



Youth Net and Counselling

# YONECO VOICE



Monthly Newsletter

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# Our Programmes

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- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.
- Governance and Human Rights.
- Media, Collaboration, Networking and Coordinating.
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# 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,

We are in August 2023 and it is a very challenging time. As we were closing July 2023, we observed the resurrection of the fuel queues and messaging on fuel scarcity. This is a worrisome development as it challenges the very ability of development. We have also noted an increase in the food basket, and the source of income continues to be limited. We observed a report of over 91% debt increase and high levels of unemployment. These are all worrying and challenging situations. Additionally, we observe the commodity prices increasing, and maize is around MWK 35,000. These might be challenging, but we need to find a way out. Malawi is a country with lots of water and we observe government efforts to do irrigation. These issues need to be expanded to various places across the country.

August 2023 is the time when young people are on holiday. Others have written their Malawi School Certificate of Examinations and are now awaiting their results. To all of you, we say that you should enjoy the holidays responsibly. We do not need to engage in casual sex or abuse of drugs and substances. Protect yourself and ensure that you plan to go back to school or prepare for tertiary education. You are the future of Malawi and the world; therefore, your care on these issues matters. While children are on holiday, we have many cultural events and activities, especially the right to passage for boys and girls, where initiation camps have been organized. We urge those involved in such issues to seriously consider the timing of such events. It would be absurd for you to tell us that children are still in the camps as schools open. We need our children in school.

We have the International Youth Day (IYD) on 12 August 2023. What are our plans this year? We need to celebrate this day responsibly and effectively. This year, the IYD will be commemorated under the theme 'Green Skills for the Youth. Towards a Sustainable World'. It is such a great theme that we all have to support it to develop the much-needed green skills. We need to ensure that we create a sustainable world by ensuring that the youth are engaged in many environment related interventions. We need a serious approach to the creation of a sustainable environment as a nation. We wish the youth well as they are creating such an environment.

Have a happy August 2023!

Report Gender Based Violence

CALL 5600

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# ECHOES OF NEGLECT: THE BOY CHILD'S PLEA

By Joy Phiri

The sky, burdened with sorrow, looms overhead,  
As relentless wailing darkens its once bright hue.  
The inconsolable child, in tears, seeks solace  
instead,  
Longing for grievances addressed and empathy  
to accrue.

A haunting melody emanates from slums,  
Where hopelessness and fear cast their  
pervasive gloom.  
This well-crafted song, with lyrics polite and  
drums,  
Swells with emotion, tugging hearts from every  
room.

Amidst the darkness, a persistent voice does rise,  
A boy child, undeterred by neglect's cruel hand.  
He cries out to policy makers, his plea wise,  
"I am a boy, yet still a child, I demand."

"Protect my future, and don't discard it like a  
wretch,  
Empower my cause, hear my supplication's plea.  
Invest in programs that ensure my life to enrich,  
For I am a boy, yes, but a child first, you see."

Let us not ignore this earnest call for aid,  
But heed the song that resonates with care.  
For in securing the boy child's life well-played,  
A brighter future, for all, we shall declare.







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# YONECO Engages the Youth on Responsible Use of Social Media Platforms

By Michael  
Mwanachawa



Insert: Some of the learners at the school listening to one of the field officers during the session in Nkhata Bay district.

YONECO has challenged the youth in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mkumbira in Nkhata Bay district to exercise their rights in a responsible manner.

YONECO made the call during a human rights awareness session that was held at Kambuwi Primary School in the area. The session was organized after it was noted that Young people are more aware of their rights than their corresponding obligations.

Speaking during the event, Project Officer for YONECO, Michael Mwanachawa, emphasized the importance of responsible exercise of rights, especially in the current digital era.

Mwanachawa encouraged the youth to use social media platforms positively and avoid spreading fake news and engaging in cyberbullying.

He said, **"While it is important for the youth to exercise their rights, it is equally important for them to do so responsibly. We urge them to use social media platforms positively by promoting dialogue, tolerance, and understanding."**

The session was attended by a total of 176 which included 75 girls and 101 boys.



