



YONECO VOICE



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Production Team

Layout and Design
Wilson Mkandawire

Contributors

Gracium Chithonje
Funny Chilembo
Victor Majola
Edwin Chulu
Triza Chimasula
Sayilesi Sinyanya
Mable Makondetsa
Vincent kacheka
Timothy Fweta
Tadala Nambuzi
Chancy Kumwenda
Mackson Mhango
Madalitso Chochongwe

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager
Daniel Chikatentha

Executive Director
MacBain Mkandawire

Our Programmes

- Youth Development.
- Child Protection and Development.
- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.
- Governance and Human Rights.
- Media, Collaboration, Networking and Coordinating.
- Climate Change and Disaster Management.
- Institutional Management.
- Research and Documentation

For more information contact

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

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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 Reader,

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children concluded its recent meeting on October 12, 2024, highlighting two crucial issues for Malawi that demand urgent attention. First, there is an alarming rise in concerns regarding adolescent sexual and reproductive health, evidenced by increasing rates of teenage pregnancies and school dropouts. This trend not only jeopardizes the future of our youth but also poses significant challenges to our educational system and societal development. Second, the effective implementation of child protection guidelines is imperative, particularly in establishing steady reporting mechanisms for children affected by violence and abuse. Strengthening helplines and other reporting avenues is a critical priority that requires our renewed focus to ensure that children can safely report incidents without fear of retribution or stigma.

Violence against children remains a pervasive issue in Malawi, manifesting at various societal levels. In response to this ongoing crisis, Malawi will actively participate in the commitment meeting in Bogotá from November 7-8, 2024. As a nation, we must critically reassess our strategies for combating violence against children, particularly sexual violence, which has regrettably become normalized within our communities. While we strive to create a safer environment for our children, we continue to witness alarming cases of violence compounded by inadequate justice delivery through our child justice system.

November marks the beginning of two significant campaigns aimed at addressing violence and abuse. The 19 Days of Activism for Prevention of Youth and Child Abuse followed by the 16 Days of Activism on Gender-Based Violence. Despite these important awareness campaigns, we are witnessing a troubling increase in incidents of abuse and violence, highlighting an urgent need for decisive action across all sectors of society.

As the rainy season approaches, its impact is already being felt across Malawi. The Solution Campus on Climate Change Health Induced Challenges, held in Dakar, Senegal on October 26, 2024, showcased various strategies to tackle these pressing issues. It is essential for Malawi to revisit local solutions that address climate-related health challenges. Our initiatives in Zomba and Machinga have documented the adverse effects of climate change on health, with current heat waves leading to dehydration and other health complications.

Our environmental efforts continue to expand through school nutrition and health programs that emphasize reforestation and sustainable practices. Additionally, Yoneco has launched an environmental initiative in Ntcheu, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Furthermore, Malawi will join other nations at COP29 in Baku from November 5, 2024, to engage with global leaders on urgent climate change issues and contribute to international solutions.

Let us unite our efforts to create a safer and healthier Malawi for our children, ensuring that they can thrive in an environment free from violence and adversity.

Have a wonderful November



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LINE

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YOUTH
HELPLINE

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DRUG &
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VOICES OF THE BRAVE

By Gracium Mkonda
Chithonje



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With every word, the youth are heard,
Their courage echoed in each word.

In shadows deep, they boldly stand,
A microphone in steady hand.
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Refusing silence, come what may.

From Zomba's heart, their strength is
shown,
Where stories bloom and seeds are
sown.
For every child, for every plea,
They break the chains, they set minds
free.

So here's to those who dare to fight,
To YONECO FM Journalists, the light.
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YONECO Engages Youths in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Awareness Session



Insert: Some of the youth who were reached with SRHR information and services in Nsanje district.

YONECO conducted a Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) session for 31 young men aged 18 to 35 at the Ntowe bus stage in Nsanje district. The session focused on raising awareness about vital sexual health issues, including safe sex practices, consent, and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Through interactive discussions, participants received valuable information to help them make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being. Additionally, approximately 432 male condoms were distributed among the attendees.

In a separate initiative, YONECO held a hygiene and sanitation session in Zomba district on October 15, 2024. Officers from the Tithandizane National Helpline Services conducted a door-to-door campaign in Chinamwali, Mpalume village, aimed at encouraging residents to adopt better hygienic practices. The session emphasized the importance of handwashing with soap, proper waste disposal—including diapers—and maintaining personal cleanliness to reduce the spread of hygiene-related diseases such as cholera and diarrhea.

