



YONECO VOICE

Monthly Newsletter

November 2025

Issue 11

Volume 12



Inside

YONECO Empowers Peer Educators to Promote SRHR Through Digital Platforms

PAGE 7

YONECO, Chikwawa Council Facilitate Learning Visit for SLGs

PAGE 14

YONECO Joins SADC Stakeholders to Bridge Research and Impact on GBV

PAGE 19

Contents

Tithandizane Helpline Counsellors Engage Youth on Mental Health Awareness.....5

YONECO Empowers Assalam Girls Secondary School Students to Speak Out Against GBV.....6

YONECO Empowers Peer Educators to Promote SRHR Through Digital Platforms.....7

YONECO Inspires Youth in Mangochi to Make Healthier Choices.....8

Naching'anda Primary School Learners Sensitized on Digital Learning.....10

Chitipa Education Officials Monitor Tablet-Enabled Learning in Schools.....11

YONECO Promotes Positive Behaviour Among Learners in Mangochi.....12

YONECO, Chikwawa Council Facilitate Learning Visit for SLGs.....14

YONECO Engages Bicycle Taxi Operators in GBV Prevention Campaign.....15

YONECO Raises Awareness on GBV and Sexual Reproductive Health in Machinga.....16

Empowering Girls in Border Towns.....17

Chikwawa, Nsanje DECs Endorse FCDO-Funded Climate Resilience Project.....18

YONECO Joins SADC Stakeholders to Bridge Research and Impact on GBV.....19

YONECO Champions Mental Health Awareness at Luntha Private Secondary School.....21

YONECO Engages Students on Promoting Quality and Rights-Based Health Service Delivery.....22

Production Team

Layout and Design
Wilson Mkandawire

Contributors

- Chancy Kumwenda
- Mackson Mhango
- Grant Dulla
- Japhet Njikho
- Ketson Mulebe
- Evanca Keyala
- Vanessa Cheyo
- Sangwani Kasonda
- Kephas Phiri
- Mbanandi Mahala
- Raphael Dallion
- Dickson Mbetewa

Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager
Daniel Chikatentha

Executive Director
MacBain Mkandawire

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



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...



with MacBain Mkandawire

Dear Readers,

Graduating from lack of a value system and failure to live values is the biggest problem that we have as a people of Malawi. Values and principles are cornerstones to living a successful life. Recent election results have shown us that whether you are a politician, business person, civil society leader or traditional leader, our value system needs to be re-evaluated and realigned. We saw many changes and reactions to the results including immediate abandonment of the ship we had boarded for the last 6 years. We have seen confessions and acknowledgement that things were not fine and we needed to have done better. But honestly, are we saying this with sincerity or it's one of the languages we need to communicate to be seen to contribute to the nation. In fact, if Malawi had a value system, our political and civil society leaders should have resigned and those elected to Parliament should have paved the way after cheating the former president that everything was fine. But here we are, they are being sworn in without any remorse. How we wished Section 64 of the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi was re-instated and we could have mobilized the citizens to demand the recall of the leaders who misled the former president and were giving lies and false hopes. However, we say Bravo to Malawians for being decisive on 16 September 2025. It should be noted that it's very difficult to build a value based system in a toxic environment.

We are starting November 2025 very committed to prevent abuse and violence for 19 Days from November 1, 2025. However, this comes after a successful 2025 ISPCAN conference in Lithuania. We noted from the policy forum the many policy directions provided to the various social structures in the systems. However, as a country we are lagging behind on the development of the systems. We have beautiful laws but very limited implementation processes. Children continue to be abused and not supported. What strikes most is the hypocrisy from actors, both government and non-governmental. One is not sure whether we want to deal with the situations or it is one of those duties that we have to perform as long as we are in employment. There are times when you revisit the activities and question why we are doing the activity. One is inclined to call for projects results audit. We even go to a level of a "DRY RUN" when our partners and donors are coming. Why should we prepare the communities if we claim we are doing the right things? While this is happening with funds not being channeled properly, children continue to be abused and justice denied. We have children in our police cells and on a daily basis an average of 15 children in YONECO's operational districts meaning that more children are getting in conflict with the law. This means that there is something amiss and we have no deliberate programme to address the matters of crime prevention. We may also need to reflect on the parenting systems and structures as well.