Insert: YONECO Project Officer for Nkhata Bay district, Michael Mwanachawa, during the session



# Tisaiwale Youth Club Cultivating Prosperity through Innovative Irrigation Farming

By Esther Yottamu



Insert: YONECO Field Officer (in yellow T-shirt) posing for a group photo with members of Tisaiwale Youth Club in Mwanza district

By equipping themselves with essential business skills, they are paving the way for their venture's continued growth and resilience.

Tisaiwale Youth Club has set ambitious goals, aiming to achieve remarkable success in increasing agricultural production. Their efforts not only contribute to improving food security within the village but also create job opportunities for local residents. As their harvests grow, the youth club plans to establish partnerships with nearby markets and restaurants to ensure a steady demand for their produce.

By taking charge of their destiny, these young individuals are not only securing a better future for themselves but also fostering prosperity and resilience within their entire community. With their determined spirit and innovative approaches, the Tisaiwale Youth Club serves as an inspiring example of how young minds can make a lasting impact on their surroundings.

In total, 31 youth members (16 boys and 15 girls) were positively influenced and reached by the transformative vision and actions of the Club.

Tisaiwale Youth Club stands as a shining beacon, showcasing the transformative power of determination and passion in a community. Established in 2018, this youth-led initiative has brought about significant positive change, particularly through innovative agricultural practices with a focus on irrigation farming.

Supported with funding obtained from agriculture commercialization, the club received a substantial grant of 40 million kwacha. With a forward-thinking approach, the youth members have planned to invest these funds in modern irrigation techniques to optimize water usage on the land generously provided by their traditional leader. To ensuring sustainability, the group has implemented renewable energy sources to power the water-pumping system.

In order to maximize their profits and enhance food security in the community, Tisaiwale Youth Club has adopted a strategic mix of high-value cash crops and staple foods like tomatoes and maize. Drawing on the wisdom of local agricultural experts and experienced farmers, the youth club organized workshops where they shared their knowledge on sustainable farming practices, soil conservation, pest management, and efficient water usage.

Recognizing the importance of long-term success, the youth members also attended workshops on financial management and marketing strategies.



# YONECO Empowers Chandulo Youth Club on Gender and Social Inclusion through SAMALA Project

By Khwima Chipeta



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Ntchisi, Khwima Chipeta posing with members of Chandulo Youth Club after the meeting.

On 18th July 2023, YONECO Field Officer stationed in Chikwatula EPA-Ntchisi engaged the youth belonging to Chandulo Youth Club, under the leadership of Sub-T/A Sambakusi. The purpose of this meeting was to sensitize the young members about the SAMALA project and stress the importance of gender and social inclusion in the decision-making process.

During the session, the youth were enlightened about the SAMALA project's objectives and its role in promoting gender equality and social inclusion in their community. The YONECO officer passionately encouraged the attendees to embrace the principles of inclusivity by actively involving women and people living with disabilities in various development activities being implemented in their locality.

It was emphasized that women and individuals with disabilities possess unique capabilities and talents, making them valuable contributors to the progress and prosperity of their community. By actively participating and taking on leadership roles, women and the physically challenged can significantly impact the decision-making process in every development initiative.

The engagement was met with enthusiasm, and the message resonated with the young audience. In total, 17 youths (12 females and 5 males) were reached during this session. The positive response from the participants demonstrated their willingness to support the cause of gender equality and social inclusion.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the youth chairperson expressed their appreciation for the efforts put forth by YONECO in the SAMALA project. The chairperson acknowledged the organization's dedication to ensuring that gender and social inclusion considerations are integral components of the project's implementation. This commitment from YONECO was commended as it further empowers the youth to become advocates for equal opportunities and inclusivity in their community.

The impact of this engagement extends beyond the immediate participants, as the sensitized youth are expected to share their newfound knowledge and values with others, thereby creating a ripple effect of positive change throughout the community.

# YONECO Drills 150 Youths in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: YONECO Field Officers (in green vests) engaging young people during one of the resilience and climate adaption sessions in Ntcheu district.

YONECO recognizes the potential which young people have to transform their societies hence the organization invests in strengthening youth leadership skills. The sessions aim to support young people in realizing their full potential and becoming active and engaged citizens who contribute to the overall development of their communities.

Further to this, cholera has also accelerated an unprecedented cholera outbreak across the country.

Thus, the youth need to be involved in decision-making processes and be allowed to lead some interventions that are aimed at addressing the current climate crisis.