On October 25, 2024, YONECO conducted a transformative role modeling session at Yamba Community Day Secondary School in Chitipa, benefiting 800 students (400F, 400M).

A student nurse from Chitipa Central Hospital, invited as a motivational speaker and role model, inspired the students to persevere through challenges and resist negative peer pressure that could jeopardize their future.

The nurse emphasized the importance of hard work, resilience, and positive decision-making, urging the students to set goals and strive for excellence, surround themselves with supportive peers, seek guidance from mentors and role models, and Believe in their potential and capabilities.

Call 393 to get information and referrals on HIV and SRHR

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Youth Champions Embrace VSL Approach for Economic and Social Impact



Insert: Some of the youth champions that were trained in Mchinji district.

Peer educators and youth champions from Kafera Village in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mkanda in Mchinji district have innovatively introduced Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) within their groups and they are reaping significant benefits from this initiative.

YONECO trained the two groups with support from KOICA and UNFPA under Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls project. The two groups of the young leaders were empowered engage and provide counselling and information related to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), as well as spearheading community engagement in combating GBV.

“As volunteers, we needed an economic empowerment initiative to bring food on the table while managing our roles as peer educators and youth champions. thought it

necessary to expand the framework by introducing a Village Savings and Loans (VSL) component to support us”.

“In 2022, we established a VSL component in our group. Later in 2023, I managed to access a soft loan and ventured into boutique into business which saw me earning a profit of MK256,000.

Corrina used some of the proceeds to buy a bicycle which has helped her in addressing mobility challenges she used to face as a business person and as a peer educator. In addition to this, Corrina further intends to venture into agribusiness.

Corrina expressed her gratitude to YONECO, UNFPA and KOICA for the training which opened up our horizons for us to ably render our services to improve the rights and welfare of adolescent girls and teen mothers.



Insert: Some of the adolescents who were reached during the session

YONECO Inspires Rumphu Youth to Register for 2025 General Elections

On 26th October 2024, YONECO engaged young people from Mayembe, Rumphu on governance issues with a particular focus on encouraging eligible young people to register with the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) in order to vote in the 2025 General Elections.

During the session, YONECO organized a debate on the importance of young people's active participation in the electoral processes. During the debate, some young people expressed their dissatisfaction with how the elected leaders fail to deliver what they promised the citizenry during the campaign period.

One of the participants, Akim Kaunda explained that: "My take home message is that voting gives young eligible people like me the power to choose the right leaders at the right time, and by choosing not to vote, we chose poor leadership."

Thus, the young people were urged to make informed decisions by attending political rallies to choose the best manifestos that align with their aspirations.

The sessions were conducted in various parts of the community with a total of 20 groups comprised of an average of 8 young people..

UNFPA Supports Youth-focused Entrepreneurs Training



YONECO, with funding from UNFPA, organized a two-day training session focused on equipping young entrepreneurs from the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Makanjira in Mangochi with business and networking skills.

Insert: Young women entrepreneurs who took part in the training workshop captured here during one of the break away session in Mangochi.

The training session was aimed at ensuring that young people are economically empowered to ably recognize conflicts as unnecessary for their survival. The session also focused on helping young people to ably identify constructive avenues for engagement in a bid to maintain peace. In addition, the participants were equipped with skills for promoting peaceful conflict resolution within business operations.

Participants highlighted several challenges, including the ongoing sexual violence which women and girls experience along the Malawi-Mozambique border at Makanjira while participating in cross-border trade. It is believed that commodities are more affordable on the other side of the border hence Malawian women and girls trek to Mozambique despite the looming threats of sexual violence.

In total, the training was attended by a total of 10 young entrepreneurs of which four were male and six females. In closing, participants were reminded of the health services available through Youth-Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and the importance of maintaining peace and preventing conflicts to become agents of change.

Scan to learn more about our work



INTERNSHIP PROFILES

TIMOTHY FWETA



Timothy Fweta is a fourth-year student pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences at the Catholic University of Malawi. Timothy has joined YONECO on a four-month internship.

Timothy looks forward to enhancing his expertise in program evaluation, research methodologies, and data analysis. Timothy is also focused on developing capabilities in budgeting and resource allocation to ensure efficient project delivery. Furthermore, Timothy wants to enhance his skills in advocacy, mentorship, civic education, and case management.

Through this internship, Timothy hopes to contribute meaningfully to YONECO's initiatives and gain invaluable insights into the field. They are excited about the prospect of working collaboratively with the team to drive sustainable development and community empowerment.

