

PYAO NEWSLETTER

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

1. Word from the Executive Director



2. Contraceptives on the demand

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



61 Child Marriages dissolved in T/A Namasoko



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

About 100 children have returned to school in the area of traditional authority Namasoko in Phalombe district courtesy of Phalombe Youth Arms Organisation (PYAO).

The children are the ones rescued from 61 child marriages that have been dissolved in the area with support from PYAO and other stakeholders.

Child Protection Committee Chairperson Patric Haleke said in an interview that his committee work hand in hand with other committees in the area in ensuring that rights of the children especially girls are protected so as to sharpen their future.

“From October last year up to date we have managed to dissolve 61 child marriages . And also there are cases such as of defilement which we are following for justice to prevail.

“You can see that this has been possible because of the capacity building meetings which organisations such as PYAO have been conducting in this area,” said Haleke.

He has since asked the stakeholders to join hands to curb the malpractice which is fueling poverty among youths as they enter into these marriages unprepared.

Phalombe district Social Welfare Assistant, Stanley Gundeni thanked PYAO in a separate interview for its support towards initiatives of ending violence against girls and women, and also children protection.

“PYAO and other organisations should continue this good job, we are thankful for their support and look at these young children that have been rescued and returned to school.

Stanford Chidule, Programmes Officer 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 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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Contraceptives on the demand, PYAO committed for help

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Banda (left) handing over condoms to a happy YCBDA

PYAO's Condoms coordinator, Yasin Banda, has conceded that there is need fill condoms stocks to its full capacity as they are on the demand in the district.

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

"Condoms seem to be on the demand hence you see that we are filling our stocks so that we should not be out of stock.

"As you know we are reaching every corner of this district distributing them to the youth clubs and the members of the community, its our promise that we will continue doing that," he said.

However Banda has advised youths to avoid not having unprotected sex saying that will ruin their future and he has since advised them to find any youth community based distribution agents (YCBDAs) available in their areas for assistance every time when the need arises.

Thomas who is one of the YCBDAs in traditional authority Kaledzera said in a separate interview that they (YCBDAs) make sure that condoms are made available in all the places in their respective areas.

"We distribute these condoms to barber-shops , saloons and every corner that people should be getting them freely ," said Thomas.



Covid-19 thimwaha
wawoona nawe
asombwe, hankoni
nikhalla arachi
ohundiha antu
amodtha dtha
eretella

FP
FAMILY PLANNING
2020

Youth workers trained on use of emergency contraceptive pills



Facilitators on 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.

Family Planning Coordinator for Phalombe, Ganizani Paul, said during a one-day long training organized by Phalombe Youth Arms Organization (PYAO) that there is 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 in the first wave last year registered over 3000 teenage pregnancies.

"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 usage by youths in the communities, averting unwanted pregnancies in the long run," he said.

Among other trained people are 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 were are trained we'll be able to help our fellow youths as in the past some were buying in the 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

Some Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) from sub traditional authority Nyambalo in Phalombe district have been trained on how they can manage their resources.

The training was part of equipping them with knowledge that would make them independent thereby protecting them from different kind of abuse they get whenever they're dependent.

Programmes Manager for PYAO, Stanford Chidule, said at first the AGYWs were trained how to bake different foods.

He said now they have ventured into business hence the organisation thought of bringing the Village Savings and Loans (VSL) training.

"We want them to be able to save whatever they will be getting and be able to invest more so that their business should go bigger.

"I know they are capable of making it in this kind of business, we'll be supporting them," said Chidule.



Part of the training

The Chairperson of the group, Magret Molande, in her remarks said they can see the difference from their past and now since they are able now to get some basic needs.

"We are able to buy relish or soap through this business, we see a future in this," she said.

Youths want more funding in the youth department

Youths in Phalombe district have asked government to consider increasing budget toward the youth departments of the different district councils.

The youths said this after analyzing 2019-2020, 2020-2021 financial year budgets for Phalombe district with funding from NDI Malawi

One of the youths, Patrick Madeya, says there are a lot of resources channeled to other sectors who have less activities that the youth sector.

" Look at these revelations, it has clearly shown that the youth department is less funded than other departments, there is need to increase the funding for the youth officer to execute his roles and responsibilities effectively," he said.

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 if they feel something is not right.