The Second Summit on Social Development convenes in Doha, Qatar from November 4-6, 2025 under the theme "Accelerating Action on Poverty Eradication, Full Employment and Decent Work,

Executive Director's Note...

with MacBain Mkandawire



and Social Inclusion." The first summit happened some 30 years ago and this second summit will assess the progress made towards social development. Obviously, the summit means a lot for Malawi which has the majority of the population living in abject poverty and the recent announcement of 4.5 millions Malawi that are food insecure (MVAC Report 2025). As we review this MVAC report, we need to seriously revisit the Accountability to the Affected Populations and in particular how these resources are being used. What safeguards are in place to ensure Accountability. Our most recent engagement with AAP showed that there is a lot of pilferage of the resources and some beneficiaries do not get what is provided for in the planning. Progress on social development won't be seen if there are no effective mechanisms to support the prevention of abuse of power in the Humanitarian system. IASC guidelines are clear on accountability to affected populations but the reality shows that we usually do cosmetic approaches to be seen to be doing something. Accountability to the Affected Populations and PSEA systems must be independent of the implementing partners. Humanitarian aid workers need to have independent systems that will not be compromised if social development is to make sense. Humanitarian aid and its aid system comes with so many other challenges as we move forward. Effective safeguards are therefore important.

We are ending this note with the 16 Days of Activism from 25 November 2025. One thing we need to reflect on is what we are going to do differently. We seem to be too busy commemorating and forgetting that we have the real business of preventing GBV. Can we translate the investments in these commemorations into actions that would reduce the suffering of the survivors of GBV and introduce meaningful solutions. Can we begin to answer the questions of root causes of vulnerabilities and address them. It's high time that we address these aspects and make progress. Malawi has good laws which continue to haunt us at implementation level.

Have a wonderful November 2025.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

By
Wilson Mkandawire

October first, we give a cheer,
For elders who've seen every year.
They carry wisdom, clear and bright,
Our guiding stars in day and night.
We thank them for the paths they made,
The stories shared, the love displayed.

Then comes the second, a simple stand,
For peace across the land.
It's No Violence Day, we choose to pause,
And live by gentler, kinder laws.
No need for fights, no angry sound,
Just peace for everyone around.

The tenth day tells us all to care,
For thoughts we think and feelings there.
It's Mental Health Day, so let's be kind,
To all the struggles in the mind.
It's okay to talk, it's okay to seek,
A little strength when you feel weak.

So let's join these three days as one,
The best is yet to begun.
Be kind to older folks, be calm and true,
And treat your mind with kindness, too.
With wisdom, peace, and health we grow,
The best way we know how to go.





*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



INTERN PROFILES



Loyce Bauleni

Loyce Bauleni is an intern at YONECO office in Chikwawa, where she supports case management and community awareness on SRHR, GBV prevention, mental health, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) activities. Loyce also facilitates children’s play sessions and contributes to community mobilization and programme reporting. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work at the Catholic University of Malawi. Loyce strongly believes that “small acts of support can create big changes in someone’s life.”



Christina Matias

Christina Matias is a Social Work student at the Catholic University of Malawi who is working with YONECO as a Programmes Intern stationed in Chikwawa. In this role, Christina supports case management and community awareness sessions on child rights, GBV prevention, and promoting mental health. With her bachelor’s degree, she is passionate about inclusion, equality, and empowering vulnerable groups.



Maria Mwayi

Maria Mwayi is a passionate advocate for nutrition, food security, and sustainable development. She is currently interning at YONECO, where she supports community sessions on climate change, nutrition, mental health, and financial literacy, as well as child protection and data management. Maria holds a Diploma in Nutrition, Food Security, and Sustainable Development from Mubarak Complex College. Maria is dedicated to using her skills to promote community well-being and sustainable change.



Timothy Nkhoma

Timothy Nkhoma is a Social Work intern with YONECO at the organisation’s office in Chikwawa. Timothy is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work at the Catholic University of Malawi. Timothy has over five years of experience in nursing and clinical research. In his role, Timothy supports the promotion of young people’s sexual and reproductive health, case management, and social protection activities.



Insert: The interns from various universities across Malawi and have joined YONECO in Ntcheu district as part of their attachments. Profiles below:

Golden Maphitcha is a third-year Social Work student at the University of Malawi (UNIMA), supporting GBV prevention, human rights, and role modelling sessions.