In July 2023, a total of 150 (70 girls and 80 boys) young people from Zomba, Ntcheu, and Machinga completed a youth leadership training which equipped them with skills in resilience and climate change adaptation. The trained groups have been tasked to lead afforestation programmes, raise community awareness on proper waste disposal and promote climate-smart agricultural practices.

**“Having the youth at the centre of climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions is key as the youth of today are the ones who will also shoulder the responsibility of dealing with the decisions and actions that are being made today,”** explained Acting District Manager for YONECO in Ntcheu

Just like the rest of the world, Malawi is currently grappling with the impact of climate change which include short rainfall periods, floods, and dry spells in some parts of the country.



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**



# YONECO Internship Program: Intern Profiles



My name is Jasten Koloko, and I am currently a fourth-year student at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). My academic pursuit is focused on a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Development Communication.

Before joining LUANAR, I successfully completed my Malawi Certificate of Education (MSCE) at Puteya Secondary School in 2018. Since then, I have been dedicated to pursuing my

My name is Gerald Mbando, and I am currently a fourth-year student at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), pursuing my passion in Agricultural Development Communication (ADC).

I joined YONECO as an intern, specifically attached to the Media Advocacy and Communications Office. My internship commenced on 10th July 2023 and is set to conclude on 10th August 2023. This experience has been incredibly enriching and has provided me with practical insights into my chosen field of study.

During my time at YONECO, I have been actively involved in a range of tasks that are directly related to my course of study. Editing articles has honed my writing skills and taught

passion for agricultural development and effective communication strategies. different institutional communication channels.

Presently, I am thrilled to be gaining practical experience through my industrial attachment at YONECO. My attachment is specifically with the Media Advocacy and Communications Office. This opportunity has granted me valuable exposure to various areas within the organization. I began my attachment at YONECO on 10 July, and I am scheduled to conclude on 10 August 2023. During my time here, I have had the chance to contribute to multiple areas within the organization.

Among my responsibilities, I actively participate in the development of messages for

Additionally, I have been involved in digital photography, capturing the essence of impactful stories of change.

Furthermore, I take part in creating Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, which play a crucial role in disseminating important information to various audiences.

My engagement also extends to supporting the production of development-oriented radio programs, which offer a powerful medium for reaching out to communities and promoting positive change.



me the importance of clarity and accuracy in communication.

Documentation has given me a glimpse into the significance of record-keeping and efficient information management, crucial in any communication-based profession.

Graphic designing has been an exciting avenue for creativity,

enabling me to visually represent ideas and messages effectively. Meanwhile, my exposure to photography has allowed me to capture impactful moments and stories, recognizing the power of visual storytelling in advocating for social change.

This internship has been a transformative experience, as I have not only applied the theoretical knowledge gained from my academic pursuits but have also acquired new skills essential for my career. The professional environment at YONECO has been nurturing, allowing me to learn and grow as a communication specialist in the agricultural development sector.



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# Empowering Communities to Address Gender-Based Violence

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for YONECO in Ntcheu engaging community members during the awareness session.

The lack of knowledge about Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has led to the violation of human rights, leaving many individuals suffering in silence. Recognizing the significance of raising awareness on GBV and empowering communities, YONECO team in Ntcheu district conducted an informative session at GVH Kamwendo village.

The session aimed to educate community members about their rights, forms of GBV, and available reporting mechanisms, fostering an environment where people can seek support and justice.

YONECO in Ntcheu organized an enlightening session at GVH Kamwendo to raise awareness on GBV. The focus of the event was to educate participants about their rights and responsibilities as individuals and members of a community. The session highlighted various forms of GBV, including physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse, through real-life examples within the community.

Through the GBV awareness session, community members were made aware of the resources available for reporting cases of abuse.

Officers emphasized the importance of reporting such incidents promptly to relevant authorities, stating that silence allows harmful practices to persist and become ingrained in society. Attendees were encouraged to seek support and not hesitate to report any form of abuse, be it within the community or elsewhere.

During the session, the district staff urged chiefs to avoid handling cases beyond their capacity, such as defilement and child marriages. Instead, they were encouraged to collaborate with relevant authorities and organizations to address such serious issues amicably. This approach ensures that justice is served and that victims receive appropriate support.

