



# YONECO VOICE

**Monthly Newsletter**

**July 2025**

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**Layout and Design**  
Wilson Mkandawire

**Contributors**  
Lauryn M’banga  
Mbanandi Saka  
Cedrick Kankhuni  
Mary Chimenya  
Shadreck Sindiza  
Joy Kakhona  
Triza Chimasula  
Victor Majola  
Jean Zimba  
Edward Baxter Nyirenda  
Andrew Govati  
Jones Makandanje  
Tadala Nambuzi  
Chancy Kumwenda  
Larah Mbewe  
Vanesa Cheyo  
Clifford Chisale

**Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager**  
Daniel Chikatentha

**Executive Director**  
MacBain Mkandawire

Our Programmes

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- 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  
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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 Readers,

The 11th International Consultations concluded in Livingstone, Zambia with a call to government stakeholders to strengthen the protection of children from abuse and violence and continued commitment of the helplines to provide mental health support to children worldwide. This comes shortly after the Day of the African Child and was a good moment for reflecting on budgeting processes. As a country, Malawi was represented by a delegation led by the Honorable Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare who also made a commitment through the Ministers Forum for the event.

Malawi will be 61 years old on July 6, 2025. This milestone comes with a MK17 trillion debt, and Malawi remains one of the poorest countries while also chairing the least developed countries (LDCs). We are, however, boasting as chair of the least developed countries, and one wonders if we are serious at all. Poverty remains a persistent issue and we are slowly drifting backwards with very little hope. Politics of poverty continues to reign in this country where our politicians capitalize on the poverty of the people through small handouts. Laws banning the handouts seem to be ineffective and politicians are moving with impunity.

Malawi's economy remains a consuming economy with little or no production. Our small-scale minerals are dominated by foreigners with the aid of Malawians harboring them in our communities. Is Malawi going to progress with such development? Our agriculture sector continues to be a major challenge with very poor or no effective extension services. The Agriculture Input Programme (AIP) has been heavily criticized for not effectively delivering but is being heavily supported as a political tool at the expense of mega farms. We are yet to see the results of the green belt initiative. These are initiatives that could raise the economy of this country, but we are turning a blind eye to them.

With Malawi Vision 2063, one is inclined to think industrialization would be the way to go. But does our system allow for such development? Is our youth sector being motivated enough to promote industrialization? How is this sector being moved to respond to this challenge? We cannot move much if we do not engage with our education system 62 years after independence.

What has been the quality of our education? Have education standards improved or deteriorated? What type of graduates are we producing? Innovators or followers? Do we have educated people or not? Is our curriculum meeting the needs of the country? Has AI taken over our education when exams are answered by ChatGPT? What does this mean for our nation?

In its formative years, the Civil Society Education Coalition used to have "QUALITY" in the name, and one wonders if the change in name was a result of deteriorating standards in the sector. Perhaps we should either ask CSEC to revisit the name or strategically position itself in quality education at all levels. Sixty-one years of education with the current education system and standards leaves a lot to be desired.

Perhaps it's high time our leadership (the president) borrowed a leaf from the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, and gave a directive on Education for the Social and Economic Development of Malawi. When Donald Trump declared that the department of education needs to be restructured to look at education for America, the feeling was that possibly this would have no bearing on other countries. Country leadership has to seriously revisit education systems to ensure that they meet the needs of the people.

We conclude these July 2025 thoughts with news that our children are being systematically trafficked or sold through care institutions according to the Malawi Human Rights Commission, using the laws we have. The news comes at a time when we have a TIP Act in place and are about to commemorate the International Day Against Trafficking under the theme *"Human Trafficking is Organised Crime: End Exploitation."*

Malawi faces both internal trafficking for sexual exploitation of children and child labor, and external trafficking as a route and destination for trafficked persons. We need to seriously revisit the inspection rules for care institutions so that they provide quality care for our children. We need to create massive awareness about the Trafficking in Persons Act and also address the challenges and level of trafficking in persons in Malawi and internationally. We need a blog on trafficking in persons.

Happy Independence Day!





# THE SIXTH OF JULY – SIXTY- ONE YEARS

By

Wilson Mkandawire



Sixty-one years since chains broke  
free, From Nyasaland to sovereignty.  
The lake that mirrors morning's gold  
Still witnesses a nation bold.