Purity Lungu is a Social Work and Development Studies student at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA). As a programmes intern, Purity will be supporting community empowerment and social protection interventions.

Loveness Beston is a fourth-year student at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) studying Social Work and Community Development. His tasks with YONECO are mainly focusing on youth empowerment and child protection.

Trinity Frackson is a student at the Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) studying Early Childhood Development (ECD). In her role as a programmes Intern, Trinity is involved in child protection and development activities as well as parenting interventions.

Timothy Dzantenge is a student at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) pursuing a degree in Social Work and Development Studies. Timothy as joined our programmes team focusing on social protection and youth empowerment interventions.

Annie Maulana is a student at the Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) where she is studying Early Childhood Development (ECD). As a programmes Intern, Annie is responsible for supporting child protection and development interventions.

Lenia Samuel is a student at the Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) where she is studying Early Childhood Development (ECD). Lenia is involved in supporting child protection and development activities.

Hawa Chikalusa is a student at the Malawi Assemblies of God University (MAGU) studying Early Childhood Development (ECD). In her role as a programmes Intern, Hawa is involved in child protection and development activities as well as parenting interventions.

Usman D. Innocent is a student at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) where he is pursuing a degree in Social Work. Usman is responsible for supporting case management, counselling, and community outreach activities.

Tithandizane Helpline Counselors Engage Youth on Mental Health Awareness at Zomba Central Hospital



Insert: Tithandizane helpline Field Officer captured here engaging with some of the youth during the awareness session.

Counsellors from the Tithandizane Helpline Services of YONECO held a mental health awareness session with young people at the Zomba Central Hospital's Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) Corner.

During the discussion, the young people identified academic pressure, family conflicts, relationship challenges, and unemployment as some of the leading factors contributing to mental health issues among the youth.

The session focused on helping participants understand mental health and learn practical coping mechanisms for managing stress and anxiety.

Facilitators also shared information on where young people can access mental health support, including the Tithandizane National Helpline Services, where they can seek assistance either by visiting as walk-in clients or by calling the department's toll-free numbers.

In total, the session reached 33 participants, of whom 18 were boys and 15 were girls.



YONECO Empowers Assalam Girls Secondary School Students to Speak Out Against GBV



Insert: Students that were part of the GBV session listening to a presentation from one of the field officers.

Over 160 students at Assalam Girls Secondary School in Zomba District took part in an interactive Gender-Based Violence (GBV) awareness session organized by the Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), aimed at empowering young girls with knowledge and courage to combat GBV in their communities.

The session, held at the school campus, focused on equipping students with an understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence, its different forms, and its impact on individuals and society. Facilitators guided lively discussions on how GBV manifests in everyday life and the importance of recognizing early warning signs.

Participants were also urged to challenge the culture of silence that often surrounds GBV. The facilitators emphasized the importance of

reporting cases, supporting victims, and creating safe spaces within schools and communities.

“This session has opened my eyes. I’ve learned that even small things we ignore, like verbal abuse or controlling behavior, are forms of GBV. Now I know that keeping quiet only protects the abuser, not the victim.” said Memory Phiri, a Form 3 student.

YONECO officers encouraged the girls to be champions of change by standing up for their rights and those of their peers. The organization reaffirmed its commitment to continue reaching out to schools and communities to promote gender equality and eliminate all forms of violence.

YONECO Empowers Peer Educators to Promote SRHR Through Digital Platforms



Insert: Some of the peer educators who took part in the digital skills training in Dedza district posing for a group photo.

YONECO has concluded an orientation session for Peer Educators in Dedza District, equipping them with digital skills to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) among young people in their communities.

The training focused on helping the youth create and manage online groups, channels, and forums across various digital platforms as a way of sharing SRHR information responsibly and effectively.

The session brought together Peer Educators from the areas of Traditional Authorities (T/As) Kaphuka, Chilikumwendo, and Kachere. A similar exercise was also carried out in Mchinji District, reaching Peer Educators from T/A Zulu, Mduwa, Mkanda, Mulonyeni, and Mavwere.

The orientation is among the activities which YONECO is implementing under the Addressing Challenges to Adolescent Girls' Empowerment

through Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (ACE) Project, which is being funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and UNFPA.

Speaking after the session, Peer Educator Gift Njazi from T/A Kaphuka expressed appreciation for the training, saying it had opened their eyes to new ways of reaching young people.

