



YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

June 2025

Issue 6

Volume 12



Inside

**Chiefs' Wives
Trained in Grassroot
Peacebuilding**

**Final Cash Transfer
Brings Relief and Hope
to Families in Balaka**

**MACRA Applauds
YONECO's Expansive
Helpline Services**

PAGE 9

PAGE 15

PAGE 24

Contents

Executive Director's Note.....1

Youth Take the Lead in Environmental Conservation Drive.....5

YONECO Empowers Women and Girls to Lead in Peace Activities.....6

Victory Private Secondary School Hosts Youth Awareness Session on Dangers of Drug and Substance Abuse.....7

Chiefs' Wives Trained in Grassroot Peacebuilding.....9

Former YONECO Intern Leads Donation Drive at Lilongwe Social Rehabilitation Centre.....10

Tablet Learning Sparks Learner to Dream Big.....11

YONECO Trains Social Accountability Facilitators for Gender-Inclusive Service Delivery.....12

YONECO Takes Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention through Sports Interventions to Phalombe.....13

Nyanjiwa SLG Farm Sets Example for Community-Led Poverty Reduction in Nsanje.....14

Final Cash Transfer Brings Relief and Hope to Families in Balaka.....15

Mulanje Women Speak Out Against Harmful Social Norms.....16

Malawi's Minister of Gender Tours Tithandizane Helpline Services Ahead of Global Forum.....17

YFM Joins 2025-2026 Regional Programme for Gender-Inclusive Journalism.....18

YONECO Participates in Climate Change and Resilience Building Workshop.....19

Malawi Commemorates International Day of Families.....20

Farming Family Benefits from Climate-Smart Agricultural Education Sessions.....21

Mposa Leads in Malaria Prevention through Climate-Smart Health Education Sessions.....22

YONECO Joins Campaign to Combat TIP in Mangochi.....23

MACRA Applauds YONECO's Expansive Helpline Services.....24

YONECO Spearheads HIV Awareness Drive for Female Sex Workers in Chiradzulu.....26

YONECO Empowers Chitipa Women on Health Rights.....27

YONECO, FAO Support 14 Ntcheu Schools with Tree Planting and Sanitation Tools.....28

Community Grassroots Climate Champions Showcase Progress in T/A Mposa.....29

Cooking Demonstration Highlights Local Solutions to Malnutrition in Nsanje.....30

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.



Visit our website to
learn more about
our work

Production Team

Layout and Design
Wilson Mkandawire

Contributors
Mercy Makondetsa
Grant Dulla
Richard Nkhonjera
Sajdah Bunaya
Mercy James
Andrew Govati
Funny Chilembo
Victor Majora
Edward Baxter Nyirenda
Edwin Chulu
Mackson Mhangochi
Isaac Chakana
Blessings Chinula
Mary Chimunya
Richard Nkhonjera
Angela Bisani

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager
Daniel Chikatentha

Executive Director
MacBain Mkandawire

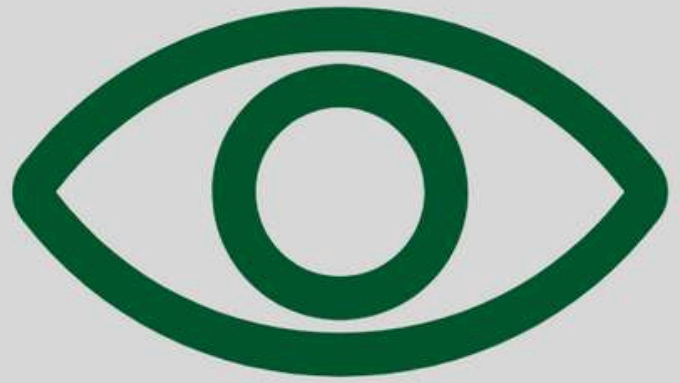
Our Programmes

- 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

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...



Dear Readers,

with MacBain Mkandawire

Welcome to our June 2025 newsletter. June 2025 means we are half way through the year and it's possibly high time we reflected on the challenges and opportunities after 6 months at personal, organizational, national and global level. We need to seriously rethink development and global issues. We need to ask ourselves as local organizations, Malawians and also as internationals.

Let us begin our discussions reflecting on the impact of President Donald Trump's Executive Orders, especially the one that affected a number of local and international NGOs through funding cuts, restricting of AID and the focus on America. The result was the closing of projects and jobs were lost. Before it could rest, we also observed that other countries like the UK and the EU as an entity were revisiting their AID packages to developing countries. We have seen vehicles being auctioned. What was more interesting was that this AID refocusing comes at a time when there was a localisation push under the Grand Bargain, C4C and many other instruments including the humanitarian leadership academy that we need localisation. The localisation movement had grown so well such that local actors were beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel. We wondered whether the America First theory was built as a response to the growing movement of localisation. We are also wondering if the response from the UK and other developed countries to reduce the aid to developing countries was a direct response to the growing aspect of localisation. However, this situation has given NGOs in developing countries to rethink the AID we are receiving and think critically about the alternatives we have. As Dambisa Moyo puts in her book "Dead Aid", no amount of aid can develop a nation. The strings attached to the AID makes developing countries poor as it creates dependency and makes the aid recipient to stop planning and not think beyond aid. Since the Executive Order, so many government departments including the UN system have greatly complained but does not offer insight into what will be done. The question we need to answer is whether NGOs can be able to survive without aid. We thank organisations like Network for Empowered AID Response (NEAR) for proving a response grant to local NGOs affected by the Executive Orders (\$25,000 is a big boost to the organisations), VIIV Health Care for supporting your partners to cope with the Executive Orders and Trocaire for being there to lead the way through the consultations and engagement through the Hub in Nairobi and the country offices. You have also led the way in providing indirect cost recovery.