"Look they've analyzed the budgets on their own and have observed deficiencies towards the youth sector, this commendable, youths have a right to question authorities," he said.



Less funding worries her: Madeya

Phalombe Council urged to take projects supervision 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 so that contractors should not be doing shoddy works.

The plea was made during a virtual interface meeting which was organized by Phalombe Youth Arms Organization (PYAO) as youth leaders across the district were presenting 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 supervision of the projects in the district is one of factors contributing to substandard works being done.

“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 e.g. checking the site of the project, digging of the foundation, Concrete or slab level, window level, beam filling level, roofing level etc.

“This tendency has contributed to the substandard work being done

by the contractors. The council should bear in mind that these building will be accommodating persons which 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 and 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 says especially findings of issues pertaining the construction of the 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, however, also 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, I want to ask our council secretariat to take matters of monitoring and evaluation very serious, 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 does the monitoring and evaluation of the projects but he was quick to ask citizens to be engaging the council if they notice something.

“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 project was to enable the service providers (District Council) to conduct a 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 implemented this 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



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



7 Participant asking a question

Low budget allocation worries youths



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

“Look at that amount, what can a sector like health do with that amount in improving YFHS and family planning delivery?”

“There are a lot of things that we have seen in the DIP which have to be looked into by the authorities , if we’re to be satisfied with the service delivery,” she said.

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 issues.

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

When 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.



Councillors promise to lobby for youths representation

Phalombe district Councillors have promised that they will lobby for youth representation in the service committees of health and environment .

This follows worries from the youths that issues to do with Youth Friendly Health Services and Sexual Reproductive Health Services and Rights are not fully being tackled by the council.

Speaking during an interface deliberations which the councillors 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 can be identified by the youth hence we need a youth representative.

“Other 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, Moses Kathumba, applauded he Councillors 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.

“Indeed we need representation in the health service committee , this is what we’re advocating, we won’t sleep until that happen,” he said.



Commends the decision : Chidule



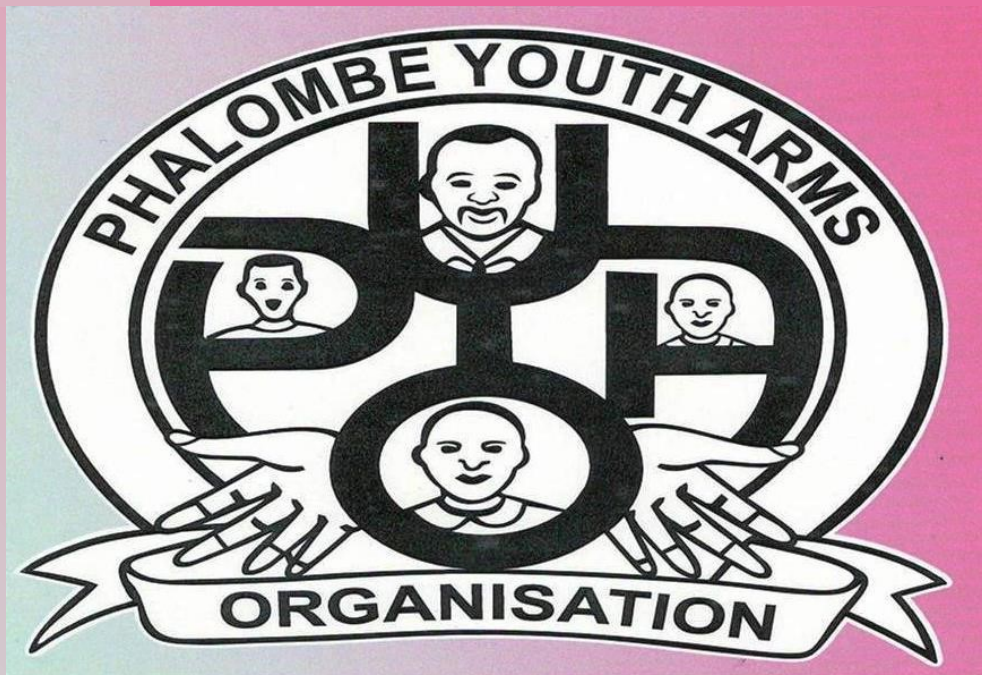
NOTICE TO OUR READERS

This is to notify you that in this *Newsletter* we just highlight some 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



POSITIVE ACTION