“We have been technically empowered on how to use digital platforms ethically and effectively to share SRHR information with our peers,” Njazi said.

As part of the exercise, the participants developed work plans outlining how they intend to use social media to raise awareness, encourage dialogue, and promote positive health behaviors among youth in their respective areas.

YONECO Inspires Youth in Mangochi to Make Healthier Choices



Insert: Field Officers captured here engaging some of the young people during the awareness in Mangochi district.

YONECO stepped up its community outreach efforts by engaging young people around Mwanyama Village in Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda through health awareness sessions aimed at promoting responsible health practices.

The sessions focused on the importance of timely seeking medical help, understanding one's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and breaking the stigma that still surrounds such conversations in many communities.

Facilitators encouraged the youth to go for regular health check-ups, practice safe sex, and communicate openly with their partners. Additionally, the participants were also urged community members to seek help from qualified health workers instead of buying cheap, unprescribed drugs from unlicensed dealers.

"Some people still believe that illnesses like sexually transmitted infections are caused by witchcraft. These myths stop people from getting proper

medical treatment and can make their situation worse," said one participant.

The team also addressed fears that some people had regarding visiting health facilities. The participants were assured that health workers are trained to respect patient confidentiality.

The sessions were hailed by many young people who indicated that the information had changed their perceptions.

"I used to think going to the hospital for STI treatment would make people talk about me," "Now I know health workers are there to help, not to shame anyone," said 21-year-old Thokozani who attended one of the sessions.

Another young participant said, "I've learned that buying medicine from unqualified people is dangerous. From now onwards, I will be clever."

YONECO Balaka Engages 600 Learners in Suicide Prevention



Insert: Learners at Mponda Primary School who were part of the suicide prevention session captured here.

On 2 October, 2025, YONECO conducted a suicide prevention session that was attended by about 600 learners from Mponda Primary School in Mponda village, under Traditional Authority (T/A) Nsamala.

The interactive session aimed to raise awareness about suicide, explore its causes, and educate learners on practical prevention strategies.

During the session, learners actively shared their thoughts, citing poverty, relationship challenges, stress, and lack of support as key factors that can lead to suicide. The YONECO facilitators stressed the importance of having someone to talk to when facing difficulties,

highlighting that open communication and support can be a powerful tool in preventing self-harm.

YONECO also promoted its toll-free helpline, ensuring learners and community members have access to confidential support whenever needed.

www.yoneco.org

**TITHANDIZANE
HELPLINE SERVICES**

Seek Support today

<p>CHILD HELPLINE</p> <p>116</p> <p>GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE</p> <p>5600</p> <p>CALL NOW It's FREE!</p>	<p>YOUTH HELPLINE</p> <p>393</p> <p>DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE HOTLINE</p> <p>6600</p>
---	--

Download
Helpline App

Naching’anda Primary School Learners Sensitized on Digital Learning



Insert: Some of the learners who are benefiting from the BEFIT program who were sensitized on effective use and care of the digital learning offered by the program.

YONECO and the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Kaseye Zone, equipped learners at Naching’amba Primary School in Chitipa with essential skills to make the most of their tablet-enabled learning sessions under Building Education Foundations through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) programme.

The session, attended by 233 learners (111 boys and 122 girls), focused on helping the learners understand how to effectively use the tablets to enhance their learning experiences.

During the session, facilitators demonstrated how to operate the tablets and provided guidance on their proper care and use.

In addition, the learners were encouraged to take responsibility for the programme’s success by promptly reporting any incidents of theft or misuse of the gadgets.

The Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Kaseye Zone commended the learners for their eagerness to embrace technology as a tool for enhancing their numeracy and literacy skills.