While the above are great response initiatives, the Executive Orders and the downscaling of the funding to the developing countries need to be looked at seriously. There have been calls to go to the foundations and we are sure that these might also be saturated. We therefore need to seriously revisit the funding and financing mechanisms for the local organizations. During the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) leaders' forum in Mangochi recently, the British High Commissioner said that "The AID Pot is drying up". She was speaking to business captains and asking them to rethink how we are financing the work we are doing. As if this is not enough, Malawi's Credit Facility collapsed when we are told that we already have a child being born in Malawi with a debt. We are not sure what this means but the reality is that things are not good. We need to develop strategies and thoughts on the aid structure and how we are going to reduce dependency. We need serious social and economic independence and not just political independence.

Enough about Aid issues even though we need to find solutions together... Amidst Aid cuts, we still have huge issues that we need to respond to over the period

We will be commemorating the International Day against Child Labour (12 June 2025) in Machinga under the theme “progress is there but theoretically more that we need to do”. While this is being organized under the theme, as a country we need to reflect seriously on the plight of child labour survivors. There has been focus in Agriculture and the domestic child labourers have not been reviewed. Unfortunately, policing child labour in the homes is very difficult. Child labor is one reason children drop out of the schools. Areas like Mposa in Machinga are both the suppliers of child labour to the domestic child labour industry while also having a huge child labour industry in the fishing communities. Known for their light weight under the water in the fishing industry, “Bira Boys” are child labourers that endure the challenges in water, drop out of schools and remain poor. However, have we reflected on the domestic child labourers and how to protect them? Have we ever been interested in the children selling things late in the night, particularly the girls? We are aware of the efforts by the Government under the alliance but this is very decimal considering the children's challenges in Malawi. Take note that these children are exported or trafficked from places like Mposa in Machinga through relations and close family ties. We need to manage this.

Malawi will host continental celebration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June 2025 under the theme “planning and budgeting for the children rights: Progress since 2010”. Its an honour for the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) to give Malawi this opportunity and we are all excited that we will host this important function. However, as we continue to plan, it is important to question some of the interventions we are having. One question that has remained unanswered is the “Child Participation” in matters affecting the children in Malawi. Current events show that Malawi child participation forums are limited to Child Parliament. While this stands as a critical leadership programme, developing an active citizenry requires that children have to be engaged not only as child parliamentarians, but also children in general. Limiting child participation to parliament not only deprives children of their right to participate, but also makes the children develop into passive citizens that do question the many things around them. We therefore need a “Children's Movement” in Malawi with a corresponding “Child Rights Organisation Movement” that would champion the child rights engagement in a holistic and not cosmetic

Drug and substance abuse continue to be a menace in our society. The situation is dire especially for secondary school going children and those who are out of school. University students have been the biggest victims of drug abuse and this has become a silent epidemic. If not contained, we will be faced with a disaster, that is, if we have not already reached a disaster phase.. YONECO through the Helpline continues to receive many parents to seek counselling services for themselves and their children. The major issues range from violence, selling of property, poor family relationships and dropping out of schools. Some of drugs used are licit drugs that are being abused and procured straight from the counter. However, there have also been incidents of illicit drugs and young people making their own drugs out of licit drugs. Places like botanic garden in Zomba and Njamba park in Blantyre and indeed many other places for recreation has become havens for drug and alcohol use in our society. As we celebrate the International Day Against Drugs and Substance Abuse on 26 June 2025, we call upon parents not to despair. This is a challenge that we need to meet head on and we should not bury our heads in the sand. We need to confront the abuse of drugs and alcohol in the family, communities and other places. It should be noted that drug and substance does not only affect the abuser, it affects the family and society at large. We need to get help on 6600 (drug and substance abuse Hotline) or 393 (Youth Helpline). YONECO will also, through the Tithandizane National Helpline Services, be hosting the "Sessions for Parents and Guardians for Children and Young People abusing drugs and substances in Zomba, Lilongwe, Blantyre and Ntcheu". Parents and guardians you also free to send an email to drugs@yoneco.org.

Have a wonderful June 2025 and enjoy our newsletter

LEAVING A MARK

By

Wilson Mkandawire



In quiet steps upon the earth,
We wander through our fleeting birth,
Not just to pass, but to ignite—
A spark, a glow, a lasting light.

With every word and every deed,
We plant a small, enduring seed,
A trace of who we dared to be,
A whisper in eternity.

Though time may wash away the
sand,
Our footprints shape the shifting land,
In hearts we touch, in dreams we
start,
We leave behind a piece of heart.

So strive to shine, to rise, to spark—
For life is short, but leaves its mark.



