

PYAO E-NEWSLETTER

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61 Child Marriages dissolved in TA Namasoko

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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3. PYAO concerned with lack of project supervision by district council



MALAWI



POSITIVE ACTION



Gundeni (left)- Participant emphasizing a point (centre)- Haleke (right)

A hundred children from the area of traditional authority Namasoko in Phalombe district have returned to school courtesy of the Phalombe Youth Arms Organisation (PYAO).

The 61 were all rescued from marriages that the organization facilitated dissolution.

Child Protection Committee Chairperson Patrice Haleke said in an interview that his committee is working hand in hand with other community development structures in the area in ensuring that rights of the children especially girls are protected and upheld in the area so as to sharpen their future.

"From October last year up to date we have managed to dissolve 61 child marriages. And currently we are zooming in on suspected cases of defilement whose reports we have received, just to make sure that justice prevails," said Haleke.

He added, "This has been possible because of the capacity building sessions on human rights which organisations such as PYAO have been conducting in this area," said Haleke.

He further asked stakeholders to join hands in addressing societal problems such as poverty which pushes many children to early

marriages.

In an interview, Phalombe district Social Welfare Assistant, Stanley Gundeni thanked PYAO for its support towards ending violence against girls and women, and also child protection.

"As a department that looks at the welfare of people in the district, we are very grateful for their support and we wish to encourage them to go further with this support," he said.

Stanford Chidule, Programmes Officer for the organization has since promised more support towards these initiatives.

WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We are very excited for being privileged to meet again in 2021. PYAO has great made resolutions for this New Year that will benefit the communities. COVID-19 continues having a huge bearing on most operations in different sectors of the economy and lives. This means energy and effort to adopt and adapt to the present situation is highly needed.

Being a new year, always we expect district budget processes to start during the first three months of the year. Sadly, this year we have sang the same old song, no citizen consultations on the budget despite calling this years` budget a citizen budget. Listening to the responses on this issue from the Chairpersons of Service Committees like Finance and Audit, Health and Environment, Education – Youth and Sports they all share the same worries that the continued lack of citizen participation in budget and policy processes contribute to the underdevelopment of the district. We really need to work on this weakness. Let`s all participate in public expenditure tracking initiatives to ensure prudence and effective and efficient public resource management in the district

The district continues facing the same problem of inadequate funding towards Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS). It seems as a district we continue seeing YFHS as not an important program that can contribute positively to the development of the district. If we want to continue hearing, reading and witnessing about the increase in teen pregnancies, high rate of sexual violence cases, low SRHR uptake, high rate of new HIV and STI infections among others in the district, let us continue underfunding this program. My plea to Phalombe District Council through our District Health Office and the beloved district SRHR partners is to ensure we start prioritizing the youth friendly SRHR.

Let me lastly take this opportunity to commend the efforts being made by Youth Champions, Peer Educators, Youth Clubs, Youth Networks, Y+ Networks, area development committees, community victim support units, community police forums, traditional leaders, faith leaders, and all stakeholders who are contributing to the gains in the fight against gender based violence. There is hope this battle is going to be won very soon.



VISION

PYAO envisions an inclusive society that values and supports full engagement of vulnerable people in civic, social, economic and environmentally healthy communities

MISSION

PYAO invests in innovative ideas, convenes interested parties, shares its learning and advocates for change in support of young people being health, creative and fully engaged citizens


FOCUS AREAS

SRHR | HIV and AIDS | Governance & Human Rights | Education
Environment and Climate Justice | Livelihood Security

STRATEGY

Advocacy | Community Mobilization | Capacity Development
Coordination & Networking | Data and Research

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High demand for contraceptives, PYAO commits to help



Banda (Right) handing over condoms to a happy YCBDA

Demand for condoms among young people in Phalombe district continues to rise and some young people are struggling to access the contraceptive method.

The revelation came out of an outcry among young people who say the commodity is being sorted for in their communities.

