



# Youth Net and Counselling YONECO VOICE



Monthly Newsletter

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# Our Programmes

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## Our Vision

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



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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,

Malawi participated in the 2023 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) with high expectations regarding the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. This comes after a series of crises in recent years, including COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. The emergence of climate-induced disasters, like Cyclone Freddy in Malawi and heat waves and fires in Hawaii and Canada, necessitates a re-evaluation of global management processes. While the wildfires and heat waves might seem distant in the west, their impact on redirecting aid cannot be overstated. Thus, Malawi must reconsider its strategies for disaster response and environmental management to address the country's numerous challenges. Active engagement with the environment and support for related processes are imperative. The escalating temperatures also amplify climate-induced health issues, including mental health challenges that could exacerbate gender-based violence. These challenges, in turn, hinder both men and women's productivity. As Malawi participates in UNGA, it's crucial to identify potential solutions for these problems.

On the global stage, the situation involving the Spanish Coach and young player warrants international condemnation, shedding light on significant issues of protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in the sports world. This situation also poses a hurdle to women's participation in such activities. For Malawi, which recently launched women's football teams alongside major teams, establishing robust safeguards for the teams is imperative to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. Malawi must be dedicated to supporting comprehensive safeguarding mechanisms for sporting events at all levels.

International Literacy Day falls on September 8, 2023, with the theme "Promoting literacy for a world in transition: Building the foundation for sustainable and peaceful societies." Considering the challenges at hand, we are all undergoing transitions. With Malawi's literacy rate around 67% (as of 2021 estimates), indicating that 33% of the adult population remains illiterate, the theme's focus on peace is crucial for societal development. Thus, it's vital to fully support adult literacy programs and projects in the nation to elevate literacy levels.

Blantyre has experienced a surge in criminal activities and attacks on citizens, often associated with street-connected children. Public dissatisfaction with the authorities' response has been evident. To address this, we should recognize that human beings possess inherent potential for negativity, and without proper guidance, negative tendencies can manifest as children grow. Malawi must confront criminal activities by devising strategies to manage street-connected children. The Ombudsman's report "Abandoned to the Street" highlights the challenges faced by these children and offers recommendations, yet progress remains limited even years later. A strategy for addressing these issues is absent.



The current generation of street-connected children has developed challenging behaviors due to their upbringing. The root causes involve broader social disruptions from urban poverty, making child care difficult as parents struggle to survive. These children also arise from inadequate parental care, home environments, juvenile delinquency, and emergent young gangs surviving through competition. Without robust plans to support these children, the risk of continued child delinquency looms. Hastily repatriating these children only shifts their operational zone. Therefore, the Ministry of Gender should finalize the draft Strategy on Street-Connected Children and ensure effective implementation.

As we conclude the third quarter of 2023, we extend warm wishes for a fulfilling September of reading.

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# RESONANT VOICE

By Jason Julius

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# YONECO Engages Youth in Rumpfi

By Larah Mbewe



Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Rumpfi, Larah Mbewe engaging the youth during the session.

On 25th of August 2023, YONECO was honored to participate in a dynamic joint meeting organized by the Jaghala, Bumba, and Lumphawa youth clubs in Rumpfi. This collaborative gathering aimed to foster knowledge sharing and mutual learning among young people, addressing the pressing issues they face.

During this insightful meeting, our representatives presented YONECO's diverse programs. Notably, our officers delved into the critical topic of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The youth were educated about the definition of GBV, its victims, various forms, and the essential channels for reporting any observed instances of GBV.

With an engaged live audience, numerous questions arose, each met with informative responses. Additionally, our officers illuminated the subject of sexual harassment, elaborating on consent and the different manifestations of such harassment.

In their feedback, the youth expressed gratitude for YONECO's enlightening presentation. They acknowledged that many among them had encountered such challenges but often dismissed them as minor issues, deeming them unworthy of reporting. The youth clubs fervently requested the continuation of such enriching sessions, emphasizing their desire to further engage with YONECO over time.

