



Youth Net and Counselling

YONECO VOICE



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Production Team

Layout and Design

Wilson Mkandawire

Contributors

- Enalla Msukwa
- Richard Nkhonjera
- Esnart Chingwalu
- Grant Dulla
- Jacqueline Holla
- Mabel Makondetsa
- Gracium Chithonje
- Littah Gausi
- Carlos Ntewa Wandale
- Thokozani Chisaka
- Florence Nkosi
- Mercy Garnet
- Temwani Hassan Shaba
- Mustafa Makumba

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager

Daniel Chikatentha

Executive Director

MacBain Mkandawire

Our Programmes

- Youth Development.
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- Governance and Human Rights.
- Media, Collaboration, Networking and Coordinating.
- Climate Change and Disaster Management.
- Institutional Management.
- Research and Documentation

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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
Confidentiality
Respect for human dignity
Transparency and Accountability



Executive Director's Note...



with MacBain Mkandawire

Dear Esteemed Reader,

Six months have gone by and we have entered the last half of the year. We need to have some reflections on what we are doing right or not. We need to take stock of our goals and targets and check if we have reached 50% of our targets. This will help us to understand whether we will successfully reach the final end or not come the end of the year.

As we concluded the last six months, we noted an increase in cases of mob justice. One wonders whether the people have lost trust in the country's law enforcement agencies and the justice system. Whatever the case, we urge Malawians to stop taking the law into their hands. We need to follow the law and if we have apprehended someone for whatever case, let us ensure that we do not punish the culprit but hand him or her to the authorities. On the hand, our law enforcement agents should ensure that the suspects are quickly taken to court and that cases are properly concluded.

Malawi celebrates her 59 years of independence on 6 July 2023. So many questions arise on this day as this independence coincides with too many issues and things that are affecting Malawians. While we are 59 years old, we are still in infancy when it comes to social and economic development. We are among the least developed countries. It seems we made a cautious decision, as a country, to remain one of the poorest countries for 59 years. It is imperative that we need to change the narrative. This will only happen if we change our mindset. As Malawians, we have cultivated a mentality of depending on others rather than relying on self-sufficiency. It is good to note that we have self-reliance in the country's 2063 development agenda. However, this will be fruitless if we do not put it into practice. We need to have a progressive mindset to achieve Vision 2063.

We would like to congratulate the Government of Malawi as the country joins the world in commemorating the World Population Day on 11 July, 2023 which is focusing on how to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls; and putting the brakes on COVID-19. We need to weigh up our population growth and pay our utmost attention to ensuring that we are managing the rights of women and girls. More importantly, we need to reflect on how we will engage men and boys as partners in protecting the health and rights of women and girls. Further to this, we should be cognizant of the needs of the boy child too because he is a key part of the equation in protecting the rights and health of women and girls. By cultivating gender equality, he can ably support positive changes for them. We say, let's celebrate the World Population Day in style.

Youth unemployment and underemployment have reached a record high. Youth do graduate from universities and colleges but they remain unemployed. We would be naïve to think that we will employ everyone if we do not think of self-employment. We need young people that have skills to create employment and can see the opportunity in everything that comes their way.

No wonder, a decision was made to have World Youth Skills Day on 15 July every year. As Malawi joins the world in commemorating this day under the theme 'Skilling teachers, trainers, and youth for a transformative future', we need to think of how we should resource the skills development component. Our education should focus on how we intend to support the youth develop the necessary skills. Our curriculum should change from academic based to competency based. Innovation should be part of the education system.

Trafficking in persons continues to be a threat to Malawi as both a transit, source and destination of victims of trafficking in persons. We remain a country that has critical aspects of trafficking in persons both internally and externally. As we join the World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July 2023, let us all help in creating the awareness about the trafficking in persons.

Let us close this message by, firstly, applauding the Malawi National Examinations Board's (MANEB) decision to administer deferred examinations to students who failed to sit for this year's Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) because their examination fees were embezzled by their designated school officials. We know that people will ask why MANEB did not just allow the students to just write exams in the first place. We need to understand that preparing for national examinations is not a simple task. All the exams are pre-packed with the number of schools. This means that they can only have a certain number of papers. However, as a lesson, MANEB should verify with schools soon after they have closed the examination fees payment period. MANEB should find a way of having the verification so that these issues should not bother innocent candidates again. The stress on children should not be tolerated.

We wish you a happy month of July 2023.



6 July
Happy
Independence Day

www.yoneco.org



THE SENTINEL OF HOPE: YONECO'S MIGHTY EMBRACE

By

Gracium Mkonda

Chithonje

In the old capital city realm,
Where Africa's heart beats warm,
Nestled 'neath Ndangopuma hills,
Lies a beacon of hope,
A guardian esteemed, for youth, women, and
the children.

