

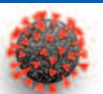
MALAWI SEXUAL
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH RIGHTS
ALLIANCE



2020 Annual Newsletter

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Covid-19 is real. Stay Safe!

About US

The Malawi SRHR Alliance is a network of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that was established in 2011. The Alliance comprises six institutions which promote rights and welfare of all people in Malawi. The institutions are; Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CYECE), Centre for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC), Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE), Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM), Coalition of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (COWLHA) and Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO).

Our Mission

Promote full attainment of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights for all vulnerable women, men, boys and girls in Malawi through service delivery, lobbying and advocacy, empowerment, creation of enabling environment, research, capacity building and collaboration and networking.

Our Vision

A Malawi society where Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights are guaranteed and enjoyed by all especially young people whose SRHR are often violated,

Editor's Comment

Dear Reader,

Welcome to our first Annual Newsletter which has captured some of the major highlights of our activities within our 2020 implementation period.

Young people's are key individuals in the development of our country Malawi. They are energetic and dynamic. The youth have all it takes to support the development of our country.

However, the youth cannot ably support the development processes if they are not given a chance to do.

In this edition you will read how we are promoting Meaningful Youth Participation as well as young people's Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in Malawi.

Tamara Chikopa

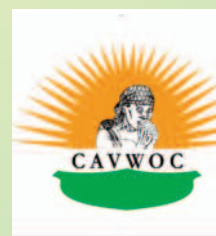
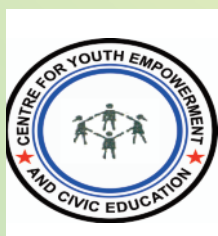
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ALLIANCE CHAIRPERSON'S DESK



On behalf of the Malawi Sexual and Reproductive and Health Rights Alliance National Steering Committee I would like to thank all the local and international partners who have contributed to the programme and institutional development of the alliance since it opened its doors in 2010.

It is encouraging to see that the alliance has grown as an institution and also in terms of programmes being implemented. The alliance membership has increased to six from the initial four initially. The alliance recently developed a Strategic plan, functional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Advocacy Strategy and Communication Strategy among other strategic documents guiding the operations. The alliance has a functional and updated website www.srhralliancemalawi.org where partners and stakeholder are now easily accessing the alliance.

In terms of programmes, the alliance has now increased number of partners supporting its work and that included Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Rutgers, SIMAVI, Choice, Aids Fonds and IPPF. The alliance is also working with AmplifyChange, Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives and AMREF Health Africa who are supporting alliances Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights programme in Chikwawa, Mangochi, Ntchisi, Blantyre and Chitipa district.

The alliance is also strategically working with University of Malawi – College of Medicine in a joint research and intervention programme dubbed Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS) Programme running until 2020. Further, the alliance since, 2016 has managed to conduct SRHR baselines and researches that have informed its programming and that of other SRHR players to ground the result based advocacy initiatives on solid data and findings in Malawi.

Finally, it is within the Malawi SRHR Alliances strategic priorities to enhance collaboration and networking in promoting youth and women Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Malawi. Therefore, the alliance is looking forward to building more strategic partnerships to jointly contribute to the achievement of SRHR policy goals in Malawi and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number three on health and five on Gender.

We look forward to another successful year of 2020 as we endeavor to ensure inclusive access to quality Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights information and services in Malawi.

Yours,

Timothy Mtambo
National Steering Committee Chairperson

COWLHA Organises Youth Retreat in Chiwawa



“Every once in a while, it is good for us to go out and experience life beyond the confines of our usual meeting spots. We want to go somewhere to relax and learn.” Said one young person and the sentiments were echoed by her peers from a Youth Club that was established under GUSO Programme.

A retreat is designed to help a person to take the mind off one’s ‘usual’ environment in order to let him or her focus on other things in a different setting. The youth are always busy and faced with the task of making important decisions about their lives. A retreat offers silence amidst noise.

A trip to Majete Game Reserve which COWLHA organized for young people was like a direct response to the young people’s need and it gave them an opportunity to learn from each other in a totally different setup. A total of 37 young people participated in adventurous learning exercise.

While enjoying games like tag of war, eating competition and sack race; young people took turns in different learning sessions on volunteerism, team building and team work, self-development and most critically, Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and access to services.

The one-day trip gave the youth a chance to interact with their fellows from other GUSO Programme’s impact areas.

Alliance NPTC Holds 2019 GUSO Review Meeting



The Malawi SRHR Alliance’s National Programme Technical Team Committee (NPTC) held a two-day Planning and Review Meeting which was held in Blantyre from 19 to 20 October, 2019.