www.yoneco.org

**TITHANDIZANE
HELPLINE SERVICES**

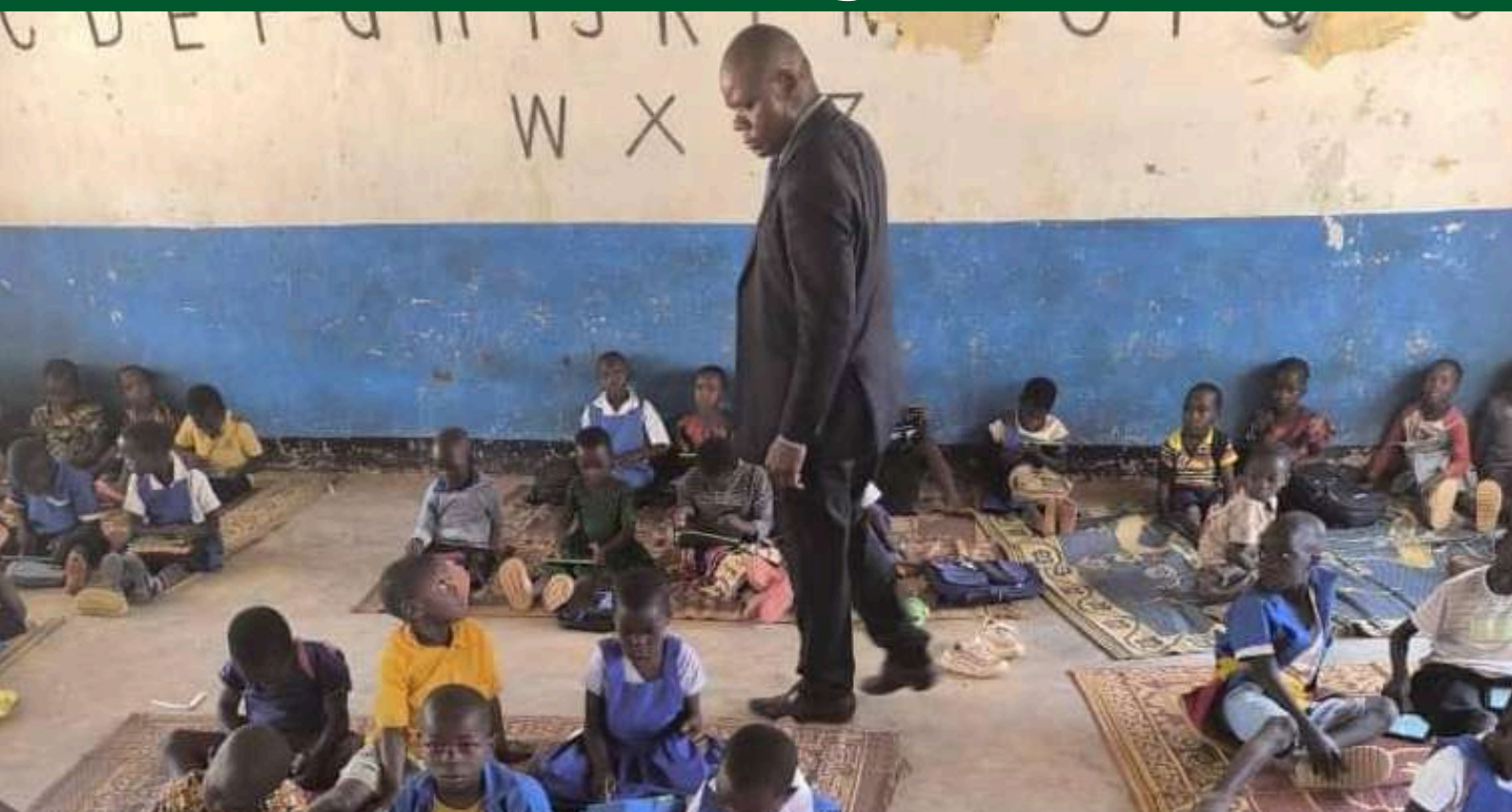
Seek Support today

<p>CHILD HELPLINE 116 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CRISIS LINE 5600</p>	<p>YOUTH HELPLINE 393 DRUG & SUBSTANCE ABUSE HOTLINE 6600</p>
---	--

CALL NOW
It's FREE!

Download
Helpline App

Chitipa Education Officials Monitor Tablet-Enabled Learning in Schools



Insert: The Director of Education and Sports for Chitipa district captured at Muselema Primary School monitoring a tablet session during one of his visits to the schools.

The Director of Education, Youth and Sports (DES) for Chitipa District visited Muselema Primary School to monitor the progress of tablet-enabled learning under the Building Education Foundations Through Innovation and Technology (BEFIT) Programme.

During the visit, the officials interacted with teachers and learners to assess how the digital learning initiative is being implemented. The visit also provided an opportunity for the team to discuss successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in the integration of technology in early-grade education.

The monitoring exercise also involved the Principal Education Officer (PEO), Primary Education Advisor (PEA) and the Zonal Education Management Information Systems Officer (ZEMISO), who jointly observed lessons and gathered feedback from the school community.