As the session concluded, the Tithandizane Toll-free helpline was highlighted as a vital resource. A total of 47 attendees, comprising 27 males and 29 females, actively participated in the meeting.





# Fostering Empowerment and Awareness

By Esnart Chingwalu



Insert: Members of Khosolo CBO during the comprehensive sensitization meeting

YONECO at Khosolo EPA in Mzimba counseling services and equip the attendees with the district facilitated a reporting instances of tools to effectively address comprehensive sensitization violence or harm that they issues such as violence and meeting focused on enhancing might encounter. human rights.

women and youth inclusion. The meeting took place with various During the session, Lawrent Daniel Banda, the social youth groups at the Khosolo Shaba, the chairperson of welfare officer for Khosolo, Community-Based Organization the committee established expressed his heartfelt (CBO). Notably, several of these to oversee the TEVETA appreciation for the meeting. youths are currently engaged in a studies in Khosolo, extended He noted its potential to six-month TEVETA study program a warm welcome to the positively shape the behavior within the local area. youth participants. He of the youth, who at times expressed that the timing of engage in violence due to the

The session encompassed a wide this session was opportune, absence of a police presence range of vital topics, with a specific as the students lacked in the area. The session drew emphasis on gender issues, the adequate empowerment in the participation of 60 societal roles and responsibilities relation to their ongoing individuals, comprising an of youth, essential life skills, and studies. Shaba earnestly equal split of 30 female and valuable career guidance. The called upon YONECO to 30 male attendees.

YONECO officer took advantage of organize more of such this platform to introduce the enlightening sessions for the attendees to the YONECO Toll-Free youth, highlighting their helpline. This helpline serves as a potential to foster vital resource for accessing responsible citizenship and



# Celebrating a Year of Learning, Growth, and New Opportunities at YONECO

By Wilson Mkandawire



Insert: Larah Mbewe posing for a picture in this file photo at this year's International Trade Fair in Blantyre where she was helping manning YONECO pavillion.

It feels like just yesterday when a young lady stepped into the vibrant corridors of YONECO on August 29th, 2022, as a wide-eyed media and communications intern. Now, a year later, she stands tall and thrilled sharing the incredible journey of learning, growth, and transformation that she has experienced during this time.

“When I first joined YONECO, my intention was clear; to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge and real-world application. This internship aligned perfectly with my studies, offering me the chance to immerse myself in various tasks that resonated with my educational pursuits. From managing the organization's social media presence to crafting compelling messages, as well as editing articles and strategically scheduling them across our digital platforms, every day presented new challenges and opportunities to learn”, explained Larah Mbewe.

However, the true essence of this experience became evident when she dared to venture beyond her comfort zone. YONECO is a multifaceted organization, and she seized the chance to explore its various fields. The radio and helpline departments particularly caught her attention. Delving into radio co-hosting and participating in child protection initiatives through the helpline department broadened her horizons in ways she never anticipated.

“In the realm of radio co-hosting, I not only developed my communication skills but also honed my ability to engage and connect with a diverse audience. Participating in child protection activities under the helpline department opened my eyes to the pressing need for safeguarding vulnerable members of our society. This newfound understanding ignited a passion within me for child protection advocacy, a cause I now hold close to my heart.”

As she reflects on this transformative year, Larah could not hide her excitement to announce a significant step forward in my journey. “I am now a proud Field Officer at YONECO, a role that fills me with both gratitude and determination. This achievement isn't solely about my personal growth; it serves as a beacon of motivation for other young individuals who embark on internships or volunteer opportunities. I want to encourage them to embrace every chance they are given, to invest their best efforts, and to demonstrate their capabilities. By doing so, they not only earn the trust of those around them but also position themselves for even greater responsibilities.”

She is encouraging all young minds embarking on their own journeys to remember that every opportunity, no matter how small, has the potential to shape their future in extraordinary ways. “Seize it, make the most of it, and let it propel you toward your dreams.”



Insert: I carry with me the lessons learned, the skills gained, and the unwavering belief that dedication and passion can truly pave the way for remarkable accomplishments.





