

YOUTHFIRST!

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Issue. 1

Young People in Malawi Fight against Unfair Trade

Over seventy youths from surrounding areas of Blantyre city converged at the Old Mutual offices next to the symbolic -Hong Kong Restaurant- to demand trade justice and sanity in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The demonstration which was preceded by a day long seminar held at the Malawi Polytechnic on 16th December 2005 was organized by a network of youth groups within the city of Blantyre. During the demonstration the youth sang and chanted anti-WTO songs and pleaded with the Trade Ministers then meeting in Hong Kong for the 6th Ministerial Conference (MC6) to consider the plight of the farmers and the people living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi who are affected by the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) respectively. Clad in white bands the youth demonstrated peacefully through the streets of Blantyre City centre. They were later joined by other people as they made their way through the busy streets.



The demonstrations which were under the auspices of Oxfam International Youth Parliament (OIYP) through the Young Advocates for the Advancement of ICT-related Development (Y.A.A.ICT-D) took the marchers to the Blantyre Youth Center (BYC) where a free concert was held thereafter. At the concert the Young Generations teamed with another youthful Musician,

Steven Kachingwe to entertain the crowd that had gathered at the function.

In a related development the Machinga Youth Network comprising ten (10) youth groups organized a protest march against the resolutions of the MC6 called "You Spoiled Our Party" on the 24th December 2005 at Nsanama. The march was just as was the case in Blantyre preceded by a briefing session for the youth and other community members that had come to grace the occasion.

Among the marchers was the Member of Parliament (MP) for the area Honourable Ernest Yahaya. In his address at the end of the event the MP urged the youth to take the campaign on trade justice seriously because trade rules are impacting greatly on the rural people. He cited examples of the proposed privatization of the Water Boards and the done and as-good-as-dust sale of Malawi Telecommunications Limited (MTL) as a clear sign of unfair trade practices rearing their ugly head. At this point the MP echoed the earlier appeal by the other speakers notably the Campaign Coordinator not to trade the rights of the citizens. This was a direct attack on WTO, which holds the view that water is a service, and therefore can be traded.



This is how it was during the match.

Young People in Africa Embrace ICT

The world has entered the Knowledge and Information Society, driven by information and intellectual products as raw materials. In this context, the ability to transmit data over information and communication. Infrastructure is a crucial resource for any nation to participate effectively in the global information society and to address development challenges. The successful deployment of information and communication technologies can contribute to the development of knowledge societies in the countries on the continent and contribute to bridging the digital divide.

Children and young people are a very appropriate target group for ICT initiatives. The range of beneficial impacts of ICT exposure and training on young people is extensive. In addition, young people are generally very enthusiastic about new technologies and quick to learn new skills. While young people are motivated, it is therefore important that competent and knowledgeable adults support their experience with ICTs. This support and guidance are critical to the long-term success of these initiatives.

The importance of effective training and ongoing support for educators cannot be underestimated. There needs to be assurance that ICTs are used effectively to teach and promote true learning. Providing access to ICTs is only a first step. Making sure that this access is transformed into productive use remains a key challenge. Youth ICT initiatives can be used to address issues ranging from basic education access to promoting HIV/AIDS prevention.

The technology should be widely available and apply to a cross-section of challenges that confront youth. There are however a number of problems that prevent youth from accessing ICT, some of these are;

- High cost of attaining ICT knowledge which is very prohibitive to people, especially the youths most of whom are not employed.
- Lack of infrastructure and equipment, for example low per capita computer count, the need to extend telephone lines to the rural areas.
- Unavailability of electricity power supply especially in the rural areas given the fact that most ICT depends on electricity.
- Limited Networks and Contacts and lack of funding

Empowering Aids Orphans

(E.A.O)

E.A.O. is a youth initiative whose aim is to reach out to youths, especially Orphans, whether (infected and affected) with HIV/AIDS, and give them a message of hope. This project was conceived in 2002, but actions taken towards this cause came into being in the year 2003. The project aims to empower the orphans Economically, Socially, Spiritually and in the knowledge about AIDS, so that they can also contribute in the fight and development process of the nation as a whole. This is supposed to be a spontaneous and "contagious" cause in that these empowered Orphans will also be challenged to assist in the subsequent empowerment of other orphans and the chain is expected to go on and on and...

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has caused a lot of damage to our world and Malawi in particular. To this effect it has generated close to a million orphans in Malawi. Statistics show that over 80,000 orphans are generated each year. We cannot therefore overlook this material figure and portion of the country's population in the development process of the nation. We believe the philosophy that the concerned party has to be included in any problem solving process and so the youth and Aids orphans, in particular should be instrumental in the fight

HIV/AIDS is neither an abstract reality nor an underestimated event in the history of this age. It is something that is real and we live with it. Almost everyone is either infected or affected by the disease. The toll that this pandemic has had on every one of us cannot in anyway be overemphasized. To say that we are going to have this problem for the next foreseeable future is not a pessimistic view per se, but rather a realistic one, and hence the need for sustainable strategies to deal with the problem. E.A.O. aims to be part of that sustainable solution.