Her hand, a balm of fellowship,
Embraces the marginalized, the oppressed,
Through telephone counseling and walk-in
support,
Dial the number, child helpline, toll-free, 116,
For GBV's plight, assistance unfolds, 5600,
6600 grants solace to drug-stricken souls,
While youth concerns find solace in 393's
embrace.

Her roar resonates across vast expanse,
A friend, a comrade to virtuous souls,
Yet a threat, a prick to foes of human weal,
Abuse a child, feel her pang, searing and real,
Youth's plight dismissed, her nose probes
deep,
Women mishandled, her thorny quills, like
porcupine's parade.





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for Social and Economic Development of Youth,
Women and Children.*



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Mobile: +265 888 919 623

Email: stationmanager@yoneco.org



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YONECO Raises Awareness on GBV and Mental Health among SOBA Secondary School Students

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: SOBA Private Secondary School students during the GBV and Mental Health Session.

On the 22nd of June, YONECO conducted an impactful session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and mental health with students from SOBA Private Secondary School. The session aimed to educate the students about the various forms of abuse, the consequences they entail, and the importance of maintaining good mental health.

In Malawi, cases of violence against men and women are on the rise, with individuals falling victim to abuse on a daily basis. The students from SOBA showed great interest in the topic and were eager to learn more. They were educated about different forms of abuse, such as physical abuse, which involves acts of violence resulting in injuries, and emotional abuse, which affects a person's mental well-being. The session also addressed issues of teasing, bullying, and other forms of abuse commonly observed in schools, urging the students to reject and stop such practices.

The importance of mental health was emphasized during the session, particularly for students who need to focus on their academic pursuits. Students were made aware of various mental health conditions, including polar disorder, bipolar disorder, and depression. They were advised to avoid engaging in early relationships, as these often disrupt education and contribute to negative behaviors. To maintain good mental health, the students were encouraged to avoid isolating themselves, explore their creativity, and find enjoyable hobbies that bring them fulfillment.

YONECO reiterated its commitment to conducting such sessions with youth in communities and schools. By raising awareness about GBV and mental health, YONECO aims to empower young individuals with the knowledge and tools needed to prevent abuse, protect their mental well-being, and create a safe and supportive environment for all.

YONECO Empowers Students in Career Goals Setting, Gender-Based Violence Awareness, and Behavior Change

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: YONECO Field Officers interacting with the learners at during the session.

On the 13th of June, YONECO Blantyre office organized a comprehensive session on career goals, addressing bad behavior, and raising awareness on gender-based violence (GBV) for students from STD 4 to STD 7. The session aimed to equip the students with important life skills and knowledge that will guide them towards achieving their goals, promote a safe and respectful learning environment, and empower them to combat GBV.

During the session, the students were taught the significance of setting goals in their daily lives. They learned that goal setting serves as motivation and provides them with a clear vision of what they want to achieve, encouraging them to work hard. Additionally, they were guided on practical steps to achieve their goals and were strongly encouraged to persevere and put in the necessary effort.

The session also addressed the issue of GBV, ensuring that the students were aware of the different forms of violence that can occur at home or at school, including abuse by parents, teachers, or fellow students. They were encouraged to report any cases of abuse they come across and were informed about the assistance that YONECO provides in handling such cases. The students showed great interest in this topic as it was new to them, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness on GBV among young individuals.

Furthermore, the students were educated on their rights and how to exercise

them in a responsible manner, emphasizing the importance of not violating the rights of others. They were encouraged to promote respect and equality in their interactions with others.

The session also addressed the issue of bad behavior, highlighting the negative consequences of drug consumption, defiance of authority, and engaging in early relationships. The students were strongly warned against these behaviors as they can hinder their concentration in class and lead to academic failure. They were urged to exhibit discipline both inside and outside the classroom, fostering positive behavior and conducive learning environments.

Additionally, the students were informed about YONECO's provision of free part-time lessons and were provided with helpline numbers to call in case they experience any form of abuse in their lives.

YONECO Blantyre remains dedicated to empowering students through informative sessions, helping them navigate their educational journey, promoting a safe and respectful environment, and providing the necessary support to address GBV.

YONECO Empowers Students at Good Hope PVT Secondary School on GBV and Role Modeling

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: Some of the students who were engaged during the session posing for a photo.

On the 7th of June, YONECO conducted an engaging session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Role Modeling with students from Good Hope PVT Secondary School. The session aimed to raise awareness among students about various forms of abuse and equip them with coping strategies. The interactive nature of the session allowed students to actively participate by sharing their perspectives and answering questions.