The community members expressed their gratitude to YONECO for organizing the informative session. They acknowledged that many individuals had endured silent suffering due to shame, fear, or lack of knowledge about reporting mechanisms. However, the awareness session equipped them with the necessary information to address GBV issues confidently.



Picture inserts: Officers from YONECO during the awareness sessions





# YONECO Builds Rural Women's Resilience Skills



Insert: Some of the women who have benefitted from climate change adaption and resilience sessions in Zomba.

YONECO has embarked on strengthening the capacity of rural women in climate change adaptation among the groups of people that are mostly affected by the impacts of climate change and resilience.

Thus, a total of 30 women from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mwambo have been trained in climate adaptation and resilience. The objective of the training was to empower the participants with knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively respond to the impacts of climate change on their communities and livelihoods.

YONECO intends to build the capacity of rural community members to adapt to changing weather patterns, reduce disaster risks, and build resilience.

"This training has equipped us with the necessary knowledge and skills that will enable us to protect our households and sustain our livelihoods," explained 48-year-old Ndazona Mpoma who was among the women who were trained from the area of TA Mwambo.

Among other factors, unequal socio-economic status leaves them with fewer means to adapt and cope with changing environmental conditions. Furthermore, gender disparities also hamper women's ability to protect themselves and their communities from climate-related risks. In addition to this, there are more subsistence women farmers as compared to men.



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# YONECO Conducts Dialogues Sessions in Mangochi

By Grant Dulla



Insert: Participants during the dialogue sessions in Traditional Authority Lulanga in Mangochi.

From 19th to 22nd July 2023, YONECO in Mangochi District, through the Border Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Project, conducted dialogue sessions in five Traditional Authorities that share borders with Mozambique. The purpose of these sessions was to identify and address social-cultural norms that hinder youth and women from accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRH&R) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services.

During one of the meetings, youth members raised concerns about the lack of enforcement of existing bylaws by traditional leaders. Specifically, they highlighted the issue of rampant sexual harassment of girls at video shows in TA Lulanga, which has led to a high number of unwanted pregnancies among young girls. This alarming trend has become a significant challenge affecting the community.

It was discovered that video shows are a major contributing factor to early and unintended pregnancies among girls.

Parents and community leaders are seeking intervention from the district council to enforce the law and curb these issues. However, there is a noted lack of active citizen participation in taking concrete actions to bring about change within the community.

The need for collective involvement and advocacy to address these challenges was

evident during the dialogue sessions.

Another issue that emerged during the discussions is the fear among men to undergo HIV Testing and Counseling (HTS). Men expressed concerns that if they were found with the virus, they believed they would face rejection by potential partners, leading to challenges in finding a spouse. This fear of stigma has become a barrier to accessing crucial HIV testing and counseling services, highlighting the need for comprehensive awareness and education on the importance of HTS and destigmatizing HIV.



## My Take...



'There is need for the education system to place emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education. These subjects provide a well-rounded skill set that fosters creativity, innovation, and analytical thinking" – Wilson Mkandawire, Program Development Officer



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# Zeroing in on the Rights of Sex Workers

By Esther Yottamu



Insert: Participants during the GBV session at YONECO Mwanza Office listening to a presentation.

On 5th July 2023, YONECO with GBV and talk about the conducted a Gender Based challenges they face in Violence (GBV) engagement seeking help or justice. session with sex workers and community members in YONECO further provided Mwanza district. information on available support services for sex

The session was held in order to address the issue of GBV which workers who have experienced GBV, such as counseling, legal aid, and healthcare. The session was aimed to provide a platform for sex workers to share their experiences, raise awareness about GBV, and discuss potential solutions to this problem.

Additionally, the engagement session was also aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination towards sex workers. It emphasized the importance of treating sex workers with dignity and respect, regardless of their occupation.

The session provided a safe space for the sex workers to openly share their experiences and promoting safe working conditions.



During the session, various sex topics related to GBV were discussed, including the forms of violence that sex workers might experience like physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. The facilitators also highlighted the importance of understanding consent and promoting safe working conditions.

## YONECO Collaborates with Tisawale Youth Club in the Promotion of Safe Sex

By Esther Yottamu

On July 12th, the YONECO conducted a productive session at Tisawale Youth Club in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Kanduku in Mwanza district. The session focused on young people's Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) by providing the youth with valuable information on how to make informed decisions regarding sex.