*Sustaining Institutional Growth and Independence
for Social and Economic Development of Youth,
Women and Children.*



YONECO CULTURAL TROUPE

Experts in: **Community Mobilization**
Advocacy
SBCC

For bookings

Contact:

The Executive Director or The Station Manager

Yoneco FM

P.O Box 471

Zomba, Malawi.

Tel: 01 525 764 - 01 526 199

Mobile: +265 888 919 623

Email: stationmanager@yoneco.org

www.yoneco.org



Youth Take the Lead in Environmental Conservation Drive



YONECO's recent tree planting initiative under Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges Project in the areas of Traditional Authorities (TAs) Mwambo and Mاتيya, Zomba, marked a significant step towards promoting environmental sustainability.

The youth clubs have 40 active participants in total (13F 27M). Since the youth are actively engaged in this journey, YONECO aims at empowering them to take an active role in protecting the environment.

The initiative not only involved planting trees but also educated the youths on the importance of environmental conservation. This hands-on approach fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership ship among the young participants, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to drive positive change.

Insert: Members of various youth clubs from Zomba district posing for a group photo.

Despite the positive outcomes, the tree planting project has a few challenges like, conflicting interests on places where the trees are to be planted, another challenge is an environmental challenge which consists of pests and diseases especially when the trees are still small. The youths were encouraged to take on active role in monitoring and checking the growth process of the trees, to avoid these challenges.

Through this effort, YONECO aims to contribute to a greener and healthier environment for future generations. By inspiring community engagement and promoting sustainable practices. The initiative is now serving as a model for environmental conservation in the area.

YONECO Empowers Women and Girls to Lead in Peace Activities



Insert: Some of the women and girls who were reached during the training posing for a group photo.

YONECO, through the Sustaining Women's Movement for Peacebuilding and Response to Humanitarian Crisis Project, organized a four-day training for facilitators of Women and Girls Peace Learning Circles in Mchinga District.

The training session, held from 12 to 15 May, aimed to facilitate the active participation of women and girls in the promotion of peace and conflict resolution within their communities.

Peace Learning Circles serve as platforms for women and girls to engage in dialogue on conflict prevention and resolution. In addition, the circles also promote discussions on harmful cultural and social norms that fuel Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV/GBV) in their communities.

During the session, participants were equipped with knowledge and skills to effectively identify the root causes of conflicts and to use non-violent methods for resolving disputes.

A total of 52 women and girls from the areas of Traditional Authorities (T/As) Mizinga and Sitola in the district attended the training.

The Sustaining Women's Movement for Peacebuilding and Response to Humanitarian Crisis Project is being implemented with the financial and technical support from the UN Women and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

Victory Private Secondary School Hosts Youth Awareness Session on Dangers of Drug and Substance Abuse



Insert: Students captured here during the awareness session on mental and physical dangers of drug and substance abuse at Victory Private Secondary School.

On 9 May, 2024, YONECO conducted an awareness session on mental and physical dangers of drug and substance abuse at Victory Private Secondary School.

The activity aimed to raise awareness among young people about the risks associated with drug use and to promote healthy as well as substance-free lifestyles. The session was spiced up by student-led poetry, drama, and live music performances, which thematically focused on the consequences of substance abuse and the importance of making positive life choices.

As drug and substance abuse continues to pose a serious threat to young people's wellbeing and future prospects, YONECO sees the need to intensify efforts towards building an informed, resilient, and empowered youth in Malawi. Thus, the initiative is part of YONECO's broader campaign under the Youth Development Programme, aimed at reducing the prevalence of substance abuse among young people and equipping them with the necessary life skills to resist peer pressure.

In total, the session was attended by 270 students (143 boys and 127 girls).



**Toll-Free
Line**

**SADC YOUTH
HELPLINE**
Call or SMS
393



For FREE
Smart Choices
for Young People.

Private & Confidential
Service *24 hours*

sahelpline.org



Thandane Helpline Services



@thandanehelpline

Chiefs' Wives Trained in Grassroot Peacebuilding



Insert: YONECO staff together with CPWs and representatives from various CBOs after the Child Protection Case Management Training in Chikwawa district.

Traditional leaders play a vital role in promoting peace and resolving conflicts within their communities. Chiefs in Malawi are widely recognized for their critical contributions to promoting community cohesion and peacebuilding efforts within their jurisdictions.

In the background, the wives of chiefs serve as informal advisors, despite not having the necessary training.

As such, YONECO, with support from the District Gender Office, has trained 20 chiefs' wives from Traditional Authorities (T/As) Mizinga and Sitola in Machinga District.

The training focused on equipping the wives of chiefs with practical skills in conflict resolution, mediation, and grassroots peacebuilding.

The participants applauded the session and described it as the eye-opener they had been waiting for so long.

"Wives of chiefs need these kind of trainings as we are deeply involved in the heartbeat of our communities. We listen, we advise, and we help guide our husbands' decisions behind the scenes. Our role may be quiet, but it is powerful in supporting peace and unity in the society," explained one of the participants from Mizinga area.

The training was conducted with financial and technical support from the UN Women, as well as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), through the Sustaining Women's Movement for Peacebuilding and Response to Humanitarian Crisis Project.

Former YONECO Intern Leads Donation Drive at Lilongwe Social Rehabilitation Centre



Insert: Some of the children who are accommodated at the social rehabilitation centre in Lilongwe during the handover ceremony.