Among other things, the team reviewed 2019 progress which has been made under the Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) Programme and further planned plan for 2020 activities. Participants will also priorities and develop an Action Plan and budgets for alliance Joint and PMEL activities for 2020.

The meeting was also attended by Malawi Focal Person from the Netherlands, Loan Liem who is also a Senior Programmes Manager for Simavi.

CEYCE Protes Youth Participation in Mangochi



The youth who have made into community development structures

Against one of its specialty in promoting Meaningful Youth Participation CYECE has contributed toward the inclusion of 2 young people in Chikwawa District Council and National Youth Network under the Get Up! Speak Out! Project which it is implementing in Chikwawa under the aim of ensuring that young people are empowered to realize their different rights.

Before CYECE supported the District Youth Office to elect New Network Leadership for T/A Lundu which would result into the election of the District Youth network after all the T/A level networks were changed, young people were not a part of the full council and in return most of the issues that affected and concerned young people were not discussed and addressed due to misrepresentation of the young person during the council meeting who would present the issues that young people

face so that they are addressed.

It is against this background that CYECE supported the DYO's office in Chikwawa to conduct the election of a New Network leadership under T/A Lundu which then in return resulted into the election of the new leaders of the district of young people that jointly collaborate to implement different initiatives at community and district level.

Through this initiative Watson Ndeule aged 24 from Tomali youth club who emerged as a chair person for Lundu youth Network was also voted as the chair person for the District Network by all the youths in the district from the 11 T/As within the district and by default of Him being the Chair for the District Youth Network was expected to represent fellow young people in the district council each time a meeting is held to make decisions.

This new development has assisted to have a representation of a young person during the full council meeting who will be delivering the interest of young people and in return having the needs of the young people in the district met and heard.

The second young person is Lovemore Zondani aged 25 from Nanyerere youth club who emerged as the vice chair-person for Lundu Network was voted by different stakeholders who are implementing youth related projects and the office of the District Youth Office to represent Youths at the National level under the National youth Network.

This is a raise in the flag since now the issues that are experienced by the young people not only will they be flashed in at the community and district level but also they shall be flashed out at National level.

CHRR Engages Traditional and Religious Leaders on LGBTI



A community awareness session on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in progress

CHRR successfully engaged health care workers, traditional and religious leaders on promotion of rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) in the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Ngabu in Chikwawa district.

The engagement meetings were organised after the organisation received complaints from the members of the LGBTI community. Among other things, the LGBTI were having challenges in accessing Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services, they were also being denied communality as well as being castigated

as downright sinners on top of the stigma they face. During the meetings, it became clear that community members had inadequate information about rights and sexuality issues. Thus, CHRR further organised number of follow up activities to create a tolerant and friendly environment towards the LGBTI community.

Among the activities, CHRR organised interface meetings on sexuality issues, mind discussions and awareness campaigns. After these sessions, CHRR also oriented members of the LGBTI community on their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). In the end, community and religious leaders as well as other community members comprehended the issues and they avowed to respect and promote the rights of the LGBTI.

In his remarks, one of the members of the LGBTI community in the area thanked CHRR for the efforts it made to address the various challenges which the group faces.

The activities were conducted with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) through Rutgers under Get Up Speak (GUSO) Programme.

A Young Person's Journey to Reformation

Andrew Dambuzeni (not real name) hails from Traditional Authority Lundu in Chikwawa. Before the emergence of Guso Project in the area, he led a reckless life, full of booze and skirt-chasin..

He could find piece works where he earned most of his living. Much to the surprise of his family and friends instead of making a good use of the generated funds, he spent all of it on beer. On top of that, old women flocked to him whenever he dangles the hard-earned money towards them.

He occasionally contracted sexually transmitted infections (STIs) from these sexual escapades. However, when this happens he sought help from traditional herbalists instead of a professionally trained medical practitioner.

When GUSO Project came into full swing in the area, he started to patronize the gatherings, and finally he convicted himself for his own wayward behaviours.

The messages resonated profoundly inside him. He commenced to see some light especially on the eventual consequences of indulging in unprotected sex since he was already a serial culprit in contracting these infections.

A reformed young man. He was trained as a Youth Community Based Distribution Agent (CBDA) he is right now. He has even volunteered himself to be part of relaying these messages to fellow youths who might have been entangled in the same life he championed before.