Funds permitting E.A.O. will organize an Aids Conference and Training workshops for a number of young people who are either infected or affected by the pandemic. Prior to that, E.A.O. will organize a 67 km bicycle ride aimed at disseminating HIV/AIDS information, as well as raising funds for the forthcoming conference and Training Workshops.

For more information send your requests to eaomw@yahoo.com

FEATURED YOUTH ORGANISATION

Youth Action in Social Economic Development

(Y.A.C.S.E.D.)

Youth Action in Social Economic Development (YACSED) is a local youth led non-governmental organization in Malawi whose activities focus on the facilitation of different projects and activities for the enhancement of the social and economic life of Malawians. It targets the youths who form the majority of the Malawian population. According to the Executive Director, Mr. Aaron Chirambo the youths are in nature strong and energetic such that if they could be fully utilized and well oriented, they can form a strong human resource with the capacity to transform the Malawi Economy. YACSED) may be a relatively new youth NGO among the numerous youth organization blossoming in the country, but its strength and relevance lies in the uniqueness of its aims and strategies. One of its aims is to promote young people's participation in Social Economic Development through education

awareness and campaign for their participation in social economic activities that directly or indirectly affect them. At the moment YACSED is concentrating on four districts, namely, Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Mwanza and Balaka, where it has organized youth groups that are working towards realizing the goals of the organization. One of the issues that YACSED has adopted in its programmes is the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs is relatively new to many young NGOs, although they are just a collection of indicators of what a developing Nation should look like, which many countries are already pursuing under different programmes, the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy being an example in Malawi. But the fact that they have been redefined and assigned targets and deadlines by the United Nations adds more credit to them.



Young people like these need to learn effective ways to participate in the Socio-Economic Development of their Countries

OPPORTUNITIES! OPPORTUNITIES!

AFRICAN YOUTH POLICIES ANALYSIS NETWORK (Y-PAN)



Policies always are an integral component of our daily lives as they influence and direct the development process at all levels. They have a power to direct our lives to prosperity or to destruction. The good news is that we, the people for whom the policies are made, have the power to positively influence the Policy formulation and implementation process.

Y-PAN is an initiative aimed at reviewing the African Youth Policies and also advocate for the introduction of such policies in countries that do not have them. Y-PAN also plans to lobby for the installation of Ministries responsible youths as well as the establishment of National Youth Councils all over Africa.

For more information on participation and other inquiries, send an email to: youthfirst@africamail.com

PLEASE SEND IN ANY OPPORTUNITIES THAT SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE USING THE ABOVE EMAIL ADDRESS

Conference and Bicycle Ride Participation

Empowering Aids Orphans is in the process of planning for an Empowerment Conference. Funds permitting E.A.O. will organize an Aids Conference and Training workshops for a number of young people who are either infected or affected by the pandemic. Prior To that E.A.O. will organize a 67 km bicycle ride aimed at disseminating HIV/AIDS information, as well as raising funds for the forthcoming conference and Training Workshops.

EAO is therefore calling on young people that have a passion for other young people that are suffering because of the pandemic and would wish to participate either in the bicycle ride or volunteer to assist in facilitating the conference to register their interest with EAO.

For more information send your requests to eaomw@yahoo.com

Youthfirst! Journal

Do you want to be a young Publisher? To be read by thousands of young people and Policy makers countrywide and beyond borders? Do you wish to contribute to the body of knowledge and influence Policy formulation and Decision-making but have not had the right chance to do so? This is your chance! **Youthfirst!** is a youth initiative that aims at creating space for young people to effectively participate in matters of Policy and Decision making at all levels, as well enabling young people to voice out their concerns to Policy and Decision makers. One of the activities that this initiative uses to achieve its goals is the production of a Youth Development conscious Journal. It is in this line that **Youthfirst!** is calling for abstracts for journal articles to be included in the first ever Multidisciplinary Youth Development Journal highlighting various aspects of development in relation to youths.

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YOUTHFIRST! NEWS

About Youthfirst!

Youthfirst! is a youth initiative that aims at creating space for young people to effectively participate in matters of Policy and Decision making at all levels as well as enabling young people to voice out their concerns to Policy and Decision makers. **Youthfirst!** realizes that, holding everything constant, the youth are the ones that are going to live more in the impending future and hence the assertion that they should be **fully** involved in Policy formulation and implementation as well as Decision-making.

One of the activities that this initiative uses to achieve its goals is the production of a Youth Development conscious Journal. Work on the inaugural edition of this Journal is underway and is expected to be out soon.

Current Activities

Youthfirst! is calling for abstracts for journal articles to be included in the first ever Multidisciplinary Youth Development Journal highlighting various aspects of development in relation to youths. At the moment Youthfirst! is in the process of developing the first ever youth development conscious Journal. The Journal will be composed of articles, research papers, Book reviews, Scenario Analyses and other works by young people.