Banda's cry, the people's song,  
"No more shall we wait too long!"  
Black, red, green—the colors fly,  
Beneath Malawi's azure sky.

Six decades past that July dawn, The  
warm heart's freedom carries on.  
Independence, earned with pride—  
Malawi stands with strength inside.

Through years of joy and years of test,  
The spirit of the lake won't rest. Sixty-  
one years of being free, Malawi's  
destiny to see.





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# Mwambo Youth Lead Tree Planting Drive to Fight Climate-Induced Challenges



**Insert: Young people from T/A Mwambo in Zomba district symbolically receiving a tree seedling from an officer from YONECO during the tree planting initiative in the district**

Young people from the area of Traditional change health impacts associated with climate Authority (T/A) Mwambo in Zomba District have change. intensified their efforts to combat environmental degradation through an organized tree-planting initiative, supported by YONECO under the Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges Project.

The initiative, which goes beyond just planting trees, is focused on equipping youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to address pressing environmental issues while empowering them to become agents of change in their communities. The tree-planting campaign is part of broader efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change in the area, including soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and increased health vulnerabilities linked to environmental degradation.

A total of 40 young boys and girls have been actively engaged in the project. These young environmental stewards have received training on conservation practices aimed at restoring degraded landscapes and mitigating the negative health impacts associated with climate change. The Making Communities Resilient to Climate Change-Induced Health Challenges Project is being implemented by YONECO with the support of Foundation S, and is aligned with global Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG13), which focuses on urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



# St Dennis Primary School Learners Inspired to Make Positive Life Choices



Insert: Learners at St. Dennis Primary schools during the information session that was conducted in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Office in Rumphi district.

On 23 June 2025, YONECO, in partnership with Life Concern Organization (LICO) and the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), reached over 570 learners at St. Dennis Primary School in Rumphi, empowering them with information to make informed decisions in life.

Addressing the students, facilitators emphasized the importance of self-belief among girls, encouraging them not to underestimate their abilities.

“Girls must build confidence, work hard, and compete on equal footing with boys. We are here to tell you that you are just as capable, and your future depends on the decisions you make now,” explained one of the officials from Rumphi DSWO.

The learners were also educated on how to identify and report physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, including abuse perpetrated by male peers or even teachers. The facilitators addressed a growing concern over rising cases of delinquency in Rumphi and urged the students to resist negative peer pressure.

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# YONECO Boosts Literacy and Numeracy Skills Among Street-Connected Children in Lilongwe



Insert: Children who were reached with literacy and numeracy skills through Mobile Schools at Divine Touch Youth Organisation in the district.

On 27 June 2025, YONECO reached out to 87 street-connected children through a mobile school session held at Divine Touch Youth, a community-based organization which is located in Mchesi, Lilongwe.

The initiative is part of YONECO’s ongoing efforts to support the educational development of children living and working on the streets.

“Our goal is to create inclusive spaces where every child, regardless of their background, can learn and thrive,” said Jean Zimba, YONECO’s Programme Officer for Lilongwe.

“We believe education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and vulnerability.”

The mobile school, a unique educational platform mounted on a portable unit, enables facilitators to engage children in fun and interactive learning activities. The sessions cover foundational literacy and numeracy, offering children who are often excluded from formal education a chance to acquire basic skills.

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# Community-School Collaboration Boosts BEFIT Progress in Chitipa

Enhanced coordination between school and community members across various schools in Chitipa district has led to significant progress in the implementation of the Building Education Foundations Through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) programme.

There has been a notable reduction in cases of damaged gadgets and a surge in community participation during various activities organized under the programme. Consequently, schools have managed to introduce new community-led initiatives to strengthen the programme's success. Community members and school authorities have collectively managed to enhance school security measures and taken care of the programme equipment.

"As community members, we are now able to contribute some funds towards the wages for security guards to ensure the safety of BEFIT devices and infrastructure," explained Seko Kabaghe, one of the community members from around Chipitu Primary School.

In addition, best practices are increasingly being adopted across schools to protect equipment and enhance learning outcomes.



**Insert: Members of the community around Dam primary school in Chitipa district supporting in the management of tablet learning.**

District education authorities have also revealed that primary schools that previously lagged in community support, such as Mibanga, Kapyera, Dam, Kaseye, and Chipitu, have caught up with the other schools.