Members of the Zonal Implementation Team (ZIT) were also on the ground to provide technical support and ensure smooth coordination of the programme.

The officials commended teachers for their commitment and assured them of continued collaboration to enhance digital learning outcomes for learners in the Chitipa district.

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

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

www.yoneco.org

TITHANDIZANE
HELPLINE SERVICES

Seek Support today

<p>CHILD HELPLINE 116 GENDER BASED</p>	<p>YOUTH HELPLINE 393 DRUG & SUBSTANCE</p>
--	--

YONECO Promotes Positive Behaviour Among Learners in Mangochi



Insert: One of the field officers engaging with the learners who participated in the life skills session.

On 14 October 2025, a total of 157 learners from St. Augustine 2 Primary School in Mangochi participated in a life skills session organized by YONECO aimed at promoting positive behaviour among students.

Teachers commended the initiative, noting that it reinforced the life values they continue to nurture in their classrooms.

The session targeted learners in Standards Six and Seven and was supported by four teachers from the school. Facilitators guided the pupils through discussions on goal setting, discipline, and making positive life choices.

Tifhandizane National Helpline Services

- Youth Helpline**
CALL **393**
For FREE
Smart choices for young people
- Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline**
CALL **6600**
For FREE
to seek support on drug & substance abuse
- Child Helpline**
CALL **116**
For FREE
to report any form of Child Abuse
- GBV Crisis Line**
CALL **5600**
For FREE
to report any form of Gender Based Violence

Other Services
Free & Confidential

Telephonic Counseling
Free to Peer Counseling
Social Rehabilitation
Case Management
Safe Places for survivors of GBV and VAWC.

Emails:
drug@yoneco.org
help@tifhandizanehelpline.org
gbv@yoneco.org
www.tifhandizanehelpline.org

Visit our website www.yoneco.org



Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Trócaire



116
CHILD
HELPLINE



5600
GBV CRISIS
LINE



393
YOUTH
HELPLINE



6600
DRUG &
SUBSTANCE ABUSE
HOTLINE

**TITHANDIZANE
NATIONAL HELPLINE
SERVICES**



Free and confidential services

Email: drug@yoneco.org | help@tithandizanehelpline.org
gbv@yoneco.org | Visit www.tithandizanehelpline.org for more.

OTHER SERVICES

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

www.yoneco.org

YONECO, Chikwawa Council Facilitate Learning Visit for SLGs



Insert: Chikwawa District Council officials together with other partners during one of the learning visits to SLGs under SP-GEAR project in the district.

YONECO, in collaboration with the Chikwawa District Council, organized a learning visit for Savings and Loan Group (SLG) members at Fodya Village in Traditional Authority (T/A) Ngabu's area.

The visit brought together SLG members from the area of (T/A) Katunga and T/A Ngabu to exchange ideas and experiences on strengthening group businesses under the SP-GEAR project. The interaction aimed to inspire innovation and help members work towards achieving their financial aspirations.

During the visit, participants observed that #SLGs in Ngabu are successfully investing in livestock ventures as a way of generating income and improving household livelihoods. Members from Katunga expressed appreciation for the

opportunity, noting that they had learned valuable lessons which they intend to replicate in their own groups to enhance business performance and financial independence.

Both groups commended YONECO and the Chikwawa District Council officials for organizing the visit, describing it as an important step in promoting collaboration and shared learning.

With funding from the European Union in Malawi and Irish Aid through UNICEF Malawi, YONECO continues to provide ongoing technical and operational support to the #SLGs to strengthen their sustainability and impact.

YONECO Engages Bicycle Taxi Operators in GBV Prevention Campaign



Insert: Field officers engaging some of the bicycle taxi operators in GBV prevention sessions in Mulanje district.

YONECO officers in Mulanje have conducted spot awareness sessions with Taxi Bicycle Operators (TBOs) around Mulanje Boma, focusing on the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The sessions aimed to engage one of the most mobile and hard-to-reach groups in the community due to the nature of their work, which involves travelling long distances daily. During the discussions, participants shared their views and experiences on GBV. Some operators expressed concerns about perceived bias in how GBV cases are handled.

The session encouraged participants to become champions of gender equality and positive behavior change within their communities.

Many of the TBOs said the discussions helped them reflect on how their daily interactions can either fuel or prevent violence.