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# YONECO Internship Program: Intern Profiles



My name is Stella Manjawira, a dynamic and enthusiastic young professional who studied journalism and media studies from Malawi Assemblies of God University. This academic foundation has not only equipped me with the necessary theoretical knowledge but has also fostered in me a deep passion for effective communication and storytelling.

My journey through academia has enhanced my skills in research and documentation allowing me to

I am Amanda Harriet Cent, a dedicated individual with a diploma in environmental management earned from the prestigious Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources College. I embarked on my journey with YONECO on the 3rd of July, 2023, assuming the role of an intern within the dynamic Monitoring and Evaluation department. This deliberate choice aims to afford me firsthand experience within this domain, as well as other spheres encompassed by YONECO, during my enriching 6-month internship tenure.

I have been earnestly immersing myself in my role, gaining valuable insights into data management, project monitoring, and report handling.

meticulously gather and analyze information to present well-rounded narratives. I take pride in being an astute observer, consistently attuned to the pulse of current events and emerging trends. This quality empowers me to contribute fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the field of journalism.

As a budding newswriter, I have sharpened the art of transforming complex information into engaging and accessible content. My words have the power to inform, inspire, and captivate readers, a skill that I continuously refine to meet the ever-evolving demands of the media landscape.



This period of engagement has been instrumental in enhancing my skill set and expanding my understanding of effective organizational operations.

I am committed to making the most of this unique opportunity, embracing the diverse learning avenues that YONECO has to offer. My aspiration is to contribute my emerging proficiency in

What sets me apart is my adaptability and versatility in various work environments. I thrive under pressure and remain open to learning from every experience. This flexibility enables me to seamlessly navigate through diverse projects and collaborate effectively with teams of varied backgrounds.

My aspiration is to synergize my inherent talents and acquired expertise to make a meaningful impact as part of the YONECO team. I am excited to contribute to YONECO's noble objectives, aligning my capabilities with the organization's vision of fostering positive change and empowerment.

environmental management and further cultivate my competencies in the intricate realm of monitoring and evaluation. With each passing day, I am progressively becoming more adept at translating theory into practical application.

I find satisfaction in the collaborative environment that YONECO provides, as it encourages the fusion of ideas, perspectives, and expertise to achieve innovative outcomes.

With unwavering determination, I am eager to absorb knowledge, refine my capabilities, and actively participate in projects that positively impact communities.





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# YONECO Conducts SASA Together Training Journey

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Some of the SASA facilitators who were trained in the SASA Together toolkit in Dedza.

community as a whole pledge to undertake actions that will perpetuate positive change over the long term.

A participant shared insights gained from their engagement with the SASA Together toolkit's three integral phases: Start, Awareness, and Support. This transformational journey has also been reflected in the experience of SASA facilitators based within Traditional Authority areas. One participant noted, **"Formerly, I struggled to allow space for contributions from my family members, and I inadvertently exercised control over all familial decisions. However, the SASA Together toolkit has dynamically opened up space for all family members to actively participate."** This personal account underscores how the phases of SASA Together harmoniously dovetail with one another, fostering heightened awareness, vital support systems, and a unification of collective efforts in the battle against Gender-Based Violence.

Numerous reports have underscored the disturbingly high rates of violence, exploitation, and various forms of abuse within numerous countries, notably intimate partner violence affecting women and marginalized communities. This has given rise to a concealed focus of this training has been pandemic of violence that is on the "Action" phase, which increasingly afflicting individuals, marks the culmination of the families, and communities. In SASA Together toolkit—an these trying times, the United Nations' "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" (GBV) serves as a pivotal occasion for international development. The training program for the entities to commit themselves to Action phase plays a pivotal identifying strategies aimed at role in bolstering collective preventing and effectively endeavors geared towards addressing violence, exploitation, propelling communities and abuse within the through the phases of action communities where and maintenance, thereby developmental initiatives are fostering enduring individual actively underway. transformation, strengthening families, and enhancing the These instances of abuse pose collective fabric of significant threats to the well- communities. This synergy of being of women, teenage actions by community mothers, and adolescent girls. o members coalesces into a tackle this pressing issue, novel paradigm. The result is YONECO, in collaboration with the an environment where UNFPA under the framework of the individuals and the

The training event garnered participation from a cohort of 30 SASA facilitators, comprising 13 females and 17 males stationed within Traditional Authority regions, namely TA Kachere, Kaphuka, and Chilikumwendo.



