

Geen grenzen aan mensen

H<sup>2</sup>VOS



**STAR Program**  
**The Child Helpline, *“Let the child speak”***  
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## **1. Introduction**

Half a year after our first visit to Yoneco we paid a second visit to Zomba. From the minute we arrived from the airport at the Yoneco office we were impressed with the progress that the team has made. The office of the Child Helpline had become a reality and even at weekends enthusiastic and motivated volunteers were answering the phone. During this week our goal was to extend their knowledge on ICT, especially on computer skills and the technical aspects of the Child Helpline. Due to the team's eagerness to learn the week (and the Helpline) has become a success.

We were very pleased to see that the Helpline has taken off so well, the volunteers have taken their job very serious and have managed to set up a very professional organization. The helpline has proven to be a very important component in an overall ambition to create awareness on HIV/AIDS, woman and child rights and sexual issues. As the rural area of Malawi is very underdeveloped especially the outreach programs into the rural areas prove to be very valuable. This also emphasizes that the line itself and ICT is only part of a much bigger solution. The ICT component will especially help the Yoneco staff in managing, structuring, obtaining and sharing information. As the Helpline grows especially the management of the calls will add value to the organization. Besides that, an overall better knowledge of ICT with the volunteers will eventually improve their ability to structure their and share their knowledge.

## **2. Program**

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00:00 AM	Internet training	Excel training	Meeting telecom agency	Evaluation of Child Helpline in 6 months
1200				
1400	Internet training	Awareness meeting		Evaluation
1700	End of day 1	End of day 2	End of day 3	End of day 4

### **3. Description of the program**

#### **DAY 1**

##### **Internet training**

After a short introduction and update of the project we spent the rest of the day giving a brief internet training. The objective of the training was to give the volunteers a practical training for the use of internet, specifically in the situation of Yoneco. The training consisted of three main parts:

- Basic introduction
- Answering questions from the volunteers regarding their internet needs
- Practical assignments

In the basic training we gave an overview of the basic features of the internet and use of the World Wide Web. It was very good to see that there was a lot of eagerness to learn and that there were quite a few relevant questions. In some small practical exercises it was obvious that there was some difference in knowledge of the internet. One of the things that pleased us very much was that through teamwork they managed to teach each other. The feedback from the group was that this way of learning was perceived as very effective. It has also resulted in a renewed confidence to learn more things. Through the books we also brought we believe that the group will be very capable to develop themselves more.

We also gave opportunity for the volunteers to ask questions regarding the internet. We took the time to answer all open questions the volunteers had and also made sure that the answers were practiced in the form of exercises by the rest of the group.

As the last part of the training we felt that it was important that the volunteers learned to use internet to gather information on topics where they might not have all information at hand. We believe this will help them to grow autonomously. This training was perceived to be very useful by the volunteers. Through the assignment the volunteers learned more on effectively looking up information on the internet. By using actual questions from the helpline we were able to demonstrate that most answers could be found, but that it is very important to search effectively. We also brought a book on Google which will help them develop their skills more. Another aspect we hope that the internet can contribute to is the overall level of knowledge. Some myths, for example about sexual issues, can be put in a broader vision when finding facts on the internet.

Questions that were looked up at the internet were;

- Can the fluids in a condom cause cancer?
- Who was the first patient with HIV/Aids?
- How do Siamese twins origin?
- Why do people who love each other close their eyes while kissing?
- Which blood type is more recipient to HIV/Aids?
- How is it possible that a man, who has sex with a woman who has had an abortion, dies?
- Why can a mosquito not transmit HIV/Aids, while needles can?
- Why is it advisable to wear a female condom a while before having sex?

#### **DAY 2**

##### **Excel training**

On the second day the training of excel was scheduled. The whole team of volunteers participated at the training, which was based on a beginner's level of Excel.

The following subjects were on the agenda:

- what is excel
- open, save and new worksheet
- entering data
- the active cell

- selecting and copying multiple cells
- making basic calculations; add, subtract, multiply and divide
- the undo function
- Auto Sum; min, max, average and count

The training was given with a Powerpoint presentation and examples in Excel, in which we gladly made use of the beamer at the Yoneco office. The training was based on the principles of the book Excel for dummies, which was given to Yoneco as a reference book.

All the volunteers practiced during the training on the diverse functions, like entering data, copying multiple cells and calculating averages.

The last part of the training was making a budget in excel. An example was created of a fictional workshop with different cost aspects. The team practiced on translating the information from text into a calculation. It took the team some time to create some logic in a worksheet in excel. Luckily with the help of each other they managed quite well.

On the last day of our visit we kept a wrap up session for all the remaining excel and internet questions. Together we also had a look at the database and answered the more complex questions about excel, which mainly Victor experienced. With these actions we are sure that all the desired information can be gathered from the database.

## **DAY 2**

### **Awareness meeting**

One of the children who received help by the Child Helpline was a small boy who was severely punished by his stepparents. To create more awareness on children's rights awareness meetings are organized at which the volunteers give more information and share ideas. This afternoon we went to a village, where the local leaders had gathered for the visit of Yoneco.

The awareness meeting was attended by Khumbo, Victor and Pacharo by Yoneco and was extraordinarily well organized. After a long and dusty ride by car we arrived in the village where about thirty men and women awaited Yoneco. After an extensive welcome and introduction of the village leaders the meeting officially started with a prayer. Khumbo initiated the discussion on children's rights by trying to assess their knowledge on the rights of children. Questions were asked about the position of children in Malawi; according to the law and in their community. A discussion followed on this subject in which also Pacharo and Victor participated in a very professional way. The Child Helpline was mentioned in the last part and many questions were asked about the Helpline itself.