Respect and Promote our SRHR - Mangochi Young People



Young people in Mangochi district using Theatre in voicing out their rights

Young people from the area of Traditional Authority (T/A) Mponda in Mangochi district made an appeal to older community members and their leaders to respect and promote their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

The young people made the appeal through drama, poetry speeches as well as traditional music which vitalized a Youth-led SRHR Open Day that was held at Issa Mponda Village Ground.

In her remarks, one teen mother stood up and stated that she fell pregnant at a tender age because adults did not bother to properly give her sexuality counselling after she reached puberty.

“I was young and misinformed but one or two words from parents or older relatives could have saved me from falling into the trap,”, explained one teen-mother from the area.

In his remarks, the Executive Director for YONECO, MacBain Mkandawire bemoaned the tendency of some parents and elders who abdicate their responsibility of upbringing children. “There is need for parents to open up and tell the young ones what they did or did not do to reach their age. Likewise, children should also be given a voice to speak out on issues which affect them”, said MacBain Mkandawire.

The Youth Network Chairperson for Issa Mponda area expressed his satisfaction that young people were able to speak out on issues that affect them.

The Chairperson attributed this to a number of interventions which YONECO, under the GUSO Programme, implemented in the area. The Chairperson mentioned the establishment of Youth Radio Listening Clubs, trainings in Theatre for Development (TfD) and Community Mobilisation as among the interventions which have helped the youth to engage adults and voice out their rights.

The activity was organized by YONECO, with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) through Simavi under Get Up Speak (GUSO) Programme which YONECO is implementing in Mangochi under the Malawi SRHR Alliance.

The activity was attended by several traditional leaders from Issa Mponda area, the youth, religious leaders as well as Simavi’s Monitoring and Evaluation personnel from the Netherlands, Sever Dzigursk.

Did You Know ?

Malawi’s intercensal growth rate between 2008 and 2018 is 2.9 percent per annum compared to 2.8 percent intercensal growth between 1998 and 2008

Chimwala Area Embraces MYP

From what the Traditional Authority said of encouraging young people to be present in community development structures to voice their matters, this year's elections, young people participated and four of them from different youth clubs are now members in these structures to represent young people issues.

At first the project had one person in community development structures now they are four young people.

This success falls under the concept of MYP where young people can participate on equal terms with

adults and being able voice their rights on issues that matters to them.

Four young people from youth club's who are now in newly established Area Developmental structures such as VDC and ADC.

GUSO is making strides in Chimwala area by empowering young people in the area to demand quality SRHR services and get involved in matters that shape their future

Transformation Train; Habiba's story

Habiba Oscar is a form two self-boarder student at Pemphero PVT Secondary School situated in Maldeco area, TA Mponda in Mangochi where she only stays during school terms. She is the daughter of Oscar Amidu Chaguga and Emily Siyabu of Chilembwe Village TA Namkumba Mangochi.

She likes watching and playing both football and netball. She has female genitalia but she doesn't have breasts, has never experienced menstruation though she is now 16 years of age. She also has strong muscular body as well as chest hair. At school, her fellow students used to laugh and discriminate her during different school activities as no one loved to associate with a 'boy'. Then she met Victor Maluwa in May 2017, one of CHRR Peer educators, who lived nearby. Victor had seen Habiba a few times before and befriended her. Victor had an inkling that she was intersex but continued to be genuinely friendly. When she became comfortable, she explained her situation to him. He was open enough to reveal that he is bisexual. He called Mathews for technical advice on handling this issue.

3 other CHRR peer educators, who were introduced to Habiba did a one on one discussion with Habiba just to let her know her rights and responsibilities, to create a safe space for her to understand she was not alone in the LGBTI community. He also let her know that there was no reason for her to be scared of being intersex as it is nature. Thereafter, they had a sensitization meeting with school staff on her sexual orientation. After this, they held a public meeting with students within two days.

In July 2018, a week after the public meeting, Victor visited Habiba to follow up on her life where she said things have changed, there is no discrimination from her fellow peers and she is now enjoying freedom of association just like anyone else. To this day, he still visits her just to check on her. Her community accepted her as well, because of the frequent community awareness campaigns. Habiba's self-esteem is a different picture than before and does not feel shy or left out when with her friends, the school setting-her friends now associate with her with no problems. The community already accepts Habiba as one of their own and have not insulted or physically attacked her for being unique

In the first week of February 2019, Habiba said she has been experiencing pain in the stomach time and again, and she has been advised to go to Mangochi District Hospital. At the time of publication, CHRR was still waiting for the next follow up visit to capture what happened at the hospital.