Phalombe Youth Arms Organization's Condoms coordinator, Yasin Banda conceded that there is need to fill condom stocks to their full capacity as they are on the demand in the district.

In an interview Banda said from January to March this year, over 40 thousand condoms have been distributed across the district.

"Condoms seem to be on the demand that's why currently we as an organization are doing our best in ensuring that we fill condom stocks in time," said Yasin.

He said it was his organization's aim to reach every corner of the district with condom distribution among the youth

and older members of the community.

Banda further advised young people that the scarcity of condoms should not drive them into having unprotected sexual intercourse, saying the act has various having negative outcomes.

"HIV is contracted once and you will live in regret forever," he firmly said.

One of the Young Community Based Distribution Agents (YCBDAs) in T/A Kaledzera Alick Thomas said they were working with the organization to ensure that condoms reach all the areas where they are demanded most so that young people are not put at risk.



Covid-19 thimwaha
wawoona naye
asombwe, hankoni
nikhale arachi
ohundiha antu
amodtha dtha
eretella

Youth workers trained on use of emergency contraceptive pills



Trainers in contraception making their presentations in different venues

Stakeholders responsible for distributing family planning methods in Phalombe have been trained on the use of the emergency contraceptive pills to promote proper usage in the district which registered 3,000 teenage pregnancies last year.

During a one-day long training organized recently by the Phalombe Youth Arms Organization (PYAO) Family Planning Coordinator at Phalombe District Health Office, Ganizani Paul, said there was need to promote usage of the pills among youths.

He said his office is aiming at reducing teenage pregnancies during this Covid-19 pandemic's second wave as the district registered over 3000 teenage pregnancies in the first wave.

"As you may also be aware, the spike in pregnancies during the first wave of COVID-19 was largely due to non-availability of this method at community level and I am sure this will ensure increased proper usage by youths in the communities, resulting in reduced numbers of unwanted pregnancies in the long run," he said.

Among the carders trained were nurses, Youth Community Based Distribution Agents (YCBDAs) Health Surveillance Assistants and Clinicians.

Mphatso Chabira who is YCBDA for Group Village Head Bokosi said the pills have been on the high demand by the youths especially girls and because of the training now they will be able to serve them.

"Now that we are trained we'll be able to help our fellow youths unlike in the past where some of the service seekers were forced to buy from pharmacies. And for those who did not have money then there was nothing they could do," said Chabira.

Executive Director for PYAO, Vincent Thom, said all the distribution agents of the emergency pills in the district will be trained so that they should be providing proper information to those who'll be needing to use them.

"We want our YCBDAs and all stakeholders in this district to have all the knowledge of how these pills are taken so that they should effectively help people," he said.

Nyambalo AGYWs get VSL skills

Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) from Sub Traditional Authority Nyambalo in Phalombe district have been trained in resource management as a way of setting up reliable economic bases for themselves.

The training was part of the Phalombe Youth Arms Organization's capacity building initiative biased at glooming Adolescent Girls and Young Women for independence.

Programmes Manager for PYAO, Stanford Chidule, said independence is one of the key ingredients to AGYWs' protection against different kinds of abuses which fall their way when they depend on males

"Some girls get sexually abused for simple things like air-time and salon money. This means that if they were able to buy and pay for such things on their own they could not be exposed to GBV," he said.

He said many of them had ventured into small scale businesses hence the organization's intervention which is coupled with a Village Savings and Loans (VSL) component.



Part of the training

Chairperson for the group, Magret Molande, in her remarks said the small scale businesses which members of the group joined were already uplifting their lives and boosting them with VSL was going to yield them more.

"We hope to see more advanced business developments with the new knowledge bestowed upon our members," she said.

Youths ask for more funding in their department

Youths in Phalombe district have asked government to consider increasing budgetary allocations toward the youth department for youth development to be meaningful.

