they need to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. YONECO's efforts in providing this education can be seen as commendable, as it will not only help in promoting healthy sexual and reproductive practices but also create a long-lasting impact on the community's overall health and well-being.

## YONECO Takes Action to Contain Cholera Outbreak in Malawi through Door-to-Door Hygiene Sessions

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: YONECO officers during the door-to-door hygiene sessions in Blantyre district

YONECO continued to take action to help contain the current cholera outbreak which has affected the country's 28 districts. Since the first case was reported on August 7, 2022, over 1,108 people have died as of 30 January 2023 and over 34,355 cases have been confirmed, representing a case fatality rate of 3.23%.

In response to the outbreak, YONECO has deployed officers to various townships across Blantyre to conduct door-to-door sessions on hygiene. The sessions are designed to provide community members with the information they need to protect themselves from cholera and other waterborne diseases.

The teams are engaging residents on proper hand-washing techniques, water treatment, proper use of toilets, safe food preparation and storage, and other hygiene-related topics.

The sessions are delivered through interactive activities and demonstrations to make them more engaging and effective.

Through these door-to-door sessions, it has been noted that some households in the affected areas have no access to clean water, chlorine, and other proper sanitation facilities like handwashing basins and toilets. YONECO is working to address these issues by providing households with these necessary resources and educating them on how to use them properly.

YONECO's efforts to educate and empower communities to take action against cholera can be seen as commendable, as it will not only help in containing the spread of the disease but also create a long-lasting impact on the community's hygiene and sanitation practices

# A Cleaner Community: The Importance of Proper Waste Disposal

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Representatives from Ntcheu district stakeholders who participated in the clean -up exercise. Bottom right: YONECO Project Officer (in green shirt).

A few decades ago, shopping baskets were a must when going out for shopping until plastic bags came in as their replacement. However, some decades of heavy use and reckless disposal of plastics has led to severe environmental damage. The effects of plastic pollution can be seen everywhere, from the oceans to our local communities. It's clear that something needs to be done to address this issue.

On January 13th, 2023, YONECO and various stakeholders in Ntcheu district took action by organizing a cleanup exercise aimed at promoting cleanliness and proper waste disposal. The cleanup was conducted in various communal spaces as a way of encouraging the general public to make the gesture of tidying premises around them as a routine part of their everyday life.

Proper waste disposal is essential to maintaining a clean and healthy community. Not only does it help to reduce the amount of pollution in our environment, but it also helps to prevent the spread of disease. When waste is not disposed of properly, it can attract pests and create unsanitary conditions.

By participating in the cleanup exercise, members of the community not only helped to improve the cleanliness of their community but also set an example for others to follow. The cleanup exercise was a reminder that we all have a role to play in keeping our communities clean.

As we move forward, it's important that we all do our part to reduce our use of plastic and properly dispose of the waste we do produce. Simple actions like using reusable bags, recycling, and properly disposing off the waste can have a big impact on the health and well-being of our community.

Let's all commit to making a cleaner community a priority and make proper waste disposal a routine part of our everyday life.



# YONECO Empowers 350 Students with Cholera Prevention Knowledge in Machinga

By Yvonne Kazembe



Insert: YONECO officers during the awareness session, interacting with learners.

As Cholera disease continues to spread across Malawi, YONECO has embarked on sensitization campaigns which are targeting primary and secondary school students on prevention of the disease.

Among other sessions, YONECO reached out to 350 students from around Ntaja area in Machinga district with awareness messages through various Interpersonal Communication strategies. The students who have been engaged have also been encouraged to share the information with their peers and relatives.

The Cholera case in Machinga was confirmed on 3 March, 2022 and has registered 1400 cases with 48 fatalities recorded as of January 30, 2023. At national level, a cumulative figure of over 29,360 cases have been reported and a total of 960 deaths as of 22 January, 2023.

Despite a number of efforts by the Malawi government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and various development partners to contain the disease, there is still need for more support to strengthen the efforts.

**STOP THE  
SPREAD OF  
CHOLERA**

**Tionetsetse kuti  
tikudziteteza  
mokwanira pamene  
tikusamalira odwala  
matenda a Kolera.  
Kutsata njira zopewera  
matendawa  
sikudzikonda koma  
kuteteza kuti nthendayi  
isapitilire kufala. Kodi  
tonse tikadwala,  
asamale mzake ndani?**



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# Seventeen Years of Consistency and Determination

By Gracium Chithonje



Molosoni's thirst for knowledge was not dampened by his promotion. In 2011, he enrolled for a Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) at Masongola Secondary School through the open education initiative offered by the school. He successfully completed this level in 2012. His first attempt for the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) was in 2013 and the results were impressive.