Bridging Young People's SRHR Information Gap



Young people celebrating after being introduced to Let's Chill Platform

YONECO has developed a web-based mobisite for young people as a way of ensuring that young people in Malawi have various options of Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) information.

The mobisite which is called Let's Chill platform has attracted a number of young people who have commended the platform for being youth friendly and easy to use. The platform has a number of articles which provide comprehensive information on various SRH topics. Among other areas, the site also addresses frequently asked questions about puberty, relationships, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other Sexually transmitted Infections (STIs).

Under the motto; 'Smart SRH choices for young people', the site gives young people an opportunity to anonymously ask questions directly to counsellors who operate 24 hours every day. Further to this, young people can also opt to use either Chichewa or English. Thus, depending on the choice made, the information gets presented in the preferred language.

The platform which is yet to be fully launched, is contributing towards the realization of GUSO Programme's Outcome 3 which is on ensuring that young people are able to access and utilize comprehensive SRH information and education.

"I have always wished for such a platform where I can anonymously get information and ask critical SRH questions," explained 18 year-old Samuel Asani from Mangochi after testing the Let's Chill mobisite.



YONECO staff (R) explaining to young people how Let's Chill Platform works

Aliance Trains Members in Social Accountability

The Malawi SRHR Alliance trained staff from its member partners in Social Accountability. The training was organised as a way of enhancing advocacy interventions on health service delivery in Malawi.

The activity was supported by the Northern Alliance and the training was also attended by members of staff from the sister alliance, the More than Brudes Alliance - Malawi.



My Method My Choice! Ndazona's Journey to Freedom



At 18 years of age, Ndazona Kambani (not real name) from village in T/A Jalasi in Mangochi is already a single mother of a two-year old child.

Hers is a typical example of how technology instead of making life better is making it more taxing especially among teen girls. Ndazona rues the day she met a man with a big 'touchscreen' phone at Namwera Trading Centre.

She had been envying friends with 'touchscreen' phones sent to them by their boyfriends or husbands in South Africa. Her heart always palpitated when she glimpsed her mates frolic with 'touchscreens'.

"I met a man at the market who offered me a 'touchscreen' phone on condition that I become his lover though I was only 16 and in Standard 6," Ndazona says. Although she wasn't happy with the relationship because of the age difference Ndazona still went out with him for nearly a year until she fell pregnant.

Her parents sent her packing to the man's village where life became a daily uphill-struggle for survival. Ashley Banda, a member of Family Planning Association of Malawi's (FPAM) Youth Action Movement (YAM) under the GUSO program said after learning that Ndazona had given birth they paid her a visit to

advise her to return to school.

Following several visits to Ndazona by the YAM members, Ndazona was introduced to SRHR information and services provided by FPAM through routine outreach clinics and youth club meetings. It was through these meetings that Ndazona made her choice to start using a family planning method which would help her plan her future.

Ndazona was determined to return back home to her parents and continue with her education while she raises her child.

Young women from the areas of T/A Jalasi and Chimwala have dispelled rumors and misconceptions that limit youth uptake of long term family planning methods. Ndazona stated that she is a living example to testify that most ills put on contraceptives are fake and not applicable to every person.

Ndazona explained, "Youths who are afraid of FP methods should see me as an example and that many myths and misconceptions surrounding contraceptives do not appear in my life. Youths have to know all family planning methods to maximize their informed choices. For instance, I know injectables and implants that can help youths achieve their sexual health and that of their child through birth spacing and improved maternal health of a mother to avoid weaknesses and sicknesses."

Male engagement in the promotion of long term family planning methods is paramount in ensuring that young girls are able to access SRHR information and services. Access to information about family planning methods has been creating an environment where young people are able to make informed choices about family planning.

Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM) routine outreach clinics coupled with comprehensive SRHR information sharing are one of the interventions being implemented under the GUSO project in TA's Chimwala and Jalasi.

Malawi SRHR Alliance Visits Sister Coalition in Uganda



Members of the Malawi SRHR Alliance in Uganda

A team of 9 people from the Malawi Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Alliance is currently in Uganda on a learning visit under the banner of Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) Programme which the Malawi coalition and the Uganda SRHR Alliance are both implementing in their designated countries.

The visit is expected to add value as well as strengthen the capacity of the two alliances and contribute towards positive SRHR outcomes of young people.

Among other things, the members will share notes pertaining to advocacy on Youth Friendly Health Service (YFHS) delivery, promotion of youth-adult partnerships, alliance governance and resource mobilization.