“This session has opened our eyes. We now understand that showing respect to women and girls makes our homes and workplaces safer,” shared another participant.

The awareness campaign concluded with a collective call to action for all community members to unite in the fight against gender-based violence and to ensure that everyone; men, women, and children are free from fear and harm.

YONECO Raises Awareness on GBV and Sexual Reproductive Health in Machinga



Insert: Field Officer for Machinga district engaging with students during the GBV and SRHR awareness sessions at Nkhandwe Secondary School in Machinga district.

On 14 October 2025, YONECO held a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness session at Nkhandwe Secondary School in Machinga district as part of the ongoing efforts to promote the wellbeing of young people.

The session focused on different forms of violence, including physical and verbal abuse, and how such experiences can negatively affect young people's mental health. The students were encouraged to speak out and report any incidents of violence to YONECO offices or through the organization's toll-free helplines.

Facilitators also discussed the importance of practicing safe sex and highlighted the role of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. Students were informed that they can visit YONECO offices to access condoms or seek guidance on other youth-related issues.

Teachers and learners commended the initiative and described it as timely and informative.

Through such engagement sessions, YONECO continues to equip adolescents and young people with knowledge and practical tools to safeguard their health, rights, and overall wellbeing.

Empowering Girls in Border Towns



Insert: Learners at Chitipa Model School who were targeted during the life skills sessions in the district.

YONECO has been conducting life skills sessions at Chitipa Model Primary School with the aim of inspiring girls to stay in school and pursue their dreams.

The sessions emphasized much on the importance of education in unlocking their full potential and creating a brighter future. The discussions also touched on the harsh realities faced by many young girls in border towns, where the temptation to drop out of school and seek employment in neighboring Tanzania is becoming more attractive.

Unfortunately, it has come to light that many of these girls are being exploited by unscrupulous individuals who lure them to Tanzania with false promises of decent job opportunities.

Instead, they find themselves trapped in the forced sex trade within the tourism sector, their dignity and safety compromised. This situation serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of young girls to exploitation and trafficking, despite their efforts to empower them through education.

This highlights the urgent need for increased awareness, support, and protection for these girls to ensure their safety and well-being.

National Helpline Services

- Youth Helpline**
CALL **393**
For FREE
Smart choices for young people
- Drug & Substance Abuse Hotline**
CALL **6600**
For FREE
to seek support on drug & substance abuse
- Child Helpline**
Let the Child Speak!
CALL **116**
For FREE
to report any form of Child Abuse
- GBV Crisis Line**
South East and East Violence
CALL **5600**
For FREE
to report any form of Gender Based Violence

Other Services
Free & Confidential

Telephones Counseling Face to Face counseling Social Rehabilitation Case Management Safe Places for survivors of GBV and SABC.

Emails:
drug@yoneco.org
help@thandzonehelpline.org
gbv@yoneco.org
www.thandzonehelpline.org

Chikwawa, Nsanje DECs Endorse FCDO-Funded Climate Resilience Project

The District Executive Committees (DECs) for Chikwawa and Nsanje have formally endorsed a Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)-funded project aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change on vulnerable households across Chikwawa, Nsanje, and Phalombe districts.

During separate meetings held between 22nd and 24th October, DEC members were briefed about the project, titled Climate Adaptation and Resilience for Communities through the Malawi Humanitarian NGO Consortium Project.

The Consortium partners include Self Help Africa, CARE, Concern Worldwide, YONECO, Eagles Relief, CARD, and CADECOM, each contributing to specific areas such as anticipatory action, resilience building, protection, and accountability.

YONECO's role in the project focuses on ensuring protection and accountability throughout the project period. The efforts will aim to ensure that cash transfers, seed distributions, and other benefits reach intended beneficiaries without misuse.

Capacity-building activities for district and community structures have been scheduled to promote integrity and awareness, while grievances will be addressed through a digitalized Community Feedback Mechanism which is operated by YONECO. Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) assured the DEC members of continued support for the district and its implementing partners, reinforcing the government's commitment to safeguarding communities.

The project seeks to strengthen household resilience, implement anticipatory action and early warning systems, and provide humanitarian assistance during the lean season (November–March).