During the session, students were provided with helpline numbers that they could call for free to express themselves and report any improper behavior or issues within their community or among their peers. The introduction to GBV encompassed a comprehensive discussion on different forms of abuse, along with an explanation of the consequences associated with each. Importantly, the students were made aware that men can also experience abuse and were encouraged to report such cases to the appropriate authorities. They were advised to listen to their elders and teachers, who can provide guidance and support.

In addition to GBV, the students were introduced to the concept of role modeling. They were taught that a goal is something they aspire to achieve, as defined by one of the students in Form 3. The session further enlightened them about long-term and short-term goals, emphasizing the importance of setting objectives and working towards them.

The students were encouraged to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits and attend all levels of education. They were inspired to work hard and dedicate themselves to their studies, recognizing that education plays a vital role in shaping their future.

YONECO's session left a lasting impact on the students of Good Hope PVT Secondary School, equipping them with knowledge about GBV and the significance of positive role models. By empowering students to recognize and address abuse while encouraging them to set and pursue their goals, YONECO aims to shape responsible, resilient, and successful individuals who can contribute positively to society.

YONECO Engages Primary School Learners on Dangers of Alcohol and Substance in Mzimba

By Esnart Chingwalu



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Mzimba Khosolo, Esnart Chingwalu, engaging the learners at Kabena Primary School

Authorities from Kabena Primary School have commended YONECO for engaging primary school learners on dangers of drug and substance abuse which are among the factors that lead to increased cases of school drop-out and poor academic performance.

Speaking during a school awareness of dangers of alcohol and substance abuse which YONECO conducted on 18 May, 2023 at the school, the Head Teacher of Kabena Primary School, Visuzyo Almon Khoma, explained that learners need to be imparted with necessary life skills that should help them to make informed decisions and resist negative peer pressure.

Whilst appreciating the efforts which organizations like YONECO are rendering to learners to excel in their studies, Nkhoma also indicated that there is a need to address factors causes of child marriages which he said is among the common factors that contribute to increased school dropout rates among girls.

"There is a need to promote the rights and welfare of the girl child as many of them do not return to school after long holidays due to forced child marriages," explained Nkhoma.

In response to the call, YONECO has planned to conduct a series of community awareness campaigns in the area which have been scheduled to commence in June, 2023.



YONECO Internship Program: Intern Profiles



My name is Temwani Hassan Shaba, and I am a graduand of The University of Livingstonia (UNILIA), where I pursued my Bachelor of Social Science in Human Rights degree. In addition to my degree, I also hold a certificate in Project Management, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Analysis. I recently joined the Monitoring and Evaluation Department at YONECO as an intern on 1st June 2023.

My primary goal in this position is to gain knowledge and experience in the fields of Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as Data Analysis.

I have successfully been able to learn and adapt myself in a professional environment.

Being a part of YONECO, particularly in one of the most significant departments of the organization, is an invaluable opportunity for me to gain valuable experience that will thrive and benefit me throughout my career.

My name is Mustafa Makumba, a 3rd year Bachelor of Arts in Journalism student at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) formerly the Malawi Polytechnic.



I am a web development intern at Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO). I joined YONECO on 4th June, 2023.

In my first month at Yoneco, I successfully developed a prototype of the Tithandizane National Helpline website. So far, I have experience in web design and development, and I am passionate about creating sleek and responsive websites that meet user needs.

Throughout my career, I have learned the importance of clear communication and collaboration with team members, and I value user feedback to improve the design process. I am proficient in using WordPress plugins and Astra templates to achieve desired outcomes, and I am always eager to learn new web development tools and techniques to improve my skills and productivity.



I am Florence Nkosi, a graduate from the Catholic University of Malawi (CU) with a degree in banking and finance. It is with great excitement that I joined YONECO as a research monitoring and evaluation intern in June 2023.

Since starting my internship at YONECO's headquarters office in Zomba, I have been entrusted with several important tasks within the M&E department. One of my key responsibilities is report writing, where I contribute to documenting and analyzing various aspects of our projects. Additionally, I am involved in cleaning cases in the CFM system, assisting with data collection and entry exercises for the SADC Youth Helpline initiative, working on institutional commodities reports, and managing institutional data trackers.

Throughout my time at YONECO, I have been fortunate to gain a wealth of skills, experience, and invaluable lessons through the sessions I have participated in. The organisation has

provided me with a nurturing environment to develop my communication and teamwork abilities. I have learned the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respecting the dignity of every individual I encounter. Moreover, I have honed my report writing skills, allowing me to effectively convey information in different formats. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to craft activity concept notes and generate project ideas, enhancing my ability to contribute creatively to YONECO's initiatives.

I encourage fellow graduates to seize the chance to intern at YONECO.

YONECO Internship Program: Intern Profiles



My name is Littah Gausi, and I am currently a fourth-year student at Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Development (ECD). It has been an exciting journey so far, and I am passionate about making a difference in the lives of young children.

