

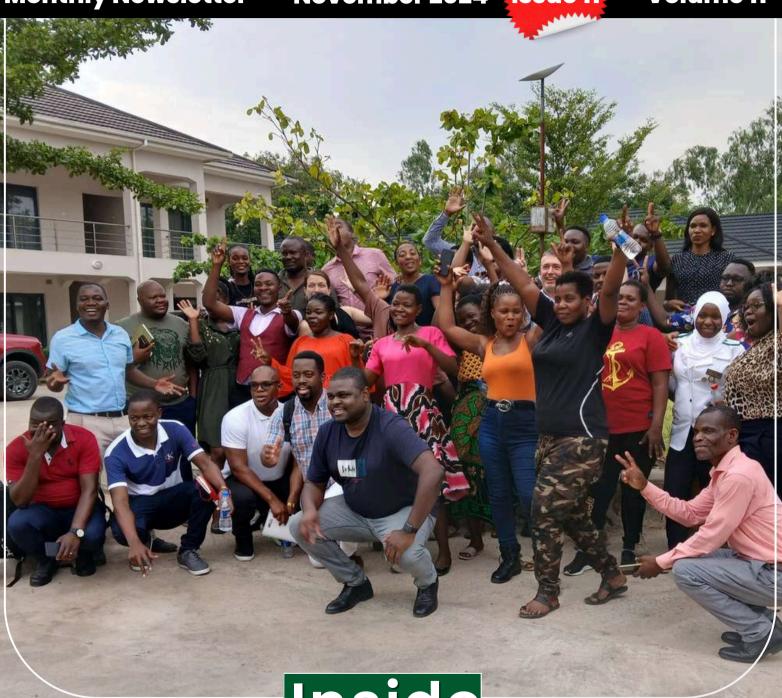
YOIECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

November 2024

Issue 11

Volume 11



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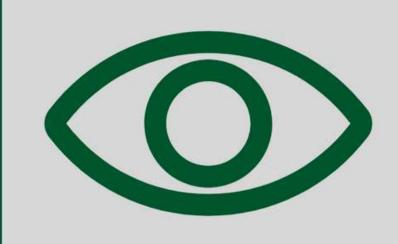
Our Programmes

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

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
Fransparency and Accountability



Executive Director's Note...

Dear Reader,.

with MacBain Mkandawire



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



VOICES OF THE BRAVE

By Gracium Mkonda Chithonje

Through YONECO FM's waves, their voices rise,

Unveiling truth beneath the skies.
With every word, the youth are heard,
Their courage echoed in each word.

In shadows deep, they boldly stand,
A microphone in steady hand.
Through every risk, they light the way,
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. Their voices blaze against the night, In truth, they shine forever bright.





Sustaining Institutional Growth and Independence for Social and Economic Development of Youth,

Women and Children.



Experts in: Community Mobilization

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Advocacy

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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 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 doorto-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.



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 Rumphi Youth to Register for 2025 General Elections

On 26th October 2024, YONECO engaged young people from Mayembe, Rumphi 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.

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.

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

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 aattended 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.



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 registration exercise for the commenced in some parts of members the country, YONECO, through encouraged its office at Machinji in Blantyre, aspiring candidates who will has embarked on door-to- contest for various positions door campaign targeting and eligible voters to register for manifestos before the elections.

campaign between 21st and members were urged 26th October, 2024, the officers refrain from being used by in Machinji township reached politicians to incite violence over 85 households.

Durina the engagement, YONECO officers reminded the According to the Malawi individuals voting is a basic human right the phase 2 of the voter and plays a crucial role in

of the voter shaping the country's future.

were to know the scrutinize their making their final choices.

In the first week of the Furthermore, the community during and after the elections.

> that Electoral Commission (MEC), registration exercise will run

from 9 to 22 November, 2024 covering Blantyre, this Nkhata 2025 General Elections has The targeted community Bay, Kasungu, Blantyre City and also among others.