The collaborative efforts between school leadership and community members continue to highlight the importance of shared responsibility in advancing education through technology.

BEFIT is a government of Malawi-owned and led programme aimed at enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among learners in standards 1 to 4 across all public primary schools in Malawi through supplemental, individualized, self-paced instruction delivered via specialized apps on Android tablets.



# Role of Early Childhood Development in Sustainable Development



Insert: Learners at one of the DICs captured here during a play and learn session.

The Government of Malawi acknowledges the significance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and promotes access to a minimum of 12 years of formal education for all citizens. In a bid to compliment Malawi government’s efforts towards sustainable national development, YONECO has ECD Programmes in 16 districts across country.

Quality early childhood education lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning, growth, and development. By denying children access to education, we risk perpetuating inequalities. Heartrendingly, children from underprivileged backgrounds often fall behind their peers and this exacerbates the existing socioeconomic inequalities.

There are also a number of key challenges that emanate from a society’s failure to provide early childhood education.

Firstly, stifling human potential is another risk that comes when children are not being offered quality early childhood education as it helps them to develop essential skills like cognitive abilities, and social-emotional intelligence. Without it, children may struggle to reach their potential.

Secondly, undermining economic growth is also another big risk that comes along when the young ones are denied the necessary early education. A well-educated workforce is crucial for sustainable socioeconomic growth of a society.

On a third note, a society risks limiting social mobility when early childhood education is not properly prioritized. Early childhood education helps to break the cycles of poverty and promote social mobility. Without this, disadvantaged children may face greater challenges in escaping poverty.

To promote peaceful and prosperous societies, governments, policymakers, and stakeholders must prioritize quality Early Childhood Development (ECD). By investing in early childhood education, we can empower children, families, and communities, ultimately building a more equitable, prosperous, and peaceful world.

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# Impact of BEFIT Programme Through the Lens of Elube Gondwe



**Insert: Elube Gondwe is very appreciative of the program and encourages fellow parents to support the program.**

Elube Gondwe, from Chikakula village in Rumphi, is a member of the Mother Group for Chivwanyuma Primary School. The 34-year-old mother of four actively supports the implementation of Building Educational Foundations Through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) Programme at the school.

As a member of Mother Group, Elube actively supports the processes of ensuring that all learners, especially girls, are equally benefiting from the initiative. Elube, who is fondly called 'amama' (mother) by the learners, frequently visit the school to monitor the tablet-learning sessions and interact with girls during break times or after classes.

Elube expresses her gratitude for the BEFIT programme, which she says is greatly assisting learners in acquiring admirable reading, writing, and numeracy skills.

Three of Elube's four children, who are in Standards 1, 2, and 4 at the school, are among those benefiting from the programme as well. 'Amama' explains that she has noted a significant difference between learners

currently in foundational classes under the BEFIT Programme and those who completed the same classes before the programme began in 2023.

Elube notes that the students in the tablet-learning generation are more engaged and show a better understanding of literacy and numerical concepts as compared to the previous cohorts.

"I would like to encourage all parents, particularly those with children in Standards 1 to 4, to support their participation in the BEFIT Programme's tablet learning sessions. My own children have greatly benefited from this initiative, and I believe that others can as well," remarks Elube Gondwe.

BEFIT is a Government of Malawi-owned and led programme aimed at enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among learners in Standards 1 to 4 across all public primary schools in Malawi through supplemental, individualized, self-paced instruction delivered via specialized apps on Android tablets.





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# YONECO Supports Final Round of Drought Relief Cash Transfers in Chikwawa



**Insert: YONECO Field Officer for Chikwawa Sajdah Bunaya posing with some of the beneficiaries under the Malawi Drought Response Project.**

YONECO participated in the third and final round of cash transfers that was facilitated by Eagles Relief in Chikwawa district under the Malawi Drought Response Project, which is funded by ECHO through CARE Malawi.

The initiative aims to provide critical support to vulnerable groups, particularly the elderly, expectant mothers, and lactating women, who have been severely affected by the ongoing drought in eight districts across the southern region of Malawi.

The final distribution exercise took place across several targeted communities, particularly villages under Traditional Authorities (T/As) Masanche and Ngowe in the district.