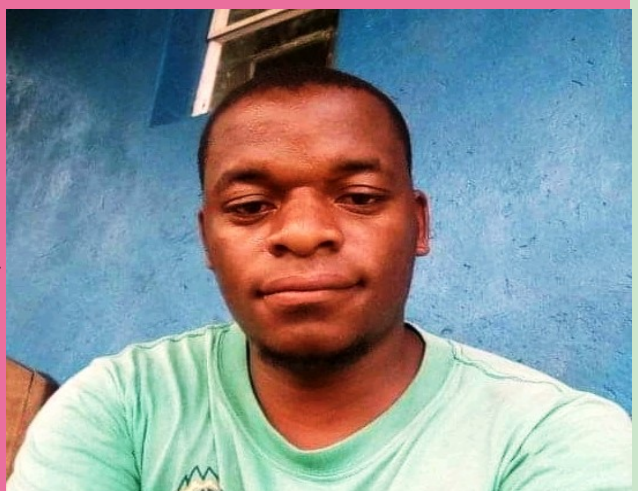
The youths said this after analyzing 2019-2020, 2020-2021 financial year budgets for Phalombe district where they noted under funding towards the department of youth.

One of the youths who is also chairperson for the Chiwalo Youth Network, Lazarus Mapeto, says there are a lot of resources channeled to other sectors who have less activities than the youth sector.

"This clearly shows that youth development is only a song that is meant to keep young people thinking that they are important. If youth development is a serious matter in this country then government should start funding the youth sector for it to operate without hiccups," said Mapeto.

Executive Director for PYAO, Vincent Thom, says youths need to be proactive and talk about their rights and what they want. He said they should also be questioning the authorities on important issues.

The budget analysis activity in which the young people identified the discrepancy was conducted with funding from the National Democratic Institute (NDI)



Less funding worries him: Madeya

Phalombe Council urged to take projects seriously



Photo courtesy of Youth Champions

Classroom block which was assessed during the exercise

Phalombe District Council has been asked to take issues of monitoring and evaluation of developmental projects seriously in order to stop contractors from doing shoddy work.

The plea was made during a virtual interface meeting which was organized by Phalombe Youth Arms Organization (PYAO) through which youth leaders across the district were presented their scorecard findings to the authorities.

Among others, the youth champions from four Traditional Authorities namely; Kaledzera, Kaduya, Mkhumba and Nazombe, in their findings revealed that negligence of council officers in supervising project construction works is one of factors contributing to substandard works being done in the district.

“It was sad that the Council officials especially from the Public Works department did not conduct the required monitoring of this construction project on all stages such as checking the site of the project, digging of the foundation, concrete or slab level, window level, beam filling level up to roofing level.

“This tendency has contributed to the substandard work being done by the contractors who feel like no one cares about the projects.

The council should bear in mind that these building will be accommodating persons hence there is need to make sure that the council is providing standard building to its people,” reads part of a report.

The youths focused on projects such as of construction of classroom block at Mambala Community Day Secondary School (CDSS) in Phalombe North Constituency, and construction of Mkhumba Resource Centre and classroom block at Minyenje CDSS in Phalombe South Constituency.

In all the projects, the youth leaders recommended that issues of feedback mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation, and community engagements have to be addressed so as to enhance transparency and accountability and that contractors should be constructing standard infrastructures.

Member of Parliament for Phalombe North East constituency, Dennis Namachekecha, agreed to what the report said especially findings of issues pertaining to the construction of a classroom block at Mambala CDSS where the contractor used substandard materials and constructed a block meant for primary school learners not for secondary school students

He further agreed that there is need to have comprehensive supervision of developmental projects so that contractors should not be doing substandard works in the district.

“I agree to all the issues which have been raised and I want to ask our council secretariat to take matters of monitoring and evaluation very seriously. We need to be getting durable works from the contractors,” he said.