After a very long sail through the rough waters of an unsustainable employment history, favor or opportunity finally smiled at Justin Molosoni. In the year 2005, Justin Molosoni not only got permanent employment as a security guard with Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO) as a means of steady income, but was also accorded an indirect opportunity to contribute to the efforts of empowering women, youth, and children in the country.

Dedication and determination can never be ignored. Molosoni's consistent dedication to his work and determination to obtain academic credentials drew the attention of the management team, which did not hesitate to usher him into the relatively new territory of his career path.

When asked about his personal vision, quest for career growth, and the career journey he had had so far, Molosoni could not conceal his appreciation for the YONECO Management's relentless efforts in recognizing the contribution of employees towards the realization of the organization's mission and vision at all levels of the organization. Justin's eyes are on a higher administrative post in the organization. Thus, Justin says he is determined to pursue a qualification in administration-related discipline.

Being fully aware that he lacked any academic papers to take him up the ladders in the organization hierarchy despite the well nurtured organizational culture which recognizes employee skills and dedication, in 2010 Justin humbled himself and joined standard 8 learners at an adult literacy center which YONECO established in Zomba. Justin Molosoni qualified for the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) in the same year.

Molosoni has worked as an office assistant for the organization since 2011, during which he has been, among many other things, exposed to implementation of various development-oriented interventions and stores management.



Top: Justin Molosoni at the head office. (Bottom-right) Molosoni supporting one of YONECO's humanitarian activity.

# Mzimba Forestry Authorities Hail SAMALA Project Partners

By Esnart Chingwalu



**Insert: Some of the community members who received the bamboos posing for a photo**

Forestry authorities at Khonsolo in Mzimba district have praised the efforts of Total Land Care, YONECO and International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) for their commitment to fostering collaboration with stakeholders in the implementation of Sustainable Land Management (SAMALA) Project.

Senior Forest Guard Edwin Chipeta explained that the approach taken by the organizations was one of accountability and ownership, and expressed his confidence that the project would be beneficial to environmental conservation in the area.

The Senior Forest Guard for Khonsolo area, Edwin Chipeta, expressed his optimism that the various activities under the project will enhance environmental conservation efforts in the area. Chipeta further explained that the consortium has put all the stakeholders at the centre of implementation, a thing which he said is enhancing ownership and accountability.

SAMALA Project donated bamboos to community members.

Bamboos offer extensive benefits to humans and the environment hence they were distributed to community members. Bamboos are a versatile and renewable resource that can be used in construction, handicrafts, production of furniture and others thereby protecting first trees which take some years to grow and mature.

*"We are satisfied with the commitment and collaborative efforts which the organizations that are implementing SAMALA Project have been showing since the day the project was introduced in this area. It is time for various government departments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community members to work together in order to restore the ecosystem," explained Chipeta at a function where SAMALA Project distributed bamboos to community members.*

SAMALA Project is being implemented with funding from Irish Aid and the Government of Flanders. The central objective of SAMALA Project is to contribute to the restoration of degraded landscapes to support sustainable livelihoods in Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi and Dowa.



# YONECO and Partners plant 600 Trees at Mphepozinayi Health Centre in Ntcheu District

By Richard Nkhonjera



**Insert: Project Officer for YONECO in Ntcheu, Richard Nkhonjera planting a tree during the event.**

On January 20th, 2023, YONECO, in partnership with community members, participated in a tree-planting activity at Mphepozinayi Health Centre in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Njolomole in Ntcheu district. The event was held in line with the interventions being advocated for in the 2022/2023 National Forestry Season, which aims to restore degraded forest landscapes for livelihood security.

The theme of this year's National Forestry Season is 'Restore degraded forest landscapes for livelihood security', and it was launched on December 23rd, 2022. The season will run until April 15th, 2023.

The Ntcheu District Council has set a goal to facilitate the planting of 1 million trees this season. So far, the council has been able to acquire 1,164,356 tree seedlings from communal and privately-owned commercial tree nurseries. The tree-planting activity at Mphepozinayi Health Centre was a step towards achieving this goal, with 600 trees being planted around the health facility.

The planting of trees not only helps to restore degraded forest landscapes but also provides many benefits such as improved air quality, carbon sequestration, and the provision of shade, which is essential for the health of both people and animals. In addition, it also helps to reduce soil erosion and improves the quality of water in nearby streams and rivers.

Overall, the tree-planting activity at Mphepozinayi Health Centre was a successful event that brought together YONECO, its partners, and community members to work towards a common goal of restoring degraded forest landscapes for the benefit of the community and the environment. The Ntcheu District Council's goal of planting 1 million trees is a significant undertaking, and the support of the community and organizations like YONECO is essential in achieving it.



THE GLOBAL GOALS

13 CLIMATE ACTION



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