I recently had the opportunity to join YONECO as an intern, and I was assigned to work at the Chikwawa District Office. This placement has been invaluable in terms of hands-on experience and personal growth. It has provided me with the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge I have gained throughout my studies and put it into practice.

During my time at YONECO, I have been actively involved in various projects, but one that stands out is the establishment of 60 ECD centers in different villages across Chikwawa district. I took the initiative to spearhead this project, believing that these centers will have a positive impact on child

protection and development in the area.

Through this experience, I have not only sharpened my skills in decision-making and leadership but also gained a deeper understanding of my chosen career path. Witnessing the difference that can be made by providing quality early childhood education and support has further reinforced my commitment to pursuing a career in this field.



My name is Mercy Garnet, I recently joined YONECO on the 1st of June 2023 as a Social Media Marketing Intern, under the exciting Daring to Shift-Digital Jobs Internship Program.

I hold a bachelor's degree in Journalism, which I obtained in 2020 from Malawi Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS). However, my thirst for knowledge and passion for the digital world led me to pursue further certifications.

In January 2023, I successfully obtained a certificate in Digital Jobs, specializing in Data Analysis, Social Media Marketing, and Website Development, from mHub.

Being a part of YONECO's Digital Jobs Internship Program is an incredible opportunity for me, and I am truly grateful. It's a chance to put my skills and knowledge to work in a practical and impactful way.



I am Carlos Ntewa Wandale, I hold a diploma in Statistics from the University of Malawi (UNIMA), Chancellor College. On the 1st of June, 2023, I embarked on a new journey as an intern in the field of Social Media Marketing at YONECO, through the mHub Internship program. I am thrilled to be part of such a dedicated organization, and I see this opportunity as a stepping stone to elevate my professional career by acquiring valuable new skills.

Joining YONECO has ignited a sense of excitement within me.

The organization's commitment to its mission and the impact it has on the community are truly inspiring. Being part of a team that is so dedicated to making a difference is a privilege that I do not take for granted. I am eager to contribute my skills and learn from the experienced professionals around me.

This internship provides me with a chance to scale up my professional life. I am enthusiastic about gaining practical knowledge and experience in the realm of social media marketing. It is a rapidly evolving field, and I am excited to stay updated with the latest trends, strategies, and techniques. By immersing myself in this dynamic environment, I am confident that I will acquire the skills necessary to thrive in the industry.

Upcoming International Days

- 6 July - Independence Day
- 11 July - World Population Day
- 15 July - World Youth Skills Day
- 30 July - World Day against Trafficking in Persons



YONECO Internship Program: Intern Profiles

My name is Thokozani Chisaka, and I am a graduate from the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I hold a degree in Communication and Cultural Studies, specializing in Public Relations. Throughout my academic journey, I have developed a strong foundation in media relations and public writing. One of my key strengths is my ability to continually acquire new skills. I have

Currently, I am working with YONECO organization in Zomba as an intern under the mHub internship program. My role specifically focuses on social media marketing. I am thrilled to be a part of the YONECO team as I see this opportunity as a stepping stone to further enhance my career and professional growth. This organization presents a dynamic environment where I can acquire new skills and expand my knowledge in the field of communication and public relations. I am eager to contribute my expertise and work diligently to meet internship deadlines, even in high-pressure situations. Being a part of YONECO is not only an exciting chapter in my professional journey but also a chance for personal development and self-improvement. I am determined to make the most of this opportunity and contribute positively to the organization's mission and objectives.

Tithandizane National Helpline Services



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Smart choices for young people
24/7

Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline
Seek Help
CALL 6600
For FREE
to seek support on drug & substance abuse
24/7

Child Helpline
Let the Child Speak
CALL 116
For FREE
to report any form of Child Abuse
24/7

GBV Crisis Line
Speak out and Stop Violence
CALL 5600
For FREE
to report any form of Gender Based Violence
24/7

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Case Management
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www.tithandizanehelpline.org



Free & Confidential

Email: help@tithandizanehelpline.org

YONECO Promotes Youth Economic Empowerment in Blantyre

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Blantyre (In glasses) posing with some of the youths who attended the economic empowerment session.

YONECO in Blantyre organized an economic empowerment session with 15 youths from Limbe market with the primary objective of inspiring and encouraging the youth to engage in viable income-generating activities.

The session was specifically aimed at equipping the youths with knowledge on how to operate a business, financial literacy, and effective utilization of profits. Ultimately, the goal was to empower the youth to boost their businesses and contribute to poverty reduction in their respective homes.

The youth demonstrated a keen interest in the topic and actively participated in the session. They were provided with valuable insights on various aspects of entrepreneurship, including safe business practices, managing finances, and maximizing profits. By sharing this knowledge, YONECO aimed to empower the youth with the tools and skills needed to establish and grow successful businesses, ultimately improving their economic well-being.