A total of 1,600 beneficiaries were reached during the final phase, with each recipient receiving MWK 92,500. This support is intended to enhance household food security and enable recipients to invest in small-scale income-generating activities.

During the exercise, one of the beneficiaries expressed deep appreciation for the assistance, stating that the initiative has significantly improved their well-being by enabling them to buy food and venture into small scale businesses to support their families.

Other targeted districts are Thyolo, Blantyre, Balaka, Mangochi, Chikwawa, Zomba, and Machinga.



# Trained Coaches Receive Sports Equipment Under Peace-building Initiative



**Insert: The facilitators that were trained under UN Women and the UN Women and Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) receiving the sports equipment in Machinga district**

YONECO, with support from UN Women and the UN Women and Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) donated sports equipment and materials to five coaches which the organization trained to promote peace using sports in Phalombe and Machinga districts.

The items that were donated include footballs, netballs, cones, and training bibs.

The distributed materials marked a key milestone in an ongoing initiative which is aimed at increasing women's participation in conflict prevention in the targeted districts. The handover ceremony was presided over by district council officials and traditional leaders.

In their remarks, officials from the district council hailed the project for using sports as a tool for uniting communities and promoting positive behavioural change among young people.

TA Mizinga urged the newly trained coaches to make full use of the equipment to promote peace, dialogue, and inclusion. He highlighted the role of sports in raising awareness on gender-based violence (GBV) and encouraging community engagement on critical social issues.

The coaches who are now equipped with both skills and tools, are expected to lead sports sessions within their communities. These sports activities will serve as recreational outlets as well platforms for promoting peace, gender equality, and education on the dangers of GBV.

The items were donated under Sustaining Community Women Movement for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Response Project which is being funded by UN Women and WPHF.

# Tithandizane Helpline Counsellors Lead GBV Awareness Session at Sparkle Foundation



Insert: YONECO officers engaging with care givers during the community awareness session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at the Sparkle Foundation in Zomba.

On 10 June, 2025, YONECO, through the Tithandizane Helpline Services, conducted a community awareness session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) at the Sparkle Foundation in Zomba.

The session aimed to shed light on the harsh realities of GBV, while emphasizing its devastating economic and social consequences at various levels.

Participants were informed about available reporting mechanisms and encouraged to utilize these channels to seek help and support. The event sought to empower community members with knowledge and tools to combat GBV and promote safer environments for all.

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.





# YONECO Trains Teachers to Tackle Mental Health Challenges in Schools



**Insert: Learners captured here in a classroom setting who are part of the vulnerable groups to mental health challenges.**

In a bid to strengthen mental health support for school-aged children, YONECO conducted a specialized training session for teachers, aimed at equipping them with skills to identify and address mental health issues among learners.

The training brought together educators from various schools and focused on practical strategies for early detection, raising awareness, and fostering a safe and supportive learning environment for students experiencing emotional or psychological distress.

Speaking during the session, YONECO facilitators emphasized the crucial role teachers play in a learner's well-being.

"Teachers are often the first to notice changes in behavior, mood, or academic performance, which can be early signs of mental health challenges.

With the right training, they can intervene or refer students for help before issues escalate," explained one of the facilitators, Mary Chimanya.

Participants were introduced to common indicators of mental health problems among children and adolescents, including anxiety, depression, trauma, and behavioral disorders. The training also addressed how to engage with affected learners compassionately and how to link them to professional support services.

Educators welcomed the initiative, noting that the training filled a critical gap in their capacity to support students beyond academics.

"We often encounter learners who are clearly struggling emotionally, but we haven't always known how to help. This training has empowered us to respond better," said one teacher, Regina Malango.

# YONECO ED Condemns Neglect of Children's Welfare in National Budget



Insert: YONECO Executive Director pictured here making a presentation at the CSO side event at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe ahead of the commemoration of Day of the African Child.

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, voiced serious concerns about the ongoing neglect of children's welfare in Malawi's national planning and budgeting processes.

Speaking at a Civil Society Organisations (CSO) side event that was held on 15 June, 2025 at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe, Mkandawire responded to a recent budget analysis revealing that the government allocates only two cents per child in the country. He described this minimal funding as a stark reflection of the low priority given to children's rights and welfare at the national level.

