



The Mat. South Bulletin

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Editor's Note

Zimbabwe is entering a critical time that often result in an increase of human rights violations and shrinkage of democratic spaces. This is the period of political campaigns and elections. The presence of the deadly COVID 19 pandemic will likely exacerbate democracy deterioration, hence the need to continue lobbying authorities to follow the Constitution terms, and allow the public to exercise their rights without any persecutions or threats.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has initiated the voter registration process in every district of Zimbabwe while some political parties have already started to encourage people to go and register to vote. In this latest newsletter, CYDT brings into awareness challenges faced by young people in Mat South who want to be registered. Some of the stumbling blocks observed by CYDT include the lack of voter registration centres and national identity cards.

With the presence of Coronavirus and financial difficulties some youth are failing to visit ZEC's District offices. Long queues were also observed by CYDT in the Registry Offices as

young people try to obtain their national identity cards. The newsletter goes on to highlight the togetherness of Matabeleland south Community Based Organisations in fighting for the development of the province. Despite continued opposition of the Amendment Bill Number 2 by the organisation, young people and other CBOs, the Bill was signed into law on May this year.

Therefore in this addition, we also brings to the fore the youth voices in relation to the passing of the Amendment Bill Number 2 into law; their concerns and the way forward. Realising that for the proper development of young people, youth friendly policies, strategies and laws must be gazetted, this edition also features an article that lobbies duty bearers to design youth friendly policies.

We hope you have a great reading, and your feedback will be appreciated.

Zwakala Ntanga!

Bongie



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Youths appreciate EYVG project

THE Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) has been, for the past 12 months, implementing a project entitled Enhancing Youth Voice in Governance (EYVG) in five project areas namely Matobo, Bulilima, Umzingwane, Gwanda and Beitbridge. The project sought to build youth capacities so that they are able to defend their rights, seek accountability and transparency in all governance levels. After the project conclusion, CYDT spoke with five youth from the five project areas to evaluate the impact of the project since they were the target audience. Here is what they said.

Nhlanhla Gumbo from Bulilima



The project had a major impact on me personally. I was equipped with knowledge that I never had before, especially concerning issues of governance and human rights; I can safely say I am now more conscious than I was before.

Through training held, one in particular, training on public policy formulation, as youth from Bulilima we managed to take it to practicality by advocating for policy change at local level especially pertaining to water issues. I was really empowered and motivated to actively participate and inform democratic governance both at local and national level. On the other hand, finding facts and root causes of a certain problem before complaining was one skill that I obtained from this project, not forgetting the knowledge I got of the constitution and how I am responsible for the change in my community. That in itself gave me the zeal to attend meetings held by the local authority such as those of the budget and public hearings brought by the parliament. I am seeing a change and I am part of the change.

Thandiwe Nkomboni from Beitbridge



I am one person who was ignorant of laws that govern the country, especially the Constitution. If I was a car, I would say my fuel was on zero. I was invited to a CYDT activity entitled Constitutional Literacy forum by a friend of mine. All I

can say is that my eyes were opened on that day. I can simply say that I now have the zeal to bring about change in my country. Hence, I am one of those young women who are interested in seeing that policies that are formulated in the country promote active youth leadership in preparation for the next elections. I understand this project is coming to an end and I know there is a new one on the cards; all I can say is that as someone who gained knowledge, I was never selfish with it. I have been sharing the information with some of my friends and neighbours. I have become one of the CYDT organisers and mobilisers on the ground after the structure on the ground realised the passion I have for information dissemination on the constitution.

Similo Ndlovu from UMzingwane

I can safely say that this project “enhancing youth voice in governance” has been an eye opener. I am now empowered to actively and effectively participate in governance processes and issues. Not only am I talking about my presence on such platforms, but I am confident enough to question and air my views. I know that my voice is important in policy formulation; hence, I have made it a point that if I have any issues to raise, I always channel them to my MP. This way, I know that the little information that I would have channelled to my MP will get to Parliament and be recorded. I hope that CYDT shall continue to impart and empower youth to take charge of their destiny because I believe the present and the future belongs to us the youth.



