



PHOTOGRAPH: BRENDA TWEA

Adolescents getting a make-over at the booth

## Youths corps impacting on communities

BRENDA TWEA  
STAFF REPORTER

As youths continue to understand the need to impact on the lives of others, many of them have joined CorpsAfrica Malawi, becoming part of the solution to the challenges affecting their communities.

Corps Africa is a non-profit organisation founded in 2011 by a former Peace Corps volunteer seeking to recognise and build on Peace Corps enormous success by offering the same transformative experience to emerging leaders in Africa.

Celebrating the holidays with her community recently, CorpsAfrica Malawi volunteer Ireen Kanjala partnered with Child Legacy, 77 Group Limited and Peach Tree Foundation to hold an event for primary school children.

The event was focused around health, nutrition and environmental education for those who attended.

The pupils drew pictures, sang songs, wrote poems and performed drama to bring awareness to living a healthy life and protecting the environment.

At the end of the day, the pupils received a nutritious meal and a holiday gift.

On the other hand, Mildred Chirwa, 25, decided to do something about the rising numbers of girls dropping out of school because of early marriages and early pregnancies.

She brought together 22 girls and set up a Girls Lead Our World (Glow) Club that would encourage them to take leadership positions in all spheres of their lives from schools, home, village and church.



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The aftermath of the make-over

"I am here in Kasungu North where many adolescent girls drop out of school and get married at an early age [as early as 14]. I'm sure this Glow Club will assist them to make sound decisions concerning their life choices and be confident of their decisions to lead meaningful lives as individuals and as a group," she said.

As part of the integration project, she recently had a meeting with girls and young women and set up a make-up booth with the theme, Promoting and Protecting Sexual Reproductive Health for Girls.

"The aim of the booth was to discuss how girls and young women can protect and promote their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights [SRHR]. I invited all the girls and young women in the villages around by collaborating with the women's group and the youth club. We discussed SRHR issues as we shaped each other's eyebrows and painted nails," she explained.

Chisomo Mathamanga, 17, from Boni Village was part of the exercise and was positive it would help her to make the right choices in life.

"We learnt a lot and from the knowledge, we will be able to make more informed choices. For instance, we will stay away from early marriages because now we know that early marriages lead to early pregnancies, which in turn lead to complications in child birth, such as fistula," she said.

Hope Mawerenga, 24, from Lilongwe is also a CorpsAfrica Malawi volunteer. She explained that she learned from her mother that life is lived to the fullest if lived for others.

Going by that kind of thinking, she noted that being able to help someone become a better version of themselves is what everybody should be doing, and that being a part of CorpsAfrica Malawi volunteers will help her to do that. ■

Pick Me  
Up  
**Poetry**

I don't love you  
except because  
I love you

I do not love you  
except because I love  
you;

I go from loving to  
not loving you,  
From waiting to not  
waiting for you  
My heart moves  
from cold to fire.

I love you only  
because it's you the  
one I love;

I hate you deeply,  
and hating you

Bend to you, and  
the measure of my  
changing love for you

Is that I do not  
see you but love you  
blindly.

Maybe January light  
will consume

My heart with its  
cruel

Ray, stealing my key  
to true calm.

In this part of the  
story I am the one  
who

Dies, the only one,  
and I will die of love  
because I love you,

Because I love you,  
Love, in fire and blood.

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