During the session, one participant expressed the importance of diversifying their business ventures and moving beyond small-scale vending. They recognized the potential for contributing to the development of their nation, Malawi, by engaging in a broader range of income-generating activities.

Furthermore, the youth expressed their gratitude for the enlightening session and also requested the distribution of condoms as a means of promoting safe sexual practices. This request highlighted their awareness of the importance of protecting themselves and taking responsibility for their sexual health.

YONECO Conducts GBV Awareness Session with Young People

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: Part of the women group that was reached with GBV awareness information in Blantyre.

On the 6th of June, YONECO organized an informative session addressing gender-based violence with women, men, and youth. The session aimed to dispel the misconception that YONECO solely focuses on child protection, as many individuals were unaware that the organization caters to all genders and age groups. Participants were educated about YONECO's mission and services, including reporting mechanisms for addressing various issues.

During the session, it was observed that many men experience gender-based violence but are reluctant to report the incidents to authorities such as the police or their community leaders. Fear of being perceived as weak by their peers often leads men to suffer silently, causing emotional distress. The attendees expressed gratitude to YONECO for extending its

reach to them and raising awareness about gender-based violence. They highlighted the importance of toll-free helpline services, where they can seek assistance, freely express themselves, and receive counseling without judgment.

YONECO also acknowledged the prevalence of violence among women. One woman shared her experience of her landlady confiscating her child's support walking stick, which was provided by the hospital after the child sustained an injury.

The landlady used it as firewood, claiming ignorance of its purpose.

This act violated the child's rights and had a negative impact on both the mother and child. The woman expressed satisfaction in knowing where to report such abuses and her newfound knowledge of protocols to seek help and guidance.

The efforts of YONECO in raising awareness about gender-based violence and hygiene were well-received by the participants. The sessions provided valuable information and equipped individuals with the necessary tools to address and prevent various forms of abuse.

Report Gender Based Violence
CALL 5600
LEARN MORE ►
www.gbv@yoneco.org

YONECO Trains 50 Safe Space Mentors



Insert: Safe Space mentors posing for a group photo with facilitators and other stakeholders after the training in Mangochi.

Safe spaces provide women and girls with a nontoxic, free and trusted space to express themselves, share experiences, debate, establish new informed and healthy attitudes, behaviors and choices. Safe spaces offer an environment that is free from patriarchy, gender stereotypes, and inequality, where individuals can communicate openly, listen to and learn from one another.

Thus, in a bid to enhance the rights and welfare of girls, YONECO in partnership with UNFPA graduated a total of 50 safe space mentors in Mangochi district who were trained from 12 to 23 June 2023. The sessions were jointly facilitated by health service providers, officers from Mangochi Police Victim Support Unit, and officials from the district gender as well as social welfare offices.

The trained young people are expected to establish safe spaces in their designated areas and contribute towards referral systems for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender-Based violence (GBV) cases.

Thus, the approach is anticipated to contribute towards the overall conflict risk management at community level.

The trained mentors are from the areas of Traditional Authorities (T/As) Katuli, Jalasi, Bwananyambi, Lulanga, and Makanjira in Mangochi. YONECO is implementing Border District and Community-Based Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Project in the five aforementioned border areas. The Border Districts and Community-Based Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Malawi project aims to strengthen capabilities to mitigate and respond to existing and projected conflict, including radicalization.

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<p style="font-size: small; color: #ffc107;">CHILD HELPLINE</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">116</p> <p style="font-size: small; color: #ffc107;">GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">5600</p>	<p style="font-size: small; color: #ffc107;">YOUTH HELPLINE</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">393</p> <p style="font-size: small; color: #ffc107;">DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE HOTLINE</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">6600</p>
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YONECO and MPS Challenge Communities to Dutifully Report GBV and VAC

By Jacqueline Holla



Insert: Field Officer, Jacqueline Holla (standing) during the awareness session with students at Nsanje Secondary School.

YONECO, in collaboration with, the Malawi Police Service (MPS) conducted a joint mobile awareness campaign on June 7th, 2023 in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Nsanje district.

The initiative aimed to educate nearby evacuation camps about preventing and responding to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Children (VAC). Officers from the two institutions explained what GBV is, its forms, and the consequences it has on people.

The session facilitators also raised awareness of the prevention of VAC, its dangers, and the available reporting mechanisms.

At the end of the sessions, various reporting channels including Tithandizane Helpline Services toll-free



Insert: A joint awareness with the police on Nsanje Community Radio Station

numbers for GBV and child protection were publicized.

Thus, community members were urged to dutifully report violence and abuse cases to various reporting mechanisms of their choice.

In total, the campaign reached 2,108 people of which 1,110 were females and 998 were males.