To successfully deal with the challenges faced by young people in Matabeleland South Province, teamwork and engagement between the province's CBOs is imperative, hence the formation of Matabeleland Alliance Community Based Organisations (Mat Alliance CBOs). One of the challenges faced by Mat Alliance CBOs is lack of visibility and platforms to share their work. As such, the Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) has so far provided platforms where CBOs share knowledge and experiences in relation to their work to increase their visibility. Godlwayo Community Development Trust (GCDT) is one of those organisations working hard to improve Insiza District in the province. CYDT project officer, Linda Mpofu (LM) took her time to talk to GCDT Director Nkululeko Tshuma (NT) to know more about the organisation and the work they are doing in the district of Insiza. Find below excerpts from the interview.

LM: Tell us about your trust, what do you do and which areas do you work in?

NT: Godlwayo Community Development Trust is a community based responsive organisation formed by the community of Filabusi-Insiza District in Matabeleland South Province and registered in 2015 as a Trust. The organisation is governed by a board whose members are drawn from Filabusi, blessed with various professional experiences and is involved in activities which include the following:

- Peace building, conflict transformation and capacity building, these are training on leadership, mediation and negotiation, peace education and we do production of documentaries around these activities.
- Civic education and human rights advocacy-Constitution education, human rights education, education on citizenship governance, citizen participation and elections.
- Gender, reproductive health education and advocacy-reproductive health education and awareness, reproductive health rights advocacy, gender mainstreaming, support for health and education institutions.
- Livelihoods and sustainable development- income generating activities, skills development, career guidance, climate change, capacity building and adaptation strategies, information dissemination and biodiversity.

LM: Describe the roles and responsibility of your organisation in the society

NT: Our role and responsibility is to build the capacity of our community so as to effectively respond to evolving community issues and challenges. To also help disseminate information on development and developing issues.

LM: What motivated the formation of this organisation?

NT: What motivated us to form this organisation was the realisation of the potential that our community has in responding to our community challenges should we be organised in the form of a formal institution, and also having

an organisation started and formed by locals as this ensures sustainability community interventions.

LM: How does your organisation contribute to the realisation of community development?

NT: We have come up with a community development basket fund where we have previously supported our better performing but underprivileged kids to write O' level examinations. Currently, we have a male student doing a degree at the National University of Science and Technology. All this was achieved out of this fund. Currently, we are raising funds to purchase a district hospital industrial washing machine. Also, on information dissemination we have a community radio initiative known as Godlwayo FM where we are in the process of raising some funds through US\$1 monthly contributions so as to do community magazines or newsletters monthly or quarterly, all these being efforts towards community



development.

LM: What are the main challenges or obstacles you encounter whilst helping the community towards development?

NT: Challenges remain there which include polarisation. Some feel we exist to further a certain political agenda, the moment you talk about human rights and democracy agenda you get viewed as an opposition agent.

Delayed community responses in community development group efforts, therefore, affecting timelines for agreed community driven members supported programmes

Migration, as community members some relocate to the diaspora, thereby affecting smooth flow of agreed programs.

LM: What are your future prospects?

NT: We look forward to implementing income generating projects, for example, a massive livestock program or crop program which will help to fund community developmental activities. We also look forward to where community leaders get to own and support the organisation community development initiatives, thereby increasing community ownership.

Southern region community based organisations meet donors

The Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) recently organized a first ever meeting between community-based organisations (CBOs) and donors under the auspices of Alliance of CBOs. Despite the meeting being conducted virtually, CBOs from the southern region of the country managed to interface with potential funding partners and shared the work they do in their respective communities.

The main thrust of the meeting was to provide a platform for CBOs to engage with donors and sell their work as a way of promoting their visibility. This came as a realization that CBOs play an important and relevant role in promoting people-centred development and in providing other key services especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. Their work complements government efforts in improving access to certain services at the same time building citizens' awareness of such.

Therefore, Alliance of CBOs members from the southern region provide a diverse focus which builds on the zeal to bridge the gap between communities and the solution holders. Under the alliance, there are organizations that have a specific focus on promoting youth and women rights while others promote access to education, health and other social services.

However, despite the splendid work they are doing locally, they are faced with a myriad of challenges that include lack of funding, limited operating space and to some extent limited visibility, hence the need to organise the CBO-Donor meeting for relation building and possible funding avenues.

Millicent Nhutsve, Director for Hands of Hope, expressed appreciation for the opportunity they had as they managed to share their work and broad objectives at the same time solicit for future support from the donor community who attended the meeting.