Rhodah Phiri, a 2023 former intern at YONECO and a student from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), led an outreach initiative to the Lilongwe Social Rehabilitation Centre.

In collaboration with the Area 25 Student Christian Organisation of Malawi (SCOM-C), Phiri and her team donated essential items including lunch, clothes, and shoes to the children at the centre. The team also took time to share spiritual encouragement, offering the children messages of hope and faith.

Beyond the donations, the group engaged the children in various games and recreational activities, creating a joyful and uplifting atmosphere at the centre.

“We wanted to show these children that they are loved, seen, and valued,” Phiri said. “Our goal was not just to give material support but also to bring joy and spiritual encouragement.”

Staff at the rehabilitation centre expressed gratitude for the gesture, noting the positive impact such visits have on the emotional and social well-being of the children.

Tablet Learning Sparks Learner to Dream Big

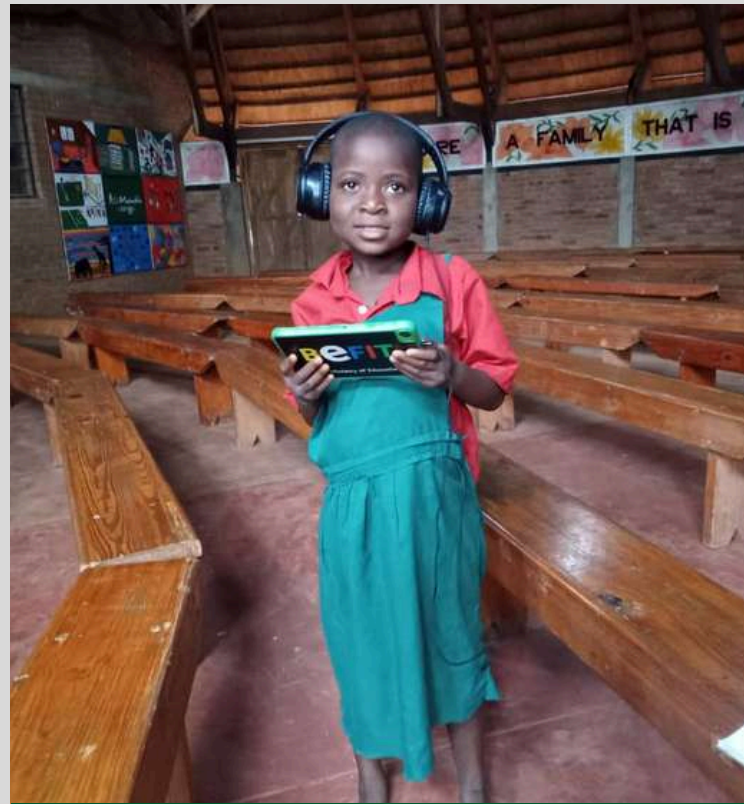
Seven-year-old Hopeness Nyirenda is a Standard 2 learner at Tenthere Primary School who hails from Jeyeka Village in the Rumphi district.

Hopeness is one of many learners whose academic journey has been transformed through the Building Education Foundations Through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) tablet-based learning sessions. These sessions have enabled her to continue dreaming big.

"I want to be a nurse so that I should be able to help people suffering from different diseases. Since I started using the tablet in September 2024, the tablet learning sessions have helped me improve my literacy and numeracy skills, and I am loving school even more," explained Hopeness, her face lighting up with determination.

Her teacher also noted how the tablet learning sessions have positively impacted her academic performance in class. According to the teacher, Hopu, as she is fondly called by her friends and classmates, used to rank between 10th and 15th position in her end-of-term examinations. Currently, the teacher reported, there is a notable improvement, as she achieved 4th position in her class during the end of the last academic term, thanks to the BEFIT tab.

Hopeness eagerly looks forward to tablet sessions, and her favourite subject is mathematics. She is also particularly drawn to Chichewa storybooks on the device.



Insert: Hopeness Nyirenda posing with a tablet at Tenthere primary school.

"I love various stories about wild animals like lions, elephants, and monkeys. I want to keep on learning using tablets," explained Hopeness, smiling.

Malawi is now experiencing the positive outcomes of educational technology through BEFIT; a government-led programme aimed at enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among learners in Standards 1 to 4 across all public primary schools in Malawi. The programme provides supplemental, individualized, self-paced instruction delivered via specialized apps on Android tablets.

YONECO Trains Social Accountability Facilitators for Gender-Inclusive Service Delivery



Insert: A facilitator captured here engaging with participants during the Social Accountability training.

On 14 May 2025, YONECO successfully concluded a training session for community-based Social Accountability Facilitators aimed at enhancing grassroots advocacy for gender-inclusive service delivery.

The two-day training targeted eight women and two men from the areas of Traditional Authorities (T/As) Mizinga and Sitola, where YONECO is implementing 'Sustaining Women Movement for Peacebuilding and Response to Humanitarian Needs Project' with funding from UN Women.

Just like many parts of Malawi, women and girls face a number of challenges in

accessing key social services. Thus, in a bid to address such issues, YONECO has trained the community facilitators to use various social accountability tools, including the community scorecard approach, to monitor and assess the delivery of social services in the district.