# YONECO Conducts Economic Empowerment Session in Chiradzulu

By Blessings Chinula



Insert: An Officer from YONECO (Standing) during the economic empowerment session at Milepa

With unwavering optimism, we extend our heartfelt wishes for an auspicious journey to the 20 remarkable women who actively participated in this session. Their determination coupled with our collective support, serves as a beacon of hope, heralding a future of tangible achievements.

As we stand united, driven by a shared vision, we remain steadfast in our conviction that together, we can transcend barriers and actualize extraordinary accomplishments. The trajectory we are forging today is one of empowerment, prosperity, and boundless opportunity.

On 18 August 2023, YONECO in Chiradzulu conducted an impactful economic empowerment session at Milepa in the district. With a resolute focus on fostering self-sufficiency, the participants were impassioned to cultivate a culture of saving and strategic investing.

Central to the session was the emphasis on the formation and participation in Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups—a pivotal concept that holds the potential to catalyze transformative change. As advocates for sustainable progress, we underscored the importance of women either joining existing VSL groups or collaboratively establishing new ones within their community.

At the heart of this endeavor lies the belief that embracing VSL groups represents an instrumental leap towards steering women away from dependence and towards self-reliance. These groups are instrumental in empowering community members to amass financial resources for future business pursuits. This, in turn, ignites a chain reaction of economic growth, bolstering entrepreneurship and engendering confidence in the innate potential each person harbors.



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# Through DR. Jessica's Lens: Exploring Local NGO Adaptability to the Shifting Funding Climate



Insert: Dr. Jessica Noske-Turner posing with the team that took part in research the workshops and other discussions

The global development funding landscape is currently undergoing significant shifts. Dr Jessica Noske-Turner has been researching how communication for development organisations have been adapting to some of the cuts and increasing precarity of development funding budgets in her home country of Australia, in the UK which is her country of residence, as well as in other donor countries across the world.

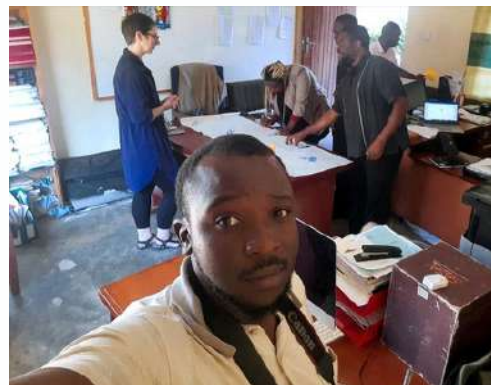
Jessica has been engaging with YONECO throughout August. A small team from YONECO have been working with Jessica in workshops and other discussions to explore the history of the organisation, and how the organisation has evolved and adapted to competing challenges over time. They have used some creative methods, such as metaphor and poetic analysis, to think about our everyday practices and emerging strategies in new ways.

The YONECO team commented that through participating in the research they saw YONECO's own, long-term impacts in a new way.

By visualising the timeline, and by looking at the organisation's most significant changes through the lens of YONECO rather than through individual projects and

donors, the cumulative contributions and impacts have been substantial.

Social enterprise models are not exactly new to YONECO, with YFM having been established as a self-sufficient radio station from the beginning. However, the group also identified that the organisation is currently undergoing one of the most significant transformations of its history.



Insert: Stakeholder mapping during one of the sessions.

Emerging strategies to self-fund the majority of organisational activities are about achieving greater self-determination and flexibility to adapt interventions in response to working with communities and understanding their real needs. In one workshop, one of the metaphors created showed a road to a project vision being plagued with holes and gaps. The alternative resources are intended to fill the gaps in donor funding.