In addition to learning about contraceptive options, the youth were also educated on safe sex practices, such as the correct and consistent use of condoms as a means of preventing both unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

The youth club members were encouraged to promptly seek medical attention when they suspect any signs of an STI. The youth were informed that this proactive step is crucial for maintaining their sexual health and preventing any potential long-term complications.

YONECO interacts with young people through their various youth clubs and conducts sensitization sessions on various issues in order to ensure that young people are well-informed and able to make educated decisions about their reproductive health.



# Empowering Vendors with Sexual SRHR Information

By Jacob Phiri



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

Vendors, being a highly mobile and busy group, often face challenges in accessing essential services and vital information. Their constant movement and busy schedules can create a knowledge gap, leaving them unaware of important aspects of life. Recognizing this issue, YONECO took proactive steps to address the needs of vendors by conducting Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) sessions at Ntaja Trading Centre.

The primary objective of these sessions was to sensitize vendors about family planning services and Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs). The importance of these health services was emphasized as crucial for their well-being and future plans.

By raising awareness about SRHR, YONECO aimed to promote informed decision-making and enable vendors to prioritize their health amidst their busy business endeavors.

During the sessions, Elizabeth Kalua, one of the participants, highlighted the significance of seeking family planning and STI services, both for individuals and couples. Recognizing that good health is vital for the success of their businesses, Elizabeth urged her fellow vendors to take advantage of the available medical support.

In addition to medical services, participants were encouraged to seek peer education and counseling services related to their health whenever necessary. This focus on peer support ensures that vendors have access to guidance and assistance even in the absence of formal health services.

The vendors warmly appreciated YONECO for organizing these educational sessions, recognizing their importance and relevance to their lives. The sessions were deemed educative and provided valuable information that the vendors may not have otherwise accessed due to their busy lifestyles.

A total of 22 vendors (16 males and 6 females) participated in the SRHR sessions, indicating the positive impact of the initiative. By equipping vendors with knowledge and awareness about their sexual and reproductive health, YONECO contributed to empowering them to make informed decisions, safeguard their health, and secure a healthier future.

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# YONECO Introduces BEFIT Programme in Chitipa District

By Danreck Pande



Insert: Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire presenting the BEFIT Programme to the District Executive Committee (DEC) in the district. Inside: Presentation of the programme to the Full Council.

The Ministry of Education through the Directorate of Open Distance and eLearning and the Directorate of Basic Education, is spearheading an innovative initiative known as the Building Education Foundations through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) programme. This transformative initiative aims to enhance the acquisition of crucial literacy and numeracy skills among primary school children. By implementing a tablet-based learning intervention, the program seeks to supplement teacher efforts and positively impact the educational journey of millions of young learners.

In a landmark move, the BEFIT programme will be rolled out nationally, extending its benefits to students from Standard 1 to 4 across all of Malawi's public primary schools. With its ambitious scope, the program aims to reach an astounding 3.8

million learners in approximately 5,800 schools. The scale and ambition of this initiative make Malawi a pioneering nation in implementing a digital learning solution on such a wide scale. In doing so, the country is poised to set an exemplary roadmap for other nations to emulate, thus contributing to the advancement of education worldwide.



Recently, YONECO took a significant step in the BEFIT programme's implementation by conducting DEC and Full Council meetings in Chitipa district.

During these meetings, key stakeholders, including Traditional Authorities and Councillors, were introduced to the BEFIT Programme. The objective was to garner support and engagement from the local leadership to ensure the program's success and seamless integration into the education system.

The first phase of the BEFIT programme will have a profound impact on 30 primary schools in the region, directly benefiting an impressive 6037 learners. Through targeted intervention and digital tools, the BEFIT programme aims to empower these young minds with essential skills, enabling them to thrive academically and unlock their full potential.

As the BEFIT programme sets in motion, Malawi is at the forefront of a transformative education revolution, harnessing the potential of technology to deliver quality education to its young generation. By bridging the gap between traditional teaching methods and modern learning tools, the nation is paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future. As the world watches Malawi's efforts with admiration, it is evident that the BEFIT programme holds the promise of transforming the educational landscape, not only within the nation but also inspiring others to embark on a similar journey towards educational excellence.