"This training has empowered us. We will now be able engage fellow community members in analyzing the underlying issues that contribute to challenges in service delivery and work with the various duty bearers to address these issues," explained one of the trained facilitators, Rose Masamba.

YONECO Takes Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention through Sports Interventions to Phalombe



Insert: One of the facilitators of the training engaging with community coaches in Sports for Social Change (SSC) in Phalombe district.

YONECO, through “Sustaining Community The first five cohorts of coaches are Women Movement for Peacebuilding and expected to engage with their Humanitarian Response Project,” is communities, sharing messages that raise conducting a five-day training session for awareness about the dangers of conflict, community coaches in Sports for Social the peacebuilding process, and responses Change (SSC) in Phalombe district. during humanitarian situations.

The training aims to equip community The project is being implemented in coaches with sport-based skill sets that Machinga and Phalombe districts with promote community cohesion, financial and technical support from the peacebuilding, violence prevention, and Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund gender equality. (WPHF) and UN Women.

The training integrates both practical and theoretical elements in its approach.

Nyanjiwa SLG Farm Sets Example for Community-Led Poverty Reduction in Nsanje



Insert: Some members of Nyanjiwa SLG captured here inspecting their crop in one of their fields in Nsanje district.

Nyanjiwa Savings and Loan Group (SLG) is among the groups that were established under the SP-GEAR Project in Nsanje district. The group's inspiring investment in crop farming stands out as an example for Community-led poverty reduction effort. The group's hard work and determination has led to a promising path from acute poverty to financial independence.

The current estimates show that the group will have bumper yields of cassava, groundnuts, and beans this season.

The farm, which is part of the group's business strategy, was launched as a sustainable way to grow their collective savings while promoting financial independence among members. The initiative reflects a growing trend in Malawi, where savings groups are embracing agricultural ventures as a means to empower communities socially and economically.

The Nyanjiwa SLG farm is currently cultivating a variety of crops including beans, cassava, groundnuts (peanuts), watermelons, and cucumbers — all classified as cash crops due to their strong market value. Once harvested, the produce will be sold in local markets, and the proceeds will be reinvested into the savings group. This will allow the group to issue more loans, strengthen internal support systems, and expand their impact in the community.

The SP-GEAR project, supported by the Malawi Government, UNICEF, the European Union, and the Government of Ireland, among other partners, aims to improve the socio-economic status of women and girls while strengthening community resilience to crises and disasters.

Final Cash Transfer Brings Relief and Hope to Families in Balaka



Insert: ECHO project staff from YONECO and Save the Children handing over cash to one of the beneficiaries in Balaka district during the disbursement exercise.

From April 30 to May 2, 2025, the Malawi Drought Response project, led by Save the Children and the District Disaster Risk Management Office, completed final cash transfers to beneficiaries in the areas of Traditional Authority (T/A) Nkaya and Phimbi in Balaka district.

The distribution exercises were carried out in nine centres namely Mbaza, Maduwani, Utale 1 and 2, Phimbi, Zidyana, Kamowatimwa, Nkaya Clinic, and Malangwinjo. The project, which is being funded by ECHO, aims to support communities facing acute food and nutrition insecurity due to an El Nino-induced drought in Malawi.

Prior to the disbursement exercise, YONECO conducted a series of awareness sessions in the targeted areas to advance the goals of the project and to promote transparency and accountability. The beneficiaries were further reminded of various Complaints and Feedback

Mechanisms (CFMS) that are being used in the project in order to ensure transparency and accountability in the process.

Implementation of the project, which is being led by Care Malawi, is being conducted in eight districts by a total of nine partners including Self Help Africa, Njira Impact, Eagles Relief, CARD and CADECOM.

In this project, YONECO is responsible for the Accountability to the Affected Populations (AAP) component using various Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs) which include toll-free lines, help desks, and suggestion boxes.



Mulanje Women Speak Out Against Harmful Social Norms



Insert: YONECO Mulanje District Manager engaging with the women who attended the awareness session in the district.

On 27 May 2025, YONECO, in collaboration with the Mulanje District Social Welfare Office, conducted a community awareness session on harmful social norms in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Chikumbu.

The session is part of YONECO's efforts to address the various root causes of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that are prevalent at community level.

"For some time, we were told to remain silent and persevere, but today I have learned that my voice matters. As women, we deserve to live free from fear and to have opportunities to build our lives," explained one of the participants, Mumderanji Masanjala from T/A Chikumbu, Mulanje district.

The activity was conducted under the Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience (SP-GEAR) Project, which is being funded by UNICEF to tackle challenges that limit women's access to economic opportunities and essential social services.

The women lamented incidents of GBV that still prevail at community level, affecting women in various ways, including mentally, physically, and economically. The women who attended the session called for increased efforts to address gender-based violence at local and national levels.

Malawi's Minister of Gender Tours Tithandizane Helpline Services Ahead of Global Forum



Insert: Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Hon. Jean Sendeza posing with YONECO staff and other invited guests after the tour.

On 23 May 2025, YONECO hosted the Hon. Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Hon. Jean Sendeza, during her familiarization tour of the Tithandizane National Helpline Services ahead of International Helpline Consultation to be held in Zambia in June, 2025.