The Malawi team is comprised of two Steering Committee members, four National Programme Technical Committee team members, the National Programme Coordinator (NPC), Monitoring and Evaluation Officer as well as the Youth Country Coordinator (YCC).

The Malawi SRHR Alliance members arrived in Uganda on 4 March and returned on 25 March, 2019. The team learnt and shared a number of strategies and promising practices in the promotion of young people's Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

GUSO Programme is funded by the Dutch Government – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the northern Alliance which comprises of Simavi, Rutgers, IPPF and AIDSfonds.

Malawi SRHR Alliance Holds Review Meeting



NPTC members and the SC Chairperson

Members of the Malawi Sexual Reproductive Health Alliance held a four-day review meeting in Blantyre to assess the impact and progress made in the Get Up Speak Out (GUSO) Programme which the consortium started implementing in 2016.

One of the key issues on the agenda was the review of a midterm research study that was conducted in the GUSO Programme impact areas in Mangochi and Chikwawa. Among other things, the members agreed to intensify efforts towards ensuring that young people of all groups are enjoying their Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

In his opening address, the Chairperson for the Alliance, Timothy Mtambo, thanked the Alliance's partners from the Netherlands for their unwavering support. He further thanked all members of the Alliance for their diligence and commitment towards the promotion of young people's rights.

The meeting was attended by several members of the Steering Committee of the Malawi SRHR Alliance as well as members of the National Programme Technical Committee. Further to this, the GUSO Programme Country Focal Person for Malawi, Loan Liem from Netherlands also attended the meeting.

GUSO Programme is a 5-year programme (2016-2020) which the Malawi SRHR Alliance is currently implementing in Chikwawa (TA Ngabu and Lundu) and Mangochi (TA Chimwala, Nankumba, Mponda, Jalasi).

Malawi SRHR Alliance Partners



Centre for Alternatives for Victimized Women and Children (CAVWOC) is a social service organization formed in 1997 and was registered under Trustees Incorporation Act in the year 1998. CAVWOC is a member of CONGOMA, NGO Board, and affiliated to

NGOGCN and Human Rights Consultative Committee. The centre targets women, men, adolescent girls and boys, teen mothers, young people and People Living With HIV/AIDs. CAVWOC is currently implementing projects in Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Blantyre, Lilongwe, Balaka, Phalombe and Lilongwe



The Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Malawi (COWLHA) is a membership organization of women and girls living with HIV that was formed in 2006 as a civil society organization to create a united voice of women and girls living with HIV and

AIDS in addressing challenges affecting them. COWLHA's mandate specifically seeks to enhance the protection and promotion of rights of women and girls living with HIV as well as to enable its members to lead a productive life by promoting sustainable livelihood programs and strengthening their capacity. Centre



Family Planning Association of Malawi (FPAM) is a non-profit making local NGO established in 1999 registered under the Trustees Incorporation Act. FPAM is affiliated to International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) as a Member Association. It exists to provide comprehensive sexual reproductive health services and information to young people between the ages of (10-24). Currently, FPAM operates in 12 districts namely: Ntcheu, Lilongwe, Kasungu, Mzuzu, Dowa, Dedza, Machinga, Mangochi, Neno, Salima, Mchinji and Karonga.



Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation is a local NGO established in 2005. The center is registered with Malawi Government under the 1962 trustees incorporation Act. It is also registered with CONGOMA and NGO Board.

CHRR targets Children, women , men, youth and other marginalized groups in Malawi. CHRR is currently implementing programmes in Blantyre, Machinga, Chikwawa,Lilongwe, Salima, Dedza, Dowa, Chitipa, Karonga, Mchinji and Zomba



for Youth Empowerment and and Civic Education (CYECE) is a Non Governmental and non profit making organization established in 1997 with an aim of addressing social economic development issues affecting children

and young people in Malawi. CYECE works to promote children's rights , youth sexual and reproductive health rights and youth empowerment through capacity building , advocacy , capacity building, community mobilization and communication for positive social change. CYECE has running projects in Dedza, Machinga, Chikwawa, Mangochi, Kasungu and Lilongwe.



Youth Net and Counseling (YONECO) was established to respond to issues of youth, women and children in September 1997 and is registered under the Trustees Incorporation (1962) Act, NGO (2001) Act and is a member of CONGOMA since 1999.

YONECO has been implementing a number of projects across the country and focuses on issues relating to youth development, women and children rights and development, human rights and governance for the development of youth, women and children.