# YONECO Conducts an Awareness Session with Kamtande VNRMC

By Wasili Akimu



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Ntchisi, Wasili Akimu (standing) during the awareness with VNRMC members from Kamtande village.

On 18th July 2023, YONECO Field Officer for Ntchisi conducted awareness sessions to the Village Natural Resources Management Committee members (VNRMC) in Kamtande village, under Traditional Authority Chikho. The focus of these sessions encompassed a range of critical topics, including climate change, the importance of youth and women inclusion in community development, human rights, and the pressing issue of gender-based violence (GBV).

During the sessions, the VNRMC members were provided with comprehensive information about the impact of climate change on their community and the significance of sustainable environmental management. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on the importance of actively involving the youth and women in decision-making processes within the VNRMCs. By encouraging youth inclusion, the aim was to empower young individuals with knowledge and opportunities for meaningful participation in community

development, bridging the gap created by the historical neglect of women and youth in such decision-making roles.

Addressing the pressing issue of gender-based violence (GBV), the sessions delved into the various aspects of this problem and its detrimental effects on individuals and the community as a whole. The VNRMCs members were enlightened on how to identify and address instances of GBV within their community.

As a proactive measure, helpline toll-free numbers were provided to the participants, urging them to report any incidents of GBV or related

issues occurring in the area. This move aimed to create a safe and supportive environment for victims while promoting accountability for perpetrators.

In total, the sessions successfully reached 25 VNRMCs members, with 11 of them being females and 14 males. The significant presence of female members demonstrates a positive step towards gender representation within the committee.

By disseminating crucial information on climate change, youth and women inclusion, human rights, and GBV, YONECO's efforts fostered greater awareness and understanding among the VNRMCs members. The empowerment of the youth and women within the committee holds the promise of enriching community development initiatives through diverse perspectives and innovative solutions. Furthermore, addressing the issue of GBV is a critical step towards creating a safer and more supportive community for all its members.



Insert: Some of the members who attended the awareness session.

# YONECO Inspires Limbe Primary School Students on Child Rights and Motivation

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: YONECO Field Officers engaging with the learners during the child rights and motivation session at Limbe Primary School.

On the 18th of July, 2023, YONECO By putting in the effort, they rights that every child should be organized a session at Limbe Primary can become role models for able to access. They were School, focusing on child rights and others and inspire those encouraged to embrace and enjoy motivation. The aim of this session around them. these rights, as enshrined in the was twofold: to motivate the constitution of Malawi and other students to excel in their studies and In the spirit of recognizing their instruments protecting the rights of to empower them with knowledge rights, the students were children. about their rights as children. informed about the

importance of knowing Additionally, the students were themselves and valuing what advised to speak up and report matters most to them. any cases of violence they may During the session, the students were themselves and valuing what advised to speak up and report matters most to them. any cases of violence they may diligently towards achieving them. Understanding their own rights experience at home, in their They were taught about both short- and values allows them to communities, or at school. The term and long-term goals. For treat others with respect and session emphasized the example, planning to come to school ensure that everyone enjoys importance of seeking help and in the morning demonstrates a their rights without unequal support from trusted individuals, short-term goal of having a restrictions. such as the police, head teachers, successful day. On the other hand, teachers, chiefs, and other envisioning their future education Education, food, health, and responsible figures, when faced journey from primary to secondary, privacy were highlighted as with any infringements of their tertiary, and eventually the industry some of the fundamental rights. represents a long-term goal that they can strive for.

The students were reminded that each one of them has the potential to make a positive impact on society. Whether aspiring to become teachers, nurses, doctors, or other professionals, achieving these dreams requires hard work both inside and outside the classroom.

Report Gender Based Violence

CALL 5600

[LEARN MORE ►](#)



# Learners Urged to Make Right Choices to Achieve their goals

By Esnart Chingwalu



Insert: YONECO Field Officers engaging with the learners during the child rights and motivation session at Limbe Primary School.

As primary and secondary schools in Malawi have finished the 2022/2023 academic year, YONECO has engaged in a number of activities that are aimed at ensuring that the learners should return enjoy their holidays and return to school in the academic year. In most instances, a good number of children do not return to school after long holidays due to a number of factors including child marriages, unintended teen pregnancies, child labour as well as alcohol and drug abuse.