"The donor meeting gave us an opportunity to showcase our work and be able to introduce ourselves to the donors. It was an eye-opener to us as it gave us a platform to be seen and establish relations with the donors," Nhutsve said.

Stacy Nyathi from Matobo Youth Development Initiative concurred with Millicent, adding the meetings should happen more frequently.

"I think meetings like these are quite helpful and need to happen more frequently. CBOs need to interact with donors for better understanding of one another because ultimately

we are all working towards the same goal," Nyathi said.

Nyathi added that the meeting assisted them greatly because now they are more aware of who funds what and who to approach since all funding partners shared their contact details. The relations that were created on the day of the meeting did not just die after the meeting considering that CBOs continue to interact and engage with donors, which is a good sign of genesis for long-lasting relations as well as trust building.

As such, in a quest to see relations amongst Alliance of CBOs members going strong and built on learning from each other, CYDT has been coordinating periodic meetings in an effort to promote peer to peer learning and strategic planning and coordination. These meetings were convened every quarter.

It is during these quarterly meetings that most CBOs have been complaining about the lack of funding to carry out their role of providing services to the locals. These platforms organised by CYDT seek to discuss strategies to be undertaken for collective lobbying on key governance issues such as constitutionalism-implementation of the constitution and alignment of laws, human rights lobby and advocacy.

Matabeleland CBOs feel that policy and legislative environment supports the work of CBOs; therefore, there is an opportunity for them to flourish and do even greater.

"The emerging policy and legislative environment are largely supportive of CBO activity, offering a stronger platform for CBOs to lobby relevant authorities for the much-needed support. We, therefore, need to utilise the space so that as CBOs we continue with our work," said Nomcebo Sibanda from Godlwayo Community Development Trust.

Meanwhile, CBOs have implored and called for the continuation of these quarterly meetings as they give focus to most advocacy issues being lobbied. There has been a unanimous agreement that CYDT continues with the leading role.

Youth implore ZEC to decentralise

With the subject of political elections gradually engrossing all corners of the country, Matabeleland South youth have called on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to decentralise its activities which will significantly improve voter registration turnout in the province's remote rural areas.

The province is currently under pressure to maintain its 13 constituencies as fears of low voter registration turnout grow due to the presence of the deadly pandemic as well as the lack of provincial ZEC registration offices.

The 13 Matabeleland South constituencies are Gwanda Central, Gwanda North, Gwanda South, Insiza North, Insiza South, Mangwe, Matobo North, Matobo South, Umzingwane, Beitbridge East, Beitbridge West, Bulilima East and Bulilima West.

With 26 000 voters being the standard or minimum number of a single constituency, low voter registration turnout could potentially see some of the province's constituencies being dissolved.

For instance, if Gwanda North has few registered voters it will be dissolved, and its people will be placed under Gwanda Central or one of the nearby constituencies that meet standards through a delimitation process done by ZEC to divide the country into constituencies for the purpose of elections.

Young people believe the decentralisation of ZEC offices has the potential of increasing voter registration turnout, enabling the province to maintain its 13 constituencies when the delimitation process begins. They said no potential voter will be left out if ZEC decentralises its offices especially at a time when youth are determined to make their voices heard.

The COVID 19 pandemic and lack of transport fares has further worsened the situation as some youth are unable to visit the only available Registry Department and ZEC district offices in Gwanda town to get national identity cards and register to

vote, hence the need for the commission to develop more voter registration centres.

One youth said, "The current prevailing conditions do not allow us to travel to ZEC's district offices which makes it hard for us to register. It is important that ZEC sets up more



registration centres which will enable us to easily go and register to vote."

"It is imperative that more ZEC offices are created in the province to increase voter registration activities which will help us to meet the standard number of a single constituency when the delimitation process is done," another youth added.

Other youth said ZEC should introduce online voter registration that is highly suitable for the prevailing COVID 19 conditions, saying that could possibly increase the participation of young people while mitigating the spread of the pandemic at the same time.

While observations made by the Community Youth Development Trust show that young people are now eager to be part of the activities that have a direct impact on their social and political wellbeing, many of them lack essential documents such as national identity cards.

Young people revealed that the delay in producing national identity cards by the Registry Department was the reason some of them were yet to register to vote; hence they implored the department to swiftly move to assist individuals without the crucial document.