The meeting was closed with enthusiasm of the village leaders and with the drinking of a Coke and the eating of some bread.

Although our Chechewa is not that good... we received some translation by the volunteers but remarked during the entire meeting that the (young) volunteers were really taking seriously. The right tone was definitely found and the number of the Child Helpline was written many times.

## **DAY 3**

### **Telecom operator visit**

This day we visited Telkom Malawi Networks, one of the two mobile operators in Malawi. We discussed the possibility of opening a toll free number in their network and other possible partnerships between Yoneco and Telkom Malawi.

The toll free number would be possible in their network. They advised Yoneco to contact Malawian regulator, Makra, to apply for a cross network number. This way Yoneco would be able to open a number which can be implemented in all networks in Malawi. They did express some concern on the fact that the helpline only has one incoming line at the moment. As mobile customers often see the

availability of a number as a mobile network issue they feared that if the helpline started getting more extra calls that it would have a negative effect on their customer satisfaction.

Telkom also mentioned that they would be willing to share their knowledge on call centers. We suspect that they are actually looking to sell some of their call center solutions to Yoneco.

Overall the meeting was very positive but we believe that Yoneco should try to be more in the lead when handling with them. They make a lot of promises but are often very poor in the follow up.

#### **DAY 4 Evaluation**

The last day the evaluation of the project so far was scheduled. Also the last questions on internet and excel were on the agenda and a wrap up meeting with Masozi.

Notes have been made on all the issues of the evaluation and these will be handed separately. The main issues were:

- Solving the technical issues (eg stories of incidental billing of the calls)
- Connecting the mobile operators
- Megaphone (at awareness meetings the volume of the volunteers is not enough)
- Sharing of information in a weekly meeting (the information from the database is not shared within the team and a moment is still missing in which they share their questions)

We emphasized the importance of a strategic plan per telecom operator to ensure that the actions are followed up. It is important that Yoneco initiates a pro active approach towards the operators and meet with them regularly.

#### **4. Conclusions**

- The team has grown thoroughly and all volunteers feel comfortable with their responsibilities. While during earlier contacts they mentioned their need for further training or information on counseling or medical information, they now showed confidence.
- The team had definitely grown into taking and sharing the responsibilities. All the members still participated and the project organization of half a year ago was still intact. Also Masozi seemed more relaxed and seemed to have delegated more responsibilities.
- All the volunteers had more profound opinions about the Child Helpline and have a broad idea of the activities of the Child Helpline. It is still a bit uneasy to share your own opinion for the different group members instead of making a SWOT analysis or working in pairs. However they all have good ideas and are really committed to the Child Helpline.
- Some volunteers, like Victor, have already made excel entirely theirs by extensive studying and practicing. All volunteers were really eager to enlarge their computer skills. All of them wanted to practice even when for some it was harder than others to use the computer. A special session on the database was attended by the entire group, although it required intermediate skills which not the entire group had.
- The number of calls is rising. The number of calls can still be quite well managed with an excel database in our point of view. However the learning ability of the team and their motivation ensures that a new database will be implemented quite well. In our opinion the time has come to make a next step towards either Access or a specifically designed software package. The big advantage of excel is that is really easy and that the knowledge of the program is a sustainable investment in the entire staff team. With current enthusiastic team members like Ian and Victor it seems like a new step in the professionalizing of the Child Helpline can be made.

- The contacts with the network are quite good, although the social structure in Malawi is still poor and this is noticeable in the network.
- The telecom operators have not had enough attention or the cooperation have not yielded the success yet. The rerouting of the calls and the possibility to call the line with a mobile have not been accomplished. Malawi Telecom did promise these two options in our meeting half a year ago. The national operator is not the partner in business which you would hope for. The meeting with Celltel in August and the meeting with MTN now showed that the mobile operators were a bit more cooperative. MTN was willing to sell all their products, even when they were not useful.... To the disappointment of Yoneco a separate number has to be opened for the mobile callers. To ensure that progress is being made with the telecom operators a special plan per operator has to be made.
- As a gift we gave management and ICT books to the team. Especially easy reference books like Excel for dummies; books about projectmanagement and internet books were already used during our stay.
- We were happy to see that many of the initiatives of our August visit were still working. For example the form at which every call is filled in, is still registered with every call. It seems like these aspects still fulfill the organization's wishes.
- Overall we were impressed with the harsh responsibility that the volunteers have. For example Bornrich went into the village to bring back two children to the village where they belonged. Bornrich spent time with the parents, who were responsible for abuse, and with other family of the two children.

## **5.) Recommendations for STAR Program**

We would advise the new volunteers to take the following aspects into account;

### Short term (2007-2008)

- The database in excel is filed very well and the knowledge of the team is quite well. Some volunteers have trained themselves really well and showed their ICT skills. Although the database is easy to use and all the desired information can be abstracted, it could be a good year to grow into access database. The idea of a new version of the database will be welcomed and will make the team proud and we have the faith in the skills of the team that they are up to it.
- The operators deserve additional attention and at a next visit all the operators should be visited (preferably in the beginning of the visit).
- The Child Helpline team will hopefully share their questions and information on a regularly basis in which they make the optimal use of each others strengths.

### Long term (2008-2009)

- The Child Helpline has the potential to be implemented in Malawi on a national level. This might be best done in cooperation with other NGO's.