Jessica's research is seeking to learning from the experiences of YONECO and other local NGOs as they move into unchartered territory social enterprise and self-funding. One of the risks could be diverted attention, where the resource generating elements of the work may demand more time and energy away from the core work. Secondly, as these are organisations with strong communication and activist components, she is interested in whether starting social enterprises could make the organisations more 'brand conscious', and potentially more careful about taking on contentious issues. For example, another one of the metaphors for how YONECO is seen by some people was the colour red for 'danger', a reference to YONECO's reputation as fearless in its child protection interventions. It will be important to protect this fearlessness into the future.

YONECO is not alone in facing these challenges, and is becoming well networked with wider movements towards localized development models. This includes the idea of Community Philanthropy, developed in South Africa by Global Fund Community Foundations and drawing on the model of Ubuntu (<https://globalfundcommunityfoundation.org/>), and the Charter 4 Change movement (<https://charter4change.org/>).

Jessica's research project and her collaboration with YONECO will continue for at least another year, and she will be continuing to engage with YONECO. If you are interested in getting in touch with Jessica you can contact her on [j.noske-turner@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:j.noske-turner@lboro.ac.uk).



Insert: One of the participants providing meaning during a metaphor session.



# YONECO Participates in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Service Delivery Capacity, Response, and Access to Justice Conference



Insert: YONECO Deputy Helpline Services Manager, Mercy Makondetsa explaining the interventions that YONECO does in addressing GBV issues.

On 1 August 2023, YONECO participated in a significant two-day conference that revolved around the theme of Best Practices in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Service Delivery Capacity, Response, and Access to Justice. This pivotal event had been jointly organized by the Malawi Government and the Malawi Irish Consortium on Gender-Based Violence, underscoring the collective commitment to address and alleviate the issue of GBV.

Held at the Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe, the conference served as a crucial platform for the exchange of knowledge, fostering an environment where valuable insights, prevailing challenges, and constructive recommendations related to GBV prevention and response were openly shared.

During the conference, YONECO mounted a dedicated pavilion at the venue. Where we engaged in the important task of showcasing the multifaceted ways in which our initiatives are making a significant impact in combating GBV within the Malawian context.

The Tithandizane National Helpline Services, YFM Radio Station, and various community interventions were spotlighted as essential tools in the fight against GBV.

This platform allowed us to emphasize our unwavering dedication to GBV prevention and response, while also facilitating broader conversations about collaboration, innovation, and effective strategies. The conference stood as a testament to our shared determination to create a safer and more equitable society, one where GBV was dismantled through unified efforts and informed actions.





# Ufulu Wanga Consortium Conducts Information-Sharing Workshop



Insert: YONECO, Beyond Suncare and Standing Voices members of staff posing for a group photo after the training in Zomba.

From August 8th to 9th, 2023, the collaborative efforts of partners within the Ufulu Wanga Project manifested in a two-day information-sharing workshop held at the Naming'azi Training Centre in Zomba.

Esteemed attendees included Boniface Massa and Saulos Mhlanga, Executive Directors of Standing Voice and Beyond Skincare, alongside YONECO Helpline Counsellors and YFM personnel.

This event, marked by its inclusivity and informative sessions, aimed to raise awareness and dispel misconceptions surrounding albinism. Attendees benefited from accurate and up-to-date information about the condition, fostering a deeper understanding of individuals living with albinism and their rights.

Supported by the European Union (EU), the Ufulu Wanga Project is a joint effort by Standing Voice, Beyond Skincare, and YONECO, aimed at advancing the rights and welfare of people with albinism in targeted areas through comprehensive interventions.

The workshop empowered participants with the confidence to engage stakeholders and community members, effectively addressing key human rights issues under the Ufulu Wanga Project.



Insert: Some of the participants who were part of the workshop at Naming'azi Training Centre



Insert: Mr. Boniface Massa, Executive Director for Standing Voices taking questions from the media.