My Take...



"There is a need to create platforms for women to voice out their issues and this is key to their empowerment as well as socioeconomic growth of the society. Over half of the Malawi population is comprised of women. Unequivocally, this means that they are a silent majority as they are sidelined during decision-making processes at all levels. Women's empowerment is critical to the realization of the Malawi 2063 Agenda. Women are a critical resource in the creation of positive change in our society". *Lemani Makina, Media, Advocacy and Networking Officer.*

YONECO Sensitizes Women on Gender-Based Violence in Mzimba District

By Esnart Chingwalu



Insert: Some of the women who were reached with GBV sessions that was conducted in the district

YONECO is thrilled to share the incredible strides made in Mzimba district, as the organization continues its mission to empower women, youth, and children. This month, the focus was on encouraging women to engage in economic activities, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, and promoting gender equality. The recent initiative involved sensitizing women involved in Village Savings and Loan (VSL) groups, providing education on gender-based violence (GBV) and empowering them to take action.

One of the remarkable women's groups that was engaged is the Chindindindi Women Club from Ulaya Village, comprising 30 determined members. Located in the Khosolo EPA of Mzimba South, these women shared their challenges in sustaining their businesses through the VSL activities. Lack of sufficient

funding was a prominent issue, as most organizations do not reach them to provide the necessary capital.

During the visit, a session was dedicated to raising awareness about gender-based violence, which proved to be an eye-opening experience. The women expressed concern over the increasing prevalence of GBV, particularly among women and school-going children. Many of them lacked knowledge about their rights and were unaware that such acts constituted a violation. It was disheartening to hear about the various forms of violence endured.

Another pressing issue raised by the women was the absence of a police unit in the Traditional Authority Khosolo area. This lack of local law enforcement

exacerbates the vulnerability of the community, as reporting cases becomes a significant challenge. In order to reach the nearest police unit, Jenda Police, they have to cover a distance of 47 kilometers, or travel 128 kilometers to reach Mzimba Police Station.

In response to these concerns, dedicated YONECO officers took the opportunity to sensitize the women on GBV during the session. Emphasis was placed on the importance of reporting cases promptly to ensure that justice is served and that the cycle of violence is broken. The women were urged to utilize YONECO's toll-free numbers, 5600 and 116, as a reliable platform to report GBV cases. Through support, a difference can be made by providing them with the necessary assistance and empowering them to stand up against GBV.

Tithandizane National Helpline Services



Youth Helpline
CALL 393
For FREE
Smart choices for young people

Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline
Seek Help
CALL 6600

Child Helpline
Let the Child Speak
CALL 112

GBV Crisis Line
Speak out and Stop Violence
CALL 112

Telephone
Face to Face
Social Re
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Free &



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Location

YONECO Head Office
Along Zomba-Lilongwe RD

Fighting Cholera with More Than Medicine

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: Some of the women that were reached with hygiene and sanitation messages.

Malawi has been experiencing the worst cholera outbreak in recorded history which started in March 2022 and continued spreading across all the 29 districts of the country in 2023. Cumulatively, 58,861 cases and 1,761 deaths have been recorded as of 20 June 2023. Over 14,000 children have contracted the disease and 219 of them have died.

Thus, it is against this background that YONECO held a hygiene and sanitation session with business owners around Limbe Market in Blantyre City. The session was held on June 7, 2023.

The activity was aimed at fostering awareness about proper hygiene practices around business establishments and emphasizing personal hygiene to prevent illnesses such as cholera.

Participants who operate food businesses were educated on securing sanitary conditions when preparing meals.

YONECO has scheduled a series of awareness campaigns on hygiene to keep the public informed about the importance of sound hygiene habits and the detrimental effects of neglecting the measures.

The session was hailed by the targeted business owners, with many of them expressing their appreciation and affirming their commitment to implementing the hygiene measures that were highlighted in the session. In addition to this, the food vendors further expressed their desire for more sessions on hygiene.

The activity was conducted under Cholera Prevention and Response Project which YONECO is implementing in Blantyre and Mangochi with funding from Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR).



Let's be extra cautious to prevent contagion when providing care to a cholera patient.
Let's prevent cholera, let's stop its spread.

www.yoneco.org





Tithandizane National Helpline Services

**Child
Helpline
116**

**GBV Crisis
Line 5600**

**Youth
Helpline 393**

**Drug &
Substance
Abuse
Hotline 6600**



Free and confidential services

Email us

drug@yoneco.org

help@tithandizanehelpline.org

gbv@yoneco.org

Visit www.tithandizanehelpline.org

Our Services

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



www.yoneco.org

SAMALA Project Trains VNRMCs in Mzimba District

By Esnart Chingwalu



Insert: Members of Gwazeni, Mapira, Bisa, and Makhuwira VDCs posing for a group photo together with YONECO and TLC staff after the training.