'Develop youth-friendly policies' ...Policy makers told

After being trained on public policy formulation, forum also gave a chance to discuss the need for Matabeleland South youth have lobbied policy stakeholders to listen to the rising youth voices who and decision makers to formulate youth friendly policies that will help provide and expand opportunities for young people to have decent lives as well as contribute towards political, economic and social development.

The youth that took part in CYDT's policy forum activities said while they were aware of the various government strides in trying to deal with youth issues, the government must continue to engage young people on the development and adoption of youth friendly policies.

They said policy and decision makers must establish policies that are in tandem with the youth's social, political and economic needs. In essence, there must be strategies that will enhance youth inclusion in all governance levels.

Young people also said youth policies should provide a clear image of how several issues affecting them will be dealt with. For instance, spell out clear strategies, interventions and sustainable plans.

They believed that well-planned policies will be used as lenses by decision makers to fight all kinds of injustices that have long worsened youth suffrage.

"The policy and decision makers must step up and craft policies that promote youth inclusion in mainstream governance from local to national level. Good policies will enhance a conducive environment for youth inclusion and participation," said Reason Dube.

Another youth, Nompumelelo Sibanda said well-planned youth policies will provide decision makers with a framework to make available resources, services and support that will enable young people to realise their potential and contribute towards sustainable development.

She added that good policies will also stand as tools used to monitor and evaluate the work being done by duty bearers for the purpose of accountability. CYDT's policy



Nompumelelo Sibanda

have long been demanding youth friendly policies. It was suggested that regular engagement between local policy makers and young people was essential in providing young people with an opportunity to spell out all their policy concerns.

For the adoption of youth oriented policies, youth claimed that their inclusion in the policy formulation process was imperative since they understood the gaps that must be covered on the existing youth policies. They encouraged each other to continue intensifying calls for the creation of youth friendly policies that will successfully enhance their inclusion in governance.

The country must have full confidence and trust on the significance of youth and their potential in solving the problems they are facing. Youth constitute the most educated, vibrant, determined and healthiest sector of the population. It is a group of young people with high hopes and aspirations for the future.

Hence, it is imperative that the policy makers broaden youth participation in all governance levels by crafting youth friendly policies, policies that will allow youth to play an important role in the decision making process.

Youths appreciate EYVG project cont'd...



Thamsanqa Ndlukula from Gwanda

CYDT activities have had a positive impact on me as they have enlightened me about my rights and motivated me to partake in issues that concern youth in self-development. It has also positively impacted on me in that I have normalised myself to be part of governance processes because the government is for the people and CYDT has helped me become the voice of the voiceless by giving me opportunities to facilitate meetings. When tasked with the role of facilitating, one gets to research more and improves knowledge scope. I was given an opportunity to present on the National Youth Bill imparting on what and how other countries have come up with their own document. All I can say is that, after the research and the presentation I made, I became a different person. The information I got has made me aspire to inspire other youth into actively and effectively participating in coming up with a sound Youth Bill. As a performing artiste, I now infuse governance and human rights lyrics in songs that I write because in my small way, I want to raise awareness on the importance of actively and effectively participating in local and national governance.



John Majahana from Matobo

CYDT has brought positive change in my personal life. This has furnished me with a lot of fruitful ideas to augment political and economic development through provision of ideas in policy making. The organisation has also nurtured me with profound leadership skills through convening youth capacity building activities which has created a critical platform to unpack some setbacks and challenges hindering political development in our respective communities and preferring solutions to such. This has nurtured me as a young leader to be part of the solution through becoming a mirror of society. In addition, through workshops and engagement platforms brought by CYDT, I have been empowered as a young person to voice out and right all wrongs in our society such as human rights abuses especially against unsuspecting citizens within rural communities like ours. In terms of constitutional information, I have gained profound knowledge which has made me to further fill in the gap of knowledge to other youth regards to the constitution.

CYDT petition increases Government-Youth relations

Since CYDT published and sent a petition to the parliament of Zimbabwe that demanded an improved youth representation in all government levels in August 2020; communication and engagement between the government and the youths has significantly improved while several key youth initiatives have begun.