As Timothy continues on this professional journey, he is committed to applying his knowledge and skills to create a lasting impact.

MURIMU KACHITSA



Murimu Kachitsa is a fourth-year student at the Catholic University of Malawi, studying social work and minoring in community development.

One of the courses which Murimu studied under the Social Work Programme at the Catholic University is HIV and AIDS Management. Through this course, Murimu gained a comprehensive understanding of HIV and AIDS, including dispelling misconceptions about it. This knowledge has provided Murimu with efficient insights into HIV and AIDS, aiding them during sessions with the youth.

As he progresses on his journey as an intern for YONECO, Murimu states that he is grateful for the opportunity, which has equipped him with skills and knowledge for client engagement and the application of social work principles.

"Working with YONECO has allowed me to put into practice what I learned in school and I am able to apply my skills in real-world situations, which is the true essence of an internship," explained Murimu.

YONECO Conducts Role Modelling Session at Yamba Community Day Secondary School



Insert: Part of the group that participated in the session posing for a group photo.

On 25th October, 2024, a total of 800 male and female students at Yamba Community Day Secondary School in Chitipa attended a role modeling session which YONECO organized to inspire and guide the participants towards positive career choices and personal development.

The event featured professionals from various fields, including nurses, teachers and journalists, who shared their journeys and challenges to motivate the students.

The role modeling session aimed not only to provide insights into different career paths but also to instill values of hard work and perseverance among the students.

On their part, all the role models emphasized the importance of education and continuous learning as tools for personal and societal growth.

The session also featured interactive discussions as well as question and answer sessions which gave the students the opportunity to engage with the role models and seek advice on education and career choices.

The role modeling session is part of YONECO's ongoing efforts to support and uplift the youth in Chitipa, nurturing a generation of informed, ambitious, and socially responsible individuals.



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YONECO's Door-to-Door Registration Campaign Reaches 85 Households in Machinjiri



Insert: One of the young men who was reached during the registration campaign in Machinjiri.

As phase 1 of the voter registration exercise for the 2025 General Elections commenced in some parts of the country, YONECO, through its office at Machinji in Blantyre, has embarked on door-to-door campaign targeting eligible voters to register for the elections.

In the first week of the campaign between 21st and 26th October, 2024, the officers in Machinji township reached over 85 households.

During the engagement, YONECO officers reminded the targeted individuals that voting is a basic human right and plays a crucial role in

shaping the country's future. The targeted community members were also encouraged to know the aspiring candidates who will contest for various positions and scrutinize their manifestos before making their final choices.

Furthermore, the community members were urged to refrain from being used by politicians to incite violence during and after the elections.

According to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), the phase 2 of the voter registration exercise will run

from 9 to 22 November, 2024 covering Blantyre, this Nkhata Bay, Kasungu, Blantyre City and among others.



**Scan to learn more
about our work**



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393

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YONECO Promotes Support Services for GBV Survivors in Mulanje



On 29th October 2024 YONECO officers in The Mulanje conducted a session on gender-based violence (GBV) and gender equality within households. The training discussions about money, they are more aimed to educate participants about the various forms of GBV and how to address these issues effectively. Attendees were better informed about different mechanisms for reporting GBV and the significance of household.

doing so for improving their lives.

A key message highlighted during the session was the importance of unity between spouses when it comes to making decisions within the family. It was emphasized that both partners should equally contribute to decision-making processes. Participants were encouraged to collaborate when managing finances, underscoring that discussions about spending should involve both the husband and wife.

By working together, couples can create a supportive environment that mitigates the risks associated with financial mismanagement and promotes harmony within the family. Lastly the Tithandizane national helpline free tall lines 116 for child protection services and 5600 for GBV services were publicized.

Hulubai Issa's Story: The Transformative Power of SP-GEAR Project



Insert: Hulubai Issa is very thankful to the project for the support she is getting which has enabled her to better her life.

Meet Hulubai Issa, one of the community members who are being targeted by the Social Protection for Gender Equality and Resilience (SP-GEAR) project interventions in Nsanje.

Before the project, which aims at reducing vulnerability and enhance resilience among women, girls and marginalized groups, Issa was staying in a grass thatched house and wasn't able to pay for her children's school fees, but now, that's a story of the past.

"I now manage to send my children to school and feed them, I have also bought

timber for the roofing of my house, my life is changing, and it is all thanks to SP-GEAR project" said Issa who was wearing a bright smile.