In his remarks, Director of Planning and Development for the district, Eric Kenamu, insisted that the council monitored all the construction work in the aforementioned projects but he was quick to ask citizens to be engaging the council if they notice discrepancies in community projects.

“When you go to each project site you’ll see in the visitors’ book that we really do the supervision part, but my plea to people is that they should be channeling their concerns to the District Commissioner’s office so that they should be addressed,” said Kenamu.

In an interview PYAO Executive Director, Vincent Thom, said the objective of the scorecard was to enable the service providers (District Council) to conduct self-assessment of their delivery of projects and services in the district and also to improve interaction and feedback mechanisms between service providers and service users.

PYAO has been implementing a Public Expenditure Tracking Project with funds from the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

Edzi Toto Clubs critical for school-going youths



Part of the participants comprised on Teachers and health workers having their orientations at Nambazo Health Centre in traditional authority Chiwalo

Patrons and Matrons of different primary schools in Phalombe district have been urged to be in forefront of encouraging learners to joining Edzi toto clubs so that they should be tapping information to do with prevention of HIV /AIDS.

The plea was made during orientations of these patrons and matrons on how they will be running the clubs in their respective clubs,

Programmes Officer , Yamikani Kayanja, said in an interview that the orientations combined both health workers and teachers so as to enhance their working relationship in supporting the learners through the clubs.

“We would like to see these two groups to be working together, these health workers are based in the same communities where these clubs are, so it is important that they need to be depending on each other if we are to make the progress with these clubs.

“For sure , I am hopeful that these clubs will be revamped and be useful again so that learners should be getting vital information in as far as stopping the spread of the endemic is concerned,” he said.

Kayanja added that PYAO would like to see the clubs to serve the purpose as the way they were established and he said the organisation wished the exercise had been extended to the secondary schools considering that that's where many youths who have reached sex-age are.

One of the health workers present at the workshop, Jack Gunde, said he will make sure that he should be visiting the clubs whenever they are meeting so as to help in disseminating information to the school going youths.

“I will be visiting schools which are nearby my catchment area during their meeting hours so that I should be participating in their deliberations and help whenever clarity is needed on a certain topic,” said Gunde.

The revamping exercise is targeting all the schools which are in the areas of traditional authorities of Chiwalo and Jenala .



I'm hopeful: Kayanja

Field moments in pictures



1. Presentation on contraceptive in progress



2. Participants deliberating



3. PYAO team arriving in T/A Kaledzera



4.



5 Community meeting at TA Mkhumba ground



7 Participant asking a question



6 PYAO's Programmes Officer Stanford Chidule struggling to move with a motorbike on a muddy road

LOW BUDGETARY ALLOCATION IRKS YOUTHS



Some of the youths of Phalombe (Photo Courtesy of Nambazo YFHS Club)

“In all seriousness, what can a huge sector like health do with such an amount? How can the two sub-departments improve their services towards us, if that is all they get?” she asked rhetorically

“There are a lot of things that we have seen in the DIP which have to be looked into by the authorities.

Youths in Phalombe district have expressed their dissatisfaction with the budget allocation towards the youth related activities.

The expressed this worry after reviewing exercise of the District Implementation Plan (DIP) for the health of 2019-2020.

Among others, during the review it was discovered that funds towards Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and family planning are insufficient.

For instance, it was discovered that in the stated period, only 200,000 Malawi Kwacha was channeled toward the two youth critical areas.

Prisca Maonga, who is one of the youths that championed the review process said it is worrisome that the two initiatives received such amount.

Asked to comment on the matter Executive Director for PYAO, Vincent Thom said there is need that authorities should lobby for more funding towards YFHS and family planning since they're crucial in the lives of the youths in the district.

“If we leave these things like this then there will be no improvement in how the youths are treated in the health facility, we need more money towards the two,” he said.

The youths did the review with support from PYAO and technical expertise from Health Policy Plus.