YONECO, in collaboration with dedicated members, has landscapes in the region. He Total Land Care and the been equipped with the expressed concern over human International Centre of Research necessary knowledge and actions, such as unnecessary and Agroforestry (ICRAF), is skills to restore and protect tree cutting even within forest spearheading the Sustainable village forest areas (VFAs). areas, and commended the Management of Landscapes Furthermore, they have been positive response to the (SAMALA) Project, which is sensitized about the SAMALA Project's intervention. making a significant impact in importance of tree planting the region. One of the key and the sustainability of Innocent Nambera, the Senior initiatives of this project is the natural regeneration in their Forest Assistant Officer for the training of Village Natural respective villages. region, expressed appreciation Resources Management for the project's activities and Committees (VNRMCs) in Feston Nihembe, the TLC pledged to provide expertise traditional authority Khosolo Project Coordinator for the whenever needed to the newly Jere. area, has urged the trained committees. He The main objective of the collaboratively with the acknowledged their crucial role in reducing human actions that project is to improve natural recently trained Village contribute to the destruction of regeneration activities and Combat the alarming state of Catchment Area Committees the Dwambadzi forest reserve. forest restoration in the area. and traditional leaders to The project continues to garner support and create a positive Through the guidance of the ensure the successful impact in the lives of women, SAMALA Project, comprehensive implementation of the project. Highlighting the youth, and children. training has been provided to potential of the project, By restoring and preserving our four committees from the Kingsley Chavula, the natural landscapes, we not Villages Development Extension Development Coordinator for only protect our environment Committees (VDCs) of Gwazeni, Khosolo EPA, emphasized its but also ensure a sustainable Each committee, comprising ten role in rescuing the degraded future for generations to come.

Play Learning Enhances Children's Mental Development

By Richard Nkhonjera



Experiential learning is a powerful tool that fosters growth and development among peers. It can take place within the confines of a classroom or be drawn from real-life experiences. At its core, experiential learning enables young people to acquire knowledge, evaluate their attitudes and values, learn and practice essential skills, and draw their own conclusions in a positive and supportive environment.

This type of learning encourages participants to engage in activities or reflect upon personal experiences, followed by group discussions aimed at extracting valuable lessons. Through these discussions, participants arrive at broader conclusions about their learnings and apply them to new situations, both within the learning environment and in their everyday lives.

YONECO, in its commitment to promoting experiential learning, has established the Girls Only Club, catering to both in-school and out-of-school adolescent girls and teen mothers. This initiative has sparked interactive and participant-centered discussions on crucial topics such as protection issues, child marriages, childbearing challenges, school dropouts, and early pregnancies.

The Girls Only Club has empowered girls, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of their rights and responsibilities. As one of the girls eloquently stated,

"Families do not always communicate their values directly. Many values are picked up from observing behavior among parents, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics such as sexuality. The introduction of this club will help us shape our own values."

These enlightening sessions take place at the YONECO Drop-in Centre, where a total of 10 girls actively participate. Inspired by their experiences, these girls have made a collective commitment to become resilient individuals, defying societal expectations. YONECO, in Ntcheu, remains dedicated to reaching out to even more girls by expanding the Girls Only Club. By empowering and instilling experiential learning skills among adolescent girls and teen mothers, YONECO aims to create a brighter future for the youth, women, and children it serves.

Re-admission of Suspended Learners Prioritizes Child Protection

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: YONECO Field Officers for Ntcheu district posing with one of the learners who got readmitted at Chitungu Primary School in the district.

YONECO firmly believes in the children and their parents, utmost importance of protecting children from various forms of abuse. Factors such as poverty, inequality, violence, cultural practices, and humanitarian crises render children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Such experiences can have long-lasting consequences, including mental health issues, compromised educational outcomes, substance abuse, school dropout, and an increased likelihood of engaging in unlawful activities. YONECO is fully committed to safeguarding children, directly or indirectly, ensuring that they have the opportunity to grow up in a safe environment and access their fundamental rights.

During an engagement with the Masitimale village community in TA Kwataine, Ntcheu district, YONECO observed that many children were aimlessly loitering around the village while their peers attended school. YONECO took the initiative to have discussions with both the

Following the counseling, noticeable positive changes were observed in the boy's attitude, and he eagerly expressed his willingness to return to school if given the opportunity. YONECO's district staff subsequently held a meeting with the headteacher at Chitungu Primary School, who agreed to readmit him. In the presence of the headteacher, YONECO officers, and parents, the children made a sincere pledge to behave responsibly at school. As a result, five learners, comprising two boys and three girls, have been successfully re-admitted at Chitungu Primary School.