The organisation has held meetings with government representatives in a bid to find better ways to deal with the youth concerns. In February 2021, CYDT participated in a virtual public hearing meeting with members from the Portfolio Committee on Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation (PCYAR) in relation to the 30% youth representation petition sent by the organisation.

This was followed by another meeting in parliament where Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation Kirsty Coventry as well as minister of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Ziyambi Ziyambi were expected to provide evidence on youth inclusion and involvement. All these meetings sought to seek clarity on CYDT's petition that demanded an increased representation of young people in all government levels.

The fact that the government has been constantly engaging the organisation on youth matters, serves as evidence that CYDT petition has greatly improved relations with the government stakeholder. This is a key success towards the goal of youth inclusion and development in Zimbabwe.

In clarifying some of the terms of the petition in these meetings organized by the government, CYDT supported by the youths from Mat South pointed out that, as much as young people appreciate the benefits of the Amendment Bill Number 2, that sought to set aside 10 seats for them in parliament, they believe that the proposed 10 seats are not enough for a balanced and fair representation of young people in parliament considering the undeniable fact that youths constitute a majority population in the country.

It was brought forward that, it was not enough for a province to be represented by a single youth due to the fact that in each province there are districts, and every district has its own youth issues, hence it was too much weight for all youth issues to be dealt with by a single youth in the province.

In responding to the raised issues by the organisation and young people, Minister Coventry said that, her ministry was ready to listen to the concerns being raised by the youths, however, it was imperative that youth clearly spell out their demands; what needs to be done and how.

Young people were also reminded that as early as 21 years of age, a person is eligible to become a member of parliament hence it was imperative that young people who are interested to be part of the parliament register themselves as public office runners as well as seek guidance from those with experience.

It was however, highlighted that the lack of resources was a major stumbling block for young people to be part of the candidates gunning for public offices. It was noted that there are already young people who have tried running for public office in Mat South and other provinces but failed dismally due to lack of financially resources; hence the need for an improved youth quota.

The petition has played a key role in the drafting and development of a National Youth Bill that seeks to deal with youth representation and inclusion issues.

Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 2) Act 2021: implications on youth participation in governance



The Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill (No. 2) that was officially signed by President Emmerson Mnangagwa and published as an Act on 7 May this year has several implications on youth participation, Matabeleland South youths have said.

The Act sets aside 10 proportional seats in the national assembly for youth, that is, persons aged from 21 to 35 years of age, one from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided. In essence, one youth will be selected to represent the whole of Matabeleland South Province.

Matabeleland South youth believe that, while it is essential to appreciate the gazetting of the Constitution Amendment Bill (No. 2) Act since it promotes youth representation to some extent, it is imperative that the government continues to engage young people who still believe a 30% youth representation is needed.

Wellington Nare from Gwanda said while the key objective of the Act may be to promote youth participation, “an improved youth representation and participation is still needed in all governance levels”.

He claimed that provincial youth issues will likely overwhelm a single youth representative, hence the need for young people to continue lobbying policy and decision makers for youth friendly laws and policies that will increase youth

representation in parliament.

Young people were also concerned with the powers allocated to the President like the power to appoint and relieve judges of their duties.

James Dube from Gwanda said this clause implies that if the President wants to extend his ruling term, he can successfully do so based on the fact that the judges in offices were appointed by him. According to Dube, there is no way the judges can oppose a President who appointed them.

The Act also states that 10 youth representatives will be elected under a party-list system of proportional representation. In other words, this Act implies that young people can only become parliamentarians through a registered political party nomination and recommendations for elections under the party list system.

Young people were concerned by this clause, alleging that their confidence in a party-system is dwindling. They questioned the extent in which the party system can significantly improve the participation of young people and women in governance processes claiming that a lot of unfulfilled promises have been made under the political party system.

Young people also said political parties promise to deliver better service delivery for youth and women during election campaigns but fail to live up to their promises when they are voted into office.

Young people said a youth quota was supposed to be oriented in a way in which parliamentarians are chosen through capacity and quality instead of the political party system. They said that the power dynamics in the quota system must be made clear for young people and women to be fully empowered. For instance, it must be clear who selects women or youth in the women and youth quotas.

Young people said one of the approaches that have proved fruitful in dealing with the challenges faced by young people is the devolution of power.

Therefore, the youth quota or women's quota must be introduced at provincial or district level, which will help increase women and youth participation in local governance.