In her remarks, Honourable Sendeza described the Helpline Services system as an inspiration that effectively bridges safety, care, and justice for children, women, and the youth in Malawi. The minister expressed government's continued partnership and support towards the management of the Tithandizane National Helpline Services.

As government, we must intensify our support and ensure that these systems are strengthened and sustained. This is not only

a national asset but a regional model for child and gender protection," explained Hon. Jean Sendeza.

Speaking during the visit, the Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, emphasized the urgency and importance of these partnerships and coordination in the management of helpline Services.

The event was covered live on YONECO FM Radio Station (YFM) and featured a live music performance by the YONECO Children's Band, as well as traditional dance and drama by the YONECO Cultural Troupe UNFPA Resident Representative to Malawi, Nelida Rodrigues; the Country Director of Trocaire, Wamuyu Manyara as well as the District Commissioner of Zomba.

YFM Joins 2025-2026 Regional Programme for Gender-Inclusive Journalism



Insert: Participants from southern African countries posing for a group photo after the capacity building workshop.

YONECO FM Radio Station (YFM) is among the 22 institutions in the Southern African region that will participate in the 2025–2026 CFI Media Parity Capacity Building Programme.

The Media Parity Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of journalists in gender-inclusive reporting and promote safer and professional media workplaces.

The Acting Station Manager for YONECO FM, Rodrick Mwale, explained that the programme is a vital step toward transforming the way gender issues are reported by the media. Mwale added that through this initiative, YONECO FM will further

enhance its ability to produce more balanced and representative content and help in shaping a more equitable media landscape in Malawi.

“This initiative empowers the media to challenge stereotypes, give voice to the underrepresented, and ultimately contribute to a more inclusive and just society,” explained Mwale.

The programme, which is being championed by CFI Media Development and Gender Links, was launched on 15 May, 2025 in South Africa. The participating countries are Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia.

YONECO Participates in Climate Change and Resilience Building Workshop



Insert: Representatives from various organizations who participated in the workshop posing for a group photo.

As Malawi continues to grapple with the negative effects of climate change, both state and non-state actors are working tirelessly to build resilient societies that can withstand harsh climatic shocks.

In line with this effort, Trocaire-Malawi organized a three-day workshop in Liwonde, Machinga, aimed at enhancing the understanding of weather and climate issues among its partners implementing related interventions in various projects across the country.

YONECO was among seven other organizations that benefited from the workshop, where valuable information was shared on weather forecasts, climate change patterns, the 2025/26 weather outlook, and strategies for strengthening climate resilience in communities in Malawi.

The workshop culminated in a field visit to the area of T/A Chamba in Machinga, where participating organizations gained practical insights into climate change issues and shared knowledge with community members.

During the workshop, YONECO was one of the few organizations entrusted to facilitate the Community Volunteer's Code of Conduct, addressing safeguarding issues at the community level, which will be utilized by all partners in the Ireland Civil Society Partnership (ICSP) programming.

Seek Support today

CHILD HELPLINE

116

GENDER BASED
VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE

5600

CALL NOW

Its FREE!

YOUTH HELPLINE

393

DRUG & SUBSTANCE
ABUSE HOTLINE

6600

Download
Helpline App

Malawi Commemorates International Day of Families



Insert: Guest of Honor at the function Honourable Halima Daud, Deputy Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare posing with directors from various organizations.

On 16 May, the Government of Malawi, in collaboration with various stakeholders, launched the first-ever commemoration of the International Day of Families.

The commemoration, which was held under the theme "Families and Urbanization," aimed to recognize the vital role families play in society and raise awareness about family-related issues.

YONECO and various partners collaborated with the Government of Malawi for the inaugural launch of the Day of Families. The event featured Honourable Halima Daud, Deputy Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, as the official guest of honour.

YONECO showcased its diverse flagship programmes to the event attendees, including the Tithandizane National Helpline, YONECO drop-in centres, YONECO FM, the YONECO cultural troupe, and the YONECO Children's Band.



Farming Family Benefits from Climate-Smart Agricultural Education Sessions



Insert: One of the beneficiaries of the interventions captured here attending to one of the many CSA methods used in her field.

As part of the Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges Project being implemented in Traditional Authority (TA) Mposa, Machinga, a trained Community-Based Organization (CBO) member is driving change through the promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices aimed at reducing soil erosion and ensuring food security.

The CBO member organizes frequent community sensitization sessions through which he educates participants on practical and sustainable land-use techniques like construction of check dams, contour farming, responsible land management, and the planting of vetiver grass on sloped terrain. The CBO member assured communities that the methods are key in addressing the impacts of climate change, including intense rainfall that increases soil erosion thereby affecting crop yield.

One family from the village that got inspired took an initiative to build a check dam on their sloping farmland to control water levels and flow. The results were remarkable because the structure helped retain topsoil and moisture reducing erosion and boosting soil fertility. This year the family recorded a significantly higher harvest compared to previous years.

The success story is now motivating other community members to adopt similar soil conservation practices in the next farming season.

The case of Mtambaika Village shows how community-led climate change interventions can lead to improved agricultural productivity and resilience for farmers.

Mposa Leads in Malaria Prevention through Climate-Smart Health Education Sessions



Insert: One of the Health Surveillance Assistant from Mposa area in Machinga district making his presentation during the meeting.