"This allocation is simply unacceptable and it highlights the urgent need for policy reforms and a substantial increase in investment toward programmes that directly benefit children," explained MacBain Mkandawire.

He urged policymakers to recognize the critical importance of investing in children's development to secure Malawi's future and called for immediate action to redress the imbalance in funding.



# YONECO Hosts iMind for Mental Health Knowledge-Sharing and Organizational Growth



Insert: YONECO Executive Director MacBain Mkandawire posing for a group photo with iMind entourage at YONECO Head Office in Zomba.

On Monday, 9th June 2025, YONECO hosted a team from iMind, a youth-led non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting good mental health among young people in Malawi.

The team, which was led by Mercy Mkandawire, the organizations Executive Director highlighted the work it is doing in mental health and requested to learn more from YONECO.

In his presentation, the Executive Director of #YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, highlighted key points in building an organization to become a powerhouse, which among other things include, planning, accepting mistakes, integrity, transparency, discipline and the willingness to learn and grow.

Quoting Stephen Covey’s Quadrant of Time Management Matrix, Mkandawire emphasized the need for prioritizing tasks based on their urgency and importance, highlighting how this helps individuals to focus on activities that contribute to their growth and avoid distractions.

MacBain Mkandawire concluded by wishing the team well and emphasizing that 'it is not easy, but it is possible'.

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# US Deputy Ambassador Engages YONECO on Youth Empowerment and Development



Insert: Andrew Winkelman, the US Embassy Political and Economic Counselor who is also the Deputy US Ambassador to Malawi, with YONECO Executive Director, MacBain Mkandawire and YONECO staff during the visit at YONECO head office in Zomba.

On 3 June, 2025 Andrew Winkelman, the US Embassy Political and Economic Counselor who is also the Deputy US Ambassador to Malawi, visited the YONECO Head Office in Zomba.

The meeting also discussed how the high rates of unemployment among the youth are negatively contributing to increased cases of corruption as well as drug and substance abuse among other things.

Top on the agenda was for the Deputy Ambassador to understand YONECO's perspective on youth in relation to the political and economic situation in the country.

The two parties discussed how the youth can be agents of change rather than being used as hooligans, and the need to empower them to refrain from being exploited by greedy politicians for their personal gain.





# Malawi Hosts Continental Commemoration for Day of the African Child



**Insert: Stakeholders in the child protection space pose for a group photo after the 2 Day meeting in Lilongwe,**

On 16 June, 2025, Malawi hosted the continental commemoration of the Day of the African Child at the Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe. The high-profile event drew over 800 participants, including children, government officials, child rights activists, development partners, and representatives of civil society from across Africa.

This year's celebration is themed "Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress Since 2010," focusing on the strides made and the challenges that remain in promoting child rights and welfare through effective planning and resource allocation.

Malawi's Vice President, Dr. Michael Biswick Usi, presided over the event, underscoring the country's commitment to advancing children's rights and improving their access to quality services and protection.

The Day of the African Child is commemorated annually on June 16 and serves as a powerful reminder of the struggles faced by children across the continent. The day was established by the African Union in 1991 to honor the memory of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, where thousands of Black South African students courageously protested against apartheid-era education policies.

This year's gathering in Lilongwe not only celebrated past progress but also served as a platform for dialogue and advocacy on how African nations can better prioritize children's needs in national development agendas.

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# YONECO Organizes Planning and Review Meeting for SP-GEAR Project



**Insert: SP- GEAR Project team from various implementation districts under YONECO sharing insights during the planning and review meeting in Liwonde, Machinga district.**

From 16 to 18 June 2025, YONECO organised a three-day review and planning meeting with district staff from Chikwawa, Mulanje, Ntcheu, and Nsanje. The session aimed to assess the progress of the Social Protection for Gender Empowerment and Resilience (SP-GEAR) project, focusing on its journey from inception to date.

The beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), who are also SLG members, have been supported in establishing individual and group businesses as a means of investing in their financial independence. The long-term goal is to transform these businesses into community-based cooperatives by 2026.

During the meeting, district teams presented their planned activities, achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and made recommendations based on their experiences over the period.

As the project enters its third phase, there is a focus on tracking the changes that households are experiencing since the establishment of the SLGs.