Councilors to lobby for youths representation

Phalombe district Councilors have promised to lobby for youth representation in the service committees of health and environment where currently there is no such representation.

This comes as a response to worries from the youths who said issues to do with Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and Sexual Reproductive Health Services and Rights (SRHR) were not being fully tackled by the council due lack of youth representation in the two critical committees.

Speaking during an interface deliberations which the Councilors had with the youths in the district, Chairperson for the Health Committee, Esther Lambulira—who is the councillor for Machemba ward said the matter will be considered.

“What you are saying its true that some of the problems facing youths in the health sector can be fully articulated by the youth hence we need a youth representative.

“Another issue is that we only get already made budgets and some of these things are difficult to be incorporated, so we’ve asked the council to collect the anomaly,” he said.

On his part, one of the youths, Patrick Madeya, applauded the Councilors for their interest in the youths’ affairs.

“This is very welcome that our elected leaders have seen the need that we should be having voice on matters of health that concern us, we’re delighted with this,” he said.

On his part, Programmes Manager for PYAO Stanford Chidule said they’re pleased with the development.

He said: “Indeed we need representation in the health service committee.”



Happy with the decision: Chidule



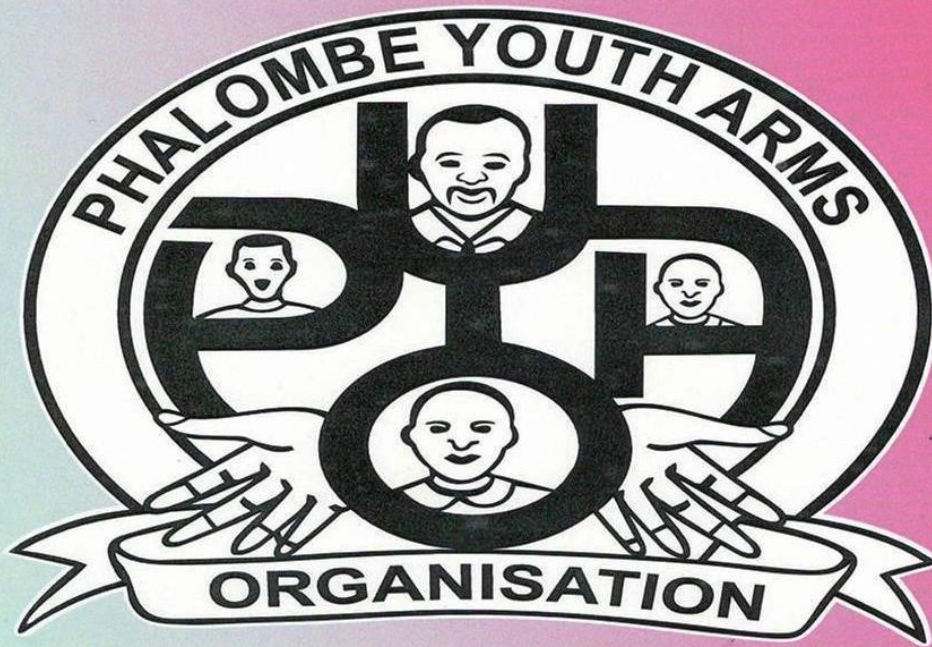
NOTICE TO OUR READERS

This is to notify you that in this e-**Newsletter** we just highlight some of the activities that our organisation carries out. There are a lot of the activities which have been done between the month of January-March 2021 which we could not put them in this publication.

Please don't miss anything all the time by liking our **Facebook** page or follow our **Twitter** handle.

Wishing you Happy and Prosperous 2021





Physical Address : Opposite Phalombe Health Centre
Along Phalombe-Mpata-Nkhulambe Road

Our Offices are always open from Monday- Friday (08:00AM-04:30PM)

Thank You for Reading Our Newsletter

FP
FAMILY PLANNING
2020

 **NDI**
MALAWI

ViiV
Healthcare

POSITIVE ACTION