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# Collaborative Efforts Shine Bright in UNICEF–Funded Project for Cyclone Freddy Affected Communities

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: Child protection stakeholders who took part in the meeting paying attention to a presentation

In a heartwarming display of synergy, the Blantyre Technical Working Group (TWG) on Child and Child Protection has proven to be an invaluable asset during the appraisal session of our latest project, generously supported by UNICEF. This initiative holds the noble goal of ensuring the provision of essential services and fortified protection for a spectrum of vulnerable groups – encompassing children, women, and other affected segments – all stemming from the aftermath of the devastating Cyclone Freddy.

Leading the charge was Mrs. Sewenthe Mahwayo Chipofya, YONECO's Programme Support Manager. With astute guidance, our dedicated team embarked on this crucial endeavor, poised to reshape lives, reignite hope, and sculpt a brighter horizon for the distressed communities, especially the children.

The intrinsic power of collaboration, particularly with the TWG and various stakeholders, lies at the core of crafting solutions that resonate inclusivity and sustainability. Our joint efforts are intricately woven into the fabric of creating solutions that not only address immediate needs but also

**sketching out a path towards a more promising future for these communities, with a special focus on the children."**

The collective heartbeat of our actions that holds the potential to kindle profound transformations in the lives of those who require it most. Hand in hand, we stand equipped to usher in substantial change and make a lasting impact in the lives of those yearning for relief and restoration



Insert: YONECO, Programme Support Manager, Sewenthe Mahwayo during the meeting

# YONECO Joins Commemoration of 2023 Day of African Child in Blantyre

By Enalla Msukwa



Insert: Some of the district stakeholders captured during the commemoration ceremony in Blantyre.

The commemoration of the 2023 Acknowledging the dual nature Day of the African Child (DoAC) of technology, Maliti also witnessed YONECO's enthusiastic lauded its potential for participation in a significant event advancing education and held at the Tafika Community- information access. The annual Based Organization (CBO) Ground Day of the African Child, in Blantyre.

Councilor Mike Maliti, Chairperson of the Blantyre City Council, delivered a thought-provoking address underscoring the evolving challenges posed by digital technology to children's well-being. In his speech, Maliti highlighted the alarming exposure of children to mature content through online platforms, leading to concerning consequences such as an upsurge in child marriages and the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

observed on June 16th, held the theme 'Rights of the Child in the Digital Environment,' reflecting the evolving landscape of childhood experiences.



Insert: Some of the teachers who were trained at Muselema Primary School

# Enhancing Education through Teacher Trainings in Chitipa District

By Dunreck Pande

On the 23rd and 24th of August 2023, YONECO's collaboration with the Chitipa District Education Office bore fruit as they jointly organized an insightful training session for primary school teachers. The workshops were conducted at Muselema and Chipalanje primary schools, extending their reach to educators in both localities.

The primary objective of this training was to equip teachers with a deep understanding of the BEFIT (Building Education Foundation through Innovation and Technology) programme. It aimed to empower them with the essential skills and knowledge required for delivering effective classroom sessions.

The training proved to be a significant milestone for the participating teachers. Not only did it shed light on the intricacies of the one-course software, but it also clarified their roles and responsibilities within the education ecosystem.

A notable outcome of the sessions was the development of tailored timetables by both primary schools. These timetables were thoughtfully designed to seamlessly incorporate tablet-based learning sessions, aligning with the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education.

Expressing gratitude for the enthusiastic participation and collaborative spirit, the officers conveyed their heartfelt appreciation to the teachers. The active engagement and the successful creation of well-structured timetables highlighted the dedication of the educators to enhance the learning experience for the students.



# Empowering Adolescent Mothers and Teen Girls: Bridging the Education Gap

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Some of the teen mothers who were engaged during the sexual and reproductive health and rights session at Chimwayi Village.