The SP-GEAR project, launched in April 2024, is a three-year initiative funded by UNICEF, the European Union, and the Government of Ireland. The project aims to empower women and girls through social protection and economic resilience programmes, targeting nine districts, including Chikwawa, Mulanje, Ntcheu, and Nsanje.

Members of staff, including Savings and Loans Group (SLG) officers, District Managers, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officers, participated in the sessions.

**TITHANDIZANE  
NATIONAL HELPLINE  
SERVICES**

**OTHER SERVICES**

- ✓ Telephone Counselling.
- ✓ Face to Face counselling.
- ✓ Social Rehabilitation.



# YONECO Joins Regional Dialogue on Feminist Funding Amid Rising Threats to Women's Rights in Africa



**Insert: Stakeholders during a panel discussion at the regional dialogue on feminist funding for women's movements in East and Southern Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa**

YONECO attended the regional dialogue on feminist funding for women's movements in East and Southern Africa, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 16th to 20th June 2025. Key items on the agenda included discussions on strengthening financing for women's rights organizations amidst ongoing pushbacks against efforts to achieve gender equality.

Speaking to representatives during the dialogue, Hon. Sindisiwe Chikunga, who served as the Minister for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities in South Africa, stated that the ongoing defunding of women's organizations represented one of the greatest dangers to the progress achieved since 1995 in the fight against violence against women and girls.

"Women's rights are under siege. The poison of patriarchy is back, and it is back with a vengeance: slamming the brakes on action,

tearing up progress, and mutating into new and dangerous forms," she lamented.

She further described the dialogue as an opportunity to refine the narrative and contribute to transformative initiatives that explored ways to source funds for women's movements and groups.

The dialogue was organized by UN Women and the European Commission under the Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action to End Violence against Women (ACT) programme.





# YONECO Executive Director Participates in Regional Consultation on Online Harms



**Insert: A cross-sectional view of participants during the Training and Consultation on Online Harms in Livingstone, Zambia.**

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, was among key participants at the Voice Up Online: Training and Consultation on Online Harms, held on 23rd June 2025 in Livingstone, Zambia.

The high-level event was convened by Child Helpline International in collaboration with UNICEF and the Global Cybersecurity Forum, bringing together regional child protection experts and frontline practitioners to address the growing challenges facing children in the digital space.

The consultation aimed to shape a comprehensive Training of Trainers manual designed to equip stakeholders with practical tools and strategies to combat cyberbullying, online child sexual exploitation, harmful online content, and the mental health impacts of digital engagement on children and young people.

Speaking during the event, participants emphasized on the urgent need for coordinated action and community-level awareness to protect children in increasingly digital environments.

The outcomes of the consultation are expected to inform capacity-building efforts across Africa and contribute to a safer online space for children everywhere.





# YONECO Hosts U.S. Chief of Mission in Zomba



Insert: U.S. Chief of Mission to Malawi, Chargé d’Affaires Amy W. Diaz together with the YONECO Vice Board Chairperson, Dr. Immaculate Chamangwana, & the M&E Manager, Daniel Chikatentha.



Ms. Diaz also toured key departments at the organization, including the ICT Centre, Tithandizane Helpline Services, and YONECO FM studios. As part of her visit, she interacted with women from various community parenting circles established by YONECO around the Chinamwali Trading Centre in Zomba.

YONECO expressed gratitude for the recognition and support of its mission and vision, reaffirming its commitment to advancing the rights and welfare of vulnerable groups in Malawi.

Zomba, 23 June 2025, YONECO, was honoured to host the U.S. Chief of Mission to Malawi, Chargé d’Affaires Amy W. Diaz, at its Head Office in Zomba.

During the visit, Ms. Diaz held a productive engagement meeting with YONECO’s programmes team, led by the organization’s Vice Board Chairperson, Dr. Immaculate Chamangwana. The discussions focused on YONECO’s ongoing efforts to support youth, women, and children across Malawi.





# Malawi Commemorates World Day Against Child Labour in Machinga



**Insert: Minister of Labour, Honourable Peter Dimba, MP presiding over the commemoration in Machinga district.**

On 12 June 2025, Malawi commemorated the World Day Against Child Labour with a national event held in Traditional Authority (TA) Mposa, Machinga, drawing together stakeholders from the agriculture and development sectors in a united stand against child exploitation.