Issa is part of the numerous success stories being registered under the project's social cash transfer which is funded by UNICEF and implemented by the Malawi government with complimentary support from YONECO.

YONECO, UNICEF, and officials from the Malawi government are in Nsanje district to assess the progress of the project that commenced in June this year and is scheduled to continue until 2026

YONECO and Stakeholders Spearhead Efforts to Address Mental Health Issues among Adolescents in Chikwawa.



Insert: A facilitator from the department of Social Welfare in Chikwawa during the psychosocial support session at TA Lundu in the district.

On 23rd October 2024, the Chikwawa district YONECO Office joined the Social Welfare and District Health Offices in providing psychosocial support to 48 adolescents (11 girls and 37 boys) at Tomali Primary School under Traditional Authority Lundu. The exercise aimed to enhance good mental health among adolescents who are significantly affected by mental health issues, particularly during and after times of disaster.

Apart from offering a group therapy session on mental health, the youth were given the opportunity to come forward for one-on-one sessions. Among other issues, the youths noted that the recent dry spells had led to an acute shortage of food in their households, resulting in psychological distress that impacted their performance in school. They also spoke about the difficulties some of them faced after the loss of a parent. For instance, a girl we will refer to as Mary, who is in Form 2 at Mzumira Secondary School,

modalities and procedures that are in place to ensure that the project should achieve its intended objectives.

In his opening remarks, FAO's International Administration's Officer, Antony Nyagadza, expressed his confidence in YONECO's capabilities and stated that his organization is hopeful that YONECO will deliver with the expected diligence.

Mpira Dam supplies water to Ntcheu, Balaka and Liwonde towns. However, deforestation and loss of vegetative cover around the dam's catchment areas has been affecting its capacity.

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Malawi Commemorates 2024 International Day of the Girl Child



Malawi commemorated the 2024 International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC) at a function that was held on 18 October at Chiwembu ground in Mwanza district.

The event that was presided over by the Minister of Gender, Social Welfare and Community Development, Honourable Jean Sendeza doubled as the launch of the new country's Ending Child Marriage Strategy.

YONECO was among the organizing partners of the event. The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, joined the Minister as well other partners and stakeholders in a solidarity march to the venue.

Insert: Guest of honor at the event Hon. Jean Sendeza, flanked by YONECO Executive Director and other dignitaries during the commemoration event in Mwanza.

At the event, YONECO showcased various interventions to the Minister, highlighting the interventions which YONECO uses towards enhancing the rights and welfare of the girl child in Malawi,

In addition, the function was covered live by YONECO FM (YFM) with two of the station's girl child presenters managing the airwaves.



Breaking Borders and Sharing Knowledge as YONECO Host Partners



Insert: CDC, YONECO and Macro Team members posing for a group photo after the meeting.

On 29th October 2024, YONECO in Chikwawa hosted Centers for Disease Control (CDC) officials from the US, Botswana, and Mozambique together with MACRO team who visited the district on a learning and exchange visit to the Key Populations (KP) programme which YONECO is implementing.

The exercise was aimed at strengthening partnership, sharing best practices and understanding the integration and linkage of KP clients from community to the facility setting.

The journey saw the teams engaging with the DHMT members where they discussed the clients referral system. It was noted during the meeting that most of the KP clients are being tracked by the peer educators under YONECO and that progress has shown the program is

on the verge of reducing the HIV epidemic through tailored health services.

A follow up engagement with peer educators, facility partners and District project staff was later done to understanding the KP intervention framework which is being utilized as well as a deep dive into the peer educators micro planning strategies being employed.





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LET'S GROW WITH US

Training of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Community-Based Educators (CBEs), and Youth on Climate Change and Health



Insert: Field Officer for YONECO in Machinga district (Standing) during the training session at Puteya TDC.

YONECO led an impactful training for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Community-Based Educators (CBEs), and youth, focused on building community resilience against climate-induced health challenges as part of a three-year project.

The training, which took place at Puteya TDC in Machinga, saw participants being introduced to foundational concepts of climate change and discussed its direct effects on their lives. Stories surfaced about children missing school to help families struggling with food insecurity, families fractured as members leave in search of resources, and devastating losses of livestock and lives due to flooding, especially around Lake Chilwa. Concerns were raised about unsustainable practices, such as deforestation

and farming near rivers, which degrade land and intensify these issues. Amid these challenges, participants showed a strong determination to learn and work together.