In a landscape where girls' dropout rates surpass that of boys, YONECO has emerged as a beacon of hope, fervently advocating for the resurgence of girls' education. This heartening success story of YONECO's mission to rally support for school reentry, particularly among teen mothers and adolescent girls. The recent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights sessions held at Chimwayi village, GVH Gongolo, TA Kwataine showcased the transformative impact of education on these young lives.

One of the pivotal sessions orchestrated by YONECO centered on the daunting challenge of nurturing a child in the face of limited resources. This initiative bore fruit when a group of eight determined young girls, alongside their parents, converged at the YONECO Ntcheu Office. Fueled by insights gleaned from YONECO's SRH and education rights sessions, these girls expressed an unwavering commitment to reclaiming their education. "Education is our conduit to surmounting challenges. With our

as schools prepare to reopen their doors, YONECO remains a steadfast advocate for these young girls' educational journey. The organization is dedicated to facilitating their reintegration into the educational sphere, forging vital connections with institutions such as social welfare and other relevant organizations. Beyond academia, YONECO's transformative influence extends through Child corners in Gongolo and Kalumbu villages, hosting sessions on male engagement in health, child protection, sexual and reproductive health, and women's empowerment.

Chief among the obstacles faced by these young mothers is the financial burden of school fees. In a remarkable display of fortitude, they turned to YONECO for assistance, driven by a fervent desire to enhance their lives through education. Their resolve extends beyond personal growth; it encompasses the commitment to nurturing their children while simultaneously advancing their own education. Parents, too, rallied behind their daughters, emphasizing the profound impact of education on family empowerment. YONECO further underscores the importance of seeking financial support from estranged spouses, a shared responsibility that transcends marital circumstances.

The success story of these eight courageous adolescent and teen mothers serves as a testament to the power of determination. YONECO's tireless efforts are set to reverberate even further, as the organization envisions the establishment of additional centers in various villages. This expansion underscores YONECO's unyielding commitment to nurturing potential, amplifying voices, and reshaping futures.



# YONECO Engages Charcoal Sellers in the Fight against Climate Change

By Richard Nkhonjera



Insert: Some of the people who were engaged during the awareness campaign

Charcoal and firewood continue to serve as reliable energy sources for the people of Malawi. However, it is noteworthy that certain shocks and disruptions within the country can be attributed to human activities, specifically the practice of charcoal burning and selling, pursued as a means of livelihood. While this economic approach has its merits, it also contributes to various adverse impacts, including environmental degradation and consequent shocks. To address this, it is imperative to explore alternatives that can mitigate the repercussions stemming from such human-induced activities.

A key remedy lies in cultivating awareness about climate change and its associated challenges. This awareness is essential to foster the adoption of sustainable human activities that do not exacerbate climate-related issues. YONECO, recognizing the significance of this endeavor, has undertaken efforts to raise awareness, with a particular focus on charcoal sellers who congregate at the Ntcheu market during the early hours of the day.

Through this initiative, YONECO aims to enlighten these sellers about the detrimental effects of certain human activities on climate change, as well as their subsequent impact on economic development.

The initiative aims to inspire individuals to transition towards more environmentally friendly practices that can not only mitigate climate change issues but also contribute to the nation's progress. During these awareness sessions, participants were educated about the adverse consequences that human activities can inflict on the environment and subsequently on the economy. This led to a collective understanding of the imperative to adopt alternative activities that align with sustainability and environmental preservation.

In a bid to actualize this change, participants were encouraged to consider engaging in activities that have

Additionally, participants received guidance on joining Village Savings Groups, which can provide a platform for investment in small-scale businesses that are less harmful to the environment. This impactful awareness campaign reached a total of 19 charcoal sellers. By enlightening these individuals about the broader implications of their activities and offering viable alternatives, YONECO is striving to pave the way for a more sustainable future, where human actions are in harmony with environmental well-being and economic prosperity.



Insert: Results of human activities on the environment are devastating.



## Farmers Benefit from Productivity Gains Due to SLM Practices

By Yamikani Gausi



Insert: Farmers appreciating some of SAMALA project interventions during the learning visit in Kasungu

In a pursuit to achieve both enduring environmental sustainability and socioeconomic prosperity, the implementation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices takes center stage. These practices, centered on responsible land resource utilization, aim to boost productivity while minimizing detrimental environmental effects.