Scan to learn more about our work



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GBV Crisis Line 5600 Youth Helpline 393 Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline 6600



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YONECO Promotes Support Services for GBV Survivors in Mulanje



On 29th October 2024 YONECO officers in The officers explained that financial Mulanje conducted a session on gender- decisions can greatly impact a family's based violence (GBV) and gender stability. When both partners engage in equality within households. The training discussions about money, they are more aimed to educate participants about the likely to reach sound and various forms of GBV and how to address decisions. This partnership not only fosters these issues effectively. Attendees were better financial management but also informed about different mechanisms for strengthens the overall dynamics of the reporting GBV and the significance of household. doing so for improving their lives.

session was the importance of unity risks associated making decisions within the family. It was within the family. emphasized that both partners should to collaborate when managing finances, 5600 for GBV services were publicized. discussions underscoring that about involve both spending should the husband and wife.

By working together, couples can create a A key message highlighted during the supportive environment that mitigates the with between spouses when it comes to mismanagement and promotes harmony

equally contribute to decision-making Lastly the Tithandizane national helpline free processes. Participants were encouraged tall lines 116 for child protection services and

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 then department of Social Welfare in Chikwawa during the psychosocial support session at TA Lundu in the district.

On 23rd October 2024, the Chikwawa district modalities and procedures that are in place to 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,

ensure that the project should achieve its intended objectives.

In his opening remarks, FAO's International Officer, Administration's **Antony** Nyagadza, expressed his confidence in 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 affecting been capacity.



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

October 2024, YONECO in on the verge of reducing the HIV epidemic hosted Centers for Disease 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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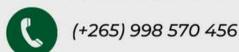
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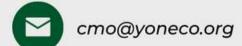
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Training of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Community-Based Educators (CBEs), and Youth on Climate Change and Health



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

Community-Based community resilience against climateinduced health challenges as part of a The three-year project.

The training, which took place at Puteya Participants TDC in Machinga, saw participants observations beina introduced to school to help families struggling with efforts. food insecurity, families fractured as and devastating losses of livestock and answers, reinforcing Lake Chilwa. Concerns were raised health about unsustainable practices, such as together deforestation

YONECO led an impactful training for and farming near rivers, which degrade land Organizations and intensify these issues. (CBOs), Community-Based Educators challenges, participants showed a strong (CBEs), and youth, focused on building determination to learn and work together.

training also sustainable covered community solutions to address climate change's nutritional and health impacts. actively shared their and solutions, foundational valuable ideas for promoting resilience. The of climate change and YONECO team ensured these insights were discussed its direct effects on their lives. captured, culminating in a collaboratively Stories surfaced about children missing developed annual action plan to guide future

members leave in search of resources, The session ended with a questions and the community's lives due to flooding, especially around commitment to addressing climate-induced challenges and moving towards healthier, a 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 personal stage, sharing 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 culturally these 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 **Ūptake**



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

Mkanda Health Centre in Mchinji district has Chauwa seen a rise in young people accessing Sexual interventions, it was challenging to provide and Reproductive Health (SRH) Services, a information and convince both youth and their trend which is potentially key in the reduction parents in the area about the benefits of using of Sexually Transmitted Infection (STIs) and contraceptives. teenage pregnancies among the youth.

services is the availability of trained peer Chauwa explained. educators and youth champions. Chauva among the youth in the area.

peer educators introduction of youth champions, the number and KOICA. people accessing **YFHS** young increased to an average of 40 a month.

noted that before YONECO's

"The sensitization meetings conducted by peer Edith Chimuka Chauwa, a Youth-Friendly educators and youth champions have been Health Services (YFHS) provider at Mkanda instrumental in persuading parents to allow Health Centre explained that one of the the youth in their families to visit the health contributing factors to the increased uptake of facility and choose family planning methods,"

alluded that the work of the two groups has She added that the youth themselves are now led to increase in the demand of SRHR services more aware of the family planning options available to them.

Previously, about 15 to 20 young people were The training of peer educators and the accessing various SRHR services from the introduction of peer educators is part of the health facility within a period of one month. Action for Teen Mothers and Adolescent Girls However, following the capacity strengthening Project which YONECO is implementing in and the Dedza and Mchinji with support from UNFPA



Tithandizane National Helpline Services

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