The training also covered sustainable community solutions to address climate change's nutritional and health impacts. Participants actively shared their own observations and solutions, contributing valuable ideas for promoting resilience. The YONECO team ensured these insights were captured, culminating in a collaboratively developed annual action plan to guide future efforts.

The session ended with a questions and answers, reinforcing the community's commitment to addressing climate-induced health challenges and moving forward together towards a healthier, more sustainable future.

YONECO trains Community structures on Climate Change Resilience



Insert: Part of the group of participants who participated in the training session in Zomba.

On October 29, 2024, YONECO Officers together with officials from Zomba Social welfare, conducted a training session at Hunger Hall - Jali, Traditional Authority Mwambo in Zomba district, under the Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges project.

Among the facilitators were the HSA's who had already been trained on the same topic. The training aimed to enhance the capacity of community-based organizations, village protection committees, and community educators to manage climate-induced disasters, promote early warning systems, foster community-level adaptation strategies, and strengthen collaboration and resource mobilization.

40 participants (11 females and 29 males) from various community-based organizations, village protection committees, and community educators attended the session.

Additionally, participants were informed about some of the causes of Gender-Based Violence and the available reporting mechanisms. The Tithandizane National Helpline toll-free numbers (116, 5600, 6600 and 393) were also publicized during the training.

This training is expected to strengthen community resilience to climate change-induced health impacts by promoting proactive disaster management and adaptation strategies.

Promoting the Rights of People with Albinism in Malawi's Remote Areas

As phase 1 of the voter registration exercise for the 2025 General Elections has commenced in some parts of the country, YONECO, through its office at Machinji in Blantyre, has embarked on door-to-door campaign targeting eligible voters to register for the elections.

In the first week of the campaign between 21st and 26th October, 2024, the officers in Machinji township reached over 85 households.

During the engagement, YONECO officers reminded the targeted individuals that voting is a basic human right and plays a crucial role in shaping the country's future.

The targeted community members were also encouraged to know the aspiring candidates who will contest for various positions and scrutinize their manifestos before making their final choices.

Furthermore, the community members were urged to refrain from being used by politicians to incite violence during and after the elections.

According to the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), the phase 2 of the voter registration exercise will run from 9 to 22 November, 2024 covering Blantyre, this Nkhata Bay, Kasungu, Blantyre City and among others.



Insert: Part of the Helpline Caravan team engaging with people in their communities.

Following the performances, a person with albinism from the local community took center stage, sharing personal insights and reinforcing the message of respect and equality from a lived perspective. This powerful moment was complemented by presentations from a representative of MACODA (Malawi Council for the Disabled) and the local police, who emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of people with albinism, highlighting that they, too, are deserving of love, protection, and the same rights as every other Malawian.

The event was a resounding success, attracting close to 1,000 people who gathered in curiosity as soon as they heard the vibrant drums and saw the cultural troupe in action. Through these culturally resonant performances and deeply personal testimonies, the audience was reminded of their shared humanity and the need to stand in solidarity with people with albinism.

This awareness session at Kasinje Market marks just one step in YONECO's ongoing journey to ensure the safety, dignity, and rights of people with albinism across Malawi, and we are committed to continuing this vital work in even the most remote and underserved areas of the country.

Mkanda Health Centre Experiences Increased SRH Service Uptake



Insert: A group of peer educators from the district posing for a group photo.

Mkanda Health Centre in Mchinji district has seen a rise in young people accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Services, a trend which is potentially key in the reduction of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs) and teenage pregnancies among the youth.

Edith Chimuka Chauwa, a Youth-Friendly Health Services (YFHS) provider at Mkanda Health Centre explained that one of the contributing factors to the increased uptake of services is the availability of trained peer educators and youth champions. Chauwa alluded that the work of the two groups has led to increase in the demand of SRHR services among the youth in the area.

Previously, about 15 to 20 young people were accessing various SRHR services from the health facility within a period of one month. However, following the capacity strengthening initiative for peer educators and the introduction of youth champions, the number of young people accessing YFHS has increased to an average of 40 a month.

Chauwa noted that before YONECO's interventions, it was challenging to provide information and convince both youth and their parents in the area about the benefits of using contraceptives.

"The sensitization meetings conducted by peer educators and youth champions have been instrumental in persuading parents to allow the youth in their families to visit the health facility and choose family planning methods," Chauwa explained.

She added that the youth themselves are now more aware of the family planning options available to them.

The training of peer educators and the introduction of peer educators is part of the Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls Project which YONECO is implementing in Dedza and Mchinji with support from UNFPA and KOICA.



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