The recent Peer Learning Exchange Visit organized by partners of the Sustainable Land Management (SAMALA) Project at the Lisasadzi Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Kasungu district highlighted the tangible benefits of SLM. Over 30 lead farmers, representative of the project's impact areas, congregated to exchange insights and strategies on the optimal implementation of sustainable land management techniques.

The recent Peer Learning Exchange Visit organized by partners of the Sustainable Land Management (SAMALA) Project at the Lisasadzi Extension Planning Area (EPA) in Kasungu district highlighted the tangible benefits of SLM. Over 30 lead farmers, representative of the project's impact areas, congregated to exchange insights and strategies on the optimal implementation of sustainable land management techniques.

Noteworthy success stories emerged from participants such as Eunice Kanyenjere, who increased her maize harvest from three to 15 bags per plot, eliminating the need for costly inorganic fertilizers. Similarly, MacDonald Magalasi achieved a substantial boost in his maize yield, increasing from 8 to 25-30 bags per acre, courtesy of SLM practices.

By prioritizing soil health, water conservation, biodiversity preservation, and land degradation reduction, SLM practices prove their worth as a transformative approach. Executed across Kasungu, Ntchisi, Dowa, and Mzimba, the SAMALA Project's implementation by Total LandCare Global, World Agroforestry - ICRAF, and YONECO is supported by Irish Aid and the Government of Flanders, showcasing the commitment to sustainable land management principles.



Insert: Members of Mbombo VNRMC during the Environmental Conservation meeting in Ntchisi

## YONECO Engages Mbombo VNRMC on Environmental Conservation

By Akimu Wasili

In a collaborative effort to address climate change, YONECO field officers partnered with officials from TLC and ICRAF to engage members of the Mbombo Village Natural Resource Management Committee (VNRMC).

This engaging session took place in the area under Group Village Head Mzandu, Traditional Authority (TA) Chikho in Ntchisi district.

The purpose of the session was two-fold: to raise awareness about the pressing issue of climate change and its multifaceted impacts on communities, and to actively involve the committee members in crafting sustainable initiatives for environmental conservation within their locale.

During the informative session, committee members were also equipped with vital knowledge and skills necessary for establishing thriving nurseries for both exotic and indigenous tree species. Notably, the session was attended by 11 women and 9 men, marking a collective commitment to safeguarding our environment.



# Pioneering Natural Regeneration in Landscape Restoration

By Esmart Chingwalu



Insert: Participants posing for a group photo after the meeting with representatives from ICRAF, Total Land Care and YONECO in Mzimba.

The people of Traditional Authority (T/A) Khosolo Jere in Mzimba district have been encouraged to participate in natural regeneration activities in their areas to help restore the degraded landscape.

This message was conveyed during a visit by representatives from the International Centre of Research and Agroforestry (ICRAF), YONECO, and Total Land Care to some farmers who have already taken steps in the activities by establishing tree nurseries in their catchment areas.

The officers provided techniques on nursery establishment, management, and cooperation as part of the Sustainable Management of Landscape (SAMALA) Project being implemented in the area. The farmers were urged to source many seedlings for their nurseries and given the promise of learning grafting techniques to encourage them to create their own grafted trees.

Additionally, farmers were taught to plant trees that enrich the soil with nutrients, which would motivate them to get involved in agroforestry and further contribute to the restoration of the degraded landscapes in Khosolo. YONECO Officer for the area stressed the importance of involving many youth and women in the activities without restriction.

The officers visited a total of 11 nurseries in the Mapira, Chilibvumbo, Gwazeni, Chikondi, and Mbiko nurseries.



Insert: Farmers showcasing their tree nurseries during the visit





**116**  
CHILD  
HELPLINE



**5600**  
GBV CRISIS  
LINE



**393**  
YOUTH  
HELPLINE



**6600**  
DRUG &  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE  
HOTLINE

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