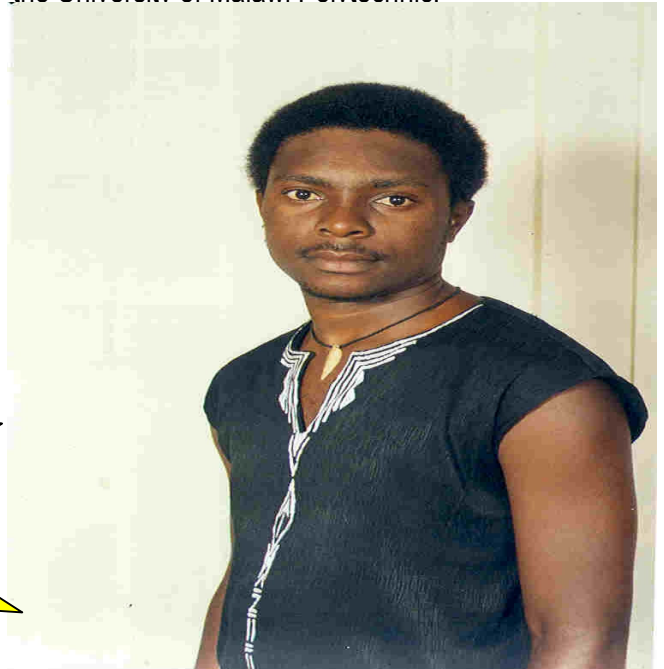
With the availability of funds, youthfirst! will go ahead with the production of the first ever youth Magazine, which will be an upgrade of Youthfirst! Newsletter.

Youthfirst! is read by thousands of young people across the globe. This is the Inaugural edition of this Newsletter. You are therefore invited to contribute in the coming issues. You can send in organisational profiles, Youth News, Opportunities, and many others you may think of. Suggestions for improvement are very welcome.

Young Designer Takes Fashion to another Cultural Dimension

As many areas and sectors of the Economy continue to develop, Fashion is also coping up with the pace. In Malawi, there is much talk of women and youth empowerment economically, but many young people do not want to use their talent to empower themselves economically. One young man has decided to be an exception. Mwayi Namaona together with his good friend Sheena Chilimampungu have teamed up with friends to produce a clothes label dubbed Nzika Wear. Nzika is a "Chewa" name, which means Citizen or native.

The philosophy behind this cloth label is the promotion of culture by identifying with the roots of one's cultural heritage. Mwayi's artistic exploits date back when he was in primary school and his fashion consciousness manifested while he was in secondary school when he used to host and organise beauty and modelling contests. Sheena has successfully participated in a number of beauty contests. She was once First Princess for the Miss University of Malawi. She is currently the second princess for Blantyre Newspapers Model of the year. Sheena is also a Bachelor of Commerce Student at the University of Malawi Polytechnic.



A sample of some of the designs by the Nzika Label.

Lessons in Stories

A young woman was finishing her first year of college. Like so many others her age, she considered herself to be a liberal Democrat and was for the fair redistribution of wealth. She felt deeply embarrassed that her father was a life-long Republican, which she opposed openly.

One day she was challenging her father on his beliefs, particularly his opposition to higher taxes and more entitlement programs. In the middle of her heartfelt diatribe, based upon lectures she had from her left-wing professors at school, he stopped and asked her, point blank, how she was doing in school.

She answered rather haughtily that she had a 4.0 GPA, and let him know that it was tough to maintain. She had to study all the time, and rarely had time to go out and party. She barely had time for a boyfriend, and didn't really enjoy many college activities because of spending so much time studying. In addition, she continued, she was taking a very difficult curriculum.

Her father listened and then asked, "How is your friend Mary?" She replied, "Mary is just getting by." She continued, "She barely has a 2.0 GPA," adding, "and all she takes are very easy classes and she never studies." Explaining further, she continued emotionally, "But Mary is so very popular on campus, college for her is a blast. She goes to all the parties, and very often doesn't even show up for classes because she is hung over."

Her father then asked his daughter, "Why don't you go down to the Dean's office and ask him to deduct a 1.0 off your 4.0 GPA and give it to your friend who only has a 2.0." He continued, "That way you will both have a 3.0 GPA and certainly that would be a fair, equal distribution of GPA."

The daughter, visibly shocked by her father's suggestion, angrily fired back, "That wouldn't be fair! I worked really hard for my grades. I did without, and Mary has done little or nothing. She played while I worked real hard!"

"Welcome to the Republican Party," her father said smiling

MORAL: Young people let us be careful with our arguments, we have to be prepared for tricksters that can rope us with petty argument.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The development process of many African countries and other developing nations continue to suffer heavily because of Trade injustices usually perpetrated by developed nations.

Young people, are mostly affected because they usually have less purchasing power compared to their elderly counterparts.

It is the duty of every young person, whether from developed nations or the third world to stand up against trade injustice in the world. Holding everything constant, young people are the ones that are going to live more in this world and certainly face and experience the heaviest of the impact of these injustices. These injustices only serve to widen the gap that is existent between the rich and the poor, which is a negative as far as development is concerned.

Consider the following statistics to appreciate the extent of the problem.

Three richest people in the world possess more financial assets than the poorest 10% of the world's population i.e. 600 million.

The richest 50 individuals in the world have a combined income greater than that of the poorest 416 million people.

40% of the world's population receives only 5% of the world's income.

54 % of global income goes to the richest 10% of the world's population.

Do something about it!!