Project activities will include cash transfers, distribution of climate-resilient seeds, and rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, targeting 31,364 households in Nsanje alone, which will reach an estimated 320,049 people across the three districts. In Nsanje, implementation will cover the Traditional Authorities (T/As) of Mbenje, Ndamera, Malemia, and Ngabu, running from 1 October 2025 to 31st March 2026.

District sector heads commended the consortium for aligning the project's interventions with existing district development priorities, noting its potential to significantly cushion vulnerable households from food insecurity and income shocks while promoting accountability and community participation.

YONECO Joins SADC Stakeholders to Bridge Research and Impact on GBV



Insert: Part of the research panel discussing some of the gaps in sexual violence during the workshop in Cape Town, South Africa.

On 14 October 2025, YONECO participated in the “Bridging Research and Impact” workshop that was organized by Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and GIZ in Cape Town, South Africa.

The convening brought together researchers, policymakers, and frontline organisations from across the SADC region to share how evidence can inform effective responses to gender-based violence (GBV).

The workshop prioritized critical research gaps such as technology-facilitated GBV and school-based prevention programmes, with valuable input on scalable, evidence-based interventions.

For YONECO, this engagement reaffirmed the need to ground our interventions in solid research and evidence.

As we move forward to advance the rights and protection of children, youth, and women, access to up-to-date and relevant evidence is essential for the formulation of impactful programmes and policy shaping.

**393 YOUTH
HELPLINE**

YONECO Commends EU for Supporting CSOs with Equipment Donation



Insert: Representatives from various CSOs posing for a group photo together with the EU Ambassador to Malawi.

YONECO expressed its heartfelt appreciation to the European Union (EU) for its generous donation of assorted equipment to eight Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Malawi, including YONECO.

The equipment, which was previously used by the EU Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM) during the just-ended general elections, was officially handed over during a ceremony that was held in Lilongwe on 14 October, 2025.

Speaking during the event, the EU Ambassador, Daniel Aristi-Gaztelumendi, said the donation is part of the EU's commitment to ensuring that resources sourced locally remain in Malawi and continue contributing to national development.

"By donating the equipment to Malawian CSOs, the EU is making sure that the locally procured materials and equipment stay in Malawi and support the work that organizations do in strengthening governance and development," said Ambassador Aristi-Gaztelumendi.

The Executive Director of YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire, commended EU for the continued partnership and support. Mkandawire highlighted that the donated equipment will go a long way in strengthening YONECO's capacity to implement programmes that promote youth participation, gender equality, child protection and community empowerment.



Insert: Executive Director YONECO during the event in Lilongwe.

YONECO Champions Mental Health Awareness at Luntha Private Secondary School



Insert: Steve Learners at Luntha Private Secondary School in Balaka during the mental health and suicide prevention awareness session.

YONECO Machinga District Office conducted a Mental Health and Suicide Prevention awareness session at Luntha Private Secondary School, equipping students with knowledge and practical skills to manage their mental well-being.

The session focused on helping learners understand the importance of taking care of their mental health and adopting healthy coping mechanisms when faced with challenges. During the discussions, students identified academic pressure, relationship issues, substance abuse, poverty, and the loss of loved ones as some of the main causes of mental health struggles among young people.

Facilitators encouraged the students to speak up and seek support whenever they feel overwhelmed. They were also introduced to available support systems, including YONECO's Youth Drop-In Centre (DIC) and the Tithandizane toll-free helplines, where they can access counseling and guidance services.

"Sometimes we don't realize how much stress we carry until it becomes too heavy," "This session has reminded me that it's okay to talk to someone and ask for help when things feel difficult," said Grace Mtima, a Form Four student.

YONECO Engages Students on Promoting Quality and Rights-Based Health Service Delivery



Insert: Some of the nursing students at Mangochi District Hospital who were part of the session.

As part of its efforts to promote the right to quality healthcare for all, YONECO held an interactive session with 11 nursing students at Mangochi District Hospital.

The session, which was held on 7 October 2025, aimed to strengthen the students' understanding of client-centred care and the role of empathy, ethics, and accountability in service delivery.

The discussion focused on various critical issues including how health workers can enhance build community trust and uphold human dignity in healthcare settings.

The discussion also focused on various systemic challenges that affect quality healthcare delivery like staff shortages, limited medical supplies and long waiting times.

The participants committed to providing their services in line with their professional training and expressed their gratitude to YONECO for the session, which they considered vital for improving positive health outcomes and patient satisfaction.



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