The Minister of Labour, Honourable Peter Dimba, MP, presided over the function as the guest of honour. As part of the activities, the Minister toured several exhibition pavilions, including one hosted by Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), a leading organization in child protection and advocacy.

At the YONECO stand, the organization showcased a number of its initiatives designed to combat child labour. These included the Tithandizane National Helpline (reachable via the 116-child helpline),

YONECO FM as an advocacy tool, and a range of community outreach and communication campaigns aimed at raising awareness and supporting vulnerable children.

In his speech, Minister Dimba praised YONECO for its tireless work in promoting child rights.

“In Malawi, when people hear the term ‘child abuse,’ they think of YONECO; not because the organization causes it, but because it has become synonymous with the fight against it,” he remarked.

The event was broadcast live on YONECO FM, with coverage led by the station’s child presenters, giving young voices a prominent platform in the national dialogue on child labour.



# YONECO Supports Key Stakeholder Meeting to Review SP-GEAR Progress in Nsanje



Insert: District Manager for YONECO in Nsanje, Jaqueline Holla making her remarks during the stakeholders review meeting in the district.

On 27 June 2025, the YONECO office in Nsanje supported a District Social Support Committee meeting to review the progress of the SP-GEAR project, an initiative designed to empower women, girls, and marginalized groups in Nsanje.

The meeting served as a platform for engaging various social protection sectors to reflect on their experiences in implementing project activities. Discussions revolved around various aspects of the project since its inception in 2024, including its progress, successes, challenges, lessons learned, and identified opportunities. These updates were shared through presentations.

One of the key highlights of the discussions was the positive reception of the Savings and Loans Groups (SLG) component among

the beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP). The committee acknowledged the impact of the initiative, emphasising its role in enhancing financial resilience within communities.

The meeting brought together 35 participants, representing various sectors, including the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), YONECO, and the District Community Development Office (DCDO), among others.

The meeting is expected to further enhance collaboration among the partners and stakeholders, which is critical to ensuring the successful implementation of the project.





# YONECO Head Office Hosts CIFF and GNB Malawi Delegation



**Insert: YONECO board members together with the visiting team at one of the communities that was visited to appreciate child protection initiatives in Zomba district.**

On 20 June, 2025, YONECO hosted a delegation from the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the Girls Not Brides (GNB) Malawi showcasing its comprehensive child protection and youth development initiatives.

The delegation toured YONECO’s facilities in Zomba, where they were introduced to several key departments including the Tithandizane National Helpline, the ICT Department, and YONECO FM. The tour highlighted the organization’s multi-pronged approach to supporting children, youth, and vulnerable communities.

As part of the visit, the CIFF team was taken to Traditional Authority (TA) Mwambo, Group Village Head (GVH) Kimu, where YONECO has been actively engaging local leaders and community stakeholders.

One of the standout successes shared with the visitors was the reintegration of several teenage girls into the formal school system.

The visit was concluded with a vibrant cultural performance by the YONECO Cultural Troupe, featuring traditional dance and an educational play that addressed key social issues. The engaging performance left the guests inspired and offered a lively close to a day of meaningful exchange.

CIFF representatives expressed appreciation for YONECO’s grassroots impact and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting initiatives that advance child rights and development across Malawi.





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# YONECO Conducts Food and Nutrition Awareness Session for Women in Zomba

Insert below: Tithandizane Helpline Services field officer engaging with the women during the awareness session in Zomba district.

In an effort to improve the health and wellbeing of community members, YONECO conducted a Food and Nutrition awareness session at Njonjo Village in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Malemia in Zomba district.

A total of 21 women attended the session that was particularly aimed at promoting the nutritional health of children, expectant women, and lactating mothers.

The session facilitators addressed a widespread misconception among many people in Malawi that only the wealthy can afford to have balanced meals. The awareness session was designed to empower women with practical knowledge on how to maintain a healthy diet for their families using locally available and affordable foods.

Another key focus area of the session was the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) for infants during the first six months a practice often overlooked due to cultural misconceptions and external pressures from different community groups. The facilitators emphasized that EBF is critical for the child's development and immunity.







# Tithandizane National Helpline Services

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Helpline  
116**

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