Malaria has been one of the critical public health challenges in Malawi particularly in the lakeshore areas like Mposa in Machinga district. Despite the mass distribution of mosquito nets to prevent the disease, the failure to properly use and unwillingness to sleep under them has been making the fight against malaria seem like a losing battle.

It is against this backdrop that Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) in Machinga district are making a remarkable progress in malaria prevention by promoting consistent and correct use of mosquito nets through patient education, household visits and community awareness campaigns. Through the sessions, the HSA have also managed to dispel various widespread myths and misconceptions surrounding the use of mosquito nets.

Through the interactions, the community health workers have managed to tackle various harmful beliefs that mosquito nets cause headaches,

infertility and bring about misfortunes to users among others.

The efforts have paid dividends as many community members adopting the routine use of mosquito nets. As a result, Mposa Health Centre registering reduced cases of malaria which were also high among expectant women and under-five children.

The HSAs were trained under the 'Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges Project' to effectively communicate culturally sensitive information in a bid to effectively address the two-fold challenge of climate change and its impact on public health.

The case of Mposa area is a testament to the effectiveness of integrating climate change adaptation strategies into community health education interventions.

YONECO Joins Campaign to Combat TIP in Mangochi



Insert: Learners and other participants during the awareness campaign in Mangochi.

On May 2, 2025, YONECO joined community members and various key stakeholders in an anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) awareness campaign that was held at St. Augustine 3 Primary School in Mangochi District.

The event that was held under the theme “Human Trafficking is Organized Crime – End the Exploitation” aimed to raise awareness on the prevalent problem of TIP in district which is increasingly vulnerable due to various socio-economic and geographic factors.

As a border district with a thriving fishing and tourism industry, Mangochi attracts both internal and cross-border migrants. Additionally, low literacy levels coupled with demand for cheap labour and limited economic opportunities increases people’s susceptibility to exploitation.

The awareness campaign was marked by a number of activities including an awareness march, a panel discussion, as well as various sporting activities.

The District Manager for YONECO in Mangochi, Funny Chilembo, represented the NGO sector in a panel discussion that was held during the event. In the discussion, Chilembo emphasized on the importance of reporting mechanisms for victims and the general public.

The function was presided over by the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Homeland Security, Erica Maganga.

**Scan to learn More
about our work**



MACRA Applauds YONECO's Expansive Helpline Services



Insert: MACRA and YONECO officials engaged in discussions during the assessment of the implementation of the toll-free national child helpline 116.

On 2 May 2025, a delegation from the Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), that was led by the Deputy Director of Legal Services, Kelious Mlenga, visited YONECO to assess progress towards the implementation of the toll-free national child helpline 116.

The officials expressed their satisfaction with the scope of services that YONECO offers.

"We are more than satisfied with what YONECO is doing," Mlenga said during the visit. "We thought the organization only operated the Child Helpline, but today we have seen that they have more critical toll-free lines aside from 116."

Mlenga further explained that MACRA is satisfied with YONECO's efforts to make support and information accessible to Malawians on a wide range of social issues. "As the regulator, we are really pleased with the great work that YONECO is doing to ensure that people in Malawi have access to information and support services," Mlenga added.

YONECO presented data from the past five years, which further highlighted trends and impacts of the Tithandizane Helpline services. Additionally, YONECO also shared its successes, ongoing challenges, and several innovative platforms developed internally to respond to the needs of the people.



The real voice of the youth, women and children

Like & follow



ADVERTISE WITH *YONECO* FM AND GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Our frequencies

100.8 MHz

101.0 MHz

*For program and
business placement*

CONTACT

Communications and
Marketing Officer



(+265) 998 570 456



cmo@yoneco.org



Along Zomba-Lilongwe
RD, Next to Calvary
Family Church

WE OFFER



EXTENSIVE AUDIENCE REACH

*Let your product or service
reach to a multitude of people
from across Malawi*



AFFORDABLE RATES

*Place your adverts and get
the most affordable rates*



VALUE FOR MONEY

*Choose YFM and get the best
service and value for your
money.*

www.yonecofm.com

LET'S GROW WITH US

YONECO Spearheads HIV Awareness Drive for Female Sex Workers in Chiradzulu

On 13 May 2025, YONECO organized a series of HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns targeting female sex workers in the Chiradzulu district in a bid to prevent the spread of the virus and ensure that people living with HIV are accessing treatment effectively.

The sessions, which reached 48 female sex workers, focused on various key issues, particularly Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), ART adherence, and promoting the uptake of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).

The female sex workers who attended the sessions expressed their concern over the shockingly high prevalence of SGBV against

them. The participants indicated that this issue is also one of the factors fuelling the spread of HIV in the area.

They were encouraged to report incidents of violence either in person or through the GBV Crisis Line (5600) to prevent further occurrences of this vice and to ensure they receive the necessary support services.

At the end of the session, the participants affirmed their commitment to playing an active role in preventing the spread of HIV.



YONECO Empowers Chitipa Women on Health Rights



Insert: YONECO field officer for Chitipa district captured here engaging with the women during the session.

Despite ongoing national and global efforts to promote gender equality, women in some rural communities around Malawi remain unaware of their health rights and where to seek help when the rights have been violated.