Thus, on 21 July, 2023, YONECO organized a sensitization session with learners from Kabena Primary School in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Khosolo Jere in the Mzimba district. The session was

**“Helping learners to resist societal and negative peer pressures is key to ensuring that learners should return to school amidst so many temptations to fall victim to various harmful practices,”** explained Esnart Chingwalu - Project Officer for YONECO in Mzimba.

organized in response to a call from school authorities after noting that many children do not return to school after extended holiday breaks.

Thus, the session focused on providing information on factors that prevent many children from returning to school after the end of an academic year.

According to the school’s Head Teacher, Visuzyo Nkhoma, the key factors that prevent children from returning to school after a school holiday include child marriages, child labour and teen pregnancies.

**“Learners need to understand that education is key to a brighter future and there is a need to encourage them to make the most of their educational opportunities,”** explained Nkhoma.



Report Gender Based Violence  
**CALL 5600**

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# Chinamwali DIC Graduates 30 into Early Grade Learning

By Happiness Chanunkha



Insert: Parents and ECD learners from Chinamwali DIC during the graduation ceremony.

On 19th July 2023, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) terminal school session at Chinamwali DIC came to a successful conclusion, as 68 young children (24 boys and 42 girls) took their exams. Of these, 60 children (30 boys and 30 girls) passed their exams, and an impressive 30 graduates were prepared to move on to Standard 1.

Before the exam results were released, a privileged opportunity was granted to conduct sessions on Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The discussions primarily focused on the various forms of abuse that occur between husbands and wives, such as domestic violence, denying responsibilities, restricting wives from engaging in social-economic activities like small-scale businesses, and neglecting their duty to provide basic necessities like food and clothing for the family. These sessions aimed to raise awareness about the negative consequences of such behaviors

and encouraged participants to foster healthy and respectful relationships within their families.

The issue of drug and substance abuse, including smoking, excessive beer drinking, cocaine, and mandrax, was also addressed during the event. The harmful effects of these substances, which often lead to severe consequences such as mental health issues, were emphasized. By highlighting the dangers of substance abuse, the aim was to deter individuals from engaging in such destructive behaviors and promote a healthier lifestyle.



In addition to addressing social issues, the event also emphasized the importance of sanitation and personal hygiene. Parents were advised to take proper care of their children by ensuring they bathe regularly, providing them with clean water, and offering well-balanced and nutritious meals. These efforts were aimed at improving the overall well-being and health of the children.



Insert: Parading to receive certificates and gifts.



During the event, YONECO's toll-free helpline numbers, such as 5600 for GBV, 6600 for drug and substance abuse, and 116 for general helpline services, were prominently publicized. Attendees were encouraged to utilize these helplines to report any cases of abuse or related issues they may come across. This initiative aimed to ensure that individuals had access to support and assistance when facing challenging circumstances.



## YONECO Provides Relief Items to Cyclone Freddy Survivors at Mbidi Evacuation Camp

By Lackson Jere



Insert: Helpline Services supervisor, Lackson Jere handing over clothing items to a lactating mother who is based at the camp.

On 19th July 2023, YONECO distributed relief items to survivors of Cyclone Freddy who are still residing in evacuation camps in the T/A Mwambo area of Zomba district.

Having carefully assessed the situation at the camp, it became evident that the people were still facing a lack of basic necessities essential for their daily activities and well-being.

In response to the pressing needs of those at the camp, the helpline team at YONECO mobilized necessary resources to provide aid. Generous contributions included clothes for both children and adults, shoes to protect their feet, and warm blankets to provide comfort during these challenging times.

The survivors expressed their deep gratitude to YONECO for the invaluable support they received during this difficult period. The chairperson for the camp, on behalf of the residents, conveyed heartfelt appreciation for the assistance received.

Acknowledging the ongoing challenges faced by the survivors, YONECO remains committed to continuing its efforts in mobilizing additional resources to support these resilient individuals at the evacuation camp.

The organization's unwavering dedication to providing assistance and alleviating the hardship experienced by the affected community members exemplifies the spirit of empathy and solidarity.

As the survivors of Cyclone Freddy strive to rebuild their lives and find strength amidst adversity, YONECO's continued mobilization of resources will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in supporting their recovery and helping them restore a sense of normalcy.



Above and below: Jere handing over clothes to survivors at the camp during the distribution exercise at Mbidi camp.