YONECO's district staff in Ntcheu engaged in discussions with parents, teachers, and children, identifying the lack of scholastic materials as one of the factors contributing to absenteeism. The children were educated about their rights and responsibilities, including the right to education, life, and food. Through counseling sessions, they were reminded of the significance of schooling and encouraged to return.

Hanleck Nkhoma, a fourth-grade student, expressed his desire to go back to school, despite his initial apprehension due to past misconduct.

YONECO remains committed to providing ongoing counseling to these children and has scheduled a session on positive parenting during one of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. By focusing on the holistic well-being of children, YONECO strives to empower them to become responsible, thriving individuals, ensuring their future success.

YONECO Empowers Teen Mothers and Adolescents through Experiential Learning

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: YONECO Field Officer engaging the teen mothers and adolescent girls during the experimental learning session in Ntcheu.

Experiential learning is a powerful tool that fosters growth and development among peers. It can take place within the confines of a classroom or be drawn from real-life experiences.

At its core, experiential learning enables young people to acquire knowledge, evaluate their attitudes and values, learn and practice essential skills, and draw their own conclusions in a positive and supportive environment.

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As one of the girls eloquently stated, "Families do not always communicate their values directly. Many values are picked up from observing behavior among parents, particularly when it comes to sensitive topics such as sexuality. The introduction of this club will help us shape our own values."

These enlightening sessions take place at the YONECO Drop-in Centre, where a total of 10 girls actively participate. Inspired by their experiences, these girls have made a collective commitment to become resilient individuals, defying societal expectations. YONECO, in Ntcheu, remains dedicated to reaching out to even more girls by expanding the Girls Only Club. By empowering and instilling experiential learning skills among adolescent girls and teen mothers, YONECO aims to create a brighter future for the youth, women, and children it serves.

YONCO Holds Meeting with Parents of ECD Learners

By Mabel Makondetsa



Insert: YONECO Field Officer engaging the teen mothers and adolescent girls during the experimental learning session in Ntcheu.

Following the successful establishment of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre in Chikwawa, an important meeting was organized which brought together the parents of children who were enrolled at the centre, with the aim of cultivating a strong and effective partnership between the ECD centre management committee, caregivers, and parents. The collective goal was to create an environment that would greatly benefit the academic learning, behavior, social and emotional development, and overall well-being of the young learners.

During the meeting, various key strategies and initiatives were discussed to ensure the promotion of child rights and to enhance the welfare of all the children attending the ECD centre. The participants recognized the significant role that

a collaborative effort between parents and the ECD centre management committee can play in providing a nurturing and supportive environment for the children.

One of the prominent decisions made during the meeting was to prioritize the recruitment of caregivers from the local community. It was agreed that selecting caregivers with clear and clean track records would be essential in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for the children.

By employing caregivers from the immediate community, the ECD centre aimed to establish a stronger connection between the children and their local cultural context, fostering a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Furthermore, it was emphasized that these caregivers should possess the necessary qualifications and skills to effectively support the children's growth and development. The parents expressed their confidence in the local community's ability to provide suitable caregivers who would understand the unique needs of the children and be committed to their well-being.

The meeting also highlighted the significance of regular communication and feedback between the ECD centre management committee, caregivers, and parents. Open lines of communication were seen as essential for exchanging information, addressing concerns, and fostering a mutual understanding of the children's progress and development.

Improving Child Communication Through Indoor Games and Story-Telling

By Michael Mwanachawa



Insert: Some of the children who patronize YONECO DIC in the district

On June 26th, 2023, YONECO conducted a series of engaging activities with children at the Drop-In Centre (DIC) located in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mkumbira in Nkhatabay.

The aim of these activities was to assess the well-being of the children and raise awareness about the various challenges they face in their daily lives. The activities encompassed storytelling, physical games, quizzes, and a variety of indoor games.

The storytelling session served as a valuable opportunity to learn about the children's home lives, the treatment they receive, and the environment in which they are growing up. It provided insights into their personal experiences and allowed YONECO to gain a deeper understanding of their individual circumstances.

During the event, the children were informed about the different forms of violence and abuse they might encounter. They were also encouraged to promptly report any such incidents they may come across to Tithandizane Helpline 116 toll-free line. By fostering an environment of trust and open communication, YONECO aimed to empower the children to speak up and seek help when needed.

To promote physical fitness and encourage social interaction, the children engaged in various games with their friends towards the end of the session. These activities not only contributed to their physical well-being but also provided an opportunity for them to bond and strengthen their friendships.

A total of 45 children participated in the event, with 30 girls and 15 boys actively engaging in the activities. This inclusive participation ensured that both genders had an equal opportunity to benefit from the event and contribute to the overall success of the day.

Speak out against GBV



Call
5600



For free

Report any form of
Gender-Based
Violence