During the session, it was revealed the prevalence of some predominant cultural norms continues to disempower women in rural areas. Among other issues, the women who attended the session bemoaned the traditional rite of 'Kwimala' (bride price) which they said silences them on critical issues.

It is against this background that YONECO conducted a human rights sensitization meeting for women in Izeki Village in Chitipa district. The session aimed at empowering women to make informed decisions about their reproductive health rights in presence or absence of bride price.

Traditional leaders who were engaged in the session also acknowledged that women should be entitled to same freedoms as men including the right to make decisions about their reproductive health. The leaders avowed to support efforts that are made towards ensuring that women are not subjected to human rights violations in the name of traditional culture.

In his remarks, one of the traditional leaders who attended the session stated that "a bride price should not be a tool for changing a woman's entitlement to human rights".

The session will be followed by further engagement sessions with men and various community gatekeepers

YONECO, FAO Support 14 Ntcheu Schools with Tree Planting and Sanitation Tools



Insert: YONECO and FAO staff presenting the some of the materials at one of the primary schools.

From 12 to 17 May, 2025, YONECO, in partnership with FAO, donated watering cans and dustbins to 14 primary and secondary schools in Ntcheu district in a bid to support tree planting and sanitation efforts in these learning institutions.

YONECO and FAO are working with students in the district to instill a culture of tree planting and land conservation.

Students from the targeted schools celebrated the donation during the distribution exercise dubbed ‘Greener Schools, Cleaner Futures!’

“This donation means a lot to us,” said Thokozani Banda, a Form 3 student at one of the beneficiary schools. “It shows that we have a role to play in protecting our environment, and now we have the tools to make a real difference.”

The 14 schools that benefited from the initiative are Ntcheu Secondary School, Ntcheu Community Day Secondary, Hope Nursery, Chipusile Primary School, Gongolo Primary School, Nan-Ray, Nkhande Primary School, M'deka Primary School, Ntcheu Roman Catholic Primary School, Mwansambe Primary School, Hope Village, Chibweya Primary School, Gumbu Primary School, and Chikusire Primary School.

The exercise was conducted with technical support from Ntcheu District Forestry Office with financial support from FAO under Forest and Landscape Restoration Project.

Seek Support today

CHILD HELPLINE

116

GENDER BASED
VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE

5600

CALL NOW

It's FREE!

YOUTH HELPLINE

393

DRUG & SUBSTANCE
ABUSE HOTLINE

6600

Download
Helpline App

Community Grassroots Climate Champions Showcase Progress in T/A Mposa



Insert: Community actors posing for a group photo after the review meeting in Machinga district.

On 13 May 2025, YONECO organized a review meeting under the Making Communities Resilient to Climate-Induced Health Challenges Project in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Mposa in Machinga, where participants shared progress and illustrated the impact of their interventions.

The meeting brought together key community actors working to enhance local climate resilience. The key initiatives reported included various community awareness campaigns on the effects of climate change, tree planting activities, and the promotion of climate-smart agricultural practices.

The review meeting brought together Community-Based Educators (CBEs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), community healthcare workers, the youth, and members of Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC) from the area.

The session allowed participants to present and reflect on the activities carried out since their training under the project.

During the meeting, it was noted that there had been increased community efforts to build resilience to the effects of climate change. Among other things, communities have adopted various climate-smart farming practices, restored wetlands, and engaged in reforestation through their strengthened climate adaptation committees.

The Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges is being implanted with financial support from Foundation S.

Cooking Demonstration Highlights Local Solutions to Malnutrition in Nsanje



Insert: Some of the women who took part in the demonstration captured here during the event.

In an effort to promote improved nutrition among the beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) programme, YONECO and the District Community Development Office organised a hands-on cooking demonstration on 15 May 2025 at Phanga Primary School in Nsanje.

The session aimed to showcase practical ways of preparing diversified, nutritious meals using locally available foodstuffs without the need to buy expensive ingredients.

The activity brought together community members who were guided by community health promoters and nutrition officers. During the session, participants prepared a variety of nutritious meals using locally available ingredients.

The menu featured traditional and nutrient-rich dishes such as phala la mgaiwa (whole grain maize porridge), phala la mchewere (millet flour

porridge), potato futali, sanguwo ya mazira (eggs with moringa), and juwisi wa malimbe (baobab fruit juice), among others.

Additionally, the communities were further supported with recipe and food safety directions, as well as various cooking techniques.

The activity was conducted under the Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience (SP-GEAR) project, which is being implemented in nine districts across Malawi, namely Mzimba, Ntcheu, Balaka, Chikwawa, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, and Zomba. The project combines the efforts of the Malawi Government, UNICEF, the European Union, and the Government of Ireland to tackle challenges that narrow women's access to economic opportunities and essential social services.



Tithandizane National Helpline Services

**Child
Helpline
116**

**GBV Crisis
Line 5600**

**Youth
Helpline 393**

**Drug &
Substance
Abuse
Hotline 6600**



Free and confidential services

Email us

drug@yoneco.org

help@tithandizanehelpline.org

gbv@yoneco.org

Visit www.tithandizanehelpline.org

Our Services

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



Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

trócaire



**Women's Peace &
Humanitarian Fund**
A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership



www.yoneco.org