In times of crisis, acts of compassion and support are crucial in fostering hope and resilience within affected communities. YONECO's humanitarian efforts stand as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path to recovery for those impacted by Cyclone Freddy, as they work towards rebuilding their lives and creating a brighter future.

## SAMALA Engages Farmers on Climate Change Mitigation

By Akimu Wasili

On Monday, 24th July 2023, YONECO field officer for Ntchisi, working under Kalira EPA, conducted an awareness session for farmers 45 (22 males and 23 females) belonging to Kalikuni village in T/A Vusojere. The primary objective of this meeting was to educate the farmers about the SAMALA project which is currently being implemented in the area.

During the meeting, the farmers were engaged in discussions and identified two major causes of climate change in the area; cutting down trees for charcoal production and extensive cultivation. These practices have led to deforestation and soil degradation, contributing to the alteration of the local climate. The meeting provided an opportunity for the farmers to gain awareness about the consequences of these activities and explore alternative approaches to land use.

Land restoration activities were also a key topic of discussion during the meeting where participants recognized the importance of maintaining land fertility for sustainable agriculture. They were also encouraged to adopt smart agricultural practices advised by agriculture staff to preserve the land's productivity and promote environmental conservation.

Lead farmer from Kalikuni village expressed his commitment to take a proactive role in supervising and guiding the other members of the farming group citing that his dedication as a lead farmer will serve as an example to others,



# YONECO Empowers Communities from T/A Vusojere on Women Inclusion, GBV, Climate Change and Human Rights

By Akimu Wasili



Insert: Community members from T/A Vusojere during the community awareness meeting.

On Monday, 10th July 2023, YONECO field officer for Ntchisi conducted a community awareness meeting at T/A Vusojere headquarters, addressing crucial issues that impact the community's well-being including Youth and Women Inclusion, Gender-Based Violence, Climate Change and Human Rights. During the meeting, community members were encouraged to actively participate in community activities aimed at improving livelihoods. A significant emphasis was placed on including youths, women, and physically challenged individuals in these activities to empower and uplift them. Recognizing the importance of inclusivity, the community was urged to work collectively to create opportunities for all members to thrive.

With an alarming rise in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases in the area, the community members were sensitized about the root causes of GBV and preventive measures. Importantly, members were made aware of the report GBV incidents and informed about the relevant stakeholders responsible for addressing GBV-related issues in the community. This knowledge is essential in fostering a safer and more supportive environment for all, especially vulnerable groups.

Acknowledging the ongoing climate change-induced disasters, community members were encouraged to actively participate in environmental conservation efforts. Activities such as tree planting and land restoration were highlighted as practical steps to mitigate the impact of climate change. Furthermore, the community was advised to engage with and support the activities being implemented by the SAMALA project, which focuses on sustainable agriculture and livelihoods.

In an effort to raise awareness about human rights, the community was provided with comprehensive information about the definition of human rights and the different forms of abuse, along with examples. Participants were educated on how to report instances of abuse, ensuring that the community members have the necessary knowledge and tools to protect their rights. The distribution of helpline toll-free line numbers further reinforced the commitment to support

victims and address human rights violations. The meeting received support from the GVH Vusojere, VDC members, and AEDO for Kalira EPA. In his remarks, GVH Vusojere expressed his appreciation for YONECO's presence in the area, noting that prior to their involvement, the community had limited knowledge about human rights and reporting mechanisms. He likened YONECO's impact to a guiding moon that will lead the community towards improved livelihoods and well-being.

In total, the community awareness meeting reached an impressive 256 individuals, with 123 females and 133 males actively participating. By addressing these critical issues and empowering the community with knowledge and resources, YONECO continues to play a vital role in fostering positive change and resilience within the T/A Vusojere community.







**116**  
**CHILD**  
**HELPLINE**



**5600**  
**GBV CRISIS**  
**LINE**



**393**  
**YOUTH**  
**HELPLINE**



**6600**  
**DRUG &**  
**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**  
**HOTLINE**

# TITHANDIZANE NATIONAL HELPLINE SERVICES

 Free and confidential services

## OTHER SERVICES

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

**Email:**  
drug@yoneco.org | help@tithandizanehelpline.org  
gbv@yoneco.org | visit [www.tithandizanehelpline.org](http://www.tithandizanehelpline.org) for more.